

The Impact of Globalization on Small Scale Artisans in Azrou, Morocco

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Abstract

Faced with the impact of globalization upon business productivity and the consumer's expectations and demands in current-day Morocco, Moroccan small scale artisans are struggling to compete and earn income to survive. This new phenomenon is due to a smaller interest in the handicraft sector both by the state and by the young consumers, whereas until today, the most basic infrastructural needs for successful business such as affordable transportation and affordable means of publicity are absent in remote villages such as Azrou. The reduced interest in the handicraft sector from the upcoming generation is also a result of globalization and threatens to lead this sector to extinction. Thankfully, the state has come to realize these emerging phenomena and has began an effort to improve the handicraft sector and keep it alive since this last has represented a major source of income for Morocco in the past. Our general approach was to study the small scale artisans specifically in Azrou in order to acquire a deep understanding of the problem, and through studied successful cases, propose solutions and recommendations for the artisans in Azrou as an alternative to the state's strategy for the improvement of the artisanal sector in Morocco. The results of our research show that there are ways for the small-scale artisans to improve their businesses with the means they currently have, and these include the use of e-commerce, taking advantage of ethical tourism to publicize and help their businesses grow. The implementation of these recommended solutions will surely aid these artisans, but it is the task of the state to improve or develop the infrastructure needed to ease access to e-commerce and the tourist sector, ultimately ensuring the long-term prosperity of the small-scale artisan business and, ultimately, their quality of life.

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Definitions

The following terms are used recurrently throughout this paper. It is therefore important to know what each variation means.

artisanal: having to do with the handicraft art.

artisanat: the handicraft industry.

Artisanat (the): the Azrou Center of handicraft.

Executive Summary

What is the impact of globalization on the small scale artisans of Morocco and specifically in the Azrou region, what has been done to counter these effects, and what are some solutions to resolve these issues?

This research project aimed to focus the main part of its activities on understanding the problems faced to date by artisans working in the Artisanat of Azrou and nearby regions, but information was also gathered from Fez, where the handicraft sector is more prosperous. While the research included the general scope of the problem faced nationwide, and how the adverse effects of globalization contributed to these issues, the solutions proposed are geared more towards the specific needs of the artisans of Azrou, with the goal of empowering them through technological and ethical means for self-sustenance.

The Problem

The problem can be divided into two parts: one social, and one economic. The social aspect includes issues arising from lack of interest in the handicraft sector from the young consumer and future artisan. It also involves the difficulty in survival and low quality of life for small-scale artisans. The economic aspect consists of difficulty in publicity, lack of financial means, lack of affordable transportation, and low rate of income for the small-scale artisan. The problem was addressed by first focusing on the Azrou artisans using a case-study approach to illustrate a snapshot of the more general

issue faced in Morocco. This approach aims to facilitate the understanding of the general issues while providing a bridge between the general problems and how the government ministry responsible for the handicraft industry plans to resolve the general problem.

Problems specific to the Artisanat of Azrou:

The problems facing the artisans of Azrou are presented using a case-study format for each artisan we interviewed. Their problem and issues are presented using an individual-by-individual approach, with the goal of giving the context a more humanistic aspect, so that the reader has a stronger feeling of communicating directly with that individual. Furthermore, rather than using a formal interview method with specific and detailed questions laid out before-hand, the interviews with the individuals we met were more of a discussion where our goal was to let that person express their concerns and reasoning in whichever way they saw fit. This facilitated discussions and allowed the artisans to express themselves fully without being disrupted by new questions, which we learned was an effective way to uncover their deepest concerns. Interviewing more than one artisan allowed us to determine the problem which all these artisans shared, marking these as the most essential ones to be addressed, and filtering out the smaller issues specific to each artisan. To eliminate the possibility of a biased opinion, we also interviewed several merchants selling handicraft goods, as well as Hoceine Zahri, the president of the Artisanat of Azrou, and Sharon Keld and Katherine Dyne, two Peace Corps Volunteers helping the Artisanat.

The artisans interviewed include Youssef, a stone carver working outside the Artisanat, Said, a metal worker in the Artisanat, and Fatima, the president of the

Artisanat's women's weaving cooperative. We were able to identify several problems specific to the Artisanat's workers. A major one is the lack of availability of inexpensive raw materials such as wool, from which the women's cooperative suffers the most. The absence of local facilities to process raw materials forces these artisans to purchase the necessary materials from far-away cities such as Casablanca and Sale. This reveals two other problems which are transportation and geographic location. Since artisans in Azrou and nearby regions alike earn barely enough income to live on, they cannot afford to buy or rent transportation vehicles. The location of Azrou is also not favorable for their businesses, since it is not frequented by tourists, not being one of the famous imperial cities of Morocco. What has worked for these artisans in the past, and what they are accustomed to, is local business culture which relied heavily on a stable amount of visitors in Azrou. Today, however, due to the reduced amount of visitors and the shift of interest in handicraft products, these artisans must adopt a more global business model, yet they do not have the means or know-how to accomplish this.

Interviews with the officials working in the Artisanat and Peace Corps Volunteers in the same field have revealed more issues pertaining to the Artisanat. Political and economic problems described by Mr. Zahri include debt owed by the Artisanat and competition from local merchants outside the Artisanat. Furthermore, an interview with PCV (Peace Corps Volunteer) Katherine Dyne has enlightened us on the quality of life of local merchants, which explains why products outside the Artisanat are sold virtually no profit.

All in all, the various interviews we have had in Azrou gave us a clear understanding of the specific problems that the artisans and the Artisanat are facing, and

allows us to be more comprehensive when talking about the general problems observed on a national level.

Problems in the artisanal sector of Morocco in general:

The information relevant to the general issues facing the handicraft sector in Morocco was obtained for the most part from Mr. Zahri and PCV Dyne, but is also confirmed in certain articles about the ministry of the interior's strategy for improving the handicraft sector. The general problems include financial support for the artisans, transportation, problems with raw materials, lack of adequate training for modern commerce, lack of innovation, and lack of motivation for the new generation of artisans.

The strategy

We continued our investigation by learning about the national strategy that the Ministry of Culture and Tourism has set up for 2015 in order to address many of the issues involving artisanat, along with certain specific problems not yet covered. With this strategy in mind, we also explored what has already been done by this ministry nationally, and then focused upon what has been done specifically in Azrou. This information acted as a basis for the solutions proposed in the subsequent section.

The Ministry's strategy for 2015:

Because of the low income rate in the handicraft sector up to date, and its unexploited economic potential, the Moroccan government decided to put it back on its feet. It began by developing a serious strategy that will be operated for the next ten

years, starting from 2005, with the goal of valorizing this sector and increasing the attractiveness of the artisanal profession and business aspects. This strategy seeks to give Moroccan products their true value and position the Artisanat in the international market. A well defined project with budgets and deadlines already set up hopes to facilitate the development of the artisanal sector with the improvement of techniques of production and the establishment of more training centers.

The problems include lack of exhibition spaces, illiteracy, lack of training and education, and a fragmented artisanal body which lacks adequate production tools, difficult financial and social conditions, and the lack of motivation from the upcoming generation to become artisans. The ministry plans to address these issues by setting up new spaces for exhibition, creating and financing institutions for artisanal apprenticeship, education, and training, collaborating with financial institutions to facilitate loans for artisans, improving artisans' social security, and revalorizing the image of the Artisanat vis-à-vis the youth of Morocco.

What has already been done by the ministry?

The strategy introduced above was launched in 2005, meaning that two years have passed since the ministry took the initiative to conduct reforms in the handicraft sector. With that in mind, it is interesting to know several of the specific things done by the ministry in order to assess its effectiveness and commitment regarding the problems mentioned. To perform this assessment, we first described what has been done on a national level, then focused specifically on the Azrou Artisanat.

Nationally the ministry led a campaign to improve living conditions in rural areas, with the goal of discouraging skilled rural artisans from migrating to larger cities. It also conducted a survey to learn about the artisan's specific needs. Lastly, it organized an artisanal training program for young people to learn the trade, and encouraged them by covering some of their fees.

Specifically in Azrou, the ministry of Culture and Tourism gave 33 artisans, selected based on their experience and reputation, free shops to work in and sell their products in. These are the shops inside the Artisanat of Azrou. It also contributed in building the showroom to promote crafts from the surrounding regions and generate income for the Artisanat. The building of a museum of artisanal products and lifestyle originating from Azrou and the nearby Atlas regions was initiated by the ministry in Azrou, although it has yet resume construction. Last but not least, the ministry, with the collaboration of the Peace Corps, helped train artisans in the Azrou region to improve and innovate their crafting techniques. Two examples are the natural dyeing of wool, and the reviving of straw carpets.

Case Studies

E-commerce in Morocco:

To investigate the effectiveness of e-commerce in Morocco, we learned about a national online retailer as well as an international one, both based in Morocco and owned by Moroccans. The national retailer is a high-tech seller known as Microchoix.ma. Based on information on the website, this last has about 56,000 subscribers up to date, and offers good service including a return policy, a warranty, and maintenance for all

products. It also accepts numerous payment methods including payment upon delivery, wire transfer, cash deposit, and credit/debit card payment. The second website was studied based on information on the website itself, and from the interview we had with the owner of the website, Moulay Alaoui. His site, Kasbahouse.com, is an international online retailer, and also provides good services including an effective return policy, UPS shipping, and a warranty for all products. It accepts credit/debit card payments as well. Because we had the chance to communicate with Mr. Alaoui, we wanted to learn more about e-commerce from him, so we asked him about three issues. The first is how shipping and return can be conducted internationally from Morocco. He suggested the use of UPS. Second, how can Moroccans pay online? He suggested the use of Paypal or pre-paid debit cards made available by the ISP Maroc Telecom. Lastly, we wanted to know what the costs are for building and maintaining a website. According to Moulay Alaoui, a person can be hired on a monthly basis to maintain the site for 500 to 1000 dirham, and building the website would cost about 3000 dirham.

Ethical tourism in Fez:

On October 27, 2007, we went on a trip to Fez with the goal of finding out more about what makes the city so successful in the artisanal domain. The adoption of a tourism model geared towards fair trade was the strong point that gave Fez its success. By visiting several artisanal cooperatives, we had a clearer idea of what made them successful. In the pottery cooperative, for example, we were given a descriptive tour of the manufacturing of earth products. We also watched the different artisans undertake various tedious tasks such as painting bowls with intricate designs by hand, or hand-

chiseling thousands of pieces of clay to make a 'zellige' mosaic. We were then taken to the cooperative's shop in which their own products were sold, and where tourists did not hesitate to buy. Tours were also done in artisan cooperatives specializing in other crafts such as leatherwork, textiles, and metal carving. The key points we noted for these successful models which all cooperatives adopted are:

- Demonstrating the handicraft method and manufacturing process
- Using 'eco-friendly' manufacturing methods
- Observing the people involved in action and learning to some extent about their way of life
- the strategic presentation of all of the above

Recommended Solutions

After having identified the problems of the Azrou Artisanat, what their roots are, and what has been done to overcome some of these problems, we devised a set of studied recommendations that will help improve the business of the artisans and increase the flow of visitors, shoppers, and tourists to the center itself. Among these solutions is a fair-trade-oriented e-commerce, which will be most useful in generating income and publicizing the center internationally, with the least time required for implementation. Another recommendation may require more time and support from the government to implement, and consists of taking advantage of ethical tourism for the promotion of artisan crafts and culture.

E-commerce:

E-commerce is the use of internet technology to conduct business and marketing. Its advantages are that it breaks geographical and time barriers by allowing information to be viewed almost instantly worldwide, enhances the customer's purchasing choices, and provides a wide range of market opportunities. It also has some disadvantages, which include issues with privacy and security, success is based on reputation, and everything is digital. This means that not only does the center need access to a computer, internet, and image editing software, but also that the handicraft good qualities are not fully represented in a mere image. The approach taken for this section was to review two successful Moroccan e-commerce websites to show that e-commerce can work in Morocco, and to provide a motivating factor for the Azrou Artisanat to adopt an e-commerce solution. We then described certain barriers specific to the handicraft trade, to show that e-commerce is not as simple and easy as one may believe. To counter this negativity, we described a set of success factors for e-commerce websites. Last but not least, we discussed several options the Azrou Artisanat has of taking advantage of e-commerce.

E-commerce barriers specific to the handicraft trade:

In a research paper on e-commerce options for Third World craft producers, Dr. S. J. Batchelor and Mike Webb identify six barriers that artisans in developing countries are facing vis-à-vis e-commerce, which all apply to the artisans in the Artisanal Center of Azrou:

- The fact that digital images lack the true feeling of the object
- Digital compressed images are not color accurate
- Customers expect high service standards
- The issue of reputation, financial security, and privacy

Key Success factors for e-commerce websites:

We have also considered the steps that successful producers and alternative trade organizations have taken to establish effective websites, as defined by Batchelor and Webb. These include:

- Define the website audience and strategy
- Integrate with other processes
- Register with search engines and optimize ranking
- Build links to the website
- Promote the website offline
- Start an email newsletter
- Consider payment processing

Ethical Tourism:

Ethical tourism is a form of tourism described as one which “aims to maximize the benefits from tourism for local destination stakeholders through mutually beneficial and equitable partnerships between national and international tourism stakeholders in the destination. It also supports the right of indigenous host communities, whether involved

in tourism or not, to participate as equal stakeholders and beneficiaries in the tourism development process” (Batchelor and Webb, 95: 2002). In this section we explained the theory behind ethical tourism and how it operates, and used the example of our visit to Fez to both clarify the concept and demonstrate a successful application of ethical tourism. This was used as a basis to analyze ways to help the Azrou Artisanat take advantage of ethical tourism.

How ethical tourism operates:

Traditional tourism tends to empower the wealthier people of the host destination, and leads to “leakage” of wealth back to the first world. Ethical tourism addresses this leakage by focusing tourist interest on financially poorer areas. It can be viewed as an ecosystem where the primary tourist service providers act as main points of income and can empower all affiliated organizations, the ones affiliated with those, and so on. Ethical tourism wants the financially poorer areas to become these primary service providers, empowering their entire ecosystem.

How the Azrou Artisanat can take advantage of ethical tourism:

Ethical tourism is another solution that will help alleviate the Artisanat’s financial depression. Its successful implementation demands certain pre-requisites, some controllable by the Artisanat, and some not. In this section, we gave recommendations for the Artisanat to implement the most feasible ones, and improve upon those it already has.

Pre-requisites are controllable when the Artisanat, on its own, has the financial resources, authority, and means to make a change. Based on the case study of our visit to

Fez, and what we learned from Zahri and Keld about the limited means the Artisanat has access to, two factors are believed to be controllable at least to some extent:

- Self-promoting the fair-trade aspect of the Artisanat.
- Advertisement.

Recommendations for a self-promotional campaign oriented towards fair-trade are:

- Develop an presentation plan for visitors to demonstrate the manufacturing process effectively
- Inform tourists about the artisans themselves
- Improve aesthetic presentation of all crafts
- Adopt eco-friendly manufacturing processes, and insist upon these in the presentation

With help from the state in terms of funding and authorizations, and with qualified personnel such as Mr. Zahri for organization and help from volunteers with the required technical skills, the following recommendations will help advertise the Azrou center:

- Use of e-commerce
- Use of business cards
- Create a logo
- Give commissions to travel agencies and tourist guides
- Post signs in the city indicating the location and presence of the Artisanat
- Get involved in any travel program promoting traditional lifestyles.

1. Introduction

In this project, a study is carried out looking carefully at Moroccan politics, culture, and economy, and then ties all the ends to the theme of globalization to analyze how this latter is affecting small-scale businesses in the country. A closer look is given to the small-scale artisans in the Azrou region, located in the Atlas portion of Morocco to try to evaluate the negative impact that this global process can have on certain branches of Moroccan society. Globalization is first examined from different angles and a general overview of its potential influences and bearings is given. The discussion starts by defining the main factors that allow its development and then uses these dynamics to describe how a country can be affected by globalization in terms of economy, culture, and politics. The influence that globalization can have on a country can thereby be divisive, especially for a third world country that is still struggling with basic reforms and the restructuring of its main institutions such as education. A skeptical question is then asked, whether Morocco is ready to embrace globalization and a more thorough analysis of Morocco's background in politics, economy, and culture is provided in attempt to answer this question. Issues like political crises, Morocco's strive for democracy, its endeavor to improve the conditions in its rural areas, its development of tourism and eco-tourism in different cities like Marrakech, Agadir, Fez, and Meknes, and other topics related to economy and culture are visited.

2. Globalization in Morocco

As globalization changes our world, it can change it in good or bad ways depending on how each country is prepared for it. The advantages it has are evident: faster economic growth, higher and better standards of living with new opportunities. Then again, not all countries have been able to benefit from these alleged opportunities. Nations who lack the technical capacities, the infrastructures and the necessary institutional capacities find themselves left behind. Africa, for example, submitted itself to marginal growth over the past decade (“The Challenges of Globalization for Africa”, 09. 15.2007). A fast demographic boom gulped down a good portion of their grain stocks, increasing the gap between the high and affluent western and northern standards of living and those of the Africans. African international trade continues to go down, now with only 2 percent of world imports (“Globalization: Internal Trade and Migration”, 0.9.15.2007). Even temporary crises such as monetary deficits and other financial incidents that certain developing countries experienced have had an impact on their development. This can be also added to the issue of poverty and inequality that is recurring in third world countries and that needs to be dealt with effectively by the world community before opening the world market to everyone. Education is also a prime variable in this context and will be discussed henceforward in order to show its importance in development. In fact, globalization has already led some countries towards a financial crisis as in Russia, Asia, and Latin America during the late 1990s; this drift in the economy is recognized as the temporary crises of the 1990’s.

2.1. The Temporary Crises

The monetary crises of the 1990's – in Russia, Thailand, Korea, Indonesia, Mexico, and Brazil – give evidence that such problems are the ill-fated consequence of globalization. In reality, one has to ask whether globalization makes the management of national economies more difficult for both already advanced countries as well as the economies of up-and-coming markets.

These monetary crises have quite complex causes due to fiscal problems arising from institutional political inadequacies in the fiscal sector of developing countries compared to the highly advanced international financial institutions of the developed world (ex. London, Tokyo, and Paris). Today, all the countries around the world community currently take measures to reduce the risks of such crises. Even if the economic results were for the most part positive in many of these countries, they were not ready to overcome this so-called fiscal monster in many ways. Economic stability, a firm financial system, considerable economic opportunities for private investment, transparency and good management of public affairs are a few conditions that these countries have to meet in order to participate in this process.

On the international level, many investors didn't value the serious after-effects that liberalization of capital would have on the stability of developing economies. In the large financial districts, managers didn't follow the deterioration of the situation alertly. The information available on certain international investments, notably those done offshore, was insufficient. The market therefore inclined towards adopting a more open

behavior with neighboring countries, which resulted in sudden capital flows leaving and entering these listed countries.

In the light of the fiscal crises of the '90s, the international community responded by reinforcing the monetary and financial systems around the world. The general objective needed to be accomplished in all the countries, primarily those that are still developing, was a more transparent, operative, and equitable financial and political system in attempt to open the world market for everyone and in a fair and impartial manner. In view of globalization, this attitude towards international growth must also be taken by countries suffering from problems of poverty and inequality in order to rise above these issues and develop their resources.

2.2. Poverty and Inequality

One has to determine whether globalization heightens poverty and inequality in a developing country. To answer this question, it is necessary to make precise that, during the 20th century, the average world revenue per habitant largely increased, but in irregular patterns according to some countries. Unmistakably, the disparity in revenue in these last two decades between the rich countries and the poor countries is growing even wider in some countries which were not able to close that gap, notably those in Africa as well as some in Latin America. A study of a large number of countries, representing almost 90% of the global world population, for which data and economic statistics are available throughout the 20th century, came to the conclusion that production by habitant has slightly increased but that the distribution of wealth between countries is more unequal than what it was at the beginning of the century. (Khor, Martin. 09.16.2007)

One of the most striking conclusions reached during the study is that although the relatively poorer countries have had somewhat of an improvement in their national profits along with other things like education and a longer lifespan, the disparity between the revenues of the population was made worse. For this reason, developing countries like Morocco have to have a vigorous and strong political system that will allow for national development to take place while more explicitly keeping in mind the objective of reducing poverty and establishing more equity in the distribution of revenue among citizens. For this reason, many projects have been implemented in this country to raise the living standards of those people in rural areas by improving infrastructures and bringing new changes in the rural spheres (Globalization: Internal Trade and Migration. 09.19.2007). One last thing to consider here is the position of women in society, especially when talking about the Moroccan craft industry, which in turn is conducted by a large female population.

2.3. The Integration of Women Into Development

The integration of women into the development of a country is essential in every kind of activity, but particularly in the process of globalization. To fully benefit from globalization, it is important to give women rights that will allow them to benefit fully in the process of global development, specifically to educate women and to integrate them into economic growth.

Within the entire Moroccan population, 62% of women are illiterate compared to only 40% of males (Morocco Social Development Brief). Approximately five out of ten women are literate in the cities, but this number drops dramatically to only one literate

woman out of ten in villages. More than half of young girls don't go to school, mostly because there aren't that many schools in rural areas and parents prefer to have them stay home rather than walk long distances and put themselves in danger.

Women were discriminated against in different ways in Morocco before the Moudawana came out in 2004, a reform on the Moroccan Family Code that gave women equal rights to men. Before that year, women could be married as young as 16 and could hardly claim divorce from their husbands. Widowed women were neglected and were under the complete control of the husband's family. They could not work if they were raising the child and a large number of women were subject to domestic abuse.

Over the years however, as Morocco has been expanding itself to more cultures around the globe and modernizing its economic and political structure, it has also brought its society up to date in 2004 by revising its Family Code and bringing new changes on the state of women in general. The Moudawana empowered women in politics, economy, and society by enhancing their rights in both public and private spheres. With this new convention on women's rights, the reforming laws promoted an equally based culture that gave a more positive image on their role and place in Moroccan society.

2.4. Education and Literacy

By encouraging education and literacy in schools and universities, the production rate in a country is stimulated and moved to a higher degree. If directed effectively, fields dedicated to national research and development can be managed to mobilize sufficient resources for a durable development. For this reason, a country with a better educational basis is a country which will maximize its production and capitalize on globalization.

Morocco has high illiteracy rates, ranging from 45% for males, 62% for females, and 90% in rural areas for both groups; clearly, some of the highest rates seen in North Africa. In addition to this, Morocco is a multi-linguistic nation where Arabic, Berber, and French are spoken by different people. Half of the population speaks Berber, which has 3 dialects. This linguistic diversity is a real challenge for many Moroccans today because some people chose to learn French while they were in school and others focused on Arabic instead. As for the indigenous Berbers, despite the fact that most of them speak Arabic, their French is usually deficient, especially for those who live in the mountains and who don't have access to any teaching materials (Background Note: Morocco).

2.5. Is Morocco ready for Globalization?

For a country to fully benefit from the process of globalization, it needs to be ready to expand its market and have a good educational basis to optimize the labor force. A good example to illustrate this idea is that of the Asian Tigers, which included ex-third war countries of Taiwan, Singapore, Hong Kong, and South Korea and whose success was directly linked to their educational reforms, something known as “intellectual capital”. These nations experienced a rapid economic growth and national prosperity primarily due to the emphasis they put on their educational system. After setting up schools around their countries and calling attention to the education of their people, the Asian tigers experienced massive third wave industrialization, particularly in manufacturing, after the cold war which kept them economically connected with the Western World even until today.

Any country that desires to enrich itself in this new age will have to exploit its

educational development to take advantage of modernization in the political, scientific, and economic sectors. Only then can it really be more competitive against the huge industries that are now throwing themselves into every single country in the world.

The question that needs to be asked at this point is whether Morocco ready to face this challenge and work its way out of all the issues mentioned above, maximize the potential benefits from this process, and minimize the downside threats of economic and social destabilization. Before going any further with this question, the reader must know more about Morocco in its political, economic, and cultural sectors in order to judge the effectiveness of the present Moroccan order.

3. Morocco: Background

The goal of this section is to give a brief introduction to Morocco and describe its political, economic, and cultural sectors with the purpose of evaluating whether or not it's ready to embrace globalization entirely while preserving its identity and cultural heritage. Please note that this section is not crucial to the development of our thesis, yet it is here because we believe it is important that one should first get somewhat of a grasp of what Morocco is and what it has been in the past in order to understand how globalization has changed some of its aspects. Skipping this section and going to the subsequent one will, however, reduce little from the understanding the core of our discussion.

3.1. History: The Search for prosperity after Colonialism

Morocco has a long history in which it has been influenced and invaded by outside powers. After being ruled by many influences for several centuries, Morocco found the means to adapt to new conditions and eventually found prosperity after it gained full independence in 1956 from France and Spain. In reality, what Morocco is going through nowadays during the age of globalization is no different from its history except that the invasion is of new technologies and new business techniques that could be as threatening to local success and autonomy instead of the Roman swords and Syrian horsemen.

[More details provided in Appendix X1]

3.2. Moroccan Government

This section aims to assess the structure of the Moroccan government and account for the late political reforms that came in place by King Hassan II and his heir to the throne, King Mohammed VI. The following reforms are directly related to the overall theme of globalization and illustrate Morocco's concern in expanding its political and economic scope with other countries and develop better international relations.

3.2.1. The "Gouvernement d'Alternance":

The "gouvernement d'alternance" is a new long-term process adopted by King Hassan II in 1998 seeking to make better the Moroccan order and promote freedoms, liberalization, and democracy through several socio-political transformations needed over the next decade so that the Moroccan economy can compete globally.

[More details provided in Appendix X2]

3.3. International Politics

Countries with good overall international relations, including favorable foreign relations and economic connections, score better with regards to globalization. It is essential for a country to have a good history of international relationships in order to take an integral part in this process and extend its economic market without any significant constraints. The following theme is relevant because it puts Morocco in a dangerous position that could jeopardize its global relationships with other countries.

3.3.1. Morocco/Algeria Crisis:

The current Moroccan-Algerian conflict stems from the 20th century when the two countries were engaged in a conflict over the dominance of northwest Africa, particularly over the Western Sahara. This struggle went about for 26 years and is still one of today's major national concerns.

[More details provided in Appendix X3]

3.4. National Politics

This section aims to appraise Morocco's domestic policies and discuss major issues that have a considerable impact on the country's ability to move forward and become more modern; important themes such as democracy and conditions in the rural world are questioned here.

3.4.1. Democracy in Morocco:

In Morocco the king has a considerable amount of power and influence. He may disapprove the laws of the Parliament whenever he wants to. The constitution of the country cannot be changed without his approval. In 1992, it has been revised and the prime minister became the one to nominate other ministers of the country, although the king still has the power to replace them. There exist two kinds of ministers in Morocco, those appointed by the king, called the ministers of sovereignty, and those that the prime minister nominates. During Youssoufi's government, many important officials were elected to promote human rights in Morocco; examples of these people are Mohammed Aujjar, Minister of Human Rights and Larbi Messari, Minister of Communication.

In order for Morocco to engage globalization prosperously and take advantage of it, the political arena has to be well in place and a democratic system must exist in every branch of society. There are several issues related to democracy in Morocco that are crucial and that are discussed in Appendix X4 in conjunction with the theme of globalization such as the concept of “Makhzen”, civil liberties, freedom of associations, trade unions, the condition of women in the Moroccan society, and also the Berber culture.

[More details provided in Appendix X4]

3.4.2. The Rural World in Morocco:

The Moroccan artisanal sector finds its source in the rural world. Most of today’s artisans are rural people who live in villages and who gain a living by making handcrafts and selling them. For this reason, saving the rural world implies saving the artisanal sector and conserving these artisans and making traditional trades more prosperous is a priority that the government is working on (IAWG).

[More details provided in Appendix X5]

3.5. Moroccan Culture:

Morocco retains a very rich and diversified culture. After its independence in 1956, Morocco was home to numerous cultures and was therefore a multi-cultural nation. Some of these civilizations include the Jewish, Arab, French colonial, Islamic, African, and Berber cultures, which harmoniously coexisted in the country for many years.

Culture plays a major role in Moroccan society. It is considered a sacred heritage,

and it is an important part of Moroccan nationalism, so that citizens are proud of their heritage and participate in its growth. With many local cultural traditions and cultural groups, a strong unified feeling of social alliance and compassion is felt between each ethnic or cultural group, and when one walks down the streets of old medinas in cities like Fez, Meknes, Rabat, or Marrakech, such cultural pride is readily evident.

The Moroccan attachment to traditional popular customs and practices is seen in many aspects of society such as painting, cinema, theatre, and sport. Over the past few years however, the country has been undergoing modern changes and much of this culture is being westernized, primarily as a consequence of globalization. It has been partially leaning towards modern European lifestyles, which could impose a serious threat to the preservation of local traditional handcrafts, more than ever during this new era of globalization. Therefore, Moroccans have to be sensitive about modern cultural forms while preserving their cultural traditional methods.

[More details provided in Appendix X6]

3.6. Economy

The goal of this section is to give a brief assessment of Morocco's economy, primarily looking at highly productive sectors like tourism, in an attempt to put an emphasis on the importance of cultural tourism as a way to safeguard the country's artisanal trade.

3.6.1. Tourism:

Visitors from all around the world have been attracted to Morocco for decades for its beauty, hospitality, and rich culture. A large number of tourists coming from Europe, the Middle East, other areas of the Maghreb, and the Americas come to Morocco annually in order to see the famous local handicrafts and embrace the cultures and history of famous ancient cities that have stood for about 13 centuries, like Marrakech, Fez, and Meknes. The tourist industry provides about \$2 billion each year in the form of foreign currency and represents nearly 10% of the annual GDP. Many Moroccan families base their income on this sector and win their living wage through this flourishing sector. Morocco is also a major recreational attraction with its 3500 km of coastline on both the Atlantic Ocean and the Mediterranean Sea. Cities like Agadir or Mohammedia are very popular for having some of the most beautiful beaches and greet a large number of tourists each summer. Other tourist attractions are to be accounted for like the Sahara, which captures the curiosity of many tourists who are fascinated by the exotic dimensions of the Moroccan southern and eastern edges of the Sahara. The hotels in Morocco are also a lure to those tourists who like five-star palaces, and these are usually places that have all the facilities inside them so the tourist could have all the basic amenities available for him without having to leave his hotel. Various cultural themes and events

are organized for tourists in hotels around music and dance. Another important attraction that tourists see in Morocco is its relative low prices on things like food, hotels, and shopping items like carpets, leather goods, wood works, and other handcrafted products.

Tourism provides a large income for many small-scale artisans who either work in their own shops or in cooperatives. More and more vacationers are absorbed by what is called cultural tourism, the desire to get in touch with native cultures and experience intercultural exchanges, and this has improved the market for traditional arts and crafts. Every major city in Morocco has an “ensemble artisanal”, usually referred to as an artisanal center, where regional crafts made by local artisans who live in those cities are displayed. Within the center exist several shops for both sales and production, and these are all clustered around a closed courtyard. The handicrafts on display usually include wooden or metal panels and doors, pottery, embroidery, carpets, and shaped iron. Thus, maintaining an affluent tourist sector in Morocco entails a better state of affairs in the Moroccan craft industry. In fact, the Artisanat in Azrou is the main focus of this study and will be looked into in great detail later on in this report.

[More details provided in Appendix X7]

3.6.2 Agriculture in Morocco:

Agriculture holds a very important place in the economy of Morocco. Without it, Morocco would be a very poor and underdeveloped country that could never be able to raise its stand and compete in globalization. The agricultural sector employs nearly half of the active population (20-40 year olds) and makes contribution of 17% in the national GDP.

[More details provided in Appendix X8]

3.6.3. Fishing in Morocco:

Sea fishery is a substantial business in Morocco that can help the country develop and allow for positive negotiations with other countries around the world. It represents 15% of the overall exportations, of which 55% are for food exports. The annual value that the sector brings in to the national treasury is of 600 million US dollars. Maintaining the prosperity of this sector could play a major role in Morocco's efforts in regards to globalization.

[More details provided in Appendix X9]

3.6.4. Textile Sector in Morocco:

The development of the Moroccan textile industry is a direct threat to today's traditional fabrics. The increased promotion of this industry over the years represents an important danger to traditional production.

The textile industry was stricken in 2005 by a major crisis which started in January of the same year and was caused by the dismantling of several important multi-fiber agreements Morocco had with a few countries, mainly China. The Chinese competition in this sector grew very fervently and started crushing the Moroccan production lines. This rivalry, however, created a positive effect on the textile business as many professionals reacted with great enthusiasm and fervor to face this issue and restore the Moroccan textile manufacture. The textile crisis was confronted by all the affiliated parties working in the sector and a feeling of personal conscientiousness was felt by

many directors and business owners who now became vigilant and attentive to provide first quality services and satisfaction towards their clientele ("Le Pari Audacieux du Maroc", 2007: 72-75).

Today, the Moroccan textile is in direct connection with the international market and leaders are seizing every opportunity that arises to outrival Asian competition. With the current resurgence of the textile sector is undergoing, many international entrepreneurs are seeing this as an occasion to relocate their factories and move them to Morocco. The famous Fruit of the Loom Production, presided by Brian Kennedy, was relocated to Skhirat, Morocco, in 1994 and this announcement came with an investment of 1.6 billion DH and the creation of 1150 new job positions for the local young generations. However, the addition of these new urban jobs may be good for the textile section in general, but it is still an alternative to traditional crafts, which would, in all probability, lose out in the long-term. Just before this venture, a partnership was signed between the Moroccan group Atlantic and the famous Italian leader in jeans, Legler, to create a new industrial complex specialized in weaving and cotton spinning. These are only a few investments that Morocco has been taking on along with other major partnerships that have been agreed on with the Spanish Tavex and Inditex after the Free Trade Agreement Morocco signed with the United States in 2004, and which will increase national export and capital in the textile sector starting from 2006 ("Morocco: Government, AMITH sign agreement..."). Today, Morocco is doing fairly well for itself when it comes to textile, and the raw material (wool, cotton, etc...) can be found in great abundance in northern coastal cities like Casablanca, Sale, Mohammedia, and Rabat ("Le Pari Audacieux du Maroc", 2007: 77-79). Many factories exist in these metropolises and

are in fact specialized in the finishing and processing of this raw material into fine and first-rate thread. After asking several artisans in the Azrou Artisanal Center about the materials they use to make carpets and mats, we found out that the center has a partnership with a few of these processing factories up north and order processed textile fabric from there in order to ensure that their products are unequaled in terms of quality and appeal. However, this also creates many difficulties for the small artisans in Azrou due to the fact that they have to travel long distances up north to get their raw materials; a point that will be expanded on later in the report.

3.6.5. The Moroccan Craft Industry in Danger

Traditional crafts in Morocco are altered with the influence of globalization to the point where this whole industry would have to make some real adjustments to safeguard its place in today's modern society. While some new industrial initiatives generated by globalization are thriving in Morocco, handcrafted products like wood tables, metal frames, rugs and carpets, and leather goods used as either decorative accents or house furniture are gradually being superseded by machine-made products in factories of mass production. Traditional crafts are therefore stricken by the incursions caused by cheaper mass produced, factory-made, products. The quality of the handcrafted items that small-scale artisans make in many rural areas in Morocco is also in great danger of being crushed. Today, many Moroccan artisans who live in the villages move to cities in order to search for a better and more modernized lifestyle. Education and job opportunities lure these people into considering life in the city. Most Moroccan villagers are being directly affected by new economic surges in cities like Casablanca, Rabat, or Marrakech, which

have industrialized and modern sectors. With this new migratory behavior, many artisans are forced to give up traditional handicraft trades and seek employment in today's modern technological civilization. Others who are struggling with finances end up selling their inherited material belongings, handicraft products they made over the years that were once a sign of their wealth and identity.

As Morocco develops industrially and opens its doors to the world market, changes are inescapable for indigenous peoples and artisans who are intimate with their national traditions. Undoubtedly, some of these people are those small-scale artisans who are cannot withstand the competition of cheap mass produced goods that come out of modern industrial factories and warehouses specialized in assembly-line production.

3.7. Azrou:



Figure 1: Geographic location of Azrou
Source: kitmax.com

Azrou is a small Moroccan city located 13 kilometers from Ifrane, or 89 kilometers south of Fez (wiki). The city, named after a big rocky peak near which it was built, hosts 40,000-70,000 inhabitants, and is known for its reputable artisanal crafts as well as the verdure and forestry which surrounds it (Rachid, Keld).

3.7.1. Artisanal Center of Azrou:



Figure 2: Entrance to the Artisanal Center in Azrou

Within Azrou is an artisanal center whose purpose is not only to give artisans a place to work, but also exhibit their work among other crafts which come to the center from neighboring cities such as Ain Louh and TmHadaet. The complex includes workshops for five crafters (four wood crafters and one metal crafter). It also has a larger workshop which is used by 28 women who make up the center's only cooperative: the Women's Weaving Cooperative. The artisans in the center work on their own and sell their artifacts without direct help from the appointed officials working in the center. Furthermore, the five crafters pay no rent or utilities for their shops since they have been granted to them by the state, based on their experience working with the center in the past. One of these five workers is a wood carver named Abdeljabbar Mohammed, who has been in the artisanat for over 40 years; he explained how in the past, the artisans in the center had many more advantages. For instance, the artisanat would provide them

with flour on a weekly basis, and took care of them when they needed any form of assistance, with the goal of keeping them healthy and their work productive (Personal interview with Abdeljabbar Mohammed, 10/10/07).



Figure 3: Marouane Afiri (left), Mohammed Abdeljabbar (right)

Having lost all these advantages today certain artisans interviewed seem rather frustrated about the current situation, as can be seen in the following image:



Figure 4: Marouane interviewing the other Mohammed (wood carver)

The women's cooperative, which includes about 28 women, has its own government board made up of a president, vice-president, and treasurer. This cooperative is supervised by the president of the center (Mr. Zahri) and his co-workers, who keep records of their sales and taxes (interview with Hoceine Zahri, 09/18/07). According Mr. Zahri, cooperatives have more advantages compared to mono-artisans. Probably due to their higher potential for success, the government gives more support to cooperatives by giving them loans and minor grants for equipment. Cooperatives are also more likely to receive larger projects because they are bigger and have the capacity to handle large orders (interview with Hoceine Zahri, 10/10/07).

The Artisanat also includes a rather large showroom used to exhibit all kinds of handicrafts from Azrou and the nearby regions. The following just a few images of this showroom:



Figure 5: Part of the Showroom



Figure 6: Wooden crafts, paintings, and metal pictures



Figure 7: Textiles and Berber carpets made by the artisanat's women weaving cooperative

(For more pictures of the showroom, please visit appendix E)

It is in the artisanal center that we conducted most of our interviews, and the goal of this project is to help improve the center and aid the artisans working in it. In order to come up with an effective solution, however, it is essential to learn about the problems faced not only in the artisanat but also generally in Morocco.

3.8. Background Conclusion

With the current approach that has been taken to address our thesis, globalization can be pictured as a powerful storm that embraces everything on its way, including the culture of a people, their artistic values, and their commercial fashions. How much of a blow can this blast of wind have on traditional craftsmen in a country like Morocco? With this new era of globalization, there are painful economic disruptions and social changes since an economy and a society are forced to adapt in order to become more

competitive on an international scale. These are concerns that many countries including Morocco will have to face.

As globalization is rapidly hitting countries whose economies are still developing or in transition, they need the right tools and equipment in order to face it and ride its wave. For this to happen, the country in its entirety needs to prepare itself for development and move forward with the new trends by first educating their people and by developing procedures and laws to regulate their market without disrupting the current state of the economy or the traditional ways of the people.

In every kind of human activity, literacy is a very important variable. Unfortunately, Morocco is still struggling with illiteracy. Seven out of ten people who live in cities in Morocco are literate while more than five out of ten people who live in villages and small towns are illiterate. About 60% of the young girls aged from eight to sixteen years old never had the chance to go to school. Much of this illiteracy can lead to several cracks in the economic sector, making these people an easy prey for illegal practices, corruption, and underpaid jobs. Efforts to educate people should play an important role in modern Moroccan life. Morocco is also struggling to improve its healthcare system and makes this a priority in today's politics. It is also trying to fight poverty progressively although the poverty rate is currently very high. The PCI in Morocco is about \$1400 with a gross domestic product (GDP) of \$1430 only. About 19% of the population is considered "very poor" and make less than \$1 USD a day. Economically speaking, Morocco is becoming progressively industrialized over the years although the agricultural sector still plays a dynamic role in the economy. About 80% of investments in agriculture are for the export market. However, the country has been

suffering severe droughts over the last few years and recently the agricultural production has significantly dropped, causing the country to have slower economic growth. The industrial sector represents only maybe a fourth of the national economic activity while the country is seeking most of its income from sectors like tourism, agriculture, and the service sector. For this matter, globalization can be a major curse on the Moroccans if it's not treated with care and consideration and if the country doesn't improve some of its basic infrastructures (“Health Service Delivery”, 09.17.2007).

One major threat of globalization that can significantly damage a country and leave scars behind is the loss of national identity. This notion has in fact impinged on a good portion of the new Moroccan generation. Today, many people in Morocco don't draw any connections to their country of origin or even their culture although they have lived there all their lives. A good number of these people can't speak their native language fluently (Arabic or Amazirghi) regardless of the fact that they have kept in contact with their country and lived there for many years. Native languages like the Berber *Tachlhit*, *Tamazirght*, or the Moroccan dialect known as *Darija*, are under serious threat of disappearing nowadays. This is clearly a global problem affecting all elements of Moroccan culture.

The Amazirghi are in actual fact the native people of Morocco, and they constitute a strong common node between the Moroccan society and culture. They have a strong attachment to their culture and a rich cultural civilization in Morocco. Even supposing these people consist of about half of today's Moroccan society and are known for their very rich craft industries like carpets, textile, and home decors, their language and culture are dying out rapidly and are being buried by Arab cultural hegemony. This

phenomenon intensified especially after the Gouvernement d'Alternance of 1998 that was mentioned earlier in the report, and which emphasizes on a political system that is directly synchronized with the ideological Moroccan society that has as a foundation a unique language (Arabic), religion (Islam), and culture (Arab heritage), and therefore a unique identity. This empirical and universal approach taken by the government is clearly to the detriment of the Amazirghi heritage and the Arab-Islamic dogma that is being adopted is victimizing the Amazirghi patrimonial civilization. The cultural preservation of this culture is consequently under a serious threat, especially with globalization.

Although the Moroccan government is trying to help the Amazirghi people by organizing a few cultural festivals and social events to commemorate their cultural richness throughout the year, these actions are too meager to help solve this foremost cultural snag the Amazirghi people are suffering from. In reality, the governmental efforts to save and preserve this culture will only be effective if measures of help are taken on a more direct level and rooted in market places and Berber villages to help the cultural traditions and participate in the Berber trade.

More and more parents are pushing their children into attending international institutions, French or American schools at very early age and they don't take the time to pass on family traditions and familiarize them with the inherited patterns and customs of their country. Many Moroccans are now watching TV channels such as MTV more than local national stations like 2M or RTM. The partisan and traditional spirit that Moroccans have towards their country might be undergoing an undermining change and is more liable to deteriorate as years pass. These are concerns that countries like Morocco have to face throughout the new era of globalization.

Globalization can easily create changes in the social order of a country. By multiplying the international exchange of products and services in a country like Morocco, the cultural richness of this nation can be in great jeopardy. Globalization in fact could reduce the cultural differences one sees around the world and it promotes a world where everything and everyone thinks, lives, and consumes similarly. Therefore, with this in mind, the North African heritage that Morocco represented for centuries is on the verge of changing as the country is modernizing itself. The cultural diversities that distinguish Morocco from any other country are becoming less abundant and uniformity is threatening Moroccan culture to the degree it is brought into globalization.

In Morocco, globalization has engulfed so much of the economy that many traditional sectors have been wiped out under the idea that today you have to go really fast to stay ahead. Cultural practices are being distorted and many cultural elements are taken out of the mores of the people. The cultural authenticity in Morocco is being destabilized by the huge flux that is being caused by globalization during these years. This notion has affected those small artisans that earn their living through small practices and skills like weaving and handcraft. In this project, we'll stress out this point in more details by investigating on the once famous Artisanal Center of Azrou, Morocco, and examining how their success became just an old memory they recollect every day.

4. The Problem

The goal of this section is to demonstrate in detail the numerous problems faced by the Moroccan handicraft sector and the artisans themselves. This is done by first exploring the problems of the artisans specifically in the Artisanat of Azrou as well as those in the neighboring regions, through interviews with artisans and Peace Corps Volunteers. The problems observed will then be generalized and confirmed by reviewing what the ministry identifies as problems encountered in the sector on a national level.

4.1. Problems in Azrou and Neighboring Regions

Through a series of interviews with various artisans including Youssef, a stone carver working outside the artisanat, Said, a metal worker in the Artisanat, and Fatima, the president of the Artisanat's women's weaving cooperative, we were able to identify several problems specific to the Artisanat's workers. Interviews that were held with Zahri, the president of the Artisanat, and Peace Corps Volunteers Dyne and Keld also reinforced certain points and included new ones. One problem is the difficulty in obtaining processed raw material such as wool, which affects the women's cooperative the most. The absence of local facilities to process raw materials forces these artisans to purchase the necessary materials from far cities such as Casablanca and Sale. However, doing so requires the transportation of these goods from relatively distant areas, which is costly. Since all these artisans have barely enough money to live on, they lack financial means to afford buying or renting transportation vehicles. The location of Azrou is also

not favorable for their businesses, since it is not frequented often by tourists, not being one of the famous imperial cities of Morocco.

Another problem is the lack of training and knowledge required for modern-day commerce. This requires a more global business model as opposed to local one to which the artisans are accustomed. As we learned during an interview with Mr. Zahri, the Artisanat lacks advertisement, which in the global market is essential. This is especially true when more famous cities such as Fez, Meknes, and Marrakech, are the main hubs tourists and handicraft shoppers, rendering the smaller regions such as Azrou less noticeable.

From Zahri, we also learn that the Artisanat has a problem of debt, and another issue involving competition from local merchants outside the Artisanat who sell lower quality products at a cheaper price. An interview with Peace Corps Volunteer Katherine Dyne enlightened us on the necessity of local merchants to sell their goods for the cheapest price in order to earn the money they need to live on, which explains why products outside the Artisanat are sold cheaper. All in all, the various interviews we have had in Azrou gave us a clear understanding of the specific problems that the artisans and the Artisanat are facing, and gives us specific evidence when talking about the general problems observed on a national level.

4.1.1 Problems described by Youssef the stone carver:

Youssef is one of three artisans well known in Azrou due to his unique stone crafts and talent. He owns his own shop outside of the Artisanat, but is still affiliated to it since some of his goods are displayed and sold in the Artisanat's showroom. He

specializes in carving small lamps in the form of balls, chunks of wood, or other eccentric shapes, all made of gypsum. Gypsum is the mineral of choice since it is smooth, which makes it easy to carve. It is also translucent, which allows a light bulb inside the sculpture to diffuse light uniformly throughout the entire stone. This aesthetically pleasing aspect makes Youssef's crafts unique. The latter has two coworkers and can produce about thirty objects per day if the demand is high enough. Although no numbers have been given, Youssef affirms that the demand for his crafts has been low compared to the past, when he attended more fairs. (Personal interview with Youssef, 08/30/07)

Youssef explained why his business was not prospering. The first and most significant problem is that of location. One has to first understand that the majority of any Moroccan artisan's revenue comes from foreign tourists rather than Moroccans themselves. This is because Moroccans are good bargainers: they will not buy an item until it is as cheap as it can possibly be. This sometimes means that Youssef, just like many other artisans, will have to sell the item for only 15% more than it cost him if he sells to other Moroccans. Furthermore, Youssef is not a mass producer because his team is limited to three people, and the nature of the crafts takes considerable time and effort. He also lacks wholesale demand needed to be able to mass produce consistently. Therefore, a 15% profit margin from the small amount of items sold means that he and his co-workers barely earn enough income to live on. On the other hand, a tourist will generally not bargain as aggressively with the artisan because it is not in their nature to do so, and for Europeans and Americans, the price seems very cheap in the first place. Youssef can therefore make a lot more profit, say 30%, when selling to foreign tourists. Given the fact that Youssef's business will prosper most with such tourists, it is important

that he sells mostly to them, and this is where the problem of location and transportation comes in. In order to be able to sell to his desired clientele, they must either come to him or he must go to them. Unfortunately, Azrou is not a well known tourist area not only due the lack of publicity about what it has to offer, but also because of its geographic location. Azrou is surrounded by forests and rivers, which, while attractive to many Moroccans, has less appeal to international visitors. Consider the fact that Moroccan travel brochures promise tourists camel rides in the deserts of the Sahara, hikes and mountain climbing in the Atlases, sipping warm mint tea under the palm trees of Marrakech, walking around in the culturally rich medinas of Fez, or tanning under the sun on the beautiful Mediterranean beaches in El Hoceima or Tetouan. One thing is for sure, Azrou does not figure as one of those tourist dream areas because most tourists are already accustomed to river and forest topography in their own countries. They therefore want to experience something different when they come to Morocco. For this reason, one will not see many international tourists walking around in Azrou. As a result, Youssef, like other artisans in the city, will not have the advantage of selling his products to them. Hence, in order to sell his products to tourists or wealthier Moroccans who will not spend too much time bargaining if at all, Youssef must transport his products to those locations where most tourists are found, and this creates an array of new problems.

According to Youssef, he barely earns enough from his crafts to be able to finance his basic needs. From what we have gathered from several sources, including Sharon Keld (Peace Corps Volunteer working with the Azrou Artisanat center), several artisans in that center, and Youssef himself, cheap transportation services are not available in Azrou. Because the artisans cannot afford to buy vehicles themselves, they must rent one,

or pay someone to transport the goods for them. Youssef has heavy products and according to him, a round-trip from Azrou to Rabat for example would cost at least 1500 DH. He gave us an example of a trip during which he was called to display his products in a fair held during a parliamentary meeting in Rabat. Youssef had to transport his goods all the way to Rabat in the hopes of selling something, but it turned out that his crafts were merely used to decorate the area. He lost 1500dh during that trip, which for an artisan like Youssef is more than a month's revenue and therefore a great loss.

Artisanal fairs are the best source of revenue for Youssef but only when they are completely or partially financed by some form of organizational patronage. He mentioned several fairs held by USAID in the past during which he was able to not only sell many of his products on site, but also publicize his work and gather a few reliable clientele who now order his creations in bulk. One example of his clients is a buyer who sells his products in Holland. Other similar merchants are also based abroad. However, these fairs are held only very seldom and even less so during the past two years. The Peace Corps had also organized such fairs in the past but artisans have to pay for transport and a fair stand, which costs them around 3000 DH for 10 days. For small-scale artisans such as Youssef, it means investing a few months of earnings into a few days of fair.

Realistically, fairs are held at most three times a year, so one may wonder, how do these artisans survive during the rest of the year? According to Youssef, most of their meager earnings come from passing Moroccan travelers who are on their way to Ifrane, Erfoud, Zagoura, Marrakech, or the desert. Most of these have their own cars and can therefore transport the items by themselves. Even though the Moroccan travelers manage to buy the crafts at the lowest price they can get, the revenue from these sales is what

allows Youssef to continue his production.

4.1.2 Problems described by Said the metal worker:

Said was the first person we met on our second visit to the Artisanat in Azrou. He was seated on a window ledge talking with Fatima (the director of the carpet weavers), contemplating the meaning of life. It seems like this is what Said does most of the time, since for him, as well as for Fatima, there is very little enthusiasm for the successful promotion of their trades. This is not to be taken lightly however, since Said gave us something of a justification for his lack of initiative in promoting his craft. Said bends and shapes metal to form artistic frames for decorating doors, windows, or paintings, among several other small gadgets. According to Keld, however, his shop needs aesthetical improvement, since it is not attractive to passing customers.



Figure 8: Said's Workshop

With better commercial and artistic presentation, which Said has yet to gain the initiative to undertake, Keld feels that his business can improve. From Said's point of view, however, the problem extends far more than improving the presentation of his

shop. The problem is in the internal politics of the Artisanat Center, which he does not have any control over. One problem is that the center has financial limitations which do not allow it to give commissions to tourist guides and hotels to promote the center, like many successful cooperatives in Fez do. Said also feels that the Artisanat's showroom is diverting the interest of customers from the smaller shops in the center, therefore hurting the center rather than helping it (Personal interview with Said, 08/30/07). However, the Center director Zahri believes that this showroom is a necessity for attracting more customers and also for promoting not only the crafts of the local artisans of Azrou but also those of the nearby regions (interview with Hoceine Zahri, 10/10/07).

According to Said, travel agencies are well paid by the artisans in Marrakech and in Fez so that their tourist guides will show the tourists around in favor of these artisans' own businesses. This not only includes bringing tourists to visit their own shops and encouraging them to buy from them, but also preventing tourists from visiting competing artisans. Experiences like this are still frequently reported by foreign tourists. Since most artisans in the more tourist-rich cities of Morocco are doing well enough to be able to afford tipping the tourist guides, small networks of artisans support each other in each city, and work together to prevent competition coming from other cities. Azrou happens to be one of their targets, and according to Said, the artisans in Fez and Marrakesh specifically tip tourist guides working in the Ifrane-Azrou region to prevent tourists from visiting the artisanal center in Azrou and take them instead to those larger cities. These guides in many cases will make the tourists believe that the artisanal center has closed down. Although we have no way of verifying these charges, the source of this problem is the fact that the artisanal center does not invest enough into publicity, including failing to

give commissions to tourist guides and agencies (personal interview with Said, 10/10/07).

Another political problem which preoccupies Said and weakens his desire to move his business forward is related to the other businesses which sell items in the showroom of the Artisanat. The purpose of the Artisanat is to give local artisans a place to work and sell their products, publicize their products, and promote the artisanal traditions of the Atlas regions nearby. According to Said, this plan is not going as well as expected. The people in charge of the Artisanat (which Said was particularly reluctant to accuse directly) take advantage of the place by buying crafts from outside of Azrou for a cheaper price than they would be made within the Artisanat, and resell them in the display room to make some profit. Of course, since they are not renting the display room, nor have they invested into buying the property, their profit margin is quite high. This, in turn, is to the detriment of the artisans in the center, since they must reduce their prices to a minimum amount in order to sell any products in what they see to be their bazaar (personal interview with Said, 10/10/07).

On the other hand, Zahri sees a need to attract more customers to the center and judges the showroom necessary. He explained that the reason crafts are bought cheaper from other neighboring towns is mainly due to the availability of the raw materials from which crafts are made in those regions. For instance, an artisan in a region near which gypsum is mined will buy the gypsum in bulk and cheaper because no or very minimal transport fees must be covered. On the other hand, an artisan in Azrou will have to pay much more for such a heavy raw material that has had to be transported a considerable distance to reach Azrou. Consequently, in order for the Azrou worker to compete with artisans from other regions, he must sell the same product for the same or lower price,

therefore cutting down his profit margin to a minimal amount, and perhaps lowering the quality of his product.

4.1.3. Problems described by Hoceine Zahri, the President of the Artisanat

On September 18, 2007, another visit was made to the Artisanal Center of Azrou in the hopes of finding more about what really hinders the artisans from moving their business ahead. A meeting was set up with the president of the center in order to have a primary source of information and someone we might provide with useful information. Hoceine Zahri, President of the Artisanal Center of Azrou, was elected to his position by the Ministry of Culture and Tourism. His mission consists of maintaining and improving the Artisanat and the regional artisanal industry. His tasks include keeping records of sales from the display room as well as the women's textile cooperative, helping illiterate artisans with formal paperwork, and most importantly, organizing programs to promote the crafts that are fabricated not only within the artisanat itself but also towns in the nearby Atlas regions such as at Sefrou, Ain Leuh, and TmHadaet.

One of the major problems facing artisans in Azrou is that of the lack of access to finished raw materials. This is especially troublesome for carpet weavers. The one carpet weaving cooperative in the center makes its carpets from quality thread that can only be purchased from Casablanca and Sale, which are far from Azrou. The processed wool and transporting it are both expensive, which is enervating when one considers that the wool that is processed in Casablanca is actually bought in Azrou for incredibly low prices. This additional production cost is one of the reasons that the carpets made in the center are more expensive than the ones sold in the local souks. On a side note, a merchant in

the Azrou souk informed us that the carpets that he buys from individual workers in the nearby mountain regions are made from thread that is processed by hand, which lowers its quality and durability. On another note one can argue that the carpets that are made from such thread are more valuable since the work is entirely hand-made and authentic. However, the women's cooperative is accustomed to using processed thread, which is why Zahri requested that the ministry build a wool processing factory in Azrou.

However, this led to a paradox. Given current technology, which is not environmentally friendly, the ministry abstained from building the factory because it would pollute this region, which is known for its pure and clean air. This is problematic because the ministry wants the Artisanat in Azrou to expand and become more profitable, but at the same time, can't endanger tourism by polluting the air. Zahri argues, however, that this is an exaggeration because a single factory cannot cause so much pollution, compared to factory cities like Casablanca and Rabat.

Another problem with the Artisanat is the large debt of 140 MAD that it has accumulated over the years. Zahri explained how in the sixties and seventies, the Artisanat was much more successful and famous, getting rich buyers from the Emirates, France, Germany, England, and other European countries. This was before the attacks of 9/11, which discouraged buyers and tourists from both Europe and the US. In the 60's and 70's, the center employed about 150 workers and produced better quality products. However, the center acquired many loans from banks in order to pay the workers and finance itself, but unfortunately, and for various un-established reasons including a possibility of corruption, the center was not able to repay its debt. When we asked Mohammed the wood carver why the center failed, his response was "only god knows," a

common Moroccan way of saying that reasons are not obvious and one must not assume the answer (interview with Mohammed, 10/10/07). When the center became bankrupt at the beginning of the 80's, the officials deserted the center, leaving it with a debt of 140 million MAD. The late king Hassan II even came to Azrou in 1989 and saw the problems it was facing. Being disappointed by its downfall, he requested reports on the reasons for this debt and promised to address the problem. However, no royal action was ever taken on the matter (interview with Hoceine Zahri, 09/18/07).

4.1.4. Problems described by PCV Katherine Dyne:

Katherine Dyne is another Volunteer we met during our second visit to Azrou. She is helping a group of artisans in the region of Ain Leuh, which, according to her, are more successful than the Azrou workers due to their motivation in promoting and improving the quality of their work. Dyne explained several puzzling issues, one of which is the fact that products are sold cheaper in local markets than they are sold in the artisanal center of Azrou. There are two reasons for this. First, many artisans make their products and sell them for such a minimal price because they are desperately in need of money to feed themselves and feed their children. Here, it is no longer a question of improving their business, but a question of mere survival and basic needs. Furthermore, those who sell their products so cheaply are usually in urgent need to make cash to survive, and have inherited craft items from their parents or grandparents who had made the products for personal use. For instance, a carpet made from wool that is 30 years old does not look much different from one that is made from brand new wool besides the fact that the color is more faded. This is not the only factor among all factors, but the most

important factor when you are talking about the quality of materials used to make the carpet is how fine the wool is: the finer the wool, the better the quality of the carpet since it represents much more time spent to produce a same area of carpet made of thicker wool. On a side note, fine wool is defined as wool that is thin, strong, and colored using natural dyes. Imperfections in the carpet also reduce its quality, although some buyers learn to embrace and enjoy these imperfections as a sign that it was handmade. Suppose then that a local artisan has old carpets made of fine wool, and only cares about making enough money from which to live on. He or she will obviously sell this product much more easily than would the weaver working at the Artisanat. Unlike Katherine Dyne's weavers, who have other life activities such as taking care of their families, and are not the only source of income in their family, the weavers at the Artisanat depend on a steady income to provide for their families and must therefore produce a steady stock. Of course, no matter how many old carpets they have from their parents/grandparents/family, these will eventually run out, and the small scale weaver will have to buy a new stock of wool from Casablanca to continue production. This eventually results in naturally higher prices, which although may seem expensive compared to those selling for cheaper in the markets, are actually not sufficient for supporting the small-scale weavers. This is especially true if one were to base this on what they need to be making in order to support their families and improve their business (interview with Katherine Dyne, 09/08/07).

4.2. General Problems in Moroccan Artisanal Production

The words of the artisans and people working in the Azrou Artisanat make it clear that there is a multitude of problems that the artisans face. Although some problems, such as geographic location or debt, are specific to the Azrou region and the Artisanat, others are more common and can be observed throughout all of Morocco. The general problems include financial support for the artisans, transportation, problems with raw materials, lack of adequate training for modern commerce, lack of innovation, and the lack of motivation for the new generation of artisans. This section aims to highlight some general problems and put them in the context of globalization.

4.2.1. The future of Artisanat is uncertain

From one of the interviews we had with Zahri, we have learned about several key problems faced on a national level, which the ministry is trying to address. The problem can be split up into two main categories: preserving Moroccan cultural heritage by the preservation of the handicraft sector, and exploiting its economic potential by improving all the basic problems the artisans face and laying down the ground for national development and international commerce. From a long term perspective, the Moroccan handicraft sector seems as though it will become extinct because the young generation of Morocco is not at all interested in working with handicrafts. Most youth see this work as something that will keep them from advancing up the social ladder and gaining prosperity. Due to the effects of globalization, young people dream of what they see on satellite TV channels of developed countries, notably in Europe. Because of easy access to pirated satellite channels, almost every home in the cities of Morocco, including the

slums, owns a satellite dish which enables them to stay tuned with what is going on in European countries. Day after day they witness how the people of Europe supposedly live, even if it is sometimes fictional. As a result, they want the same modern lifestyle: one in which they will have an education that will allow them to have a job in an office and that will pay them more money for little or no physical effort. When one comes up to an average below-middle-class Moroccan youngster and asks what he or she dreams of doing when he/she grows up, his/her response is to go to Europe, or to become a doctor, a business man, or an engineer. Based on the trouble that the state has had with recruiting new apprentices for handicrafts, when given the proposal to work as an artisan, carving wood, sculpting stone, or weaving carpets, the average Moroccan youngster will reject this proposal. This is the biggest problem which the Ministry of Culture and Tourism is facing. If all young people have no desire or reason to become artisans, then what will become of the handicraft sector in the future, one which for many years employed a significant amount of people and contributed a fair amount to the economy of Morocco (interview with Hoceine Zahri, 09/18/07). It is a fact that the income from handicraft exports has only been decreasing over the past two decades, and the following plot shows this for some types of products:

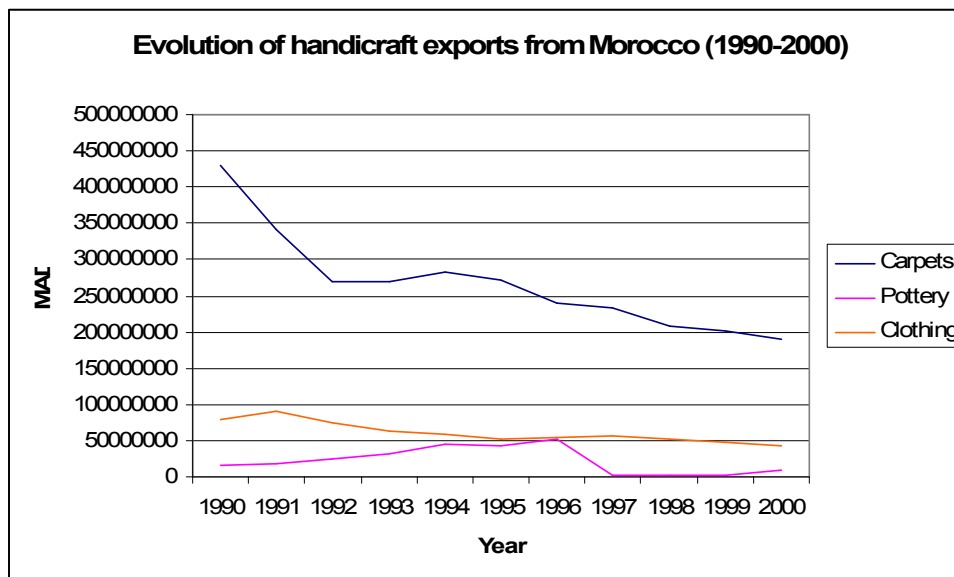


Figure 9: The evolution of handicraft exports. See Appendix C, Table 3

4.2.2. The deterioration of quality

Another problem that the artisanal sector is facing on a national level is that of quality. Except for some of the more famous artisan districts, such as Fez, most contemporary artisans tend to prefer speed over quality (interview with Hoceine Zahri, 09/18/07). Although this would seem like an advantage vis-à-vis the ministry's strategy for Morocco's handicraft sector for 2015, one must note an essential difference between fast production that maintains quality and one that doesn't. In the case of most current artisans, with the inadequate tools they own, speeding would compromise quality. On the other hand, with improved production tool, products can be produced faster and still maintain a good level of quality and finish. Over the years, the cost of living has increased substantially, and poorer people are struggling to survive. Because most artisans are based in rural areas, they are poor and must therefore sell in bulk in order to make any profit. Because of this, they are reduced to making products that lack quality in order to make them faster and cheaper. Carpet weavers, for example, buy cheaper wool

that breaks easily, or make it themselves, then dye it with chemical colors that fade quickly. The weaving patterns have become less and less intricate to increase the carpet's speed of fabrication (interview with Hoceine Zahri, 09/18/07). A fact that several interviewed carpet sellers have confirmed is that the older rugs are much better quality, mostly because the women who made them did it for their own use. In the past, it was a form of social prestige to wear beautiful woven coats or display intricate carpets at one's home, which explains why they spent much time, effort, and care in weaving the most tedious designs with the finest thread (interview with Hassan Sadiki, 09/18/07). Today, those types carpets are being sold by women who are under great financial pressure (interview with Katherine Dyne, 09/08/07). Zahri mentioned how the Spanish, German, and Portuguese tourists who have come to Azrou in the past, when the Artisanat was successful, are disappointed by the quality of work they find today (interview with Hoceine Zahri, 09/18/07). This is also an impression of Prof. John Shoup at AUI. Perhaps this is an indication that today's artisan is thinking more about short term survival rather than long term prosperity, which is another negative effect the pressures of globalization has had on the craft industry.

Conclusion:

The problems discussed in this section pertain to both the Artisanat of Azrou and the Moroccan craft industry in general.

The problems specific to Azrou are:

- Lack of means of transportation for raw materials
- Lack of means of processing raw materials
- Absence of a flow of international tourists in Azrou
- The need for an advertisement campaign
- The impact of the low quality of life of artisans upon their crafts

The problems of the handicraft sector of Morocco in general are:

- The need to improve the attractiveness of the handicraft industry to the upcoming artisans.
- The need to adapt to current international market demands
- The deterioration of the quality of handicraft products due to mass production

In the following section, some of the general problems mentioned above are revisited expanded, and new ones are also introduced.

5. Strategy of the Ministry of Culture and Tourism

This section discusses the national strategy that the Ministry of Culture and Tourism has set up for 2015 to address many of the issues involving the handicraft sector. Keeping this strategy in mind, we will explore what has already been done by the ministry nationally, and then focus upon what has been done specifically in Azrou. It is after the material dealing with the nation as a whole is covered that it will be possible to come up with suggestions to best aid the artisans in Azrou, who depend upon a fast solution to survive.

5.1. The Ministry's strategy for 2015

Because of the low income rate in the handicraft sector, and its large unexploited economic potential, the Moroccan government decided to put it back on its feet by developing a serious strategy that will be carried out for the next ten years, starting from 2005, with the goal of increasing its attractiveness and business perspectives to national and international customers and future artisans. This strategy seeks to give Moroccan products their true value and a position in the international market. A well defined project with budgets and deadlines already set up aims to facilitate the development of the handicraft sector with the improvement of production techniques and the establishment of more training centers.

5.1.1. Problem 1: Unexploited economic potential

Currently, the artisanal sector contributes to 19% of the net national production and employs about 20% of the active population. In terms of sales 13.7 billion MAD are made, but only about 0.05% of these (700 million) are destined for export ("Le Pari Audacieux du Maroc"). The government believes that the sector is not exploited to its full potential and aims to improve its exportation rate by addressing the issue of the lack of innovation and diversity in the materials and colors used - factors which are demanded by the international market. The primary reason as to why the craft industry has not been innovative and able to compete internationally is because this sector has not had easy access to arts funding or even financing from Moroccan banks. On that account, the support of the government is deemed necessary to launch the trade towards prosperous development.

5.1.2. Strategy: Addressing the problem of unexploited economic potential

Today, the artisanal sector is benefiting from lots of reforms and actions by the government and new spaces for exposition and sales are being built in order to promote the process of fabrication and to put an exotic accent on the Moroccan traditional heritage in tourist places like hotels in Fez and Marrakech, and seaside locations such as Asila, Tangiers, Bouznika, or Agadir. This is the same initiative that led to the construction of the display room in the Artisanat of Azrou, or the projected museum "The Pearl of the Atlas" next to it, which is supposed to display artistic crafts of the region. The government is also focusing on a few specific branches in the handicraft sector that were considered to have the most potential, such as the clothing, interior decoration,

architecture, and jewelry sector. With this in mind, a plan of creating 250 small companies specialized in these departments is being studied and offers are currently being made to leading operators in these sectors to see what propositions the government might get from them. Of these operators, only those who agree to help the government carry out their objective will be allowed to sign a governmental contract and will benefit from greater support by the government in the commercialization of their products. This will result in a set of successful key companies, one in each type of craft, each becoming a reference and role-model for emerging companies of similar crafts. The hopes of the government are that this will lead to a movement that will re-invigorate the economy in the handicraft sector. However, there is a major problem of illiteracy and lack of training that can hinder this movement, and the government has taken this into consideration as well ("Le Pari Audacieux du Maroc").

5.1.3. Problem 2: Illiteracy, lack of training and education

The average Moroccan artisan is illiterate and does not have the basic understanding of modern marketing and commerce that will enable him to expand his business. However what most artisans are realizing is that the international demand for Moroccan products is surpassing the national one. With some guidance and training from the government, these artisans could acquire the basics to be able to improve their businesses. Computer literacy and knowledge of the internet are some of the most important basics for modern-day commerce, as we will see in the recommendations section. In 2001, the United Nations Organization for industrial development started a project to assist Local Productive Systems (LPS). LPS are defined as geographic

concentrations of enterprises that produce and commercialize an interdependent or complementary set of products facing the same obstacles and having the same opportunities. There exist about 50 LPS in Morocco such as those in Fez (pottery), Nador (ocean crafts), and Meknes (clothing). The UNOIP believes that the Moroccan handicraft sector has been until today an unexploited gem of Morocco, and bases its program on the successful experience of another LPS dealing with textiles based in Prato, Italy. This Italian industry transformed from a producer of low quality textiles to an internationally renowned company that today has its own textile researchers and innovators, which is the goal the government envisions for Morocco ("Le Pari Audacieux du Maroc").

5.1.4. Strategy: Addressing Illiteracy and lack of training

The national strategy consists of forming at least 50,000 artisanal apprentices over a ten year period starting from 2007, attaining at least 10,000 per year starting from 2015 (compared to 3,000 in 2005). This objective is in response to two national strategies: to revalorize the image of artisanal jobs as seen by today's upcoming generation, who prefer more modern jobs, and to improve the reputation of Moroccan artisanal products in order to make them more attractive in the national and international markets, at the same time making them accessible to international consumers. Three main actors will execute this program. First, the chamber of Artisanat will coordinate the professional placement of artisans within companies by placing them in internship programs. Second, the department of Artisanat will take care of promoting the image of handicraft jobs, and finally the ministry of employment and professional formation will finance these

conventions, although no specific budget has been defined. The government realizes that there is a lack of effective infrastructures and plans to fix this by creating seven establishments which will train high school graduates to make them highly skilled and professional artisans ("Le Pari Audacieux du Maroc").

5.1.5. Problem 3: The situation of the small-scale mono-artisan

Another major problem, is that the productive artisanal body is very fragmented, made up mostly of mono-artisans. The 270,000 mono-artisans in Morocco do not all dispose of quality production tools necessary to increase their productivity rate and quality of work. For instance, a hand-made wooden carpet loom, which most mono-artisan carpet weavers work with, is not as precise and durable as one made of metal and designed to meet industry standards. Furthermore, most mono-artisans live under very difficult financial and social conditions, lacking basic social benefits such as medical insurance and an adequate retirement plan. With monthly revenue not surpassing 3,000 DH and the absence of true economic and social recognition, their productivity and creativity has degraded considerably over the past two decades. The problem, however, does not end here: when the children of mono-artisans see the hardships that their parents are enduring, they perceive such jobs negatively and therefore want to avoid the risk and try something different. These types of problems often lead to the migration of people from rural areas who seek employment in cities as artisans, and the urban environment can damage the quality and originality of the craft. It is for this reason that the ministry of education takes a certain number of measures through the new national strategy of artisanat to rehabilitate the artisanal job and build confidence among the artisans ("Le

Pari Audacieux du Maroc").

In the past, streets selling handicraft goods constituted the hearts of Moroccan cities and villages, and artisans themselves were highly respected in society. Each of the handicraft trades had an "Amine" (meaning "one who we can count on") who ensured the respect of the trade's traditions, methods, and rituals, while helping artisans to get along and maintaining political and financial matters. Due to major changes on a global and national level and the failure of artisans in general to adapt to the effects of globalization, the sector progressively lost economic importance. Just one example is that of Moroccan carpets, which in the 80's were reputable worldwide, guaranteeing Morocco millions of dollars of profit. Today and ever since the mid-90's, the exporters of Moroccan carpets have been complaining that their revenue has fallen considerably. Their losses are a result of fierce competition from China, Indonesia, India, and Nepal, who sell the same or better quality carpets for much cheaper. Today the artisanal sector is sinking in financial and organizational problems: the mono-artisans lack innovation, financial means, and are having trouble processing raw materials, so they must buy already processed materials and transport them. The national strategy for improving the handicraft sector has taken all of these issues into consideration and has the goal of creating quality companies that will act as a standard for quality and push mono-artisans to produce better and more goods. In order to meet the international demand, the state will include in its training programs ways to innovate by proposing new designs and solutions in terms of fabrication processes. The financial side of the problem will be addressed by providing mono-artisans with easier access to loans that will enable them to invest into their businesses. The strategy for 2015 also includes a diagnostic for each branch so that

adequate measures can be proposed and adopted in the industry ("Le Pari Audacieux du Maroc").

Because of the very low income rate which the average mono-artisan earns on a monthly basis, they have trouble sustaining their most elemental needs. Consequently, they remain incapable of investing in their small workshops. Conscious of the importance of financing in the process of modernization, the state engages itself, through partnerships with banks, to facilitate the access to loans by artisans, lending up to 30,000 MAD per artisan. According to Abdellah Chefaj (the ex-president of the chamber of professionals in the handicraft sector), this measure will certainly encourage artisans to seek loans that will enable them to invest into their business, the same way that Fogarim did. Foragim is a program that helps people with irregular income to benefit from housing loans. The success that Foragim had with artisans will make them feel comfortable about taking loans. Another problem the artisans face is the fact that most of them are subject to paying a fixed amount for sales taxes since they do not have the competences to keep a regular record of sales. This amount often ends up being more expensive than the true value of taxes they should be paying based on their actual sales. For this, the state plans to organize campaigns that will train artisans to keep an adapted accountability record that will enable them to optimize their taxes. Along the same perspective, the state also plans to encourage mono-artisans to obtain business insurance with companies such as the CNSS and Addamane al Hirafi, to which very few artisans are currently affiliated. Last but not least on the state's agenda is the plan to elaborate a new system of social security including health and injury insurance as well as retirement insurance ("Le Pari Audacieux du Maroc").

The professionals within the artisanat, and in particular the mono-artisans, have high hopes regarding the national strategy of Artisanat for 2015. The question remains whether or not the engagements taken by the government will be followed as planned.

5.2. What has already been done by the ministry?

The strategy described above was launched in 2005, meaning that two years have passed since the ministry took the initiative to conduct reforms in the artisanal sector. With that in mind, it is of interest to know several of the specific things accomplished by the ministry in order to assess the effectiveness and commitment of the ministry regarding their announced goals. To do this, we will first describe what has been done on a national level, then focus specifically on the Azrou Artisanat. All of the information in this section has been acquired from the interview with Hocaine Zahri, the president of the Azrou Artisanat.

5.2.1. What has been done nationally?

Although both the public and private sectors have a role to play in improving the current situation of the handicraft sector, the Ministry of Culture and Tourism remains the one with the political responsibility and power, as well as the financial means, to address many of these problems, despite the fact that it does not always act promptly enough to resolve the issue. However, according to Zahri, the ministry is not waiting for change to happen without taking action: it has realized there is a real threat to the survival of the artisanal sector whose downfall will lead to the deterioration of tourism. Tourism being one of the main sources of economic revenue for the country, it is critical to do all that

can be done in order to maintain it. It is the fundamental reason that the ministry is trying to preserve the artisanal sector in Morocco. The task itself, however, faces many obstacles and paradoxes. The ministry knows that most artisanal crafts are produced in rural areas. In order to prevent skilled rural artisans from migrating to the bigger cities for subsistence and living in *bidonvilles*, it has acted to improve the living conditions in rural areas. It has hence lead a campaign to develop rural areas by introducing running water, electricity, and paved roads along with improved means of transportation. It is also in the process of making a survey to collect a list of complaints from the artisans in order to identify their most specific needs. All this effort will be a waste, however, if the upcoming generation of artisans disappears, which seems to be actually happening. As mentioned previously, the young people of Morocco are not at all interested in becoming artisans. The ministry organized an artisanal training program to encourage young people to work as artisans. It offered the enticement of paying young apprentices 250 DH a month plus insurance just for them to train to be artisans. Despite all the publicity and efforts made by the government to promote this, it ran into a paradox. According to Zahri, the students who do well at school want other jobs than being artisans. Those who don't do well in school, however, are too often not smart enough to even learn the artisanal craft. From the thousands of students asked to start learning artisanal skills, only one girl in Azrou was willing to work as a weaver, which is a scary fact for the future of artisanat. Perhaps the ministry had not foreseen the hidden problems that can arise with the solutions proposed, but one thing is for sure, the ministry believes in letting time do part of the work, since it will take time for mentalities and habitudes to change (interview with Hoceine Zahri, 09/18/07).

5.2.2. What has been done in Azrou?

Looking specifically at the artisanal center of Azrou, we can observe more efforts done by the ministry to help the artisanat. The center itself is a product of the ministry: the building and six officials working in it, including Mr. Zahri, are financed and hired by the government. Giving 33 workers a place to work in the center is a small but not insignificant effort to help. The display room in the center was also financed by the ministry: although the date of this event has not been obtained, Zahri had a regional annual meeting with the governor, cooperatives, and private business owners to welcome people to expose their items with the intention of promoting and publicizing local crafts. However, it is also apparent that another reason the display room was built is to help repay the debt of 140 million MAD which the center owes. To address the issue of lack of tourism in Azrou, the ministry began building a museum in 2005 to display local crafts, dubbing it “The Pearl of the Atlas”. This name is symbolic of the geographic location of Azrou: it lies in the center of the Atlas, and most travelers going to nearby regions will have to pass through Azrou first. The problem is that there are many passing tourists in transportation vans or buses, and the few that do stop, rarely come to the Artisanat. Having a museum would perhaps be an effective way of giving visitors a reason to stop in Azrou, and since the museum is built right next to the Artisanat, it would encourage them to visit it to purchase similar crafts as those seen in the museum. Despite a good starting effort, however, the museum stands unfinished and untouched for over a year. According to Zahri, the ministry had a certain budget to build it but ran out of money, and reasons for this are uncertain. He says that it will stay untouched for awhile because the ministry has changed officials and objectives as a result of the

elections of September 2007, so only time will tell when the museum will be finally finished. As one can see, the ministry has spent some effort in trying to help Azrou but most of its efforts are in writing up plans rather than in real measures to achieve serious results (interview with Hoceine Zahri, 09/18/07).

On the other hand, the Peace Corps and the ministry have helped Azrou with more specific issues dealing with craft techniques themselves. Some workers in the center are not even skilled enough to produce good quality products. Zahri described a training program organized by the Peace Corps which taught local artisans how to dye wool using natural colorants rather than the more dangerous and hazardous chemical ones. This mission happened to be successful as artisans quickly adapted it to their carpets, increasing quality both of work and of the finished product. Zahri himself has had some successes, notably with reviving crafting techniques that had become extinct. For example, carpets made of straw used to exist in the past but stopped being produced with the introduction of plastic, which was stronger but softer to use when weaving. Previous tourists who had come to Azrou in the past and came back recently noticed how they could not find those straw carpets that were quite unique. This is why Zahri put an effort into calling in five women who knew how to make straw carpets, and helped them create their own cooperative, which is today rather successful. All in all, improving existing craft techniques and reviving old ones is an important step towards the evolution and modernization of artisanal crafts, which is demanded in the international market (interview with Hoceine Zahri, 09/18/07).

Now that one has an idea of what the ministry has done, one can see that the solutions are geared towards long term change rather than the urgent short term change

that is needed in many cases, including that of the center of Azrou. While the ministry tries to reassure artisans that their businesses will have a brighter future, one cannot be certain that this will be true. We also know that the artisans in Azrou are among many to have severe financial problems, and this is a principal reason we decided to help them. In order to alleviate the artisan's short term survival issues, the next section proposes some solutions, notably e-commerce, that could be rapidly implemented. Although some more long term solutions are also proposed, there is an ethical obligation to do something in the short term to help them with the pressing subsistence problems before the long term solutions are realized.

6. Case Studies

The goal of this section is to present much of the research gathered from two successful Moroccan e-commerce websites, as well as information from our visit to successful handicraft cooperatives in Fez. These case studies will serve as an example of what has been done for successful e-commerce and fair-trade implementation, and will be a basis for our conclusions in the subsequent chapter. Furthermore, we explain in each case how the case applies to the Artisanat of Azrou, and in some cases, why it is not the most accurate model. Nevertheless, the cases presented do include insightful and helpful information.

6.1. Case study: E-commerce in Morocco

Although Moroccan e-commerce websites are very rare, there are a few that have had considerable success. Two e-commerce sites that will be reviewed are the national high-tech, Microchoix.ma, and the internationally renowned home-décor, gift, and kitchenware retailer Kasbahouse.com. The elements of their success will be used to determine the best e-commerce solution for the Azrou center.

Case 1: Microchoix.ma

Microchoix.ma is today the number one high-tech e-commerce retailer in Morocco. It is actually a branch of Microchoix based in France, but the site itself sells products only in Morocco. It is at the same time a B2C and a B2B e-trader, and even has its own retail outlet in Casablanca due its great success. Although the company has not given specifics about its sales figures in Morocco, it does claim and also appears to be

successful, having over 56,000 subscribers in Morocco today. The reason for its success, it explains, is that it brings the same products as those sold in its French main branch for prices that defy all competition. This is because it gives the customer the advantage of buying products directly from the importer (Microchoix Maroc), which eliminates many intermediaries such as retailers, allowing the consumer to benefit from the best price in the national market (“Qui Sommes Nous”).

Microchoix.ma’s catalog includes 13,000 different products that can be delivered in no more than 48 hours throughout the main cities of Morocco (“Qui Sommes Nous”). Since it only deals with national deliveries, it uses Moroccan shipping companies such as Maroc Express and Amana. Furthermore, it accepts several forms of payment methods given the limited number of people who use credit cards in Morocco. The first payment method is payment upon delivery, where the customer pays the shipping company in cash once the product is delivered and the shipping company then reimburses Microchoix (“Mode de Paiment”). Wire transfer is another option, where the customer receives a receipt including the company’s bank information and a reference number for the product purchased, then uses that information to send money to the company, with a delay of 48 hours before the company receives the payment (“Mode de Paiment”). Another option is cash deposit, where the customer receives a receipt from the website upon purchase, and must make a cash deposit to the website’s bank account and obtain a receipt that will then be faxed, mailed, or emailed to Microchoix to confirm the payment (“Mode de Paiment”). Last but not least, and this has only been introduced very recently (was not an option over the summer 2007), is online credit card payment, which can be done through a secure form provided and administered by Microchoix’s bank (“Mode de Paiment”).

All these various forms of payment prove that payment methods are no longer a barrier for e-commerce in Morocco. However, it is also important to note that Microchoix is a rather large company and has a base in France. This implies that it has the financial means to afford offering different types of services. It is therefore not a realistic model for the Azrou Artisanat. It does, however, demonstrate that Morocco has the infrastructure to make online payment possible, whereas this was not practical until recent years, with the significant increase of internet users.

Last but not least, Microchoix has a return policy and offers guarantees on all its products. The return policy allows the user to return the product two to five weeks after purchase, based on the product. Before return, however, the customer must notify Microchoix beforehand, through its online support section, providing receipt information for that product, in order to obtain a return number that will enable him or her to return the product for repair or reimbursement. Microchoix handles all the shipping charges for all returns (“Garantie”).

It is therefore clear that effective e-commerce, with all its customer expectations and regulations, can be conducted in Morocco with today’s available technology and means of payment and shipment. However, Microchoix only sells to residents, whereas the Artisanat of Azrou aims to sell its products internationally. For this reason, we have done another case study which deals with a Moroccan e-commerce site that sells internationally: Kasbahouse.com.

Case 2: Kasbahouse.com

For this case, we have had the privilege to interview the owner of the website through emails, thanks to contact information provided by Prof. Tahar El-Korchi. His name is Moulay Alaoui, and has successfully been running Kasbahouse.com in Morocco for 15 years. Today, he also owns several other successful e-commerce websites including Atlas Imports and Ameera Imports. Upon visiting his main site, Kasbahouse.com, all the basic features of a reputable e-commerce site are available, including pictures and descriptions of all items, options to customize aspects of certain products to be ordered, a return policy which gives the customer a delay of 30 days, customer service through phone assistance, and online assistance a “contact us” form. Of the main issues that were puzzling us is how the Azrou artisans can handle return policies and shipping. Mr. Alaoui’s solution is simple: let UPS or Fedex handle everything. Having UPS do the shipping and handle returns may be very costly to both the artisan and the customer, but its reputation is essential to give the website enough credibility to attract international buyers. On the same administrative note, we wanted to know how Kasbahouse handles money transactions from Morocco. Mr. Alaoui explained that in order to do so, one must obtain international merchant status, which is non-existent in Morocco due to government laws and regulations strictly controlling the cash flow in and out of the country. He therefore suggested the use of Paypal to receive payments, which is secure, easy to implement, and accepts several forms of payment from the customer. Furthermore, a Paypal account can be opened with a Moroccan bank account. We also wanted to know how a Moroccan would purchase the product from the website, since it sells in dollars, and Moroccans do not have the privilege of being able to buy dollars

using dirham's unless there is a formal reason to do so (such as paying travel/study fees while on an American visa). If the Moroccan has a non-Moroccan bank account with a Visa or MasterCard, it is possible to purchase the products from Kasbahouse. Otherwise, Maroc Telecom (a major Moroccan ISP and telecom operator) has a new service which enables users to purchase pre-paid debit cards for online purchases. The availability of services such as UPS and Paypal in Morocco is promising for our artisans in Azrou, but leads back to fundamental problems including arranging shipping and illiteracy, which can limit Azrou artisans ability to open and maintain an e-commerce site (E-mail interview with Moulay Alaoui, 9/29/07).

On the note of maintaining the website, we wanted to know from Mr. Alaoui what are the costs and training required for building and maintaining an e-commerce website. His answer is that it ranges from 3,000 MAD to half a million MAD, depending on the technology and software platforms used. For our case, however, he predicted it would be around 3000 MAD since no advanced software or technology will be used. Maintaining the site on a daily basis would also be necessary. This includes responding to emails from customers, updating the product catalog with pictures and descriptions for new items, and solving any technical issues the website may experience. Unfortunately, none of the Azrou artisans even know how to use a computer, let alone build and maintain a professional website. Even though PCV Sharon Keld is there to help, and has in fact began building a website to promote the artisanat (see <http://www.freewebs.com/azrouartisana>), the artisans must become self-sufficient since Keld may not always be in Azrou to maintain the website. We therefore asked Mr. Alaoui what it would cost to hire someone to maintain the website. According to him, a

qualified person can be paid a flat monthly fee ranging from 500 to 1000 MAD to maintain the site. One can therefore see that in order to build and maintain a professional e-commerce site, the artisans will have to invest at least 3000 dirham to start with, and a monthly fee of 500 to 1000 dirham to maintain it. This second expense can only be eliminated through rigorous training that will teach those artisans who can read and write to use a computer and use the basic functions necessary for maintaining the site.

Considering the fact that the women's weaving cooperative refused to pay for a mail that could have gained them a free computer, it would be hard to believe that they would spend 3000 MAD to start a website. The responsibility for launching the site may therefore have to be given to the officials of the artisanat who are more educated and can take risks more easily than the artisans themselves (E-mail interview with Moulay Alaoui, 9/29/07).

Although several problems with e-commerce have been mentioned already, there are many more that are related with the nature of the artisan's businesses. Citing these problems is not intended to discourage the use of e-commerce as a business solution, but rather to tackle all these problems one by one in order to come up with the most realistic solution possible.

6.2. Case study: ethical tourism in Fez

On October 27, 2007, we went on a trip to Fez with the goal of finding out more about what makes the city so successful in the handicraft domain. Our first assumption was that the only reason it is so successful is because of its historic value and the number of tourists which visit it each year. This assumption was verified during our visit to be true, but there is a set of other factors, previously unclear to us, which give Fez its success. Part of these factors is the adoption of a tourism model geared towards fair trade by many travel agencies in charge of enhancing the international visitor's experience.

Our tour guide, Mr. Scalli, whom we met through Sara of the AUI library, was a rather aged man who knew a lot about the city's history, structure and architecture, and artisan businesses. As he toured us in the narrow streets of the medina, we observed many similar tour guides who did the same thing with their tourists. At certain points of interests in the medina, such as the newly renovated synagogue, he would stop and give us historical and current information about that stop, which is what any typical guide would do. However, our presence there was not simply one of observation: we also had the chance to purchase goods from the multitude of shops all around us. Mr. Scalli also took us to specific artisan shops that although all specialized in different types of crafts, seemed to share a similar business structure: one favoring fair trade.

Our first visit was to a pottery cooperative named "Potterie de Fez". Once at the cooperative, one of the people working there undertook the task of showing us around the different stages of pottery and *zellige* (earth mosaics) crafting and processing. The first stage was taking grey clay as a raw material (solid stone) and letting it sit in a pool of water for an extended period of time until it became clay. The raw material was

purchased from a village 13km away from Fez. This tells us that the cooperative has the financial and transportation means to bring the clay from that village. We also learn from this fact there is a 'branch' (the villagers selling the raw material) benefiting from the 'hub' (the pottery cooperative) through a mutual exchange (raw material vs. money). The raw material sellers can then turn into hubs by using the money they just earned to purchase goods or services from other branches, or simply feed their children, families, and themselves. The next step involves several artisans molding bowls, plates, jars, and other forms of pottery, or simply a large thin sheet of clay that will be chipped by hand to small pieces with unique forms that will be used to complete a mosaic on a table, water fountain, chair, wall, or floor. Before it is heated in a coal-powered oven at over 1000 degrees C, artisans meticulously paint, with only their mind to guide them, intricate designs on the pottery. For *zellige*, flat rectangular pieces of cured clay are chiseled by hand into hundreds of different shapes and sizes, colored by hand, then assembled into a beautiful mosaic to fill in whatever piece of furniture or wall that is being made. As one can see, the entire process is handmade, and no manufacturing machines are used to facilitate the artisan's work. As a result, there are a significant number of employees benefiting from the wages they earn working at the cooperative.

The last step of our tour of the cooperative was visiting the shop within the cooperative in which all of its own products are sold. One thing to note during our visit is that there were other groups of tourists visiting the same cooperative at the same time as us, and the shop was literally crowded with tourists, many of which were not hesitating to purchase souvenirs from it. The prices inside the shop were indeed somewhat higher than those in souks and shops outside the cooperative. For example, a clay soap holder

was sold for 100 dirham inside the shop, and similar one can be found for only 70 dirham in souks. Nevertheless, although many customers were aware of this price difference, they did not hesitate to buy the products. First, they witnessed those products being made, and observed all the stages of the manufacturing process. Second, they saw the people working long hours to make these products with only basic tools. Second, the entire process was eco-friendly, (even the spinning of the molds was operated by the power of the molder's feet), which is important for fair trade enthusiasts (and of course for the environment). Third, the customers were convinced that the products they were purchasing were authentic and of high quality, rather than some second quality imitation made of cheaper materials that can be found elsewhere. Last but not least, the cooperative offered after-sale services such as the possibility of shipping large products to their homes in Europe or the US (or elsewhere). One can therefore see how fair trade is successfully conducted in Fez in cooperatives such as the Potterie de Fez. However, one must keep in mind that Fez is a much larger tourist draw than Azrou can be, which is why the Azrou center will not be able to afford to offer such after-sale services. However, it must focus on advertising itself while at the same time building up upon its fair-trade aspect in order to maximize the number of customers and keep them interested even after their departure.

All the other cooperatives we have visited, including leather-workers/designers, textile producers, and metal carvers took the same basic fair-trade approach: showing the customer most or all stages of the manufacturing process, showing who was involved in this process, proving that everything was handmade and most of the time eco-friendly, and last but not least, giving the customer a chance to purchase their products. As we

saw from the pottery example, each shop is more than just a traditional shop, doing more than just displaying items and hoping to sell them; each shop was a human ecosystem in which a multitude of people benefited from any income generated. The medina of Fez can be viewed as an ecosystem as well, hosting all these smaller ecosystems. By visiting the medina, the visitor becomes part of that human ecosystem, and any income generated from that tourist, in this case through ethical means, will benefit the entire system. This is the entire concept behind ethical tourism, and one has seen from this case study how it works and why it works. The final task is therefore to apply the concept of ethical tourism to empower the Azrou Artisanat. (For more information about Fez, please see appendix F).

7. Recommended solutions

Having reviewed the problems of the Azrou Artisanat along with the roots of those problems, and having presented several case studies pertaining to already-implemented solutions, we are ready to propose recommendations that we believe will help improve the business of artisans. At the core of these recommendations is a proposal to develop fair-trade-oriented e-commerce, which will be most useful in generating income and advertising the center nationally and internationally, with the least time required for implementation. Related to this proposal is a longer term recommendation that may require government support to implement, which is promoting the concept of “ethical tourism” to draw attention to Moroccan artisans crafts and culture.

7.1. E-commerce

E-commerce is defined as:

"The conducting of business communication and transactions over networks and through computers. As most restrictively defined, electronic commerce is the buying and selling of goods and services, and the transfer of funds, through digital communications. However EC also includes all inter-company and intra-company functions (such as marketing, finance, manufacturing, selling, and negotiation) that enable commerce and use electronic mail, EDI, file transfer, fax, video conferencing, workflow, or interaction with a remote computer" (dictionary.com).

With this definition in mind, e-commerce can have various purposes and is not limited to

buying and selling goods over the world-wide-web. It can be used as a business tool for services such as cutting the cost for customer service and increasing the speed of service delivery. From an educational perspective, e-commerce enables online training and education in universities and other organizations. Last but not least, it can provide a gathering place for people to learn, transact, and collaborate (“Electronic Commerce”: 2005). Furthermore, e-commerce can be divided into two different categories - business to consumer (B2C), and business to business (B2B). In the B2C variant, the business sells products directly to the consumers, an example being amazon.com. According to a research paper on e-commerce options for Third World craft producers, Dr. S. J. Batchelor and Mike Webb claim (with supporting evidence) that the most successful B2C e-commerce sites have been trading standard products such as cds, books, software, etc (Batchelor and Webb: 2002). The other form of e-commerce, B2B, involves the businesses selling or publicizing their products online to wholesalers and outlet retailers. The benefit of this second approach is that it bypasses the task of having to handle shipping, customer service, and retailing. The downside, however, is that the products being sold by the outlet or wholesaler will cost more to the consumer because of the commission the wholesaler must earn. An example of B2B e-commerce is PEOPlink.com, a site based in the US that purchases handicrafts in bulk from artisans all around the world, and resells them online.

7.1.1 Brief history of e-commerce

E-commerce first emerged in 1970 with the invention of Electronic Funds Transfer (EFT), which allows the electronic transfer of funds between organizations. This significantly increased the speed of transactions by breaking geographical barriers. EFT was then followed by a new technology called electronic interchange (EDI), which helped business transactions from financial institutions such as banks to other types of business and facilitated the exchange of information from the supplier to the end customer. EDI uses electronic forms which cuts the costs of companies by saving them human interaction, fax, paper, and other form of physical communication charges. However, EDI was not widely accepted because it was limited to special networks such as large corporations and financial institutions which are not efficient for small businesses (due to cost and complexity of administration) (“Electronic Commerce”: 2005).

It was not until the 1990’s that three crucial factors made e-commerce possible and widespread: the internet was opened for commercial use, the world-wide-web was invented, and the usage of personal computers grew phenomenally. It is during this era that many dot-coms specializing in e-commerce appeared. Among the most famous and successful are amazon.com and ebay. E-commerce websites have generated sales worth US \$12.2 billion in 2003 (“Electronic Commerce”: 2005).

7.1.2 Advantages and disadvantages of e-commerce

E-commerce is by nature less costly and a faster way of doing business and transactions electronically since it reduces physical interaction and breaks geographical barriers now that the internet is available world-wide. It also enhances the customer's purchasing choices since the user can compare and evaluate similar products on different e-commerce sites. E-commerce business also benefits from a wide range of markets and opportunities, since such sites are frequented by a wide range of cultures and age groups. However, e-commerce also has its drawbacks. These include privacy and security issues with credit cards and fraud, reasons for which many customers hesitate to buy online. In order for an e-commerce business to be accepted by all, it must benefit from a good reputation and this involves a well known brand name. Another draw-back is the fact that the user cannot physically interact with the product, which can cause problems when purchasing clothes for example ("Electronic Commerce": 2005). Other barriers of B2C e-commerce specific to artisans exist and will be discussed later.

7.1.4. E-commerce barriers specific to handicraft trade

In their research paper, Batchelor and Webb identify six barriers that artisans in developing countries are facing vis-à-vis e-commerce, which all apply to the artisans in the Artisanal Center of Azrou:

Digital images lack the true feeling of the object:

When crafts are displayed as images on the website, the customer does not have the benefit of being able to touch, feel, and smell the object. This can considerably reduce

the value of the object to the customer (Batchelor and Webb, 57: 2002). Take Abdeljabbar Mohammed's wooden crafts for example, which are characterized by a strong cedar smell and the smooth and light feeling of wood when picked up. Simply posting a picture of a carved wooden bowl, for example, will not communicate the true value of the bowl to the end customer. This is similar with rugs and carpets made by the women's weaving cooperative's woven material, whose texture and softness are a key aspect of quality and cannot be conveyed through a simple digital image. The customer will therefore typically not be as enthusiastic about the crafts as one who is physically present to interact with the crafts and the people in the artisan's shops.

According to Batchelor and Webb, "this is one of the main reasons why the direct selling of crafts over the Internet to consumers (B2C e-commerce) has been overwhelmingly disappointing" (Batchelor and Webb, 57: 2002). Among B2C based e-commerce handicraft sites that have not been successful is PEOPLink, which is a website promoting and selling objects from 100 craftsmen in 30 different countries, and has sold only a few items from certain producers. Another example is world2market.com which abandoned selling to consumers in 2000 and closed down in 2001 due to decreasing sales and the high cost of promoting their site (Batchelor and Webb, 57: 2002).

It is due to this lack of realism that the US handicrafts importer "10,000 Villages" took the decision of not promoting their successful handicraft products online. The company's marketing director Dwight McFadden claims that "people who buy one item online may buy two or three items when they visit one of their stores" (Batchelor and Webb, 58: 2002). Indeed, the reason he can claim this is because the company distributes products over 70 retail outlets, a benefit which the artisans in the Artisanal Center of

Azrou do not have. However, an interesting point can be observed regarding the e-commerce website that the Artisanat wants to set up: it does not necessarily have to sell the products online right from the start. It will be even more effective to take a step-by-step approach by using the website simply as a means to publicize the center and its products, an advertising that it is greatly lacking. This publicity can then bring more international visitors to the center. With time and continued online publicity, the center will become more and more known, giving it a reputation high enough to gain the trust of customers who would purchase products online. Although this might seem to be a plausible solution, one must consider the five other factors that can cause problems with e-commerce.

Digital compressed image colors are not accurate

Similar to the previous problem, exposing products via digital images also lacks realism because the colors seen in the image are not the same as those seen in real life in terms of brightness, texture, and tone. This is due to the image compression necessary for efficient display of images over the internet, which rids the image of small details such as fine grains on a rug. It is also due to the nature of photography, where the flash may affect the tone of the colors. Unless a team of image optimizers is present to readjust the colors, it is rare for the colors on the digital image to match perfectly with those in real life. One may wonder why colors are such a big deal, and the answer is simple: some customers like to tediously choose objects for home decoration with colors that match perfectly with the set of furniture they own. Furthermore, when selling in bulk, the wholesaler making the bulk orders will want an accurate representation of the

texture and colors of the objects purchased. For this reason, customers prefer to buy their products from printed catalogs obtained through mail order rather than online. Eziba, a US online crafts retailer, has strategically taken this into consideration by making paper catalogs its major promotional tool to consumers (Batchelor and Webb, 58: 2002).

The Azrou artisans, more specifically the women's weaving cooperative which produces colorful rugs, can follow this model by developing an annual or bimestrial paper catalog of all its rugs, carpets, and hanbels, and offering it as an alternative to the online catalog, available through mail order, which UPS or Fedex can handle easily. The catalog can also be distributed in national artisanal conventions and fairs, with all contact information included in it, as a means of publicity. The drawback, however, is that the cooperative will need some assistance to be able to publish and print these catalogs. With a government grant or facilitated loans, however, this could become possible.

Customers expect high service standards

International customer expectations for service standards is most likely the most troubling of all barriers for e-commerce, especially in Morocco. The paradox is that the artisan's target market is Western consumers, yet these are the most demanding customers in terms of service. Even with the most prosperous Moroccan Telecom company, there is a serious lack of service quality compared to American providers, let alone an artisan who does not even know what customer service is (personal experience: 2006). Among the services demanded by the Western consumer are next day delivery, an effective return policy, easy servicing of products, and quality of workmanship. Many Western consumers buy such handicrafts as a last minute purchase as a gift for someone.

Having to wait a week or more for a shipment to arrive from a distant country will not make that consumer happy. Furthermore, the consumer wants to be able to easily return the item if it is not to his or her appeal, without having to ship it back to the country it came from. This usually means that a local contact for returns and a personal contact to handle enquiries are needed. For more expensive or larger items, the customer wants a warranty and a way of servicing and maintaining the products easily. Last but not least, the consumer wants to be reassured that the product is not made of harmful materials, is fit for its purpose, and in the context of fair trade, that its manufacturing process was not harmful to the environment (Batchelor and Webb, 59: 2002).

Although many of the service issues including shipping and returns can be handled through the use of reputable shipping companies such as UPS, several other service issues are completely dependent on the producers of the goods. Personal customer support, for example, will be difficult for the artisans working in the Azrou Center due to language barriers. International commerce implies the need to read and write at least in English. This, however, can be mediated through the help of PCV Sharon Keld. There is also a woman working in the desk of one of the woodcrafter workshops that can read and write in English, but she is not working with the women's cooperative. It will therefore be necessary for the cooperative to make agreements with this woman unless someone else in the cooperative is competent enough to undertake the task.

Servicing the goods on site may be done with the cooperation of the Peace Corps, who have headquarters in the US. Realistically, a return policy can easily bankrupt the center, which is why it must implement effective quality control and clearly communicate this to the customer along with the fact that returns cannot be handled. Quality control

will ensure that the products made are durable enough to rarely need servicing, which is the case for many products such as rugs and wooden sculptures.

Furthermore, to address the question of fair trade, all the products seen in the center are handmade, besides the factory-processed wool which the carpet weavers purchase from Casablanca, and are made of non-toxic and environmentally friendly raw materials. For the thread used to make the carpets, the Peace Corps has been holding training sessions to show artisans how to naturally die their products, and this has been proven to be very successful and environmentally friendly, although it has yet to be implemented for the Artisanat's weaving cooperative (Personal interview with Sharon Keld, 09/18/07).

The company's reputation, financial security, and privacy:

The company's reputation or brand name plays a big role in determining the success of the e-commerce business. The consumer has legitimate concerns for the security of their credit/debit card payments and the privacy of their personal information, especially internationally. Over the past, there have been some serious cases of hacking credit card numbers of on-line banks, and fraudulent use of customer's credit cards. Security expert Bruce Schneier explains that security should be considered a process, not a product, and that it is only "as secure as the weakest link, which is almost always people" (Batchelor and Webb, 61: 2002). For instance, if the user uses a simple password for his or her account, it is more likely to be cracked than one who uses a much more complex password. That is why the website must aim for higher security standards not only by the software and coding it uses for its website, but also by ensuring that the user goes through a secure process when entering personal information. One example among many is when

the user is forced to enter a password that is more than eight characters long, has at least one digit, one letter, and one upper case letter.

Privacy is another concern, since websites store the customer's personal data in their databases when an order is made. In the Western world there are strict laws dealing with how this data is used, and the customer wants to make sure none of his or her personal information is used for reasons other than what it was intended for. An example of undesired use of private data is e-commerce sites that use the customer's email to bombard them with undesired promotional offers, or adding their email to a circulation list for spamming (sending out mass amounts of unwanted emails).

With the wave of numerous emerging dot.com companies in the 90's, and the miserable failure of many, the consumer remains cautious which online companies he or she trusts, and will usually stick to the most known brand names, such as amazon.com or eBay. In the fair trade handicraft context, trusted brand names such as 10,000 villages, Oxfam, Traidcraft, and others, provide the customer with the comfort they desire due to the quality customer service and retail store alternatives they provide. Indeed these companies have invested greatly into customer service (Batchelor and Webb, 60: 2002).

For the artisans working in the Azrou Artisanat, who are not even well known nationally, the question of trust can present a big concern, yet there are ways to face it. One solution is to include in the website a brief description of the Artisanal center itself, talking about the history of the center, and explaining how it is a governmental institution. It is also true that the center has a connection with and is supported by AUI (Akhawayn University of Ifrane), and must therefore clearly demonstrate it in the website. Another useful option is obtaining an internationally renowned fair-trade label

by applying for certification from any of the existing fair trade labeling organizations. There are several of these, each specializing in a different type of production. While the Fair-trade Labeling Organizations International (FLO) focuses on certifying and labeling disadvantaged agricultural producers, the International Fair Organization (FTO) is geared specifically towards handicraft producers (“Fair Trade”).



Figure 10: FTO label
Source: ifat.org

The rights to use the label shown in figure 10 require a membership with the International Fair Trade Association (IFAT) and a maximum annual fee of € 2.500 for members in Africa, depending on the company’s profits that year (see appendix D: IFAT membership fees) ("Membership Fees from May 2007"). Membership, however, requires the applicant to have a history of sales and revenue from sales that represents at least 50% of total income (“Who can apply?”). Fortunately, the women’s weaving cooperative does keep a record of sales. However, the cost of membership is much too elevated for the center to afford with its current state of affair. However, this may be a

useful recommendation for future use if ever the center becomes more prosperous. There is in fact one IFAT member in Morocco, and it is a women's clothing cooperative based in Marrakech (see appendix D section 8.13.1. for more information).

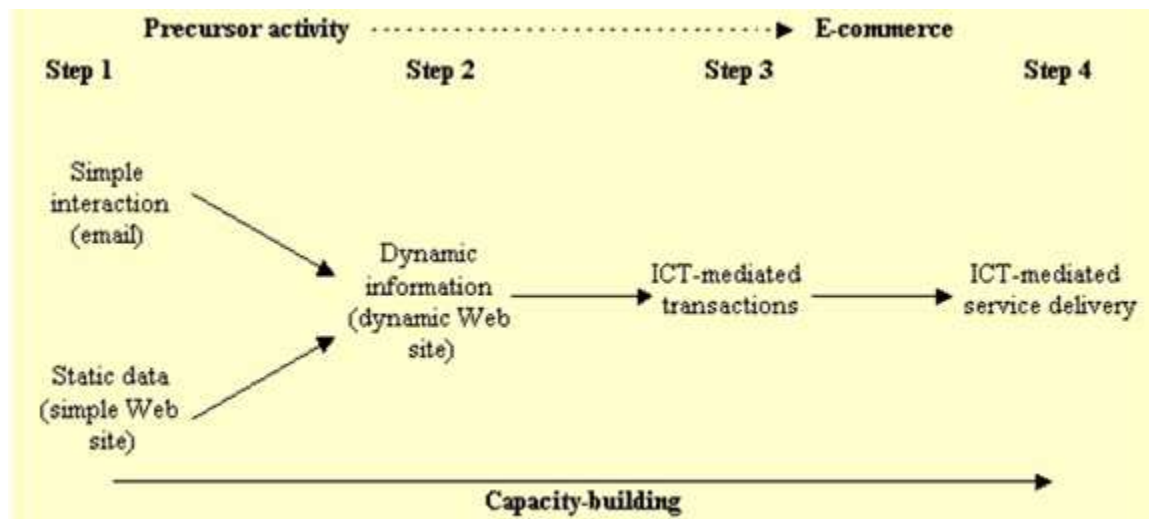
A reputable label, combined with accurate information about the center and its goals, as well as the use of a reputable shipping company such as UPS for shipping, will certainly make the customer feel more comfortable making purchases on the Azrou Artisanat's website. However, the use of credit cards and the issue online privacy can hinder this. It is therefore necessary for the Artisanat's website to include a privacy policy that will clearly lay out how secure the client's personal data will be, and how it will be used. The issue of making a credit card payment on the website can be addressed by outsourcing the payment information page to a secure page handled by a financial institution to which the Artisanat of Azrou has or will have membership. If the customer decides to use Paypal for payment, the website can simply include a Paypal link which will take the customer to a secure page administered by Paypal itself. Paypal will then send a confirmation of payment to the website, allowing it proceed with packaging and delivery. If the customer opts for a direct credit card payment, a similar approach can be taken. Just like the website Mircochoix.ma does, it is possible to have a link to a payment form administered and secured by the Artisanat's bank. The idea of outsourcing the payment forms to reputable payment companies will certainly reduce the user's hesitation to make the payment online.

Conclusion:

We have so far established the definition of e-commerce and identified its different uses and ways of usage. We have also seen through the examples of Microchoix and Kasbahouse that e-commerce can work in Morocco, and noted how these companies tackled the essential problems that we believe the artisans of Azrou would be facing while building their e-commerce sites. We have also identified potential problems by explaining the barriers of business to consumer e-commerce in the context of selling handicrafts. The barriers include the lack of smell and feel when the crafts are portrayed as images, the color inaccuracy in digital images, the high service expectations of Western consumers, and the issues of trust, financial security, and privacy that concern the customer. For each of these barriers, we suggested several solutions: the use of paper catalogs to be distributed in fairs and given to wholesale clients, the use of reputable shipping companies such as UPS to handle shipping and returns, the need for a clear return policy as well as a privacy policy, acquiring a reputable international fair trade label such as the FTO label, and outsourcing online payment forms. However, many of these suggestions are difficult to implement because they require financial means which the Artisanat of Azrou does not currently have. For this reason, the following section describes a set of key success factors for an e-commerce website of any scale and for any budget.

7.1.5. Key success factors for e-commerce websites

Before going into the specifics, it is helpful to consider the steps that successful producers and alternative trade organizations have taken to establish effective websites. Many of these began by using only emails to communicate with clients. They then evolved into making a few web pages that displayed a small selection of goods, most likely through the use of cataloging software such as PEOPlink's catgen. The next step was then to register their own domain name, create and manage their own web space, and if necessary and possible, incorporating online financial transaction features and managing product dispatch. The following diagram made by Heeks outlines the step-by-step process to be taken:



Source: *Analysing E-commerce for Development*, Richard Heeks, IDPM, University of Manchester, UK, 2000⁴⁷

Figure 11: Step by step e-commerce development process according to Heeks
Source: Stated on the figure

It is therefore encouraging for the artisans in Azrou to know that one can start small, with little or no budget, and evolve as time and budget permits, and according to need. This prevents wasting time, money, and effort. The idea of a step-by-step process also helps in creating an effective website as the producers obtain feedback from the users and model their website to most appropriately satisfy the user.

The research paper done by Batchelor and Webb identifies seven key factors for making a successful e-commerce site, which are: defining the website audience and strategy, integrating with other processes, registering with search engines and optimizing ranking, building links to the website, promoting the website offline, starting an email newsletter, and processing payment. All these suggestions will prove to be useful if the Azrou Artisanat decides to continue building its e-commerce website. All credits for this section go to Batchelor and Webb.

Define the website audience and strategy

In order to have a good idea of what content, design, and navigation system the website should have, it is important to know who the site is intended for, and what are the website's goals. The audience can range from national to international buyers, and can be general consumers, suppliers, wholesalers, alternative trade organizations, or other organizations, depending on whether the e-commerce business is to consumer (B2C), business to business (B2B), or both. The audience may or may not have special interest for fair trade. The type of audience will determine the language, type, and style of the information presented. The goals of the website will determine whether it is purely informational, commercial, or both, what specific products to promote, how the customer

will contact the producers, and whether it is used to promote the products themselves, the artisans who made the products, the art, the workshop itself, or all of these. For example, if the website is aimed at promoting the artisanat itself, one may want to make sure that travel directions are included so people can visit it (Batchelor and Webb, 64: 2002).

Integrate with other processes

The next question to be asked is once the website is constructed, how will correspondence be kept with the buyer in case of inquiries, who will be in charge of it, and how will it be integrated with the other tasks the business must handle? In case of email inquiries, it is important to establish a way to keep contact with buyers in case those in charge of the correspondence are absent. Correspondence is crucial since a serious buyer typically will lose interest in buying if his request is not answered within 24 hours. It is therefore important to have a plan that will consider all these factors (Batchelor and Webb, 65: 2002).

Register with search engines and optimize ranking

It is crucial to register the website with commonly used search engines such Google, Alta Vista, and Yahoo, because search engines are what most internet users use to find the information they seek. Some web design software and packages automatically register the website to known search engine, but in the other case one must do so manually through the search engine's websites. Once registered, it is also important to optimize the ranking of your website in order to increase the chance for users to it. This is done by designing the web pages using specific keywords, especially in headings and

titles, which you think the buyer may be typing when searching for your specific products or information. Another strategy is to divide any written content into smaller and more focused sections, which will open more doors for the user to enter your website from, since the page will be listed by search engines under many different headings and keywords (Batchelor and Webb, 65: 2002).

Build links to the website

An effective way of promoting your website is by being referred to from other organizations to which you are affiliated, related, or work with. Many websites having a specific page listing links to other sites, exchanging referral links is a common practice for websites. You can therefore contact the webmaster of the website you wish to be listed in, in exchange for listing that website in your own site. Banner exchanges, which is the same concept as links except it includes graphical content, is also an option. There also exist specific directories and indexes, free or paid-for, to which one may list his website. Last but not least, one may also list in printed directories and publications offline (Batchelor and Webb, 66: 2002).

Promote the website offline

It is also important to make use of off-line resources to promote the website. This can be done by including the website address along with email information in the company's business cards, directory entries, posters, and all forms of paperwork and advertisement. If the company does not make use of any form of advertisement, it is time to do so, especially in business cards and organizational literature, since it is affordable

and essential. If the producers, who in our case are the Artisanat workers, do make use of emails, one may consider including in the email's signature the website and email addresses alongside other contact information of the e-commerce business (Batchelor and Webb, 67: 2002).

Start an email newsletter

A weekly or monthly email newsletter is an excellent and cost-effective way of reminding customers and contacts of one's business and activities. It can be used to promote new products, and link back to the website so that the readers of the newsletter can find out more about the items they are interested in. A newsletter can begin simply as a group mailing, which is an option provided in many if not all email managers. Once the company gains more experience and financial means, it can then evolve to a more sophisticated email list or listserv. However, by courtesy to the customer, one must not spam the contacts with too many emails or too often, and one must make sure that the contact can only see his or her own email address when the group mail option is used in order to respect the privacy of all customers (Batchelor and Webb, 67: 2002).

Payment processing

“Government restrictions on access to hard currency”, “limited access to credit/debit cards and merchant status”, “high cost of setting up payment processing per transaction charges”, and the “lack of ‘e-readiness’ by national government, the banks, and the producers themselves,” are all reasons why payment processing poses a barrier for developing countries such as Morocco (Batchelor and Webb, 67: 2002). However, as

we have seen in the case studies about e-commerce in Morocco (see section 6.1), it is feasible. The possibility mentioned was the use of Paypal, which does not require merchant status. Batchelor and Webb mention two other methods, which are: the use of “managed catalogue and storefront sites such as PEOPlink’s Catgen (www.catgen.org), which offer shopping cart and payment processing”, and the setting up of an account with an international multi-currency PSP (Payment Service Provider) such as “Worldpay (www.worldpay.com) and their local associates (www.worldpaypartners.com), who offer bureau facilities for companies without their own credit/debit card merchant status” (Batchelor and Webb, 68: 2002).

Conclusion:

The key success factors listed above all apply to the context of the Artisanat of Azrou, and are crucial in increasing the quality of the website if the Artisanat does decide to pursue its efforts in making an e-commerce website. However, according to research done by Batchelor and Webb, the B2C model has not proven to be very fruitful for handicraft trades, and this is because of the barriers discussed in section 7.1.4. Despite this, according to Batchelor and Webb, the internet can offer enhancements to existing processes and business activities, and the proper application of the options to be presented can bring significant cost-benefits to producers (Batchelor and Webb, 81: 2002).

7.1.5. E-commerce options

This section discusses all the e-commerce options that Batchelor and Webb describe as key recommendations for handicraft traders in developing countries and who seek to use the internet to enhance their business. It is included with the goal of demonstrating to the Azrou Artisanat different ways to take advantage of the internet to enhance the businesses of the artisans working there.

On-line catalogs

According to Batchelor and Webb, catalog-based websites can be a useful enhancement when dealing with wholesale and retail buyers (B2B business model), and this has been the approach taken by several more successful craft sites such as OneNest, and Global Sources. However, these last claim that the use of an on-line catalogs does not gain new customers, but does allow existing customers to browse through and find the products they want more easily and rapidly. This is why OneNest sticks to conventional marketing to find new customers, which is mostly offline. These methods include attending trade shows, advertising in appropriate trade directories and publications, and the mailing of catalogs and newsletters to contacts. Furthermore, it is helpful for craft producers to include stories about themselves, their heritage, and the crafts they make in specific, since this promotes the products by giving them a more humanistic value. This is especially important for fair trade enthusiasts (Batchelor and Webb, 82: 2002). In conclusion, it is important for Artisans in Azrou to master these conventional marketing techniques rather than rely solely on the internet for radical change, and it is very helpful to tell stories in their catalogs.

Design

Producers that Batchelor and Webb have spoken to claim that advice and guidance from professional designers based in Europe or the US has been crucial in helping them develop products appropriate for export. This is an important way for producers to win international retail contacts or even win contracts to supply retail chains since it builds variety and local capacity, like organizations such as Traidcraft have pointed out. The cost to bring an overseas professional to consult producers for one or two weeks, however, is very high, and the producers often cannot afford this. Therefore, the conventional solution is to have the professional designer hold a workshop for several producers at the same time, such as has been done in Morocco with the help of the Peace Corps. However, this approach too often does not allow the designer to be present throughout the entire development process of the producer, whereas the other solution, which is the use of internet conferencing, does. Microsoft, among many other software developers, offers software bundles, such as Msn Messenger, that handle audio and video conferencing, file sharing, and other meeting tools. The problem with this, however, is that it requires a good quality connection with sufficient bandwidth from both ends (Batchelor and Webb, 82: 2002). With bandwidths reaching up to 20 MB/s in Morocco, it is not impossible, but the cost of such bandwidths is very expensive compared to services offered in Europe and the US. For example, a 512mb connection, which is barely sufficient for quality video and audio conferencing, costs 300 MAD per month with the only terrestrial ISP in Morocco up to date: Maroc Telecom (“Nos offers”). This sum represents a significant amount for artisans who, according to Sharon Keld, touch no more than 2000 dirham of income per month (interview with Sharon Keld, 08/30/07).

Email

According to a survey of fair trade organizations done by Batchelor and Webb, email has been identified to be the most important medium of communication, ahead of telephone and fax, especially in developing countries. Of the 34 producers surveyed, 91% made use of email as their primary means of communication (Batchelor and Webb, 83: 2002). The reason is simple: when dealing with national contacts and especially with overseas clients, email is much more cost-effective than telephone and fax. Email is also efficient in “processing sales information, assisting in product development, and enhancing communications with organizations”, since one can take the time and effort needed to properly prepare the contents of the email rather than dealing with customers in real time (Batchelor and Webb, 83: 2002). For instance, in case the producers do not have the means or knowledge to make a website, email is an easy and cheap alternative to send information and photos of their products to prospective or existing customers. Email can sometimes be more reliable than postal services, and is definitely faster. For this reason, it can be used as a simple marketing tool, allowing the use of newsletters and group mails, while building an email list of buyers and contacts.

The only problem might be access to internet. However, the artisans in Azrou can make use of cybercafés which are present in Azrou according to what we have seen from our visit there. These can be accessed on an affordable pay-per-hour basis, ranging from five to ten dirham per hour.

Multimedia

Today, due to the rapid development of technology and availability of diverse software, multimedia solutions such as slide shows, flash presentations, and videos, are much more affordable and accessible. One can produce good quality videos with just a digital camera and a desktop or laptop for video editing, which would cost less than 20,000 MAD. Five years ago, the material for filming and video editing would have cost twenty times more (Batchelor and Webb, 85 2002). Videos are a wonderful way of promotion and marketing, since it can show the artisans making their crafts, manufacturing processes, and tell the stories of the individual artisans. CD's containing the videos can be produced cheaply by burning them using a desktop or laptop with a dvd or vcd burner. A blank dvd cd today costs around 5 dirham as opposed to 20 dirham two years ago. The videos can also be streamed for free on online video broadcasters such as Youtube or Google Video, and customers can be provided with a link to view the video. World shops based in the US and Europe, who import fair trade products and crafts from producers in developing countries, identify promotional material such as videos and graphical presentations as priority needs to help promote these goods (Caserta 2001).

For the artisans in the Artisanat of Azrou, who do not have a computer nor a digital camera to work with, an affordable alternative would be to rent these or even borrow them from individuals willing to rent or lend, just for the duration of the filming and editing.

Market information

Angelo Caserta, author of the NEWS! 2001 study *Creating a fair trade partnership through a fair trade global communication system*, identifies market trends as being the “top information need listed by both World Shops and producer organizations” (Caserta 2001). The internet not only allows the individual and retail buyers in Europe and the US to view the products from less developed countries, but also allows producers to see the newest trends in gifts, furniture, home décor, and other craft goods in the international market. This allows them to adapt their own crafts and designs to meet these trends and satisfy the consumer more easily. Some online fair trade organizations such as Viatru have taken advantage of this by providing their producers with market intelligence through newsletters containing links and information about the market trends. As opposed to conventional use of catalogs and magazines for ideas about designs which become quickly outdated, the internet consistently offers more accurate and up to date information about trends and seasons (Batchelor and Webb, 86: 2002).

We have seen how B2C e-commerce is not the most successful business model for most producers in developing countries due to lack of financial means and national infrastructure necessary for efficient e-commerce, which limits the supply chain (see section 7.1.4 on e-commerce barriers). The more reliable model is therefore the B2B business model, where the producer group relies on alternative trade organizations such as Traidcraft or 10,000 Villages to handle the retailing of the products to the end consumer, due to their greater experience, financial means, and infrastructure. The producers only act as suppliers to a local ATO (Alternative Trade Organization), who will ship the products to an ATO abroad for distribution. This model is illustrated by

Batchelor and Webb in the following diagram:

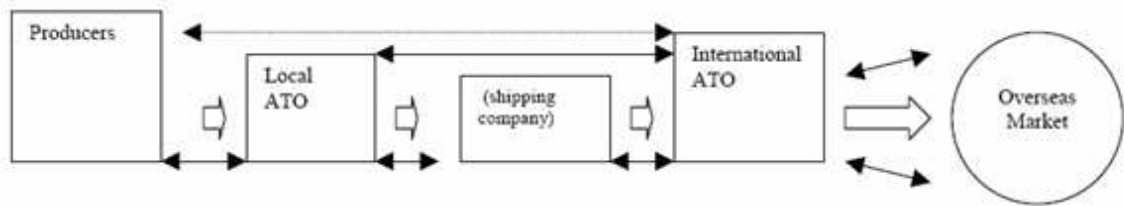


Figure 12: Supply flows for craft producers before introduction of Internet technology (Batchelor and Webb, 86: 2002)

As one can see, with this model, the producers cannot see the market trends of the international market since they do not deal with the market directly. However, as described by Batchelor and Webb, the internet can be introduced into this model as a ‘lens’ that allows the producers to see the internal market the same way that the ATO’s distributing their products do:

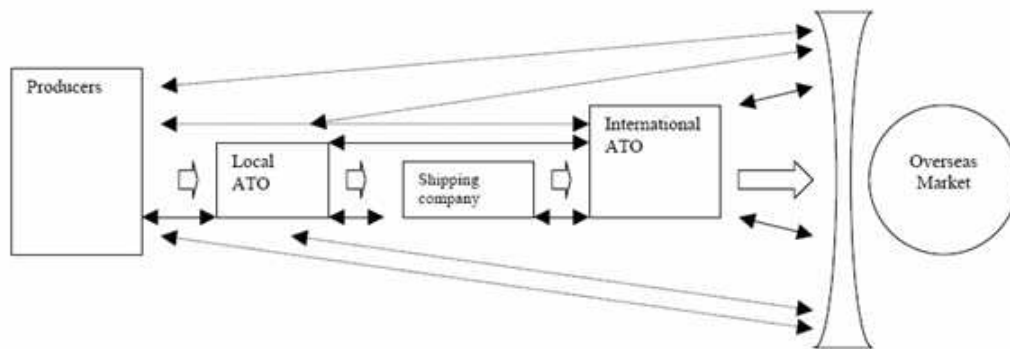


Figure 13: Information and supply flow charts with the ‘e-commerce lens’ (Batchelor and Webb, 87: 2002)

This business model, compared to the B2C one, has strength and a weakness. The advantage is that it allows the producers to empower themselves by showing the international market who they are and what they do, through their own website. On the other hand, since the producer is a member of the ATO, their search engine rankings will

be insignificant because all keywords will first lead to the ATO rather than the producer group, since the ATO has invested more money and time into optimizing its rankings. This means that the buyer will have to browse through the ATO's website to find products, which means they will be able to see the 100s of other producers represented by the ATO (Batchelor and Webb, 87: 2002). This brings forth an issue of competition. If the producers are independent from any ATO's however, their name will not be affiliated to the ATO and as a result, their rankings will be higher. For B2C to work however, the producer must be able to handle all the demands of the supply chain discussed previously.

After a tedious search in all the ATO's cited in the Batchelor and Webb research paper, none seem to represent Moroccan crafts, which means that currently, there are or possible very few local ATO's based in Morocco. This means that the B2B model cannot be applied until the arrival of ATO's in Morocco, which may come with the implementation of the Ministry's strategy for artisanat for 2015. Therefore, the artisans in Azrou, have no other choice than to follow a B2C model for e-commerce for the time being.

Future opportunities

Although we have covered the ways to make a successful e-commerce website and considered the several ways internet technology can be used to enhance the business, the handicraft business is by nature vulnerable to shifting markets. For his reason, Batchelor and Webb describe in their research paper several future business opportunities for handcraft workers, including a fair trade global communication system, and digital

fair trade.

Fair trade stakeholders, including producers, importers, labeling organizations, and world shops, realize that the communication system among them does not have an efficient information flow. That is, while world shops have no difficulties with reciprocal communication between them and consumers, producer organizations face a wall of obstacles that makes this task very difficult. Furthermore, labeling organizations deal directly with producer groups, but have little interference with world shops, importing organizations, and national associations. Other information flow barriers are illustrated in this flowchart proposed by Caserta's 2001 study, where grey arrows represent outgoing information and the white arrows incoming information:

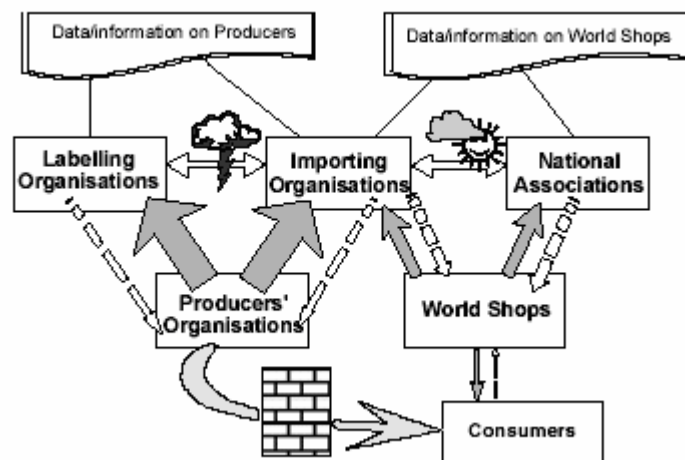


Figure 14: Current information flow between fair-trade stakeholders (Caserta, 2001, 25)

In order to improve transparency between all stakeholders, increase information flow, enable producers to share their stories, product information, and background information with World Shops and other retailers, and allow the collection of customer profiles and feedback, Caserta proposes a portal (FairTradeForum.net) that will be

accessible to all affiliated parties (Batchelor and Webb, 90: 2002). This will lead to a new information flow model as shown in figure 15:

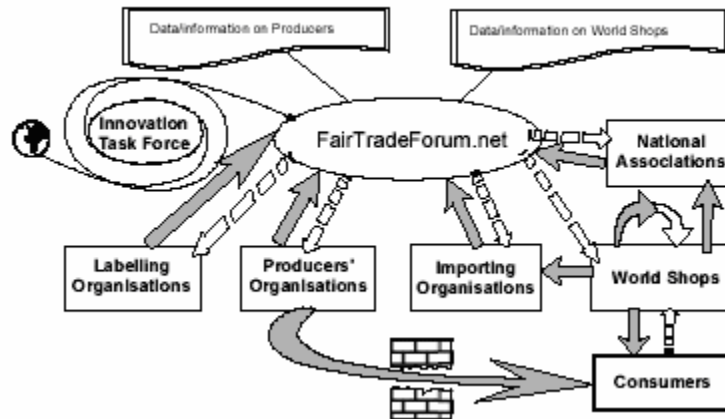


Figure 15: Improved information flow between fair trade stakeholders (Caserta, 2001, 29)

Another interesting option is that of digital fair trade. Today, all forms of digital media is being sold on the internet, including music, movies, games, photos, text and books, and software. The advantages of digital products are that they are easy to store, can be copied without degradation (therefore can be made once and copied many times for distribution). Digital compression also allows media to be attached to emails and accessed even with low bandwidths. Last but not least, development software is commonly available and is sometimes free to use (Batchelor and Webb, 92: 2002). What this means for handicraft artisans is that their designs, cultures, and crafts do not have to be sold in physical form. Designs, such as those seen in wood carvings, carpet weavings, pottery, and metal inscriptions, can all be drawn and scanned to be converted into a digital image format that can have high commercial value. For instance, a web designer looking to give a new look to his or her website may purchase a set of designs created by

artisans in order to have the right to use them to decorate or give an aesthetic theme to his website. Modern clothing designers may also want inspiration by browsing through digital designs created by artisans around the world, then purchase the rights to use the ones they desire. Artisans may also decide to produce and sell digital postcards and greeting cards with unique pictures involving their crafts. This will serve to promote their crafts and cultures while producing income.

Conclusion:

E-commerce can provide some important business and marketing enhancements through the use of on-line catalogs, conference technology to obtain advice from professional designers, email to reduce communication costs and help market one's products with the use newsletters, digital multimedia to enhance the marketing of products, and a way for the artisan organizations to stay informed about the current market trends. Aside from these benefits, we have explored future opportunities which e-commerce may offer, including digital fair trade, and forum for global communication between all fair trade stakeholders.

Along with the key success factors for making a website, the case studies presented in section 6.1, and the barriers to e-commerce for developing handicraft specialists, one should have acquired a broad understanding of what e-commerce is in the context of fair trade, its advantages, disadvantages, difficulties, the resources needed to fund it, its future potential, and the magnitude of its utility specifically for the Azrou Artisanat. Furthermore, by focusing on the details of e-commerce, we hope to have made it clear for the Artisanat not to be over-optimistic about what it can do, since it will not be

the only factor necessary for guaranteed success. Rather, one should embrace e-commerce as a step towards success.

Success, which we all want for the Artisanat, depends on an array of other factors addressing the specific problems mentioned in section 4, such as the lack of affordable means of transportation, and the shift of customer interest away from handicraft goods in general. Many of these problems are being addressed by the state in its strategy for 2015, whereas others can be handled locally in Azrou and the artisanat itself, such as advertisement. A large part of publicity can be covered by e-commerce. However, publicity is an entire domain that can be handled in many different ways, and the more diverse the publicity is, the better chance the Artisanat has of becoming better known than it is today. This is why the next section focuses on another solution that will help publicize the artisans working in the Azrou region, and ultimately, the Azrou Artisanat itself. Although it is covered in less detail than e-commerce because it is not so much within the direct control of the Artisanat itself, it is just as important a solution, if not more important.

7.2. Ethical tourism

The World Tourism Organization (WTO) reported that tourism generated \$733 billion of receipt in 2006 (“Facts & Figures”). The WTO estimates that tourism will grow by an average of 4.1% per year until 2020. The following diagram shows this impressive trend:

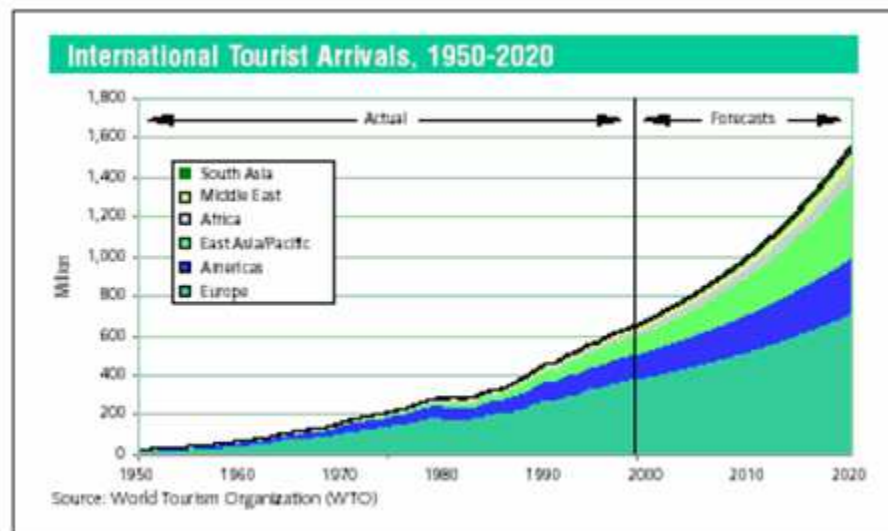


Figure 16: International Tourist Arrivals (“Facts & Figures”)

Tourism represents 35% of the world’s exports of services, 70% of which is from least developed countries (“Facts & Figures”). With the enhanced global awareness about environmental and social issues, there has been a general shift of tourism towards developing countries, with particular interest in ethical tourism. The same trend is observed for Morocco:

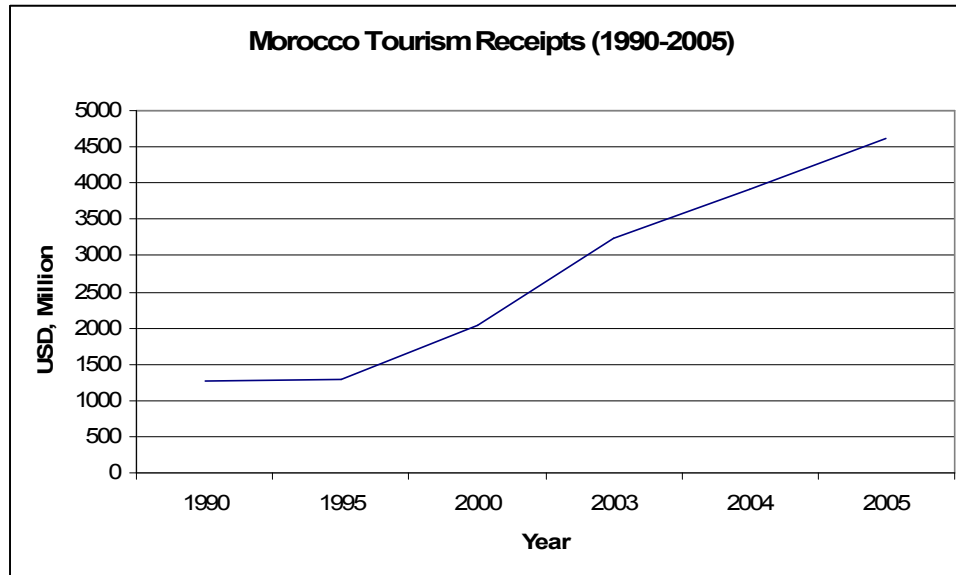


Figure 17: Morocco Tourism Receipts (1990-2005)
 Source: Data from appendix C, table 1

Ecotourism, sustainable tourism, fair trade tourism, responsible tourism, people-to-people tourism, and pro-poor tourism are just a few of the many terms used to refer to the same concept. For this paper, we will refer to the phenomenon as ethical tourism, which is defined in many different ways. According to the Fair Trade in Tourism Network, it “aims to maximize the benefits from tourism for local destination stakeholders through mutually beneficial and equitable partnerships between national and international tourism stakeholders in the destination. It also supports the right of indigenous host communities, whether involved in tourism or not, to participate as equal stakeholders and beneficiaries in the tourism development process” (“Fair Trade in Tourism Network”). G. Gordon and C. Townsend claim that it “offers tour operators a competitive advantage and safeguards the future of the industry by ensuring the long-term sustainability of a destination. It offers tourists a richer experience, as holidays will draw on the interests of those living there and those working for development, as it can

help combat poverty and contribute to sustainable development” (Gordon and Townsend, 2001). The key points to retain from these definitions is that ethical tourism aims to help the destination become self-sustainable in the long term, to provide mutually beneficial partnerships between the tourist and the host, and to allow the indigenous or poorer people of the host community to benefit from the income of tourism by drawing more attention to their way of life, while at the same time contributing to the cultural experience of the visitor. Although not specifically mentioned in these definitions, ethical tourism also aims to preserve the environment of the destination (Batchelor and Webb, 94: 2002).

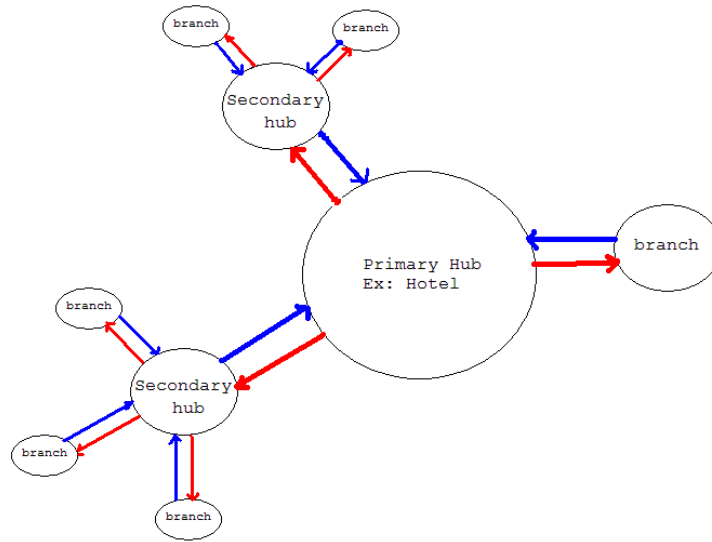
7.2.1. How ethical tourism operates

One of the primary drives for ethical tourism has been the 50-80% tourism revenue ‘leaks’ that occurs in traditional tourism. That is, most of the income made by the hosting country ends up leaking back to first world countries rather than being used to enhance the lives of local people in need. This is because traditional tourism tends to benefit more significantly the most powerful people in a country, such as those who invested into tourist projects such as hotels, resorts, clubs, and other traditional tourist necessities (Batchelor and Webb, 101: 2002). Our own personal experiences suggest that rich Moroccans, for example will typically send their children for education abroad, spend money buying luxury cars that are imported from abroad, and purchase much of their home décor from European countries. In all these cases, the income that has been generated from tourism has been sent right back to first world countries from which the

tourists came. It is for this reason that ethical tourism aims to refocus the visitors' buying power on the poorer people of the country, among these are artisans.

Anna Pollock and Leon Benjamin describe tourism as a fully scalable ecosystem where there exist mutual and mutually beneficial relationships between all members of that ecosystem (Pollock and Benjamin, 2001). For example, a hotel can comprise the heart of the ecosystem, since this is the tourist's point of return in traditional tourism. The hotel often includes a massive array of services, many of which are affiliated to it rather than an integral part of it (through mutual agreements). Such affiliations can range from the merchants who supply the ingredients, fruits, vegetables, or meats used by the hotel's restaurants, to tour or transport agencies whose services are publicized by the hotel. In all these cases, mutual agreements are made between the hub (the hotel) and its branches (the affiliated businesses). The concept of scalability becomes apparent when one considers that income can flow from the tourist to the hub to the affiliated branches, and that each of these branches can represent a hub of its own with its own affiliated branches. This amounts to a massive network of interconnections and mutual agreements, where the money spent by one tourist will benefit the entire ecosystem. However, in this model, the primary hub benefits the most since it possesses the first income, and the benefits decrease as they go to the outermost branches. This leaves the poorest people, such as artisans, who are the outer branches, with little to no benefit.

Figure 18 below illustrates this ecosystem model:



Key:

Size of circle: benefits made directly from the tourist.

Red arrow: Money spent by tourist

Blue arrow: Money incoming from connected branches in exchange for publicity from hub

Figure 18: Ecosystem model for traditional tourism as interpreted by us
 Source: Inspired from (Pollock and Benjamin, 2001)

Ethical tourism therefore works by refocusing the tourist’s primary ‘hubs’ towards the outer branches so that these branches (the poorer people) benefit more directly and therefore more significantly from the tourist’s spending. In an ideal ethical tourism ecosystem, all circles in figure 18 would be of equal size, but this is not realistic. Ethical tourism is therefore considered successful if the outermost branch circle sizes are not much smaller than the hubs they are connected to.

A holistic understanding of this theory can be difficult to grasp, which is why the following section presents a case study of a successful form of ethical tourism.

7.2.2. How the Azrou Artisanat can take advantage of ethical tourism

Ethical tourism can save the Artisanat from the financial depression it is facing today. However, successful exploitation of ethical tourism demands certain pre-requisites, many which the Artisanat does not currently have or control. In this section, we define the pre-requisites, determine what is controllable and what is not, and give recommendations for the Artisanat to acquire the controllable ones and improve on pre-requisites it already has.

Pre-requisites are controllable when the Artisanat, on its own, has the financial resources, authority, and means to make a change. Based on the case study about our visit to Fez, and what we learned from Zahri and Keld about the limited means the Artisanat has access to, two factors are believed to be controllable at least to some extent:

- Emphasizing the fair-trade aspect of the Artisanat
- Publicity

Fair-trade and presentation

We have seen in Fez that fair-trade is synonymous to success. Key aspects of fair trade include the manufacturing process, how ‘eco-friendly’ it is, the people involved in it along with their way of life, and the strategic presentation of all these factors. The Azrou artisanat includes only three types of artisanat: wood carving, metal crafting, and carpet weaving. The carpet weaving cooperative has a larger workshop compared to the other

shops, but is not as open, in terms of presentation, as the smaller shops. From the weaving cooperative, we were taken to see the women doing the weaving, and then brought back to the shop selling their rugs. Perhaps due to the nature of our visit, it did not seem that the shop was well presented to us. That is, Fatima, the president of the cooperative did not automatically show us each individual step of the weaving of carpets, a strong point which we observed was being insisted on in Fez. Therefore we recommend that Fatima devise a well organized presentation plan for visitors. This will involve going through every step of the process: from where the wool or thread is stored, to the weaving of the carpet or *hanbel*, to the finishing touches. Improving presentation may even require Fatima to change the setup of the workshop so that the position of every type of manufacturing step is physically located between the one preceding it and the one following it. This will enhance the flow of the presentation. It is essential that the shop selling the carpets be the final, rather than the first step of the presentation. During the presentation, it may be helpful to inform the visitor about the workers. Among other factors can be: where they come from, how many children they have to support, and how long they have been working there. This builds a humanistic connection between the visitor and the worker, ultimately increasing the true value of the product being made.

The same concepts can be applied to the four other shops in the Artisanat. Two wood shops and Said's metal shop are run by the artisan himself. This presents a great advantage for those artisans since the visitor buys directly from the person who made the craft. With no intermediary between the crafter and the buyer, the craft being sold has greater emotional value to the crafter who spent time and effort to make it. At the same

time, the buyer knows for sure that the object he is buying will directly benefit the artisan, and by making the purchase, feels that the artisan is really grateful. For fair-trade enthusiasts, this may be a marketing advantage. The following picture shows one of the wood carvers doing his everyday job:



Figure 19: Left: Afiri Marouane, Right: Abdeljabbar Mohammed

This arrangement is exemplary of a good fair-trade setup, where the shop comprises both the manufacturing process and the goods being sold. However, the buyer would gain more interest if the entire process is seen in greater detail rather than a glimpse of it. Unless of course the buyer wants to sit down and watch the wood carver Mohammed, Abdelouahed, or the other wood carver, Mohammed, craft a product from start to finish, it would be useful for these artisans to display a poster in their shops with pictures highlighting every step of the process. Instructional display about carving combined with the real-time crafting of the artisans, the artisan's story, and the emotional

connection with the artisan, will give the buyer a clearer understanding of what it takes to make the craft, and will hopefully encourage him or her to buy it.

A final suggestion that can be made to improve the chance of retaining the customer's interest is aesthetic presentation. The wood shops we have seen already have a rather appropriate presentation, as is demonstrated in the following image (see appendix E for images of the other wood shops):



Figure 20: Mohamed's wood shop: presentation

On the other hand, and despite Said and Keld's efforts to renovate the shop's presentation, Said's metal shop could still use more content, as the following image shows:



Figure 21: Said's metal workshop: presentation

Although presentation is an important factor for attracting the buyer, many eco-tourism enthusiasts are interested in knowing the manufacturing process involved with the craft is not harmful to the environment, especially today, where issues of global warming and preservation of Mother Earth are well publicized in western countries. One of the benefits of traditional crafting is that it is hand-made, which means that no fuel-powered industrial machines are used to make the craft itself. However, the manufacturing of the raw materials used to make these crafts may be hazardous for the environment. For the wood carvers, the question may arise about what trees they use and whether those trees are endangered. According to all three wood carvers, the trees used are from the surrounding regions, which are plentiful in forestry. It may, however, be necessary to let the tourist know that these trees are not being cut down uncontrollably, if this is the case. The women's weaving cooperative also has something to worry about. The thread that is bought from Casablanca, although being of good quality, has been

made in a factory, which causes pollution and contributes to global warming. Fortunately, there are eco-friendly alternatives such as hand-spun wool, and coloring using natural dyes. The same way that we have seen the leather cooperative in Fez dyeing leather in pools of natural colorants (with strong odors), the Artisanat's women's weaving cooperative can add a section to its workshop where thread is made by hand, and colored locally. If this is not possible, posting pictures of the process and presenting these pictures to the visitor may be an alternative solution. Furthermore, the cooperative does not have to make all of its carpets using hand-made thread; instead, it can offer carpets made of such thread as an alternative, and adjust the quantity of their production based on customer demand.

Hence we have seen how the Artisanat is a good candidate for fair trade and how it can make further small and cost-effective changes to improve the fair-trade aspect of the artisan's businesses. However, all suggestions proposed assume that there is already a steady income of national and international visitors, which is not the case. Therefore, to face this issue, the Artisanat must also invest into publicity.

Publicity

Some aspects of publicity are controllable, while others are not. The use of e-commerce, business cards, creating a logo, and making partnerships with travel agencies and tourist guides, although being difficult in some cases, are all controllable to some extent. Incontrollable factors include posting road signs, and being part of a travel program promoting traditional life styles. However, even though these are said to be uncontrollable, the Artisanat can **influence** the parties with most control, such as the

ministry, to make changes.

Although the Artisanat may not have control over certain factors, others are much more feasible in the short term. We have seen that there are some easy, cheap, and accessible ways of using e-commerce for publicity, such as the use of emails and email newsletters (many possible options will be discussed in section 7.1.5). E-commerce is a powerful tool but it will not be the only factor necessary to make a handicraft business successful. This is why one must also rely on traditional ways of publicizing. These include the use of business cards, logos, and paper catalogs. (For a detailed description of how these can be made, please see appendix D, section 8.13.3).

One of the most effective ways to access an international clientele is to make mutual agreements with those who already have access to such clientele. These can be travel agencies who hire guides, or individual tourist guides. Many of the international visitors we saw in the medina of Fez were in the company of a guide showing them around. Guides are useful for keeping the tourists informed and showing them around, but at the same time are formidable ways for companies to attract clientele. Our tour guide in Fez, Mr. Scalli, is given commissions from all the fair-trade style workshops and cooperatives he took us to visit. In fact, many of their customers were in the company of a tourist guide. This is why the Azrou Artisanat must make arrangements with guides, and this can be done in several ways. The guide or travel agency could inform visitors about the center and make arrangements to send them over for a visit, and charge the Artisanat an arrangement fee. Otherwise, a guide could bring the visitors to the center and make arrangements with the center to obtain a commission from any items sold. The majority of tourists that are in Azrou, as Zahri and Keld have pointed out, are just passing

by however, so the best strategy would be to contact the transportation or travel agencies which bring tourists to Azrou, and make arrangements with them for the promotion of the Artisanat.

The use advertising walls and signs in the city of Azrou and maybe even in the entrance to Azrou, indicating the location of the Artisanat, is another way to publicize the center to both national and international visitors, many of which are not even aware of its existence. Just one sign at the entrance of the city with the name and logo of the Artisanat may be sufficient to let people know it exists. An address may be added to that panel, but if that is not possible or practical, interested people can ask anyone on the street about directions. One can even go as far as posting arrows with the Artisanat's logo on every turn from the entrance of Azrou to the artisanat itself. The problem with such street panels, however, is that they must be approved and taken care of by the local government of Azrou. Seeing that the Artisanat is affiliated to the ministry, one may believe that this should not be too much of a hassle, but we learned otherwise from Zahri, who claims that he has made a demand to the local government for panels, but no response has been indicated (interview with Hoceine Zahri, 09/18/07). This is why this solution is classified as incontrollable. Nevertheless, Zahri can still try to get these panels in place by repetitively sending requests to the local government until the case is handled or at least responded to. Panels may also need some form of financial investment, which must also be taken into consideration.

Last but not least in measures that need to be taken is being part of a travel program promoting the preservation of traditional culture and customs. One example of this is Tribes Travel, whose slogan is "The Fair Trade Travel company" (see

www.tribes.co.uk). This company promotes ethical tourism by taking visitors on tours throughout the outskirts of big cities rather than the hearts of the cities. The outskirts of cities such as Marrakech or Taroudant are rich in Berber culture. The problem here, however, is that Azrou is not really close to any famous big city. This is why this solution is classified as incontrollable. However, Mr. Zahri may send suggestions to the ministry to promote such travel programs in Azrou and the regions nearby. Such suggestions might include the promotion of “rural tourism”, a chance to visit local farms, maybe even a “sleep-over” for the elderly ones who are not up to trekking. This could also include some sort of limited hike in the hills, including a visit to Azrou. Hence, it will then be the role of the ministry to lead publicity campaigns for Azrou and integrate it within the big tourism circuit that it is not really part of today. This report will also hopefully be a way of convincing the ministry to do so.

Conclusion:

In conclusion, we have covered some important points that will aid the Azrou Artisanat in preparing for ethical tourism and publicizing itself. The key points to remember are:

- Promoting a fair trade structure by insisting on:
 - Manufacturing process
 - Aesthetic presentation
 - Ecological preservation
- Publicity:
 - Use of the internet as a tool for publicity
 - Using Business cards
 - Creating a Logo
 - Making arrangements with tourists guides and travel agencies
 - Using street panels to indicate the presence and emplacement of the Artisanat
 - Being part of a travel program promoting traditional lifestyles

We have also seen the theory behind ethical tourism, and understood its importance with the example of the Case study on Fez. Last but not least, we have given a set of recommendations for taking advantage of ethical tourism to improve the business and popularity of the Azrou Artisanat.

This sums up our section on proposed solutions, which includes e-commerce and ethical tourism. Combined, our suggestions and recommendations should give enough reason and hope for the Artisanat to grow and prosper. However, these solutions remain

recommendations and will not become fruitful until the Artisanat is motivated enough to act to make a change, and a change we strongly believe is possible and feasible.

However, we do realize that the Artisanat is in great need of at least a minimal amount of financial support, which is why we can only hope that all our efforts will give enough reason for the ministry or any other organization with enough resources to provide it with a grant that will get it back on its feet.

Furthermore, we have seen how globalization has changed many aspects of Morocco, from its fishing industry, to tourism, to artisanat. Artisanat seems to have suffered greatly from the adverse effects of globalization, and we have seen all the problems it has caused both nationally and specifically in Azrou. We have also explored the solutions proposed by the ministry, and hope that by 2015, this strategy does indeed prove to be useful. Furthermore, we saw what has already been done to resolve certain issues, both nationally and specifically in Azrou. Last but not least, we proposed two solutions including e-commerce and ethical tourism, which will help the Azrou artisanat flourish while the ministry's strategy slowly makes its way to eventually further help the Artisanat of Azrou prosper.

8. Appendices

8.1. Appendix X1: History of Morocco

The indigenous Berber people lived in Morocco for millennia but no political order was established until it was first under the reign of the Romans. The centuries-long domination of this empire marked history and stretched out throughout all of North Africa, including Algeria, Egypt and many other countries bordering the Mediterranean. After the decomposition and downfall of the Empire, the northern portions of Morocco were taken over by the Byzantines in the fifth century C.E for a long and flourishing period of time. Meanwhile, the Berbers dominated the south and established their own society there. Later, starting from 681 (sixty years after the Hegira), a large number of Arabs flooded the region and brought with them a new religion, Islam. Among the Muslim conquerors was Idriss the Second. This great leader sponsored Islam and allowed it to expand throughout most of North Africa. Under his leadership, the country experienced a sudden birth of economic prosperity based on trade until 1555, during which the Saadines appeared and were later considered as one of the strongest dynasties to invade Morocco. However, opposition towards the power of the Saadine sultans, followed by several civil wars, led to the downfall of the dynasty. After a period of anarchy, the Alaouites appeared from the masses and came to power under Moulay Rachid in 1666, followed by Moulay Ismael, the founder of Meknes. The Alaouites ruled in peace until 1830 when they were confronted by the French government which had ambitions to invade Morocco. The Alaouites established a new political policy thereafter, called the policy of Isolation, in order to resist the French encroachments.

The political strategy the Alaouites had in mind failed, in fact, due to a lack of financial strength, and France easily took control of the country in March 30, 1912. In 1956 however, Morocco claimed full independence from the Spanish and French order and succeeded in establishing its own government and management of the country. Can lessons be learned from this success to respond to the latest threats engendered by globalization and will Morocco come out of this economic invasion triumphant? Clearly, more needs to be known about national politics, economy, and society before one could jump to a conclusion.

8.2. Appendix X2: New Government: New Opportunities

The “Gouvernement d'Alternance”:

- *The Gouvernement d'Alternance was established by King Hassan II in 1998. It was headed by Abderrahmane Al Youssoufi and his governing team.*

The restructuring of Morocco's government in 1998 by King Hassan II is undoubtedly one of the most influential steps taken to move the country forward and closer to modernization. The introduction of a more liberal political system has led to a new era of economic liberties and to a considerable economic boost in the private sector. With this new government put in place, Morocco had the political readiness and willingness to reach out to the international economies and work hand in hand with different governments from across the four continents, a strategy that positively engaged globalization.

Hassan II gave birth to the *gouvernement d'Alternance* with the purpose of making Morocco a wealthier country. In his last year on the throne, he wished to establish a new society based on his visions. During these critical years, Morocco had lots of success in its development as can be seen in the fishing and touristic sectors (Covered later in the report). This was done through the opening of the Moroccan economy to Europe, including such countries as France, Germany, Spain, and Russia. King Hassan II opened doors to a new era of liberalization and privatization in Morocco, which eventually increased national income radically. He allowed the political management to be much more effective by resting his beliefs on democratization and pushing the country in the direction of economic development. This was done by allowing for a more constitutional monarchy; steps which favored XXI century Morocco. Although there

were some economic failures and breakdowns in the process, this move was deemed revolutionary and extremely favorable, particularly after his son, Mohammed VI took over the throne just a year later, in 1999.

■ *A new government headed by Abderrahmane Al Youssoufi...*

Abderrahmane Al Youssoufi was born in March of 1924 in Tangier. He graduated from the International Institute of Human Rights. At that time, he lived on the Cote d'Azur in France. He then became a lawyer in Tangier for 8 years and was engaged in politics starting from 1943, when he became member of the National Union of the Popular Force Party. After exercising a series of liberal and anti-monarchist activities, he was arrested in 1963 by Mohammed Basri for being a threat to the national security. He was put in jail for 2 years and then in exile for 15 years. Pressured by his peers, Abderrahmane Al Youssoufi retook his functions as prime secretary in 1995. In February 4, 1998, he was nominated as the prime minister of Morocco.

The 1998 ministerial nomination of Al Youssoufi was a symbolic act done by King Hassan II demonstrating his willingness to give up some of his authority and support a more liberal government that gave more freedom to its people and favored a positive attitude towards national development.

New Government Officials:

After the death of His Majesty King Hassan II, his son Mohammed VI inherited the throne. The first thing King Mohammed VI did was to appoint new government officials – Driss Jettou (Prime Minister), Fathallah Oualalou (Minister of Finance), and Driss Benhima (Minister of Tourism) – who have had the job of leading the country

towards developing extensive worldwide economic relationships with countries from different continents. Globalization was their theme and filled numerous pages in their political agenda. Their general attitude and philosophy towards globalization was that the only hope for national growth could be accessed by taking advantage of this line of attack.

Driss Jettou:

Driss Jettou, a brilliant mathematics student, is the sheer product of Moroccan middle-class society. Before the *gouvernement d'Alternance*, Driss Jettou was the minister of trade and industry in the former government that Hassan II established in hopes of modernizing Morocco through technological innovation. He was son of a Soussi trader, from whom he learned much about trade and business. Through his father's and family's heritage, Driss Jettou paved his path through the financial landscape in Morocco. After taking control of several important economic positions, Driss Jettou was appointed Minister of Internal Affairs in the government led by Youssoufi. After great dedication to his work, this militant became prime minister upon nomination by the king.

Fathallah Oualalou:

Fathallah Oualalou is known as a very optimistic person who sees a brighter future in Morocco. When he held office as Minister of Finance the percentage growth of the GDP (gross domestic product) was of 5.5% instead of 4.5% that was initially predicted (SOURCE). However, Fathallah didn't consider the fact that there is still a significant variable in the equation that is unknown, which is the spring rain. For the Minister of Finance, there was nothing to fear. To him, even with a minimal average rain

fall, the Moroccan economy would not change significantly. However, he was wrong when Morocco suffered from a serious drought in the following years and when the Moroccan economy was hurt thereafter.

Driss Benhima:

Driss Benhima was born in 1954 from a famous father who was the doctor and later minister of Hassan II from 1961 to 1979. Benhima got his bachelor degree from Descartes, Rabat. He studied Mathematics in Versailles and later came back to Morocco to become the president of the OCP (*l'Office Cherifien des phosphates*) in 1994. Benhima was appointed Minister of Tourism in the government before the *alternance* and was one of the best politicians Morocco has known for his loyal service to his country.

8.3. Appendix X3: The Moroccan/Algerian Crisis:

Political causes:

Over the years, Morocco and Algeria gradually lost their close relationships over crises in the Western Sahara. The growing tension between the two sides was, in fact, due to political factors. Algeria is against any plan that would allow the expansion of Moroccan territories and political influence in the south. In reality, the dominance of Morocco over the Western Sahara gives it an upper hand as it encircles Algeria from the north to south. Algeria does not want Morocco to take hold of the remaining Sahara land bordering it from the south. For this reason, Algeria endorses a weak and independent Saharan state that would rule independently on matters concerning that territory. New reports mention that Algeria has been providing the Saharawi refugee camps with charitable and humanitarian support as well as military support to the Polisario, Morocco's number one rival.

Economic Motivations:

The Moroccan-Algerian Crisis not only has political causes but also economic ones. The Western Sahara serves economic interests for both countries. The Algerian authorities don't want Moroccan sovereignty over this region because this will help improve the Moroccan economy considerably. The Western Sahara could serve Algeria as a transit route to the Atlantic Ocean for the merchandizing of iron, which was discovered in southwest Algeria in the 1950's. The route would allow Algeria to have direct connections with Mauritania and would increase its trading system in northwest Africa. In 1972, Rabat agreed to construct a joint railroad that could be exploited by both

countries if Algeria allowed Morocco to use parts of its iron mines there. The proposition was never ratified due to the inimical relations between these nations. This subsection of Sahara is rich in minerals and whoever gets these lands will prosper profusely from them.

Resolution?

The Polisario remains dependent on the support provided by the Algerian government. If Algeria chooses to forsake the Polisario, this military faction will gradually become weaker and dissolve. Recently, countries like the United States of America were pleased with the political freedom and openness of the Moroccan government since King Mohammed VI came to power. Algeria on the other hand is living a true nightmare and violent factions surfaced in politics and have threatened the national security. With this much instability in the Algerian front, the possibility of ending the tensions between the two countries is significantly reduced and the potential for Morocco to increase its connectivity with the world's market can be narrowed down. A solution to this problem has to be found soon enough if the Moroccan economy is to be connected to the rest of the world. A new hearing is scheduled in January, 2008, to go over the issue and resolve it with final terms that will end the tussle.

8.4. Appendix X4: Democracy in Morocco:

In Morocco, the “Makhzen” is a very influential force on the government. This is a “feudal” power system that emanates from the local governors to the royal power over the minister of interior. The minister of Interior has an important role in judiciary affairs. He appoints a group of officials that form the judicial police. The minister of Interior also chooses judges without the consent of the Supreme Council of Magistrates. Morocco marked an important stage of democratic development when, in 1998, King Hassan II ordered the release of 112 political prisoners. However, there are still several forms of torture in Moroccan prisons and the conditions there are poor and almost intolerable. This said, the government is working hard to improve the prison system.

Freedom of speech is present in Morocco in all its colors, except for three topics that no one has the right to criticize: the Western Sahara, the monarch, and Islam. Some crimes can also confine freedom of speech such as the disturbance of public order or the illegal entrance into a university campus.

Freedom of associations is also present in Morocco, but it is restricted under the decree of 1958, which mentions that the minister of interior has to approve all these organizations before they are to be established. The decree was amended in 1973 to allow the creation of any organization as long as it does not threaten the nation and the monarchical form of the state and does not oppose the laws and the morals of the country.

Trade unions are allowed in Morocco but have to follow Article 288 of the Penal Code. Work strikes for higher salaries are illegal if they are done through violence, assaults, or any disapproved means. On the other hand, wages are most of the time set by the employers. Child labor, however, is a major issue in Morocco that happens to spread

from one city to another although it is strictly forbidden by the law.

The condition of women has improved over the years. The inequalities between men and women are still common in society on such matters as polygamy, repudiation, and the fact that a woman needs permission from the father to marry, under the Islamic Law of the Sharia. This does not exclude the fact that women's rights have increased to a significant extent over the past few years with the introduction of the Moudouwana. A good example to prove this is that 100 seats out of 400 in the parliament are occupied by women today!

The Berber culture is another important issue in democracy that could be directly linked to globalization. Berber culture was not recognized by Morocco until 5 years ago. Today, the Berber language, “Tachlhit”, can be taught at schools and many Berber shows were created to be broadcast on both television and radio. His Majesty and the government are now promoting further freedoms for these people and civil society along with the private sectors are coming together to promote and preserve Berber culture and the well-being of these people. However, up until today, no real actions have been taken by the government to supervise these efforts and no substantial changes are seen. Very few schools actually teach the Berber language as requested by the king and not one organization exists to protect Berber culture and promote it in Moroccan society. The 1998 *Gouvernement D'Alternance* also prejudiced Berber culture when their desire to have a unique Arabo-Islamic nation with a unique language and culture was implicitly expressed in one of the king's speeches in the year of 1999. This threat to cultural identity is being multiplied today with the emergence of globalization in the country; the Berber heritage, which represents so much of the Moroccan handcraft industry, might be

at risk of extinction if the government does not take direct actions and help preserve and revitalize this civilization.

8.5. Appendix X5: The Rural World in Morocco

Morocco can be considered among the least developed nations considering the fact that more than 54 percent of the rural territories are still isolated from the cities, with no basic amenities like electricity, drinking water, hospitals and other important modern conveniences that cities have. The reality is that 65% of the population in the countryside has no access to health services, 46% of them don't have any drinking water, and more than 50% of the households don't have electricity. In Morocco's rural world, 46 percent of the children don't go to school and the illiteracy rate is above 65%! (Health Service Delivery, 09.17.2007).

These are obviously major concerns that the government will have to face in order to be better prepared to modernize the country and be a key participant in globalization. The government started executing some large-scale programs these last eight years, including the construction and repairing of more than 12,000 km's of roads, the expansion of electricity to some 150,000 houses by 2010, and the installation and repairing of the irrigation system and drinkable water infrastructures for 11 million people living in 31,000 villages. Another plan that would take about five years to complete is the installation of irrigation techniques around 150,000 hectares of land. The government is doing its best in order to improve human life in the rural sphere.

What are some major improvements that took place these last years?

The Moroccan government led off one of the biggest national programs in 1996, the Rural Electrification Program. This project was conducted by the National Office of Electricity (*l'Office National de L' Électricité* – O.N.E) with the purpose of providing

electricity to all rural localities and ameliorating the social and economic status of Morocco in future years.

The program has been divided in three levels, financial, technical, and territorial stages of interest.

- Financial: The ability for O.N.E to maintain all the financial needs and to be responsible for all the financial resources required to complete this project.
- Technical: O.N.E will have to check over the electrical technology to insure that it meets all basic requirements such as safety.
- Territorial: The office has the aim of supplying electricity to all rural localities and habitations in Morocco within five years.

O.N.E carried out a plan called the Master Plan in order to make sure that its three objectives are realized thoroughly with the cheapest technologies that are out in the market. O.N.E was able to determine the total investment needed to spread electricity among 34,000 villages. The Master Plan will ameliorate the electricity networks in the country and will hopefully distribute electricity throughout Morocco; a plan that is reevaluated every two years. An inter-ministerial Committee for the Rural Electrification Program was set up to help O.N.E.

Funding

There are three sources that will fund this program. The local communities will have to give their share of money. The beneficiary habitations will also take part in the funding and finally O.N.E will self-fund this project. The local communities pay 2085 DH per habitation or 500 DH per habitation per year, given that they will be provided

with a five-year contract. The beneficiary habitations pay 2500 DH per habitation or 40 DH per habitation per month over a seven-year contract. Last but not least, O.N.E redresses the unpaid balance for each village in case there is a deficit.

8.6. Appendix X6: Moroccan Culture

Painting:

Most Moroccan paintings are known for having lots of symbolic forms that are all put together into a single image, an art known as “naïve painting”. This approach is also common in Moroccan handcrafts, carvings, mosaics, textile, even in customary utensils and objects of everyday life and which have basic images and designs that can be also influenced by higher aesthetic values. Painting gradually evolved in Morocco since independence. Some famous pioneers in the artistic world are Mohamed Chabaa and Mohamed Melehi, two painters who greatly contributed to Moroccan artistic culture. Today, painting is open to new expressions and multiple talents. Throughout the cultural revolution Morocco is experiencing in different fields, many younger artists are bringing it up-to-date with new forms and styles such as figurative painting. Although the new styles weren't particularly acclaimed by the conservative portion of the society, contemporary artists have fought in order for their ideas to be accepted and appreciated by every Moroccan. These so-called art militants have been striving to create new spaces and art galleries showing new approaches and techniques to painting. They have also been promoting the art of painting by creating new workshops and encouraging this art in schools and streets.

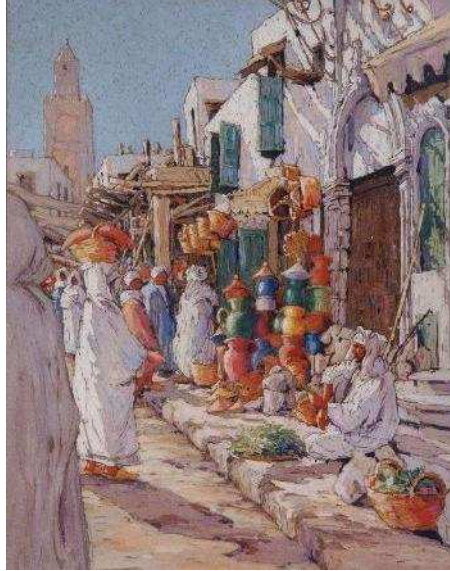


Figure 22: "Chez Ali"

Source:

<http://www.mystic-art.com/>



Figure 23: "Moroccan Jug Market"

Source: <http://www.salisburybazar.co.uk/>



Figure 24: “Moroccan Mosaic”
Source: <http://www.mystic-art.com/>

Theatre:

The Moroccan theatre is leading the way in the Arab world thanks to Tayeb Sadiki, a playwright who revolutionized the art starting from the early seventies. His works conveyed interesting themes and used modern techniques of sound and storytelling. All of his plays were successful and did well over the years. It is without any doubt that Tayeb Sadiki is a very talented person who is now a symbol of the Moroccan theatre.

Cinema:

Morocco has the most advanced cinematographic knowledge and equipment in North Africa. Moroccan movies tend to stand out from the mostly unexciting and repetitive Arabic dramatic films and have a distinct touch of originality in them. They are mostly cultural and portray existential themes such as prostitution, corruption, and poverty. Some well-known directors are Souheil Benberka, Imane Mesbahi, Derkaoui Maanouni, Tazi, and Bouanani. Modern cinematography reached the country and brought

new themes to movies, some that were considered taboo ten years earlier. With more freedom and autonomy, many new movies came to life and treated themes dealing with true societal problems like for instance the conflict between religious fundamentalism and cultural freedoms.

Recently, Moroccan cinema has been experiencing a sudden drift and interest in American and European cinema. Most of the programs featured on Moroccan television are American TV shows such as “Prison Break”, “Sex and the City”, and “Desperate Housewives”. This Hollywood inclination is very much associated with globalization in terms of cultural damage that this might have on some countries. Looking at the most famous Arab satellite, known as “ArabSat”, one finds at least 5 channels in English that show you episodes from American shows and other popular American TV programs such as American Idol or the Jerry Springer show. The impact of American television on the Arab world is indeed very substantial and is causing a cultural transfer in the way people live and this could lead to more severe levels of personality changes and disorders caused by this loss of touch with reality.

Today, aware of this fast cultural revolution and westernization of the country, Moroccan cinematography is reverting to the old traditional Moroccan view and is coming up with new innovative publicities and advertisements about the national artisanal sector in attempt to safeguard its local patrimony. In these ads, handcrafts are displayed in new modern settings and a call for national conservation of these Moroccan handiworks is sent in different forms and in different ways such as reportages, portraits, publicity, illustrations, traditional wedding events, cultural spectacles, and different other cultural events.

8.7. Appendix X7: Moroccan Tourism

Casablanca, the heart of modern Morocco...

Being the economic capital of Morocco, Casablanca is the display case of modern Morocco. Thanks to a general by the name of Lyautey that Casablanca became the center of economic life. Today, the city has a population of about 4 million inhabitants, a seventh of the total population in the country. Casablanca is a beautiful city marked by its old art-deco architecture that the French brought during the colonization period. The city holds one of the gems of Islam, the Hassan II Mosque. This great monument was built in 1993 and is now a symbol of Casablanca.

Fez, the Spiritual Capital of the Arab World...

Fez is the spiritual, intellectual, and cultural capital of Morocco. It was founded in 789 AC by Idriss I. It was later considered as the center of the dynasty by his son Idriss II. After that, this city has never stopped flourishing and extending even during the dynastic wars. In later years, a group of Jews and Kairouanais (Tunisia) came down and lived in the city. This made Fez a religious and cultural center in Morocco. The city has the largest Koranic University and famous mosque, Karaouiyne, its treasure of the arabo-andalou art, its medieval medina, and its skilled artisans. And all these items make Fez the preserver of Islamic traditions. Fez is the artisanal center of Morocco and thousands and thousands of artisanal workshops are present in the streets of the old medina.

Rabat, the Political Capital of Morocco...

With all its historical monuments, its dark colored buildings, and its old age, Rabat is just a beautiful city. The capital of the kingdom, it has a history full of events and occurrences. This city underwent a series of conflicts between different groups, including the Al Mouahidin and the Merinides. In the 12th century, Yacoub El Mansour settled down in the region and became the official ruler. In the middle of the city, the Hassan Tour stands like a guard protecting it. Behind the columns of marble, one finds the Mausolee Mohammed V, an edifice imposing respect and welcoming at the same time.

Agadir, the city of luxury...

Agadir is the most developed spot of beach tourism in the country. The city is very beautiful and has many beach resorts that are practically filled with tourists all year long. Tourism is very successful here, making 37% of the national revenues in tourism (Benkirane, Ahmed. 2006: 41-46pp). Agadir is in the middle of the desert, full of decorations that are staggering and mind boggling. Agadir has everything that a city needs to be perfect: a hot weather, green oases, fortified villages, and beautiful mountains. It is a city that everyone needs to visit.

Meknes, the Imperial City...

Often compared to Versailles, Meknes is the imperial city of Morocco and a UNESCO World Heritage site that has many fascinating Roman ruins that have been preserved until today. Buildings of colossal dimensions come forth from the ground in

harmonious ways. Meknes attracts tourists for several reasons: Beautiful panoramic views, the unique place where the best Moroccan olives are grown, the discovery of very old artisanal workshops and of course the rides on horse chariots.

8.8. Appendix X8: Moroccan Agriculture

Although Morocco has been experiencing a scanty percentage of rainfall these past years, agriculture saw some developments these last two years in many areas. Some of the new programs that have revolutionized this sector are the following: the establishment of new agricultural codes that regulate this field in many ways, including its investments, newly made projects on the building of irrigation dams around the country, better relations between the former and the state, the foundation of new agricultural institutions and schools that specialize in this domain, and finally the establishment of agro-industrial plants. The work of the government and its commitment to the sector resulted in the construction of about 90 dams with an estimated capacity of 14 billion cubic meters. The goal that was set up by the authorities in the 1960s of irrigating one million hectares of land was surpassed and exceeded. Actually, there are one million hectares of irrigated lands today in Morocco, 10,000 hectares are irrigated by large dams, and the remaining land is being hosed down by smaller dams.

Agricultural Production:

Citrus fruits, cereals, and animal products make up most of the Moroccan agricultural earnings and have supplemented the country with ample proceeds enabling it to move forward with its modernization and rebuilding.

Citrus Fruits:

Citrus fruits are grown over an area of about 80,000 hectares, 10% of the total area reserved for fruit plantations. Eighty percent of lands where citrus fruits are grown

are located in Moulouya, Tadla, and Souss. Forty four percent of the production is exported, 10% is processed, and 46% is consumed locally.

Major Cereals:

The three major cereals in Morocco are hard wheat, soft wheat, and barley. In 1996, the production of the three cereals reached 100,000,000 quintals, which means that the rate of production has increased by 100% in comparison with the years 1991 to 1995! With this output, 115% of the consumption needs were defined while this rate has never gone past 80%.

Animal production:

The production of animal products has soared over the years of 1996 through 2003, with a clear increase in milk, red meats, and white meat.

8.9. Appendix X9: The Fishing Sector

After an interview with a few people in my home city, Mohammedia, a few interesting observations in view of the Moroccan efforts to reach out to globalization come out and themes like the Spanish intimidation in this sector, globalization, and modernization were pointed out by different people:

- **Ahmed** (12th grade student): well, I think that fishing is one of Morocco's major resources that blooms the country with wealth and invigorates the economy of our nation. The revenue we get from this sector needs to be used effectively in order to develop our nation and bring it up to a level of competition with other markets in the world (Benchaou, Ahmed. 09.02.2007).
- **Dr. Mostafa** (My father): Ah! Fishing is the fountain of our common wealth, son. As you see, Morocco entered a new phase that promises success thanks to this rich sector. In a few years, the proceeds we get from this sector will help us become a developed nation like Spain or Portugal and will advertise our economy in the global market (Afiri, Mostafa, 08.29.2007).
- **Mbark** (Moroccan citizen I met in the street): fishing brings a lot of money into the hands of the government. But the problem is, where does all this money go? (Talib, Mbark. 09.03.2007)
- **Mrs. Chantalle** (My old French Teacher): this sector is in danger nowadays with

all the Spanish threats and competition that they pose (Mrs, Chantalle, 09.03.2007).

Morocco borders two coastlines, the Atlantic Ocean and the Mediterranean Sea. These extend over 3,500km's. This sector was modernized and made even more efficient by setting some new measures that increased the fishing area to more than one million km's. There are many zones that were created to expand fishing around Moroccan coastlines. A total of 200 exclusive economic zones (ZEE) were opened by the Ministry of Fishing for this same reason to allow Moroccan fishermen to use that space for them only. Fishing employs more than 200,000 people in Morocco. In fact, Morocco is the most important explorer and producer of seafood in Africa and the Arab world. Its fleet exceeds 3000 ships and its ports are well taken care of. The technology that the country is using is sophisticated and the operatives are well trained.

Major fishing ports are in...Casablanca, Mohammedia, Agadir, Rabat, Nador, Tangiers, Larache, Tan-Tan, Safi, Essaouira, El-Jadida, Kenitra, Dakhla, Laayoune, el-Hoceima.

8.10. Appendix A: I.Q.P Literature

1. <http://www.leshommesbleu.com/Wood/woodSelections.html>

This website is a good place to learn about the different handicrafts in Morocco like pottery, wood works, home decor, and leather. The major reason why I chose this website is because it displays different items and it tags them with a price in USD. This website is being used more and more for purposes of e-commerce, customs can actually log on to it and buy things off of it. The prices will be used in our project to compare how much items cost in Morocco, where they're made, and how much it would cost someone to buy them online.

2. <http://www.justmorocco.com/default.cfm>

This is a good website that I particularly liked. It is very user-friendly and you have a wide variety of selections you have choose from to check out different Moroccan products. These are put in categories and the prices of each item is listed as well with a short summary. Products like traditional lamps, carved armoires, plates and vases, tiles, and traditional mirrors can be found here and many more accessories. The reason why I chose this website is because the products are all handmade and imported from the 'Souks' and villages of Morocco! Justmorocco is a corporation founded in Florida, U.S.A, in 2000 and today it is one of the leading Moroccan furniture distributors in places like Florida and other cities in the United States. The prices are reasonable and the

corporation can ship worldwide. It works on both importing and manufacturing the products listed up on their website.

3. <http://www.moroccan-artisans.com/>

This website works in direct contact with Moroccan artisans in the Marrakech region. They sell several accessories like antique lamps and shades, mirrors, decorative iron work, and other handmade accessories. The concept of creating such a website was done by RAK Communication, a leading e-commerce corporation in Morocco. Their homepage is <http://www.rakcommunication.com/> and these people sell just about anything in Morocco and abroad.

4. <http://www.rakcommunication.com/portfolio/artisanat.html>

This website has several references to website that specialize in the Moroccan craft industry. Very good website.

5. <http://www.dartisanat-marrakech.com/>

A website that proposes a wide range of Moroccan art products. It's focused more on professional business owners who are interested in Moroccan decors

6. <http://www.morocomosaic.com/>

A website that works around the Moroccan art of Mosaic. This is a place where "zellige" plates and panes can be ordered from online along with red bricks which Morocco is so famous for, and which are used to build chimneys, columns, panel walls and house facades.

7. <http://www.toufliht.com/>

This website was made by a group of ambitious Moroccans who are from Marrakech who created it in order to promote the best of Moroccan craftwork. Products like zellige tables, carpets, lamps, forged iron, and Moroccan slippers can be found here for a very reasonable pricing.

8.11. Appendix B: E-Mail from Peace Corps Member Lee

Wilbur

[lwilbur@fulbrightweb.org]

Thursday, August 02, 2007 12:37 PM

Hello Marouane -

Very very fine that you are going to Ifrane on what sounds like a fascinating project~

In Azrou, you must meet Hoceine Zahri at the Provincial Artisan Center - he's the director there & will be very helpful to you in connecting you to artisans. (people in Azrou often knew me as "Motasim" & not "Lee").

The Peace Corps Volunteer currently working with artisans in Azrou is Sharon Keld: s_keld@yahoo.com Hoceine can also introduce you to her. There are also PCVs working w/artisans in TmHadaet (Katie) & Ain Leuh (Barbara). Sharon can connect you to them.

Make sure to visit Youssef Ouahmane - a rock carver/polisher in Azrou. Hoceine can bring you to him (he's 3 minutes walk from the artisan center). And go see the struggling Tamizart Sewing Cooperative - located in the ladies' center just above the fire station in Azrou. They need real help in product sales/marketing/everything. (on your way to their co-op, stop at the fire station & chat with Adil). I'm certain you'll find everyone overly welcoming & friendly & pleased to meet you Marouane. Another good person you

should meet through Hociene is SiMohamed Fassihi - not an artisan, but a very helpful & friendly guy (albeit a little squirley).

Also, for general orientation & meeting good people in Azrou, go to the Cyber La Brise Internet Cafe (on main road leading downhill from the big mosque - <10 minutes walk from the mosque on your left hand side top floor just past Café Sapin). There you can meet AbdulKadr Tennich, the owner of that Cyber Cafe. He is very friendly & can direct you to all sorts of good people in Azrou.

In Ifrane, you should go find Nourdine (he does daily crossword puzzles at the nearby cafe & is excellent at chess). He can be found through Azzedine the barber who is just behind the main grand taxi stand in Ifrane. Nourdine is tops & knows everyone.

Please tell everyone in Azrou I miss them dearly & think of them always. Thanks. Let me know what you find & what you think & if I may be of any assistance from here. Sorry I don't have phone numbers of people for you, but I'm far from home & don't have those with me.

I'm looking forward to hearing what you find!

Have fun & bon voyage & all the best~

-Lee

8.12. Appendix C: Tables and Statistics

8.12.1. WTO: Tourism Receipts, Africa, 1990-2005

International Tourism Receipts by Country of Destination

	International Tourism Receipts (US\$, million)						Market share in the region (%)			Change (%)		Receipts per arrival ¹	Receipts per capita ¹
	1990	1995	2000	2003	2004	2005 ^a	1990	2000	2005 ^a	04/03	05/04	US\$	US\$
Africa	6,402	8,500	10,503	16,124	19,187	21,526	100	100	100	19.0	12.2	555	24
North Africa	2,333	2,867	3,823	4,938	6,093	6,993	36.4	36.4	32.5	23.4	14.8	475	54
Algeria	105	33	96	112	178	..	1.6	0.9	..	58.9	..	145	6
Morocco	1,259	1,296	2,039	3,225	3,924	4,617	19.7	19.4	21.4	21.6	17.7	715	122
Sudan	21	8	5	18	21	89	0.3	0.0	0.4	16.7	324.4	345	1
Tunisia	948	1,530	1,683	1,582	1,970	2,063	14.8	16.0	9.6	24.5	4.7	330	198
West Africa	605	537	1,005	1,423	1,623	1,917	9.5	9.6	8.9	14.1	18.1	470	7
Benin	55	85	77	106	..	..	0.9	0.7	..	..	..	605	15
Burkina Faso	11	..	19	..	..	..	0.2	0.2	..	..	..	..	..
Cape Verde	6	10	41	87	98	123	0.1	0.4	0.6	13.5	24.7	625	237
Côte d'Ivoire	51	89	49	69	76	..	0.8	0.5	..	10.1	..	385	4
Gambia	26	28	..	..	..	..	0.4	..	..	..	..	..	..
Ghana	81	11	335	414	466	..	1.3	3.2	..	12.6	..	800	22
Guinea	30	1	12	31	30	..	0.5	0.1	..	-3.2	..	670	3
Guinea-Bissau	..	..	..	2	..	..	..	..	..	..	..	..	1
Mali	47	25	40	128	130	..	0.7	0.4	..	1.6	..	1,155	12
Mauritania	9	11	..	..	..	..	0.1	..	..	..	..	..	..
Niger	17	7	23	28	..	..	0.3	0.2	..	..	..	505	2
Nigeria	25	17	101	49	21	..	0.4	1.0	..	-57.6	..	20	0
Senegal	167	168	144	209	..	..	2.6	1.4	..	..	..	420	19
Sierra Leone	19	57	11	60	58	83	0.3	0.1	0.4	-3.3	43.1	1,330	10
Togo	58	13	8	15	..	..	0.9	0.1	..	..	..	250	3
Central Africa	98	133	181	230	251	274	1.5	1.7	1.3	9.2	9.4	345	2
Angola	13	10	18	49	66	..	0.2	0.2	..	34.7	..	340	6
Cameroon	53	36	..	..	..	..	0.8	..	..	..	..	..	..
Cent.Afr.Rep.	3	4	5	4	4	..	0.0	0.0	..	0.0	..	490	1
Chad	8	43	14	..	..	..	0.1	0.1	..	..	..	780	2
Congo	8	14	12	20	..	..	0.1	0.1	..	..	..	1,135	6
Dem.R.Congo	7	..	..	1	1	..	0.1	..	..	1.1	..	30	0
Equatorial Guinea	1	1	5	..	..	..	0.0	0.0	..	..	..	..	..
Gabon	3	18	20	15	..	..	0.0	0.2	..	..	..	70	11
Sao Tome Prm	2	..	10	..	..	..	0.0	0.1	..	..	..	1,070	46
East Africa	1,285	2,323	2,377	3,095	3,857	3,917	20.1	22.6	18.2	24.6	1.6	500	14
Burundi	4	1	1	1	1	2	0.1	0.0	0.0	71.4	25.0	10	0
Comoros	2	22	15	8	10	..	0.0	0.1	..	25.0	..	570	15
Djibouti	..	4	..	7	7	..	..	..	..	-1.8	..	260	15
Eritrea	..	58	36	74	73	66	..	0.3	0.3	-1.4	-9.6	835	16
Ethiopia	25	16	57	114	173	..	0.4	0.5	..	51.8	..	825	2
Kenya	443	486	283	347	486	579	6.9	2.7	2.7	39.8	19.2	405	15
Madagascar	40	58	121	76	105	..	0.6	1.2	..	38.2	..	460	6
Malawi	16	17	25	23	24	26	0.2	0.2	0.1	2.9	8.6	50	2
Mauritius	244	430	542	696	853	871	3.8	5.2	4.0	22.5	2.2	1,185	699
Mozambique	..	..	74	98	95	130	..	0.7	0.6	-2.4	36.0	205	5
Reunion	..	283	296	413	448	384	..	2.8	1.8	8.5	-14.3	1,040	585
Rwanda	10	2	4	26	44	..	0.2	0.0	..	69.1	..	..	5
Seychelles	126	129	139	171	172	192	2.0	1.3	0.9	0.3	11.9	1,420	2,124
Tanzania	65	502	377	647	746	796	1.0	3.6	3.7	15.4	6.7	1,320	21
Uganda	10	78	165	184	266	..	0.2	1.6	..	44.6	..	520	10
Zambia	41	47	111	149	161	..	0.6	1.1	..	8.1	..	315	15
Zimbabwe	60	145	125	61	194	99	0.9	1.2	0.5	217.5	-48.9	105	16
Southern Africa	2,081	2,640	3,118	6,439	7,364	8,424	32.5	29.7	39.1	14.4	14.4	750	144
Botswana	117	162	222	457	549	562	1.8	2.1	2.6	20.2	2.3	360	335
Lesotho	17	27	24	28	34	30	0.3	0.2	0.1	21.4	-11.8	110	17
Namibia	85	278	160	330	403	348	1.3	1.5	1.6	22.1	-13.8	475	200
South Africa	1,832	2,125	2,675	5,523	6,282	7,327	28.6	25.5	34.0	13.7	16.6	920	141
Swaziland	30	48	37	101	95	..	0.5	0.4	..	-5.9	..	205	83

Source: World Tourism Organization (UNWTO) ©

(Data as collected in UNWTO database November 2006)

Table 1: WTO Tourism Receipts, Africa 1990-2005

Source: [http://unwto.org/facts/eng/pdf/indicators/new/ITR05_africa_US\\$.pdf](http://unwto.org/facts/eng/pdf/indicators/new/ITR05_africa_US$.pdf)

8.12.2. Income from exports of handicraft products from Morocco:

Pays	1996	1997	1998	1999	2000
UE	385 317 855	411 945 603	453 462 015	491 443 527	505 726 658
Pays ARA / AFR	34 706 661	41 853 565	29 722 651	33 536 594	29 749 119
USA / Canada	58 061 805	87 517 656	92 371 444	105 894 468	121 595 056
Suisse	9 905 776	9 554 114	12 062 598	15 362 738	12 564 327
Australie	1 324 452	2 281 016	3 558 582	3 737 039	627 035
Japon	708 589	512 564	977 344	3 821 553	253 135
Norvège	241 515	62 393	154 152	120 665	117 899
Autres pays	32 857 769	30 114 973	18 285 870	14 753 723	18 144 499
Total	523 097 422	583 841 884	610 594 656	668 670 307	688 777 728

Table 2: Evolution of exportation of handicraft products by country (From Morocco to the listed countries, currency in MAD)

Source: (Kahloun, 2002, 11)

Produits	1990	1991	1992	1993	1994
Tapis	430439279	341881353	268 881 353	268193492	283780661
Maroquinerie	48323964	37701 796	38583341	42212684	38995456
Vêtements	79572068	89 971 616	75009899	62 786 034	57749003
Couvertures	4 904 756	3094986	3874 404	4711459	10 555 294
Cuivre	12 334 985	13 282 698	7 183 698	17 183 211	7 513 330
Bois	16490727	21440292	20440292	20432255	19150 758
Vannerie	40159352	33 344 595	30 585 017	27 842 686	27 469370
Art. Chaussures	11804754	2051182	402 427	2 098 575	2 245 565
Poterie	15961003	16 999 205	25 780 541	30 832 019	44 343 974
Bijoux. fantaisie	2 226 929	6439 919	9 026 566	6 231 155	5 489 424
Fer Forgé	267 511	271 341	618 357	534 914	2 425 513
Divers	30 096 904	46130167	47 105 292	34174 201	24 782517
Total	692 582242	612 609 150	537 791 802	531 868 476	5844 894 821

Produits	1995	1996	1997	1998	1999	2000
Tapis	272564249	239562581	232244247	208617412	201839605	189 532 026
Maroquinerie	30669913	49078390	46061700	36436321	30965886	41 022 609
Vêtements	50957867	54067261	57 639485	52 067 187	47 493 450	42 812 358
Couvertures	21 1041 450	14 446 989	14 803 946	16 793 377	20 720 237	29 405 571
Cuivre	15 536 160	14 265 446	14 144 434	27561 734	17 004176	20 957 486
Bois	32463 961	28 951 642	28 828 954	39 132 021	42 512 824	58 663 367
Vannerie	33 702582	27143122	27935382	340580475	39 684601	43 403 967
Articles.Chaussures	1 914 981	3 171 693	4 919 132	4 299 855	8 212 949	7 309 886
Poterie	43 466 204	51 177 351	3257955	1 970 941	2 907 179	8 359 309
Bijoux. fantaisie	5 772 742	3 177 351	3257955	1 970 941	2 907 179	8 359 309
Fer Forgé	3 661 136	13 423 193	31 996585	67 448 537	96 548 434	117 762 537
Divers	20559343	24 710 257	9 444 936	6 861664	15 248 962	12 729 478
Total	529 488 555	583 841 884	610 594 656	668 670 307	688 777 728	580 317 903

Table 3: Export of Handicraft Products from Morocco by nature of product (1990-2000, currency in MAD)

Source: (Kahloun, 2002, 13)

8.13. Appendix D: Miscellaneous

8.13.1 . COFTA Moroccan Member

MOROCCO:

Cooperative Artisanale de Couture Femmes de Marrakech

2 Derb el Akkari 1 er
Bine Lamaaser (Baba Taghzout)
Marrakech
Morocco
Tel: + 044378308
Email: coofdem@yahoo.fr
coofdem@caramail.com
Contact: Anil Khadija

<http://catgen.com/cofta/EN/members.html>

8.13.2. IFAT Membership Fees:

Membership Fees from May 2007

The annual IFAT Membership Fee is based on two components: membership type and a monitoring fee payable by all members.

IFAT distinguishes the following membership types : trading members, Fair Trade Networks, Fair Trade Support Organizations or Associate Membership.

Trading members

Turnover in USDS	Annual Membership fee in EUR
under \$100.000	€200 + monitoring fee
\$100.000 - \$1.000.000	€0,002 x turnover + monitoring fee
over \$1.000.000	€2.500 + €100 for every extra million turnover

+ [monitoring fee](#)

For members in Africa, Latin America and Asia the maximum fee is € 2.500

Fair Trade Networks

Annual Membership fee: €250 + [monitoring fee](#)

Fair Trade Support Organisations

Turnover in USD\$	Annual Membership fee in EUR
under \$250.000	€750 + monitoring fee
\$250.000 and up	€1.250 + monitoring fee

Associates

Turnover USD\$	Annual Membership fee in EUR
Associate organisations with incomes up to \$250.000	€750
Associate organisations with incomes of \$250.000 and up	€1.250
Individual associates	€100
Students and the unwaged	€35

Monitoring Fee

All members (except associates) pay an annual fee for monitoring.

Turnover in USD\$	Annual Monitoring fee in EUR
< 100.000	25
100.001 - 500.000	50
500.001 - 1.000.000	100

1.000.001 - 4.000.000	350
4.000.001 - 8.000.000	600
8.000.001 - 16.000.000	800
> 16.000.000	1.000

Please note: The Secretariat will invoice members in both US dollars and Euros at the beginning of each calendar year, calculating the dollar figures using current average exchange rates. The invoice is payable in Euros. If members have not sent the Secretariat copies of their most recent audited financial statements, their subscription will be calculated on the assumption that their sales figures have increased by 10% since the previous year.

Sending payments to the IFAT Secretariat

Members are asked to pay in Euros if possible and also to cover all bank charges when forwarding membership fees to the IFAT Secretariat. Charges are as follows:

Service	Fee
Euro Cheque	€15
Wire transfer of Euros	€0
US\$ cheque	\$19
Wire transfer of USD\$	\$6
Credit Card Payment	4.058%

Table 4: IFAT Membership Fees

Source:

"Membership Fees from May 2007" [IFAT.Org](http://www.ifat.org/index.php?option=com_content&task=view&id=155&Itemid=187). 29 May. 2007. 17 Oct. 2007 <
http://www.ifat.org/index.php?option=com_content&task=view&id=155&Itemid=187>.

8.13.3. How the Azrou Artisanat can make business cards and a Logo

An affordable way of publicity is the use of business cards. A business card can be edited in a local cyber-café and emailed to one of many publishers or publicity specialists based in Casablanca or Rabat. According to Boubker Lahlou, CEO of a publicity company called LH-com based in Casablanca, producing 1000 single color business cards will cost 250 dirham, and 800 dirham for the same quantity with multiple colors (personal interview with Boubker Lahlou, 10/18/07). These business cards can be mailed to the Azrou Artisanat by regular ground mail for no more than 50 dirham. 300 dirham is therefore a small investment for a very important business tool. Furthermore, the business card will contain the name of the artisan, or cooperative, possibly a logo, and contact information such as telephone number, address, and eventually email and website. It should also include a brief description of what the artisan or cooperative specializes in. A business card can be given to any visitor, national or international, even if that visitor has no intent to buy. The visitor is then a potential customer since if he or she does decide some day that he/she needs a carpet, wooden carving, or metal frame, he/she has the contact information to remind him/her where to obtain it. In artisanal fairs for instance, the artisans who attend can optimize the number of potential customers by giving out their business cards. Some of the artisans we have talked to, such as Youssef and Fatima, already have business cards, but the smaller shops inside the artisanat don't.

It is therefore strongly recommended that they get some.

A logo is another important tool for publicity. Designing a unique and relevant logo that can be used in business cards, websites, street panels, and other visual publicity is an effective way for a potential customer to recognize and remember a company or business. Logos can be designed using image software such as Photoshop, on any personal computer. If the artisans do not know how to use such software, it is rather easy to find someone who does and offer him or her some form payment or mutual agreement for the creation of the logo. An alternative is to draw its outlines by hand and scan it in a local cyber-café, then use Microsoft paint to fill in colors, which is a rather trivial task. It can then be saved in digital format on a floppy disk and used for websites or publications.

8.14. Appendix E : Photos

8.14.1. Pictures of the artisans of Azrou and their shops



Figure 25: Abdelouahed Assou carving wood in his shop at the Azrou Artisanat



Figure 26: Marouane interviewing Abdelouahed Assou



Figure 27: Mohammed Abdeljabbar's workshop (Left: Mohammed's multilingual collaborator, Middle: Wadii B., Right: Mohammed)



Figure 28: Marouane interviewing the other Mohammed (wood carver)



Figure 29: Said's metal workshop

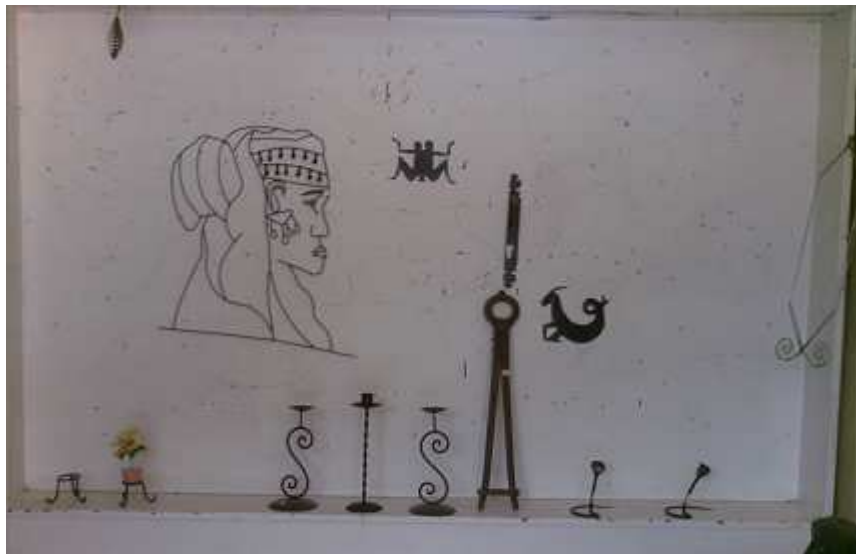


Figure 30: Said's metal workshop display

8.14.2. Pictures of the Azrou Artisanat's showroom



Figure 31: Part of the showroom



Figure 32: Wooden crafts, paintings, and metal pictures



Figure 33: Textiles and Berber carpets made by the artisanat's women weaving cooperative



Figure 34: Berber Carpet made using straw



Figure 35: Leather seats



Figure 36: Leather lamps



Figure 37: Wool and cotton hand-woven Berber clothes



Figure 38: Youssef's unique gypsum lamps

8.14.3. Other pictures



Figure 39: The Team (From left to right: Prof. Addison, Hoceine, Wadii, Marouane, Sharon)

8.15. Appendix F: Investigation: Fez

An investigation was led in Fez in order to get a more accurate understanding of its cultural wealth and to understand why cities like this one are leading the artisanal industry and receiving help from several collaborators, including the Moroccan and American government, while places like Azrou are not as prosperous.

Fez is known for having a rich and diversified artisanal background. Artisans work primarily with wood, leather, and ceramics. The city used to have a large organization specialized in the leather and textile business, the National Center of Leather and Textile ("Le Pari Audacieux du Maroc", 2007: 74-77). This center trained many artisans on how to weave and merge different types of materials like wool and cotton in a professional and elegant way into textiles like carpets and rugs. The national center of Leather and Textile was closed for about ten years, however. Several actions are being taken today to reopen it since even large industrial enterprises used to send their employees there to learn how to improve their fabrication and production skills. For many years, Fez has been the center of the textile trade and clothing industry. With the industrial development that the city has been undergoing these past years, it is ready to internationalize its market and many artisans are already working hand-in-hand with large international companies specializing in clothing. The emergence of new weaving machines is also helping the local artisan class and is providing them with more manufacturing activities that are helping them expand their market and get more regional orders from neighboring cities. Several projects have been developed by the state, in light of an extensive regional program intended to expand the industrial sector in the city of Fez, in order to create new industrial zones, encourage trade unions and cooperatives, but

also to open training centers for artisans so that they can be better trained for their businesses and provides professional services.

Fez has many distinct features that single it out from the rest of the cities in Morocco. It is the first oriental capital of the country, erected in a once vacant region in Morocco located in the north east and known as the Orient. It also happens to be in a strategic location, in the center of Morocco surrounded by several metropolises like Meknes, Rabat, and Casablanca. For these and many other reasons, Fez is clearly getting a lot of help, not only from the Moroccan government but also from the United States in the form of large grants versed in the protection of the cultural heritage and the artisanal patronage of the spiritual capital. This is primarily because it is an ancient Moroccan city that stood for so many centuries and that holds heaps of cultural history and wealth. The Moroccan government is planning to engage both the public and private sectors, including bank and loan companies, in the development of the artisanal trade in Fez. Several measures are being taken in order to prevent traditional crafts from suffering from the new incursions made by mass produced factory-made products from the north (Rabat, Casablanca, Sale, etc...). One of these measures the government is taking is their alliance with the American Millennium Challenge Corporation and the signing of a five-year contract in 2004, known as the Millennium Challenge Compact. In this contract, Morocco has been granted \$697.5 million in order to stimulate its economic expansion and improve such things as education professional training, and the reconstruction and building of new infrastructures in highly promising sectors like the artisan crafts, fishing, and tourism. Of these \$697.7 million, \$111.87 million is being invested in the craft industry, in the hopes of reinforcing the ties between this sector and that of tourism. This

considerable contribution is focused on the city of Fez and is expected to enhance its rich historic, architectural, and cultural features all by adding to the artisanal trade. The funding will also be used to allow the artisans to learn how to improve the quality of their work, to be trained in better and modern production techniques in different domains such as weaving or pottery making, and to have better access to the business side of their profession. The artisans would also be able to have access to bank loans or micro-credits in order to learn how to invest independently in workshops or new equipments for instance and to improve their standards of living.

Fez was greatly influenced by the Ottomans who, starting from the XVI century, invaded all of North Africa, except Morocco. The great Ottoman Empire had some bearings on many commercial activities like ceramics, marble, architectural carpentry, and of course, carpet weaving. Other influences came from the Berbers and the urban Romanesque architectural arts that came about during the Lower Middle Age, during the 19th century. In Fez, the number of skilled artisans bumps up to tens of thousands and a great number of artisanal corporations were organized there even back in the 1920's. The craft industry has been playing a major economic and political role in Fez for many centuries. Be it in private workshops or local markets, the handcrafted products made by the local artisans keeps everyone in that city going and carries the Fezian economy. With the growth of the co-operative system that unities several skilled artisans and helps them collaborate, help each other, and share tools and equipments, the artisanal sector greatly improved and several arts were able to thrive within their own collectives and corporations, like for instance woodworking, wood painting, wood sculpturing, ironworks, goldsmith trading, and carpet weaving. These jobs are mostly exercised in

small workshops, either privately owned or ones that are put together in centers or small conglomerates led by different cooperatives. The advantage that these collectives have is that they allow many artisans to keep their expertise and improve their production by sharing their know-how with their fellow artisans. This web of collectives in the city of Fez enhanced the artisanal sector in many ways and expanded the trade between many communes. With this system in place, these artisans are ready to receive bulk orders from large organizations like, for instance, the Royal Family.

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