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NURIA CHINCHILLA: THE POWER TO CHANGE WORKPLACES

Thanks to her, both the Spanish business and political agenda has placed work and family balance at the top of their strategies to keep talented professionals.

— Patricia Flores, General Director of Women's Issues for Madrid, Spain.

Having a Joan of Arc as a reference for life and work balance in Spain has been really useful.

— Elena Dinesen, Director of Human Resources, Microsoft, Spain

Any successful biography involves three factors: dreams, work, and patience.

— Francisco Alcaide, journalist.

As she reflected on her career and her influence on the issue of workplace flexibility, Nuria Chinchilla, a professor at the business school IESE in Barcelona, Spain, commented that she did not think of herself as being very “strategic.” “What I am lacking is strategic vision. At least this is the way I feel.” Rather, she did what seemed to be appropriate at the time to push her agenda for workplace change forward, responding to opportunities and requests as they presented themselves and basing her actions on her personal values. Consuelo Leon, a former journalist, co-author and colleague, and doctoral student at IESE commented, “Every day her work is different from the previous day because it is not clear what new problems will present themselves. She is reacting to new problems every day.”

Yet most people who spoke about Nuria Chinchilla commented on her sense of mission and purpose and her ability to attract others to her cause. Gloria Renom, a deputy in the Catalonia parliament, remarked that “Nuria has a good understanding of the themes and she prepares deeply.” Indeed, how else to explain Chinchilla's remarkable ability to influence others and to use a number of levers of power extremely successfully?

In 1993, Chinchilla had recently completed her doctoral thesis at IESE Business School in Barcelona, on the topic of organizational turnover, with no particular focus on women, flexible

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work arrangements, or work-family issues. She chose to remain at IESE, where she had worked since the early 1980s as an assistant professor. By 2003, just over a decade later, she had attained the rank of full professor, had founded the International Center of Work and Family at IESE, and was generally acknowledged to be *a* leader if not *the* leader in workplace flexibility and work-family issues internationally, attending conferences all over the globe and being extremely visible in the media. Many observers echoed the comments of Renom, the parliament deputy, who noted that “for a long time, Nuria has been considered the leading authority in the field of work-life balance.”

Chinchilla, a woman operating primarily in Spanish-speaking cultures traditionally viewed as “macho,” had nevertheless influenced laws and regulations in Spain and also had affected management behavior in numerous countries throughout South America, Europe, and Africa.

Although Chinchilla was modest in describing what she had achieved with the help of her colleagues, it was clear, nonetheless, that she had exerted quite a bit of influence. There were two major foci of her activities and accomplishments. First, she and her colleagues worked to affect regulations and laws, and to influence governments and various official commissions to change public policy toward work-life balance. (Instead of “balance” it was sometimes called “conciliation,” from the idea of “reconciliation,” which has as one of its meanings “the process of making consistent or compatible,”¹ as in making work and the rest of life once again, as it was historically, consistent and compatible.) Second, she worked to institute awards and certifications to recognize companies that had implemented family-flexible work practices. This included gathering measures, such as IFREI, an index developed by the Center, to measure the extent to which companies were family responsible. Chinchilla believed that public recognition and certification would influence corporate behavior, and measures of company activities could be used to develop lists and rankings of family-flexible work places—and no organization would want to be last on such a list.

In Spain particularly, there had been considerable progress on all fronts. Gloria Renom noted that Chinchilla had been able to boost the visibility of the issue of flexibility and work-life balance, thereby giving it more political traction, and that Nuria had served as an advisor to the Catalan government on the role of women at work and family-responsible policies. Since 1999, there had been two or three changes in the laws that addressed the balance of work and family. In March, 2007, Spain passed the Equal Opportunities Law, which, among other things, provided the possibility of a longer leave of absence for new mothers and provided 15 days’ leave of absence for fathers. As Chinchilla noted, “I have asked for one month, and finally they have given a leave for 15 days and then in eight years it will be one month.” Also, her efforts to recognize, and thereby affect, company behavior through programs that provided formal recognition for flexible and family-responsible employers were bearing fruit. The Spanish government had just formally recognized 39 companies and many organizations had broadened programs to provide support for flexible work arrangements and policies that promoted work-life balance. Meanwhile outside of Spain, other data collection and public recognition efforts were either already implemented or being discussed and planned for launch in Portugal, Chile, Mexico, Colombia, Argentina, Brazil, Peru, El Salvador, Panama, the Philippines, Kenya, and Nigeria.

¹ Webster’s *Unabridged Dictionary*, New York: Random House, 2001, p. 1612.

It was not clear how Chinchilla had accomplished so much in so short a time, and what else she might do to be even more effective in obtaining changes in workplace flexibility in the future. And there was another interesting aspect to her career. Chinchilla seemed to have largely surmounted the trade-offs faced by so many people in positions of power—the apparent need to choose between having influence and being true to one’s values and beliefs, as well as the choice between one’s work and the rest of one’s life. How had she been able to accomplish this?

PERSONAL BACKGROUND

Nuria Chinchilla grew up in Barcelona. Her father practiced law and her mother had a law degree but they both decided that she would not work outside the home in order to take care of the family. Her older brother was also a lawyer. Chinchilla received her bachelor’s degree in law from the University of Barcelona and then received a master’s degree from IESE and joined the faculty in 1984. She obtained her PhD from IESE in 1993. Chinchilla spoke seven languages (Spanish, Catalan, French, English, German, Russian, and Italian) and, particularly from the mid-1990s on, had earned numerous awards and recognition. For instance, she was named the “Best Manager of the Year” by the Spanish Federation of Executive Women; was the only woman on the Spanish list of the Top Ten in Management; was on the VIP Advisory Board of European Professional Women’s Network; was the first female full professor at IESE; and in 2007 was awarded the Most Valuable Speaker prize by the Manager Business Forum. Chinchilla was married and had one teenage daughter.

Nuria was very committed to her family. She would often introduce herself as a wife and a mother, downplaying her professional role. Patricia Debeljuh, a PhD graduate of IESE working at a university in Argentina, described Chinchilla and her family orientation:

Nuria is very maternal.... She can be 20,000 kilometers from her home, but I assure you she is still looking after her daughter, her parents, and her loved ones in Spain. For example, when she was here with her husband, she phoned her daughter the whole time because the girl had to take some important test. She always checks in with her family. Every time we arrange her travels to Argentina, she says to me she wants to be at home during the weekends, when her husband and daughter are also at home.

A story from her early personal life provides a lot of insight into how Chinchilla thought about living her life and making personal decisions:

I didn’t know anything about balancing work and family life. When I was 18 I fell in love with the typical very handsome, blonde and blue-eyed boy, one of those who are so attractive for Spanish girls. But perhaps he was not so very marvelous in his character.... So, after four months of dating for the first time, I realized that that we could not be together for life. It was impossible, I would not be able to live with someone who is not absolutely transparent and trustworthy. So I decided to cut that relationship, going against my feelings and following my rational thought. I needed a man who shared my human and religious values. I have a strong character and

otherwise we would be absolutely at war. So, I started really thinking that if I wanted to do a marriage—a marriage for me means a project for life—my partner should be really complementary. Of course I also had to be in love. Then I met Felipe, who is not blonde, nor blue-eyed, neither tall, but he has a great heart, very strong values and is almost 13 years older than me. He was always giving himself to others and helping people in need. He was in love with me, I fell in love with him and I thought, if he is giving himself to everyone, he will really give himself to his wife and children. So I discovered a great chance to build a strong and stable relationship for life with him.

He was letting me be myself and there was no problem if I wanted to go for my career and do things putting my talents into action to be useful in different ways. We were married at 24 and 36 years old, respectively, after 3 years of dating.

Before marrying, I told him, ‘Well, I have no idea about cooking,’ because my mother is a great chef and I was rebelling against that as I saw her always working in the kitchen, and after that, my father saying, ‘Not bad, but maybe it’s lacking some salt.’ So I said, ‘No, no, no. I will never have this type of situation.’ So he [Felipe] said, ‘No problem. I very much like cooking. So I will be the cook.’ And the second issue was where to live. His family had a factory [a lace factory, now closed because of competition from overseas] about 40 kilometers from Barcelona, and he wanted to live there in a marvelous town where he had a big house. And I told him, ‘No. I am not going to drive up and down with the children. I want children, and the children which will come, to go to school in Barcelona. And I want an apartment near my parents’ [they now live about five minutes’ walk]. And he said, ‘Of course. You’re right. I’ll be the one commuting every day.’

Chinchilla was initially not interested at all in the issue of work flexibility and work-life balance. The ex-dean of IESE, Juan Antonio Perez Lopez, a personal friend, had encouraged her to work on this topic, but she had refused. She noted, “I am not going to talk about women, because the ones doing research on women should be men, otherwise there is no authority.” In 1996, Perez Lopez died in a car accident. Chinchilla reflected:

I changed my focus of research because I saw that the real problem, being in the sessions in the classroom and talking with people, was this type of schizophrenia. People talking about work, work, work, and then life. ‘Life comes later. When I have the time. I don’t know when.’ And then I started saying, ‘This cannot be.’

Prior to his death and before the IV World Conference on Women in Beijing where he wanted me to go as a speaker, we organized a workforce seminar on ‘Women and Success’ to prepare. I agreed to do that if he was the one talking and I was just a moderator. It was the first time that we had this kind of topic at IESE and we had more than 300 women registered!

He repeated again and again that a company that is not able to integrate motherhood does not deserve the name of ‘enterprise,’ because it is just a ‘financial business.’

After Juan Antonio’s death, I saw clearly that women, work and family should be my specific area of research, simply because no other person was going to do it. But after digging into this topic, I realized the crucial importance of the issue for our society. Then I started fighting for change and without being totally aware of it, I was operationalizing my professional mission.

Chinchilla fully understands that, given the topic on which she does research and speaks, people will observe how she models work-family balance and flexibility. She commented, “Everything that I am speaking [about] in the classroom is reminding me of how I should be with my family members, not only with my colleagues.” When she reflected on challenges she has faced in her work, Chinchilla commented:

To balance my work and family life, this was my challenge. The real challenge was that every day I had to ask, ‘Am I doing what I’m preaching?’ This was a challenge because the work is lots of hours. But having my parents five minutes from home, which was a strategic decision, and the first strategic decision, which was to whom was I going to be married, made it easier.

THE ISSUE OF WORKPLACE FLEXIBILITY AND WORK-LIFE BALANCE

All over the industrialized world, several factors have made the issue of work-life balance and flexible work practices salient, and these factors have operated with particular force in Spain.

First, women have entered the labor force in larger numbers. A Spanish journalist, Francisco Alcaide, noted that in 1981, the percentage of employed women in Spain was 22.4 percent but that proportion had increased to 43.7 percent by 2001. Combined with increasing life spans that had many people also concerned about aging parents, dual-earner households faced challenges of caring for children and other family members while fulfilling their work responsibilities.

Second, in all the industrialized countries—and this was certainly true for Spain which, along with Italy, had the lowest birthrate in Western Europe—there was a much below-replacement level birthrate (1.4 children per woman versus 2.1 which is the minimum required). This meant economic challenges in the immediate future as fewer active employees would be available to support those who were retired. A smaller labor force would also adversely affect economic growth rates.²

² The growth rate of a country’s Gross Domestic Product, by definition, depended on two things: increases in the factors of production (labor and capital) and the productivity or output per unit of input for those factors of production. Although increases in labor productivity could mitigate the effects of diminished population growth on increases in GDP, the evidence suggested that the growth rate of the labor force, and particularly the growth rate of skilled workers, was an important component of economic growth.

Third, both survey and anecdotal evidence suggested that the younger generation of employees were much less willing to subordinate their personal life to their employers' needs. One managing director at Morgan Stanley in New York, reflecting on these generational differences, had commented that women employees now regularly turned her down when she requested that they accept geographic transfers or work long hours to get projects completed. She noted, "It's almost like insubordination."

Juan Manuel Roca, a business journalist in Spain, commented, "The new generation of young professionals has been born with a different mentality, one that values free time. Therefore, they are not prone to spend too many hours at the office. Faced with this new reality, companies have been forced to adopt different rules and policies to attract and keep talented young professionals."

Fourth, the lower birthrates coupled with the impending retirement of the baby-boom generation, starting with those born just after the end of World War II, meant that many companies faced an impending shortage of talent.

Fifth, this talent shortage was strategically important for business because in the industrialized countries such as those in Western Europe, work was increasingly intellectual—entailing creativity and innovation—since many lower-skilled tasks had already been moved offshore.

A sixth factor also operated in Spain: the long working hours. As Roca, the business journalist said, "Spain has long workdays, with more working hours than its neighbors. In other European countries, such as France, the United Kingdom, or Germany, employees finish their workday at 5 p.m. In contrast, a Spanish workday can last until 8 or 9 p.m., leaving workers with little time to be with their families, children, and friends." In an interview in January, 2007 on small, family-run businesses, Chinchilla commented on the long work hours and their consequences:

Spain is at the bottom of the list of productivity in Europe, only in front of Portugal and Greece. This situation produces what we call 'human ecology pollution.' Spanish business managers still attribute their companies' success to nonstop work, missing the perspective on potential gains if they worked with less stressed-out workers. People with excessive workload survive the day at the office, but they are less motivated, less creative and less committed.

Steven Poelmans, another faculty member at IESE and academic director of the ICWF (International Center on Work and Family), headed by Nuria Chinchilla, noted that the timing of Nuria's engagement with the issue of workplace flexibility was particularly propitious.

The timing has been simply great. To begin with, there are the idiosyncratic working hours in Spain, which are completely not in sync with the school hours. We have very long working hours because of the long lunch break. The second thing is that Spanish people are Latin people, so they truly value family very much. Then there is the massive integration of women in the labor force, which also happened over this last period in Spain. Basically, between 1995 and 2005,

we've seen an increase of 67 percent in the proportion of women working, an increase that came later in Spain than in some other countries.

The role of women was also changing, even in Latin countries with a presumably “macho” culture. For instance, since the mid-1990s, women had achieved more positions of political power in Latin countries. An article documenting the rise of women to prominence in Latin America noted:

The Spanish term *equidad de genero*, or gender equity, gained new meaning last week when Cristina Fernandez de Kirchner ... became the first woman to be democratically elected president in the nation's [Argentina] history Last year Chileans elected Michelle Bachelet South America's first female president, while Portia Simpson-Miller was elected the first female prime minister of Jamaica. Lourdes Flores came within a percentage point last year of breaking the gender barrier in Peru when she lost to the eventual president, Alan Garcia, in the first round of voting there.³

In Spain, the journalist Francisco Alcaide also commented on the increasing role of women in professional and political life:

In Spanish universities, 66 of every 100 students are women, as well as 59 of every 100 graduate students. Right now in Spain, a woman holds the Spanish vice-presidency for the first time ever. Spain also has eight female ministers. Moreover, 36 percent of the 350 seats in the chamber of Deputies belong to women, while in 1982 Spain had only 4.5 percent female deputies. With 36 percent of deputies being women, Spain ranks fourth in the list of European countries with the most female deputies. In 1982, the percentage of Spanish female senators was 4.35 percent. Now it is 25 percent.

Although work flexibility and work-life balance were often discussed as women's issues, Chinchilla consistently avoided any framing that would cast them in that fashion. As Patricia Flores of the government of Madrid commented, “For her, gender equality means having a better society and a more efficient business world.”

Chinchilla noted, “What we do for women, we do for all human beings. Every structure that is against women is also against men, and this is so for two reasons. First because if women are just seen as labor force and not recognized as full human beings with different roles in life, their motherhood will suffer and their role as spouses and daughters will too. Second, men also need to have time for their role of fathers, sons and brothers, as well as to have a balanced life and the recognition of all this has to be conquered, too.” She also noted that in addition to framing the issue as one of being able to attract and retain talented employees—and companies should definitely not ignore the 50 percent of the talent pool that were women—she was concerned about the well-being of people overall. She said, “I saw so many people having really great professional success but [becoming] terrible failures in family and social life, not just women, but men, too. The lack of balance in the different areas of life has consequences not only in the

³ Alexei Barrionuevo, “Political Tango, Women in the Lead,” *The New York Times*, November 4, 2007.

personal happiness of people, but also in the company's results and sustainability, as well as in the future of society."

As Consuelo Leon, her co-author noted, "Some women want to be superwomen. Others want to imitate a masculine role at work. Others don't want to fight for cultural change at work. Others don't want to give up anything, ever. That's impossible!"

IESE AS A POWER BASE⁴

Chinchilla was a professor at IESE, part of the University of Navarra, and there was little doubt that her position there helped with her influence efforts. As Flores noted, "IESE is a point of reference in the Spanish business world. That gives her a lot of credibility." Chinchilla also had credibility because of her education—a law degree, an MBA and a PhD—and from her position as professor.

The University of Navarra was founded in 1952 by Opus Dei, a personal prelature of the Catholic Church with about 80,000 members all over the world. Opus Dei, which translates to "the work of God," was started in 1928 by Josemaria Escriva to bring Christian values and ideas of service to all daily activities, including work. Made famous (or infamous) by its caricature in Dan Brown's book (and the resulting movie), *The DaVinci Code*, Opus Dei's mission was to infuse people-oriented values into social institutions and daily activities.

Steven Poelmans noted, "A holy person is not a hero. It's a person who, in day-to-day activities, shows this eye for detail, this commitment, this energy to serve others." He commented on the congruence between Nuria's work and the school and its values:

It's maybe a little bit bizarre for a business school to be concerned with what other schools would consider as a marginal issue, as it's not really at the core of the bottom line. But it really reflects the philosophy of the school, which puts the person in the center of the organization. And it's a school that prides itself on its focus on ethics and social responsibility. And, in addition, the institution behind the school is a Catholic institution that has a high stake in the family. So, combine these things together and you get a highly supportive school.

Consuelo Leon also commented that the congruence of personal faith and beliefs with her work provided an important source of strength and an explanation for Chinchilla's success. Leon said, "Her beliefs are not in a different world from her academic, professional life. She always defends what is important to her: the importance of people in an organization; the importance of individuals; individual beings created by God, family as the center of life; human support as a benefit in a company. Her religion is a way of living."

While the university's main campus was in Pamplona, it also had an engineering and bioscience campus in San Sebastian. IESE, the university's business school, had been established in Barcelona in 1958. The school initially offered only executive programs, but in 1964, with the

⁴ Much of this information comes from the websites of IESE and, to a lesser extent, Opus Dei. The IESE website is <http://www.iese.edu> and Opus Dei is <http://www.opusdei.us>.

help of an advisory committee staffed in part by Harvard Business School faculty members, IESE launched the first two-year MBA program in Europe. A Harvard-IESE joint advisory committee was established in 1963 (and continued to operate at the time this case was written). In 1969 IESE began offering doctoral degrees in management, and in 1984, the school opened a campus in Madrid where it offered executive education programs, both open-enrollment and custom programs. By the fall of 2007, IESE had more than 27,000 alumni of its degree and executive education programs living in 90 countries.

IESE competed in the global business education marketplace, and over the previous couple of decades, had made remarkable progress in building its reputation and portfolio of activities, as well as expanding its physical facilities. In Barcelona, virtually all of the classes were taught in English, 97 faculty members came from some 25 different countries, and about 80 percent of its full-time MBA students came from countries other than Spain, with comparable proportions of non-Spanish students in its executive MBA and executive education programs. Over the years, the school's prominence had increased substantially. For instance, the *Economist* magazine's Intelligence Unit's ranking of full-time MBA programs released in 2007 rated IESE as the third best business school in the world,⁵ while a 2005 *Forbes* ranking placed IESE second in two-year MBA programs outside of the United States, and the *Financial Times* in 2004 rated IESE as the thirteenth best business school in the world and fourth in Europe. Its executive education activities were also quite highly rated.

In part because of its sense of mission and purpose, IESE had done a number of things to help faculty from other business schools and to assist in the development of business schools all over the world. So, for instance, it had an international faculty development program geared toward business and management educators, with more than 200 alumni as of 2007.

In late 2007 IESE opened a New York office, and it offered executive education programs in Munich as well as in other, non-Spanish locations. It had alliances with leading U.S. business schools such as Berkeley, Duke, Kellogg, Michigan, MIT, New York University, and non-U.S. schools such as the University of Melbourne (Australia), Rotterdam School of Management (the Netherlands), and the Indian School of Business that permitted about 60 IESE students to spend the first semester of their second year at a foreign campus and for students from those campuses to come to IESE.

But perhaps IESE's most distinctive outreach activity was its role as the hub of a network of associated business schools around the world, many but not all in Spanish-speaking countries. The network began when in 1967, Mexican academics and business leaders sought help from IESE to establish IPADE, which in 2007 was one of Mexico's best graduate schools of management. That established a pattern of IESE, sometimes jointly with other institutions such as Harvard, providing advice and assistance for new schools seeking to provide business education and to conduct research on management. By 2007, IESE had been involved in the founding of some 16 business schools (listed in **Exhibit 1**). In some cases, IESE offered joint executive programs with these schools, and in many cases, faculty from IESE traveled regularly to be involved in teaching and research in other schools in the network.

⁵ Chicago and Stanford ranked ahead of IESE.

Speaking about how this large network of connected schools affected Chinchilla and her activities, Poelmans noted, “Nuria has, through the strong network of IESE, always had an impact on those other countries. Basically, what she did is to take her mission from Spain to other countries.”

NURIA CHINCILLA’S PERSONAL STYLE AND APPROACH TO GETTING THINGS DONE

Nuria Chinchilla’s ability to build a power base and exert influence seemed to depend on both some personal qualities and a number of things she had done. As to her personal style, many of those who knew Chinchilla described her in ways similar to that of Elena Dinesen, director of human resources for Microsoft, Spain:

She is a hard worker. She lives in Catalonia but every time I see her, she is in Madrid, working. She has tremendous personal and professional values. She never imposes her opinion. Nuria champions the women’s cause, and has great analytical skills. She gives well-documented conferences. She is not afraid of standing before a male audience and gently saying that Spain has a male chauvinist culture.

Consuelo Leon also commented on Chinchilla’s hard work: “She sleeps only a few hours and is still able to speak at conferences easily. She is strong and has a great capacity for work.”

Patricia Flores, the general director of women’s issues for Madrid, described how the community of Madrid, IESE, and a third organization sponsored the Flexible Business Madrid Award (Madrid Empresa Flexible). Although Chinchilla was the moving force behind that award, she was willing and indeed eager to involve others and share the credit. Flores noted:

Here in Madrid we have three renowned schools of business: IESE, the Instituto de Empresa and Esade. I talked to Nuria and told her that the other two schools had to be involved, too. Any other person would have said no, because Nuria was sort of the spiritual mother of this award, she had the methodology, and it was basically her idea. Well, she agreed to include them. She thought that including the other schools would empower the topic of work and life balance, putting all the schools on the same page.

Nuria was also invariably polite and concerned for the welfare and feelings of others. Steven Poelmans, her colleague and collaborator in the research center, noted that “When you have an important meeting with her, she takes the phone off the hook and makes sure she’s focused and she’s 100 percent with you.” He also related how, when a participant at a conference had a medical problem, Chinchilla intervened:

I was organizing my first international conference on work and family here in Barcelona, and everything went well. But on the last day, I got a phone call at home to tell me that one of the participants had been robbed in the city center and he got injured very seriously. He broke his leg, just under the hip, and for someone about 60 years old, this was a very serious injury. We immediately went

to the hospital to make sure everything we could do to support Jeff [the injured person] was being done. But Nuria stepped in and she went beyond what she could do. She phoned up a friend who is a surgeon, who at that point was in Italy. I don't know how she did it, but she made him come over. This surgeon operates on some of the top football players of Barcelona. This guy came over in no time and he personally supervised Jeff's care and did the surgery. And she [Nuria] spent a lot of time with Adele [Jeff's wife, who was with him and was also robbed] and Jeff in the hospital, knowing how busy she is. I wanted to tell you that anecdote because I think it puts it all together. You see Nuria's executive style, making sure that things that need to get done are done. But at the same time, you see her compassion and her generosity with her time.

Similar tales came from others who knew Chinchilla. Miriam Filella, a human resources executive at ENDESA, the largest electric utility company in Spain, noted: "We developed a professional friendship, but two years ago, when I had my daughter, she came to visit me in the hospital, bringing my kid a present. She is like that—she takes care of both professional and personal aspects of her relationships."

Patricia Debeljuh, an Argentinian professor, noted that Chinchilla had the ability to handle multiple tasks and be sensitive to people's needs at the same time. "We were once in an elevator, discussing a project and when we stepped outside, we bumped into some member of her team. Nuria immediately asked about her mother's health. Later, I found out that the mother of this person was sick."

Chinchilla's dedication to her work and her vision for what work-life flexibility should entail helped give her incredible energy and also made it easier for her to recruit others to her team. A story told by Debeljuh about one of Nuria's visits to Argentina illustrated Chinchilla's focus and stamina:

In June of 2005, I was in Barcelona and met with her. She was coming to Argentina for just two days, but I asked her if she was interesting in meeting with some of my executive women friends at a working breakfast. We checked her official agenda and she was scheduled to arrive at 6 a.m., with her first meeting at 11 a.m. Her first day looked pretty busy, as well as the second, last day, so I said, 'Nuria, forget about meeting with these women. Your flight arrives at 6 and you need an hour to get to your hotel and you also need time to rest.' But she replied, 'Of course I have time! I have time between 6 a.m. and 11 a.m. What am I supposed to do for those five hours?'

The breakfast was great. More than 80 executive women signed up and they were all enthusiastic about meeting with her. I arranged to pick Nuria up at her hotel at 8 a.m. However, something happened. The taxi driver that picked her up at the airport took her to the wrong hotel! Instead of taking her to the Sheraton in downtown Buenos Aires, he took her to the Sheraton in Pilar, 37 miles from downtown. Now, in normal conditions, driving from Pilar to downtown Buenos

Aires takes up to one hour. The day Nuria arrived, it was pouring rain and she had to commute during rush hour in a cab. She arrived at the working breakfast at 10 a.m., two hours late. But despite all these inconveniences, she kept a great attitude. She talked for 45 minutes, looking like a woman who had not just arrived from Spain, who did not face any inconvenience that day, and who did not have anything else to do but talk to us. Her audience was captivated. Nuria addressed them as if they were her friends. She had them in her pocket. In the end, she stayed with us for one hour, and at 11 a.m. I took her to the university where she started her official agenda.

Chinchilla was also very good at identifying talented people and attracting these individuals to assist her in her efforts. Steven Poelmans was considering a couple of different places to get his PhD. But he met Nuria in 1997. She invited him to give a little talk on stress management for the faculty. And after the speech, she asked him to do his doctoral work at IESE and work with her. After he completed his degree, Chinchilla saw that Poelmans' academic, statistical and research skills would complement her skills quite well, so she recruited him to stay on and help her with the Center, which was just getting organized then in 2001. Or consider the case of Patricia Debeljuh, working at IESE's "sister school" in Buenos Aires. Although she received her doctorate at IESE, Chinchilla was not her advisor, and she had met other IESE professors. But, Debeljuh recounts:

Right after we met, she told me about her research and projects. At that time, she was starting her research on work and life balance, and she was really enthusiastic about it. She seemed passionate about her work. She seemed like a visionary to me. She was not thinking about limiting her research only to Barcelona or to Spain, but expanding it to several other countries. She told me that she was doing some field research and, in a very generous way, she offered me the opportunity to repeat the study in Argentina. We had just met and she was already offering me the use of her research. Unfortunately, I was busy preparing my dissertation. However, her gesture and generosity impressed me a great deal. Due to my multiple trips to Barcelona, we got to know each other. I have participated in research, seminars, and training sessions organized by her. Our relationship has grown with the years.

Yet another example was Consuelo Leon, who had worked with Nuria for six years on research, consulting engagements, and helping shape public opinion. Chinchilla was interested in Leon because of her strong personal values and her potential. But as Steve Poelmans pointed out, seeing that potential was not something that every academic might be capable of doing.

Chinchilla had been very successful in getting attention in the media for the issue of flexible work arrangements. As the business journalist Juan Manuel Roca noted, "She is Spain's leading expert on those topics. Chinchilla has positioned herself as Spain's leading academic reference on those topics."

Three things had apparently helped Nuria Chinchilla build relationships with the press.

First, she was accessible, taking journalists' calls, often doing interviews as soon as they were requested, and being willing to work with the journalists' schedules and deadlines. Furthermore, Chinchilla was willing and able to be a public figure—a role that requires a lot of time and energy and being willing to be in the spotlight.

Second, Chinchilla was always thinking about how to help journalists do their jobs and make their tasks easier, for instance, by providing access to the conferences she organized and the people, often quite senior executives, who attended. She argued that the key to her success with the media was understanding that they were human beings. Many of the reporters were themselves women, working impossible hours and for organizations that did not always provide flexibility. They formed a natural constituency.

Chinchilla described how her relationship with the media developed:

It began when we had the first meeting only for women human resource managers in 2001. The day before the meeting, someone called and said that they had heard I'd done research on this and that and the other, and could they have an interview. And what I did was to say, 'Okay. You are in Madrid. Tomorrow, I will be in Madrid. Why don't you come to the meeting of women human resources managers at the IESE campus? You can not only do my interview, but you can interview all the women there. You can attend all the sessions, have lunch with us, and then you can write whatever you want.'

When this woman [the journalist] was there, she said it was incredible. The article ran for a full page, with photographs of all these women talking about feminine values in the companies.

And from then, I was asked to write a book on feminine values. And what I said was, 'Feminine values cannot be the title because my mother will buy it and not anyone else. So we have to talk about female ambition.' This book became a best seller. And from then, everyone is asking to have an interview. I am doing my interviews mostly by phone in the car, in my office, from home. Every time, every hour. I am managing my time and providing a good service to the person who wants to have an interview. So this is why the television and radios and newspapers are happy with me, and then they come back. And also, because they know that I have data and this is what they want.

Third, Nuria recognized, more clearly and strategically than most, the importance of the media for disseminating the research results and policy prescriptions produced by her and her colleagues in the center. She commented that media relations and making research findings known was an important part of her job.

Chinchilla was willing to be pretty firm with people in order to get things accomplished. She described her difficulties in getting things moving in one of the countries, and what she did about it:

Our network partner was not easy to work with, because there were only men, no women there. But I asked the dean to have a meeting and he had lunch with me. I told him that we need to do this research in his country, because I cannot have an international research project without it. I told him, 'There are people knocking on my door from other universities, but I would like to work with you, because you are the one in our network. But, it's the last chance I can give you.' In this case I had to call the dean and say, 'If your mission is to make things better, to improve the entrepreneurs and the managers, to improve the lives for people who are managed by these people, then you have to do something.' I told him that I had been waiting for him to say something for three years, but was ready to take the opportunity to another university. And that's it. 'I am determined to do this in your country, so if you want to do it with me, I will be happy. But if you do not, I have to invite another university.'

I am tough in the content, but not tough in the way I am talking. In fact, I am giving arguments for them to really decide that this is good for their school and for them. They are going to be in the newspapers, they are going to be the first in the country to do this. I send them all the data to see what they will get. But in the end, when I shook his hand, I said, 'The only answer you can give me is yes. It's the only alternative.'

Roca, the business journalist, noted:

Nuria is not afraid, when facing an executive, to say, 'You think that making your employees work several more hours will make them more productive. You are wrong. Workers will be far more productive when they can balance work with leisure, family, and family welfare.' She is not afraid of saying this to business managers.

Chinchilla was able to deal with difficult audiences and situations using a combination of determination, persistence and grace. She had lots of data and information at her command, presented in a very organized and clear fashion, and demonstrated commitment to her work. She also did not give up.

A number of people spoke of how Chinchilla was unafraid to admit problems and mistakes, to present a very realistic view of work-life balance issues, and to present her ideas in front of any audience, even ones that might not take immediately to her message.

Chinchilla always used data, generated from her research and elsewhere, to make her case to companies for the importance of flexible work arrangements. For instance, a newspaper article stated:

Only 27 percent of companies in Spain have some flexible rules: flexible work hours, leave of absence to take care of children, part-time schedules, work from home, etc. However, this percentage drops to only 7 percent when referring to Spanish companies that have integrated family-conciliation policies. 'If

companies need figures to probe all this, here are some: Conciliation can reduce absenteeism up to 30 percent. One third of first- or second-time mothers are prone to leave their careers due to the difficulties of reconciling work and family. When they leave, a company must pay one and a half salaries to hire and train a new employee,' Chinchilla says.⁶

Chinchilla was very proactive in reaching out to people and building networks that brought like-minded potential allies together. At one level, the many conferences in which the Center presented its research findings provided opportunities for people to meet and connect. But she did more than organize conferences and seminars. As Dinesen of Microsoft noted:

Last year, Nuria launched a program for women executives in Spain. This is a very interesting network of women that are board of director members. We discuss women's situations in companies and bring the subject to our board meetings, in terms of education, the obstacles we face, and how to overcome some male chauvinist situations. This group brings awareness to women's situations and Nuria leads this fantastic program.

Nuria Chinchilla, working with other organizations, brought companies that did, or did not, have family-friendly policies into the limelight. She instigated an award recognizing family-responsible businesses, and ensured that award received appropriate attention:

For the first time ever, 12 Spanish companies received yesterday [May 9, 2006] the Certificate of Family-Responsible Businesses, sponsored by the Spanish government and the Fundacion + Familia The Spanish Secretary of State for Social Services and Family, Amparo Valcarce, praised the 12 companies saying they passed a 'long exam.' These companies were evaluated and audited on employment stability, time and space flexibility, support to the worker's family, professional development, and on the promotion of equal opportunities. The certificate is valid for three years and allows companies to use logos to identify themselves as family-responsible businesses.⁷

Also, since 1999, Chinchilla and her team had gathered data to construct the IESE Family Responsible Employer Index (IFREI). According to the journalist Francisco Alcaide, this entailed an annual survey with about 2,000 Spanish companies. The Center sold benchmarking data, so companies could compare themselves to others and to best practices, for 3,000 Euros.

Chinchilla would also do consulting inside companies to help them improve their policies and practices with respect to employee retention and work-life balance. Indeed, she met people in human resources at both Microsoft and ENDESA through such activities.

AN UNFINISHED AGENDA

⁶ Eli Garcia Villalon, "A Very Importance Balance," *Dario de Sevilla*, June 24, 2006 (translated from the Spanish).

⁷ Carlos Abajo, "Spanish Government Certifies Family-Responsible Businesses," *Cinco Dias*, Madrid, May 10, 2006 (translated from the Spanish).

Although Nuria Chinchilla had obviously accomplished a great deal, she was unsatisfied with the current state of affairs and was wondering what else she might do and what other strategies she could consider. In an interview on her book, *Female Ambition*, with the website Expat Women in the fall of 2007, she spoke of her aspirations for the future and her concerns about what might be the result of companies not changing their policies:

We need public administrations that reward companies who are family-responsible, just like they do for abiding the laws of not polluting—family stability means a secure, strong and stable community. We have on our website an interactive, self-diagnostic test to see if your company is family-responsible (www.iese.edu/icwf). We rate companies from A to D, A being systematically enhancing and enriching ‘human ecology,’ and D being systematically destroying and impoverishing it....

Here in Spain, I am working with the government to try and set up a point system for companies that would lead to tax reductions if the companies are considered family-responsible. It is like the Quality program of the ISO. If we do not try and change society soon, we will have many single people working long hours and never having time to create a family, or many more divorces and children with no parents to take care of them because they are working all the time. Is this the society we want to become?⁸

⁸ http://www.expatswomen.com/book_review/interview_nuria_chinchilla.php, September 20, 2007.

Exhibit 1
IESE's Network of Associated Business Schools
and Their Year of Founding

AESE—Associação de Estudos Superiores de Empresa, Lisbon, Portugal (1980)

PAD—Escuela de Dirección de la Universidad de Piura, Peru (1979)

CEIBS—China Europe International Business School, Shanghai (1994)

IAE—Escuela de Dirección y Negocios, Universidad Austral, Buenos Aires, Argentina (1978)

IDE—Instituto de Desarrollo Empresarial, Guayaquil, Ecuador (1993)

IEM—Instituto de Estudios Empresariales de Montevideo, Universidad de Montevideo, Uruguay (1994)

INALDE—Instituto de Alta Dirección Empresarial, Universidad de la Sabana, Bogotá, Columbia (1986)

IPADE—Instituto Panamericano de Alta Dirección de Empresa, Universidad Pan-Americana, Mexico City (1967)

ISE—Instituto Superior de Empresa, Brazil (1997) LBS—Lagos Business School, Pan-African University, Lagos, Nigeria (1992)

ESE—Escuela de Negocios, Universidad de Los Andes, Santiago, Chile (1999)

SBS—Strathmore Business School, Strathmore University, Nairobi, Kenya (2005)

School of Business Administration, University of Asia and the Pacific, Manila, Philippines (1995)

NTU—Nile Tech University, Cairo, Egypt (2004)

Tayasal—Escuela de Negocios, Universidad del Istmo, Guatemala (1977)