

International Symposium on:

**"Following in the footsteps of Xavier Richet:
Walking the road of eclectic network research"**

INALCO-Paris, Monday 14 March 2022

In tribute to our late colleague and friend Pr. Xavier Richet

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***Dear Diana, Julien, Daphné and Xavier's family members
Dear colleagues and friends,
Distinguished guests,***

First of all, I would like to tell you that I'm particularly and deeply affected while I take part in this tribute to our dear and much respected friend and colleague, the late Professor Xavier Richet. I would like to say a few words in recognition of the achievements of a great person, who devoted his entire life to serving training and research in his country and other several universities and institutions around the world.

I also seize upon this opportunity to extend my very sincere and warm gratitude to our colleagues and friends, holding this tribute ceremony, and Professors Jean-François Huchet, Violaine Delteil and Julien Vercueil, for having been able to intelligently combine friendship, acknowledgment, plural reflection and uncompromising analysis. All these elements constitute the values and principles that our late friend Xavier defended.

This is the reason why I wanted to mention the several aspects of Professor Xavier Richet's personality, perceived and experienced during more

than 40 years of working together and developing, in particular, fraternal friendship.

Dear colleagues and friends,

Each one of us has a professor or a researcher as their role model who marked his life in general, and academic and professional career in particular. Professor Xavier was a given researcher who have really marked my career since I had to work with him in the early 80s, during which we build a real research company together. The latter was the name he preferred using to refer to the several international meetings we constantly held together since 1985 every two years. These include meetings held in Fez til 1998, others held in Rabat between 1998 and 2010, and the rest in Dakhla, the chief place of Morocco's Southern Provinces, since 2010.

For the sake of history,, Xavier, Philippe Clerc and I started preparing to hold, if conditions permit, the 7th International Meeting of Dakhla in December 2022, the theme of which, we have chosen, focuses on *“managing crises and predicting risks in an uncertain world: national policies and world governance”*. Unfortunately, Xavier will not join us, but we will dedicate the meeting to him.

The joint adventure that Xavier and I initiated, to promote network research, started with a simple idea. Every two years, we shall identify a theme that corresponds to an economic issue that seems important to us, significant and sufficiently transversal and multidisciplinary, and around which we shall mobilise collective intelligence of researchers and institutional stakeholders, belonging to various academic horizons and all geographical origins. They have being part of the network that we have built together with many colleagues and friends, and which today exceeds the number of 150 researchers from Africa, Europe, the Americas, Asia, and Oceania.

These meetings are always accompanied by a collective publication produced and co-edited by Moroccan and French publishers, most often l'Harmatan.

The latest book, resulting from the work of the last meeting, has just been released last week, containing an afterword written by Xavier Richet a few days after the great lockdown. It certainly was his last reflection on what he referred to as *“thwarted globalisation”* in his text. I'am very pleased to offer a copy of the book to his family gathering in this ceremony.

The above-mentioned joint adventure allowed me, in the long-term, to discover multiple dimensions of Xavier Richet's personality.

1. Xavier Richet's human features

All those who had the opportunity to meet and know Xavier were impressed by his very distinguished human qualities.

Indeed, Xavier is a discreet and jovial person, endowed with a measured optimism. He despises conflicts and fulfills his commitments. He is open-minded, lively, and much attached to his family. He faces current issues and hopes. He devoted his life to serving good causes. He is available whenever his friends need him. He is a fervent defender of human and universal values of tolerance, and inter-cultural, civilizational and religious dialogue. All these values and principles make Xavier a great waiver of human ties and builder of network for action and friendship.

2. Xavier Richer as a friend

I personally consider Xavier as a truly faithful, loyal, supportive and generous friend. He respects differences, recognizes good deeds and understands the situations. He always seeks to share concerns with other by involving in a network that comprises his friends and colleagues, and endeavouring to keep and popularise it.

For all these reasons Xavier was everyone's friend, as proven by the presence among us, attending this vibrant tribute ceremony. Some of whom are coming far away in person or virtually.

In doing so, Xavier depicted the world he wanted to create and for which he always managed to mobilise the collective intelligence of these friends and colleagues to make it real.

Xavier's promotion of knowledge and research was central to this permanent quest for a better work

3. Xavier Richer as a researcher

All those who knew or have had to work with Xavier, as a researcher, are impressed by the qualities that characterize him as one of eminent researchers that marked their field of specialisation.

In fact, he belonged to this generation of fewer researchers that the University of the XXI century produces less and less; a generation whose major traits encompass erudition, a high level of competence, impressive work capacities, great listening skills, open-mindedness and a noticeable refusal of all forms of dogmatism.

However, Xavier's qualities as a researcher include rigor, scientific honesty, and belief in the merits and usefulness multidisciplinary, as well as pragmatism, the scholar's commitment and the researcher's responsibility. Indeed, he was constantly driven by a strong conviction that Economics must be a science that shall serve human beings.

Dear colleagues and friends,

I would to conclude my keynote in tribute to this great French Economist by paying vibrant respects to another person who consolidated his brilliant and distinguished career. I mean his wife Diana Cooper-Richer, whose love, presence, devotion and sacrifice were behind this great, faithful and eminent friend and researcher's success.

This the reason why I want to pay tribute to her. I shall also pay respects to their children and grandchildren, whom Xavier cherished much during his lifetime.

Rest in peace our close and much-respected friend and Brother Xavier!