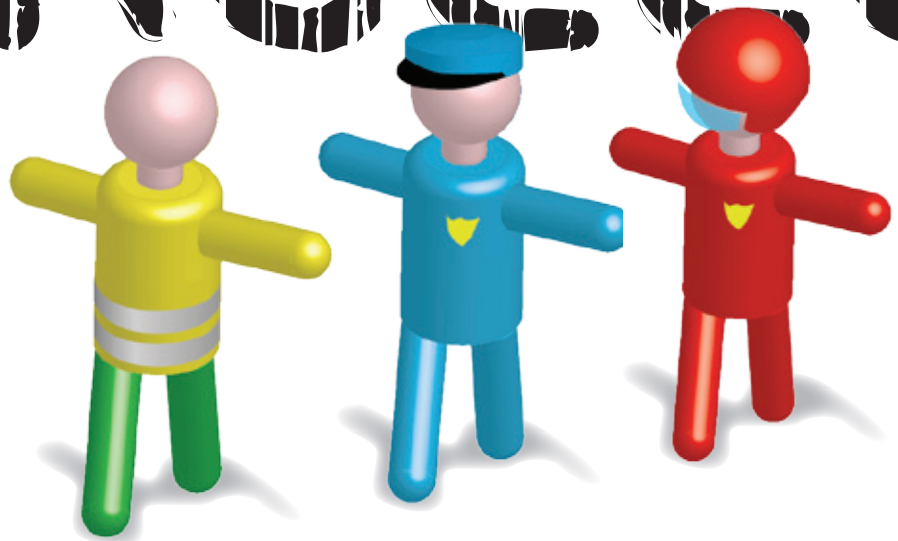


MADE IN

Garment production for public authorities. Traceability and guarantees⁰¹

MOROCCO



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commitments from these brands to ensure that the basic conventions of the International Labour Organisation (ILO) are respected in their supply chains. Without denying the labour problems in the country, the leading Spanish fashion firms have gone public with their Corporate Social Responsibility measures with the aim of convincing public opinion that the infringements of the employment rights in the countries where their items are made do not affect their suppliers.

One way or another, the major clothing brands have given themselves codes of conduct and social audit systems that seek to ensure their compliance. However, there is a great deal of diversity in the methodologies used, and without denigrating the work of the most committed companies, the majority of the Spanish clothing industry has no control (voluntarily or otherwise) over the conditions imposed by their suppliers on their workers. Most social audits are conducted in a hurry, superficially and with prior notice to the factory owners, and they have proven to be clearly ineffective in detecting double accounting and fraud or to throw a little light on the long subcontracting chains (Pruett, 2005).

Neither do the codes of conduct include improvements in key aspects of working conditions that have a direct effect on the living conditions of the workers and their families. Generally speaking, in their internal codes, Spanish companies make an undertaking that everyone who works in their production chain will be paid a minimum salary equivalent to the one set by the law of the country and, in many cases, they state that the remuneration will reach a “worthy salary” or a “sufficient salary to meet basic needs”. However, the rise in prices of primary-need products and the scant effectiveness of verification methods lead to an ever greater imbalance between the cost of living and salaries in the sector.

Due to this, and despite the Corporate Social Responsibility measures, many Moroccan workers continue to live in poverty while having an extremely long working day. In a front-line factory that is producing directly for Spanish companies that demand audits prior to commissioning production, the average working day is nine hours a day from Monday to Friday and five hours on Saturday, with a salary of around 250 euros a month. At a production centre that does not come under any pressure from its customers to pass this type of audit, overtime is compulsory and extend the working day to eleven or twelve hours a day, six days a week. These hours are usually unpaid and salaries do not exceed 200 euros a month. A large proportion of the workforce works without any contract or any type of social protection. In subcontracted workshops, salaries can be below 100 euros a month and contracts are non-existent.

The clothing industry in Morocco is facing a future filled with uncertainty. On the one hand, the last three years have seen a fall in production caused by the end of the Multi Fibre Arrangement (an agreement within the framework of the WTO that limited imports into the EU and the USA of clothing and textiles from Asia) and the subsequent relocation to China. On the other, the effects of the contraction of consumption in Europe, derived

from the international financial crisis, will not take long before they are felt in sales of clothing and in production levels for the large international firms. In light of the tense situations resulting from low salaries, rumours are spreading that any attempt at worker organisation or demands could lead to the large companies’ relocating production to Asian countries and the subsequent job losses.

Despite the situation, many countries continue to find in Morocco a “competitive” market at the cost of production prices that are sustained by the social vulnerability of its workers. These include workwear or uniform companies that had traditionally produced on European soil but that now see in relocation of production a way of reducing labour costs.

With increasingly more global supply chains, what control do European public authorities have to prevent public money from being used to buy clothing produced under exploitative conditions? Can we know the source of the uniforms that are bought with public money? What guarantees can the companies supplying the public authorities offer that their product does not contribute to the exploitation of Moroccan workers?

Evidently, the production of uniforms and garments for European public authorities is spread all over the globe. In this report, we focus our attention on Morocco, carrying on from other work carried out by the Spanish Clean Clothes Campaign. The document shows the situation of female garment workers in the North African kingdom, paying special attention to the factors that keep the workers in poverty despite having a job. The second part highlights a case study in which we have attempted to ascertain the origin of the clothing bought by public tender to contract by a number of European public authorities, identifying those supplier companies that have relocated production to Tangier, in order to gather witness accounts about the employment conditions of the people who work in the production of this clothing.



The majority of the Spanish clothing industry has no control over the conditions imposed by their suppliers on their workers.

MADE IN



MOROCCO

2. The clothing and textile industry in Morocco

Clothing and textiles are the leading industrial sector in Morocco and account for around a third of the country's exports. The factories and workshops in the sector employ 40% of the workers in the industry and generate 66% of female jobs (Lopez-Mancisidor and Urcelay, 2007). In the sector, 70% of the workers are women.

Spain has been the most important customer of Moroccan clothing exports since 2006, the year in which their volume reached 950 million euros. Some 35% of Moroccan garment exports in 2006 were for Spain. The relations between the clothing and textile markets in both countries are very close, as Spain exports fabric to Morocco (70% of textile exports in this direction are made up of fabrics) while it imports garments (López-Mancisor y Urcelay, 2007). It is clear, therefore, that the processing of rolls of fabric into items of clothing for many Spanish companies is done in Morocco. The country's industrial areas also work for companies throughout Europe, with an especially significant presence of British, French and Dutch firms.



Clothing and textiles are the leading industrial sector in Morocco.

Moroccan exports by sector in millions of DH.
Comparison January – February 2009 to January – February 2010

Sector	2009			2010		
	january	february	total booth months	january	february	total booth months
Car var% var in MDH	602,6	733	1.335,6	697 +15,7% +94,4	1.146,8 +56,5% +413,8	1.843,8 +38,1% +508,2
Electronics var% var in MDH	335,9	369,4	705,3	414,8 23,5% +78,9	406 9,9% +36,6	820,8 16,4% +115,5
Maritime products var% var in MDH	772,1	979,2	1.751,3	1.078,8 +39,7% +306,7	1.211,8 +23,8% +232,6	2.290,6 +30,8% +539,3
Textile and clothing var% var in MDH	1.800,6	1.545,7	3.346,3	1.285,3 -28,6% -515,3	1.037,6 -32,9% -508,1	2.322,9 -30,6% -1.023,4
Knitwear var% var in MDH	650,7	552	1.202,7	502,7 -22,7% -148	41,56 -24,5% -135,5	919,2 -23,6% -283,5
Footwear var% var in MDH	287,6	244,7	532,3	220,9 -23,2% -66,7	208 -14,6% -35,8	820,8 -19,3% -102,5
Aeronautics var% var in MDH	235	209,2	444,2	142,3 -39,4% -92,7	161,2 -22,9% -48	303,5 -31,7% -140,7

Source: Office des Changes, 29 March 2010

The Moroccan garment industry's strong dependence on the outside world has set off a number of alarm bells in recent years as the competition from Asian countries is making itself felt. The growth of China, India and Bangladesh as garment manufacturers directly affects the Moroccan industry, especially since the end of the 10-year transition period regulated by the World Trade Organisation (WTO) Agreement on Textiles and Clothing, which replaced the Multi Fibre Arrangement in 1994. The end of the transition period in 2005 has led to the disappearance of quotas on Asian products (especially Chinese products). In 2005 already, Chinese exports to the EU rose by 41.5%, while those from India went up by 18% (López-Mancisidor, 2007). According to the World Bank (2006), Moroccan exports to the EU fell by 7.4% between 2005 and 2006. According to the chairman of the Moroccan Textile Producers Association (AMITH), Karim Tazi, the end of European restrictions on Asian clothing led in that period to the closure of 10% of the clothing and textile companies in Morocco.

Added to the pressure from Asian competition are the consequences of the global crisis. Recent years have seen a number of significant closures which, besides leaving several thousand workers out in the cold, have given rise to rumours about bad times ahead. On 16 November 200, the **Organisation Démocratique du Travail (ODT)** union denounced

the closure of the four factories owned by the Mornatex⁰⁴ company in Salé (Rabat), which had a total of 1,500 workers. According to sources of the Confederación General de Trabajadores (CGT) in Andalusia, over 50 factories have closed in 2010 in Morocco, while instability and a lack of formality worsen the problem of becoming unemployed as there is no social protection for the vast majority of these newly jobless⁰⁵.

Asian competition has further strengthened the dependence of the large Spanish firms which, despite the lower labour costs of China or Bangladesh, have not lost interest in a supplier that is also cheap and that is just a few nautical miles from Spanish soil. Stockless supply dynamics and so-called "fast fashion" make it extremely interesting to have factories nearby where orders can be placed that will be speedily served and ready to reach European shop windows⁰⁶.

The most important production centres in the country are in the industrial areas of Rabat, Casablanca and Tangier, with Tangier being the one lately to attract most activity from foreign companies. Although Casablanca has the best infrastructures, the tax benefits of the Tangier Free Zone have strong pulling power. As will be shown further on, another factor in Tangier's "competitiveness" is the lesser union presence (or the almost complete lack of unions in garment factories).

The growth of China, India and Bangladesh as garment manufacturers directly affects the Moroccan industry.

04.- Mornatex is a subsidiary of Courtaulds, a British multinational that produces for Marks and Spencer, Victoria's Secret, Gossard and others. More information at http://www.econostrum.info/Au-Maroc-les-1-500-employes-de-Courtaulds-Textiles-font-de-la-resistance_a4523.html

05.- <http://www.cgtdandalucia.org/1-500-despedidos-por-la>

06.- In recent years, the speed with which orders placed by international firms with their subcontracted factories has become an essential factor of competitiveness. Being able to establish a fluid flow of products enables storage costs to be reduced and commercial risk avoided. If orders are small and constant, they can be adjusted to demand, so that if they are not commercially successful, the accumulated stock is minimal. This risk is passed on to the producer, who is unable to plan the work rate. If work accumulates and the permanent workforce is unable to meet production needs, overtime is raised disproportionately, workers without contracts are hired or production is subcontracted out to small workshops.

Garment Workers in Tangier

3. The living conditions of garment workers in Tangier

Objective conditions

In April 2003, the Clean Clothes Campaign and Intermón Oxfam published the report entitled *La moda, un tejido de injusticias* [Fashion, a Fabric of Injustice], in which they denounced the harsh working conditions experienced by Moroccan garment workers. The study documented excessive working hours, low salaries, verbal and physical abuse, arbitrariness in hiring and firing, disproportionate disciplinary measures, barriers to union action and a high degree of casual labour in the factories that work to export, very often for Spanish fashion companies. None of this has ceased to exist.

According to another report produced by the Attawasol Association, the Amarante Setem association and the universities of A Coruña and Vigo in 2008/2009 (hereafter the "Amarante Report"), the employment conditions experienced by Moroccan women working in the textile industry in Tangier are very far removed from being in line with the minimum standards set out by the International Labour Organisation⁰⁷ and with the principle of equal opportunities between men and women⁰⁸.

Manufacturing production in Morocco, and specifically in the city of Tangier, is structured over three levels of work place. Firstly, there are the front-line factories, where production is for export for international brands. Generally speaking, the owners of these businesses are Moroccan investors, although occasionally they are Spanish, British or other European companies. A large part of these factories produce garments for Spanish brands such as Inditex, Mango and Cortefiel, and they are audited regularly with the aim of ensuring their international customers that they comply with current legislation and with the standards that fashion firms regard as essential. Despite the limitations of the audit systems, in the front-line factories, compliance with local employment legislation is higher than the industry average.



In these workshops 92% of the sample does not have an employment contract.

07.- <http://www.ilo.org/ilolex/spanish/reccdisp1.htm>

08.- The current regulations on gender equality policies within the international framework of the UN can be found at the following link: http://www.altcamp.altanet.org/ftp/igualtat/normativa_vigent_politiques_d_igualtat.pdf p 4-6.

The availability requirement is absolute.

At a second level, we can identify smaller workshops throughout the peripheral suburbs of the city of Tangier⁰⁹. With regard to hiring, the *Amarante Report* highlights that in these workshops 92% of the sample does not have an employment contract and the majority, some 70%, feel that their work is ongoing despite 78% of people being in their post for less than a year. From the point of view of employment rights, and taking the international framework and Moroccan legislation as the reference¹⁰, the employment conditions of many of the workers in these factories would be illegal.

If we look at salaries, only 11% are paid a salary above the minimum (10.62 DH an hour) and only 24% get a detailed payslip. The irregularity in this case is absolute and information about Social Security is nil. In irregular employment relations, the contribution is not usually deducted from the payslip, but there are workshops where the Social Security contribution is deducted from the salary and then not paid to the public authorities, so increasing the profit margin and cutting employment costs fraudulently.

According to Moroccan employment legislation, affiliation to the National Treasury of the Social Security is mandatory for both the entrepreneur and the workers and apprentices. Family contributions would account for some 8.87% of the gross monthly salary of the employee payable by the employer. Short-term contributions are 0.66% of a maximum salary of 5,000 dh (0.44% payable by the employer, 0.22% payable by the employee), while long-term contributions are 9.12% of a maximum salary of 5,000 dh (6.08% payable by the employer, 3.04% payable by the employee). The *Amarante Report* shows that 92% of the women interviewed had no information about this matter.

This irregularity in terms of receiving a salary and of Social Security payments is present in every aspect of working life: sick leave, maternity leave or time off to care for a sick family member, etc. In light of the lack of protection caused by this irregularity, the availability requirement is absolute and flexibility in hiring allows employers to do away with the need for a permanent workforce. A worker who has to be absent from her post for health matters, for example, can be replaced immediately by any other worker, without receiving any type of remuneration for sick leave.

With regard to the working day, Moroccan legislation establishes that it may not exceed eight hours a day, 48 hours a week or 2,496 hours a year. It is also set out that overtime may not exceed 10% of the normal working hours and that payment for overtime is established according to the following parameters: On working days, when overtime is between 5 am and 10 pm, the salary is increased by 25%, whereas if the overtime is between 10 pm and 5 am, it will be increased by 50%. On weekly rest days or holidays, the increase will be 50% in the first time band and 100% in the second.

Only 47% of the workers interviewed for the *Amarante Report* comply with the timetable requirements set out by law. Some 68% of the cases

09.- It is very difficult to determine the number of irregular factories in Tangier exactly, as the nature of their being irregular and the difficulty in identifying them complicates the task of carrying out an approximate census. This estimated percentage is based on the field research and interviews with key reporters conducted in recent years by the Attawasol Association, *Amarante Setem* and *Setem Catalunya*.

10.- Information taken from the Official Chamber of Commerce, Industry and Shipping of the Campo de Gibraltar. <http://www.negociomarruecos.com/legislacion-laboral.aspx>

analysed have no information in advance of any overtime that they will have to do when they start the working day. 61% of overtime is paid at its normal rate and only 6% is paid at the legal rate. A significant percentage of women workers (33%) are not aware of the regulations regarding overtime rates.

As regards union rights, the *Amarante Report* highlights some worrying facts. The workers state that respect for union affiliation and participation is practically nil and that the most common methods of repression are intimidation and immediate or unfair dismissal.

MOROCCAN WOMEN



4. What keeps the workers in poverty?

Female subordination at work and in the home

The personal and employment situation of Moroccan women has always been treated with a certain tendency to see things simplistically. Generally, their situation has been judged to be disastrous, alluding to their lack of freedoms, lack of independence and lack of decision-making power, and the physical and psychological imprisonment inside repressive Islamic codes that dictate a morally docile conduct as being the only possible way for them. As a reaction to this interpretation, many Moroccan women, including writers such as Fátima Mernissi, politicians such as Aícha Berlabi, sociologists such as Leila Chafai and a long list of others, have devoted their life and work to tearing down the prejudices created, largely, by a Western society generating discourses on otherness on the basis of a biased approach and from their own point of view.

Alongside these women belonging to the political or university elites, a great many other Moroccan woman have fought, especially since the 1950s, for public and private recognition; and not just for this but also for the historical recognition due to them as providers of the material wellbeing of the home, primarily, in the classes with a more modest income (Mernissi, 2007) and for the call for both formal and material equal rights to those of their colleagues, fathers, brothers, husbands with whom they live in a Morocco that is increasingly more urbanised and less traditional. In the last decade, women have accounted for over 40% of the Moroccan workforce. Similarly, 30% of doctors in medicine and 25% of teachers in Morocco are women (Dris-Aït-Hamadouche, 2007).

Alongside these women belonging to the political or university elites, a great many other Moroccan woman have fought especially since the 1950s, for public and private recognition.



The changes in the Mudawana or Personal Statute Code and in inheritance inspired by Sharia, which regulates and legislates de facto intra-family relationships and the status of women in Moroccan society, is a result of the feminist movement, or the Moroccan feminine movement in the words of Leila Chafai¹¹ (1997), achieving an initial amendment in 1993 and a second and more substantial one in 2004. These changes entail an opening-up to the transformations that Moroccan society has undergone since the 1950s, in which women are the central figures, shaking the traditional architectures of the social structures that relegated them to a specific form of secondariness.

In light of the evidence of recent history, we need to be prudent when looking for the causes of the disadvantages of women in the Moroccan labour market in endemic or cultural causes. Many of the reasons for this employment instability are shared, except for a few specificities, by the majority of women worldwide who struggle every day for personal and family development and their life plans in an economic environment that regulates the job market with an invisible hand and which generates a model of inequality of which they are the victims in Indonesia, Mexico and Morocco itself¹².

Horizontal segregation and employment instability

As described in the introduction, the clothing industry is Morocco's leading industrial sector and over 70% of jobs are held by women. The concentration of women in this sector is a good example of the horizontal segregation¹³ of work in the country. This segregation gives rise to what have become known as "pink collar" jobs, an adaptation of the traditional "white collar" and "blue collar" terms that refer to primarily male jobs. The term pink collar refers to jobs traditionally and mainly carried out by women, characterised by being low-income and having little prestige, scant recognition and almost no promotion opportunities. It is true that in the feminist literature, these concepts are traditionally associated with the primarily middle-class employment markets. However, they are perfectly operational in the case of Morocco, specifically to describe the phenomena of the clothing industry¹⁴. The sexual segmentation and division of labour are phenomena that arise in any job market, irrespective of their geographical location. This is due to a global economic environment whose rules reproduce the same inequalities and phenomena of progressive impoverishment anywhere we place the production chain, in this case the textile one.

According to Newsome (2003), the new concepts in terms of industrial production and sales distribution have fostered the segmentation of work, creating low-skilled jobs that are being filled primarily by women. The clothing sector was among the first to identify the most labour-intensive parts of the production process that required less technical training for their outsourcing and relocation: cutting and sewing. The result of the search for cheap labour, relocation has also been conditioned by the new commercial distribution strategies based on reducing the time between

11.- Available at <http://www.nodo50.org/mujeresred/marruecos-leila.htm#1>

12.- In this sense, the final conclusions of the workshops conducted by TIE Netherlands in February 2011 were in favour of this thesis. Women participants in Indonesia, Malaysia, Guatemala, Mexico and Morocco who worked in the textile industry jointly recognised the similarity of the situations of inequality and injustice in their work environment.

13.- According to the "Women and Work" glossary of the Department of Employment of the Government of Catalonia, horizontal segregation consists of "the non-uniform distribution of men and women in a given sector of activity. Generally, this type of segregation means that women are concentrated in jobs that are characterised by lower pay and social value and which are, to a large extent, an extension of the activities that they carry out in the domestic environment".

14.- To quote Martha Nussbaum (2002): "Feminist philosophy should add new items to its agenda if it is trying to approach the world of development productively; these topics include hunger, nutrition, literacy, right to land, the right to seek employment outside the home (...). In general, it seems right that the problems of women workers in both the developing and the developed nations should increasingly take centre stage and that the specific problems of middle-class women should give way to them" (pp 34, 35)

the production order and the sale of the product. As we will explain later in more detail, subcontracting garment making to external suppliers combined with just in time distribution strategies entail a transfer of the production risks from the brands to the workers¹⁵. A result of these strategies being applied is the creation of jobs that require low technical skill, which are characterised by low salaries and high volatility derived from the impossibility of planning the pace of production. Inequalities in access to education and the growth of female poverty push women into taking these jobs.

15.-The effect of the new commercialisation strategies on workers is explained in greater detail in the section entitled "The role of companies and their international customers".

Literacy rates of men and women between the ages of 15 and 24. Morocco 1982, 1994, 2004, 2008

	1982	1994	2004	2008
Literacy rate, young women (% of women between the ages of 15 and 24)	31	46	60	68
Literacy rate, young men (% of men between the ages of 15 and 24)	58	71	81	85

The literacy rate of young people is the percentage of people between the ages of 15 and 24 who are able to read and write, with understanding, a simple and brief proposition about their everyday lives.

Source: Institute of Statistics of the United Nations Educational, Scientific and Cultural Organisation

From the point of view of the dominant social perception, this type of feminised work perfectly suits a social imaginary that reproduces the separation of roles in the domestic sphere in the work sphere. Sewing is an activity that is traditionally associated with a domestic, patient and submissive female world. Textile factories are an extension of the private space, in line with the androcentric layout of any patriarchal society. Clothing maquilas (contract manufacturing plants) easily connect with the dominant social imaginary that places women in work that is not just specifically female but is also especially unstable, in turn causing an eminently female poverty, even when this work is carried out in the public sphere, with all the consequences that this entails, as it is a sphere of exclusively male domination.

The unstable work in the textile factories in Tangier is aimed at an army of cheap female labour, ready to accept it for a variety of reasons. Of these, one of the most important reasons identified by the women themselves in the Amarante Report is the low literacy rate and the low level of education that they have in general. It is common for the workers to regret "not having studied more" as they perceive that more of an education would enable them to get work with better conditions or posts as supervisors in the factories and workshops.

"Because of the long working days, women can't find time to look after their children and be with their families. Many of them end up with depression and other illnesses. (...)"

Fátima, worker, trade unionist and activist. March 2011

In small factories, the bosses say that it's the customer who has the final say. This means that if the customer places an order for such and such a day, their need comes before our employment rights".

Fátima, worker, trade unionist and activist. March 2011

Workers organised onto associations or unions perceive the scant literacy as a barrier also to asserting their rights with the employer. In this sense, it is important to point out that comradeship and mutual solidarity play an important role in coming through situations of labour injustice successfully, as was explained in the conclusions of the TIE-Netherlands workshops where the women taking part explained that on occasion the perception of an unfair situation led to contact with a colleague who was a member of a union or association and that, from that point on, interest was created about their rights at work, which they shared with their colleagues when it was necessary.

Another possible cause of the women's acceptance of unstable conditions in this sphere is the pressure exerted by their families to contribute a salary to the family income. The majority of the women interviewed realise that the basic shopping basket products have got more expensive in recent years and that their families' total income is not enough to get to the end of the month. It is impossible to improve the job status within the sector, and job mobility into other production sectors is nil. Consequently, many women interviewed state that they work in the textile sector as there is no other option, which results in their acceptance of low salaries and unstable conditions.

However, sometimes this weight in the family economy becomes a double-edged sword as the immersion of women in the productive sphere does not usually entail the joint responsibility of the male members of the family (brothers, husbands, fathers, etc.) with regard to the domestic chores, and it is the women, married or single, who are obliged to do double working days, which, when we add on the overtime, mean an impossible timetable to enjoy a personal life in which to plan future interests, such as carrying on studying or being politically active in a trade union in favour of their corporate interests. Trade unionist Fatima Lamah explains it as follows: "Because of the long working days, women can't find time to look after their children and be with their families. Many of them end up with depression and other illnesses. (...) There are also cases of miscarriages in factories as pregnant women work with the same intensity as the rest (...) The legally established working day is eight hours, but no one respects it. There are even women who work fifteen hours a day. In small factories, the bosses say that it's the customer who has the final say. This means that if the customer places an order for such and such a day, their need comes before our employment rights."

In this sense, productive work is not at all an emancipating option for women but quite the contrary, as the loss of social support networks, the result of overload, ends up in a rise in physical and psychological ill-being and, in the last instance, in the high degree of female poverty.

Today, this type of industrial work is being destroyed due to a number of factors, including the world economic crisis. This dual loss (social network and paid work) leads to a progressive social exclusion whose impact is yet to be assessed since the effects of all these circumstances, together with the crisis, will emerge in the medium or long term.

Apart from this, a significant consequence, and one that has perhaps not yet been studied sufficiently in depth, is the issue of sexual violence and harassment in the work place frequently suffered by these women. As a consequence of the vertical segregation in which a majority of men hold a certain hierarchical power as "monitors" in the factories (who are usually in the trust of the employers and normally lack any specific training) and a consequence of the women's fear of losing their job (especially in the current systemic crisis), women suffer in silence what many call in the interviews "unacceptable behaviour", which often leads to their leaving their job.

In the domestic arena, cases of sexual harassment barely come to light, much less become the subject of official complaints. However, among the workers who were members of associations or union sections, collective support and mutual solidarity allow the debate to arise, as well as the workers' concerns regarding their lack of protection against this abuse. Both the workers interviewed and those who took part in the workshop stated that they had been victims or had directly witnessed situations of sexual persecution or abuse. Three of the union members who took part in the workshop recognised that their interest in defending employment rights arose after having been victims of physical abuse with sexual overtones that went completely unpunished.

Workers, trade unionism and bargaining power

Between 1961 and the 1990s, the kingdom of Morocco was under the totalitarian rule of Hassan II, who exercised harsh repression against his political opponents. Hundreds of activists who were critical of the regime were tortured, murdered or held in infamous prisons such as Tazmamaat. The monarchy controlled every level of political life and there was no press freedom (Hochman, 2007). In the 1980s, human rights violations came to light on the international stage thanks to the work of the Moroccan Human Rights Association. Faced with internal and international pressure, shortly after King Mohammed VI came to power, he set in motion reformist policies and agreed to pardon 3,700 civilian victims of the repression exercised by his father.

Reforms include an apparent liberalisation of the media (although any criticism of the monarchy continues to be impossible), the opening up of spaces for political opposition and the legalisation of union activity. Since the implementation of the reforms, the classical political actors (parties and trade unions) coexist with other forms of organisation of civil society. There are hundreds of new associations that work against illiteracy, poverty and unemployment and for human rights, women's rights and the rights of the Berber people. The channelling of this activity through discourses that are highly critical of the regime and the strong dissatisfaction with the political process (participation in the 2007 election did not reach 37% of the electorate) reveal the discontent with the limitations of a "democratisation" that is led and controlled by the Royal Family.

"In my factory there were six women who weren't paid holidays. When we realised, we contacted the union. After that, we got improvements and although there's no permanent union representation in the factory, the women have got together and met informally since then".

Naima, garment worker. Tangier, February 2011

“Sometimes the bosses tell us: if you don’t step up the pace, I’ll lose money with you! I’m going to have to start selling the machines not to have to close down the factory!”.

*Zaida, garment worker.
Tangier, February 2011*

Even though it is legal, the presence of union representation in the industrial areas devoted to clothing is very scarce. In the case of Tangier, it is almost anecdotal. The workers interviewed who are members of an association or who are active in the UMT agree that the catalyst for their interest in collective political action was identifying clear situations of injustice in their work place, but that until they became active, they were not aware of their employment rights, collective bargaining procedures and the social role of the unions. With the institutionalisation of union activity, the workers have won spaces in which to achieve partial improvements to working conditions and to achieve greater compliance with the Work Code. In the workshop conducted with the workers, plenty of experiences of collective claims for irregularities in payments, verbal abuse or lack of hygiene in the work place were documented. Naima commented that in her case, the reason for the association was the result of a perception of grievance: “In my factory there were six women who weren’t paid holidays. When we realised, we contacted the union. After that, we got improvements and although there’s no permanent union representation in the factory, the women have got together and met informally since then.”

However, although the organised workers identify the benefits of being part of a group, for the interviewees who are not members of a union or association, the barriers to organisational life weigh too heavily. In their comments, we identify an accumulation of work and family factors that excessively hinder any union activity.

It is not strange that the same workers who tell of employment situations contrary to Moroccan labour legislation are grateful that they have a job and that they have a salary, no matter how small it is. The managers of the factories and workshops put across the message, with some degree of success, that the work is not profitable and that the financial viability of the company is under a great risk. The workers state that rumours abound constantly in the production centres about forthcoming factory closures due to Asian competition and low salaries in other countries. The employers themselves take on a discourse of auto-victimisation and pressure, using such expressions as “if you don’t step up production, I’ll lose money with you” or “I’m going to have to start selling the machines not to have to close down the factory” . News about the factory closures that have occurred in the last three years help reinforce the idea that any element that distorts production could lead to the company closing down or moving. Notable among these reasons is “labour dispute”. From the point of view of employers and the representatives of the authorities, the unions pose a threat to investments, and this is conveyed to the workers with such expressions as “if you complain any more, the investors will go to China. The people work there and don’t complain so much”. Irrespective of the level of realism of the threats, employers use the spectre of closure to impose their conditions and overcome any resistance.

Added to the fear of closure is the fear of reprisals in a work environment in which abuse goes unpunished. All the workers agree that they are forced to keep their complaints and claims in silence until they get the

complicity of the group. One of them explained that “the employer and the intermediate posts mustn’t know you know your rights, otherwise you’ll lose your job”¹⁶. What is a motivation for the organised workers to channel the collective struggle and raise their colleagues’ awareness is a resounding reason for the non-organised ones to avoid any potential source of problems.

The limitations imposed by employers and by a hostile environment to organisational activity are in addition to work and personal situations that hinder even further any participation by women in union life. Although in the personal sphere, some of the workers interviewed state that their families do not see union involvement as something positive, the barrier that they all agree on is the lack of time. In addition to the long working hours are family responsibilities, after which they scarcely have any time for leisure or association work. This prevents organisation at the work place level as the workers are not willing to extend the time they spend away from their family environment to do union work or hold meetings.

Complaints about time are not just centred on the amount of time but also the ability to plan. Overtime is imposed with no prior warning when there is a lot of work and it is not seen as optional. When working hours are unpredictable, the workers’ ability to decide on their family life and their involvement with a union or association is minimal. Even the workers who say they have good working conditions (they receive the guaranteed inter-professional minimum salary and their working weeks do not exceed 48 hours) complain that overtime is never predictable and that at the start of the working day they never know with any certainty at what time they will finish.

“The employer and the intermediate posts mustn’t know you know your rights, otherwise you’ll lose your job”.

*Imane, garment worker.
Tangier, February 2011*

¹⁶.-Witness accounts of the workers gathered at the international exchange of women workers on organisation in maquilas (contract manufacturing plants) (Tangier, 10 to 15 February 2011).

The role of companies and their international customers

The initial research and documentation of working conditions in the clothing sector in Tangier conducted by the Clean Clothes Campaign in 2002 were presented and discussed with the leading Spanish companies in the clothing sector. The major firms, which already had Corporate Social Responsibility programmes, put forward the argument that the Moroccan setting hindered the traceability of the production process and that the causes of the labour problems and of non-compliance with legislation should be sought in the high degree of corruption of the public authorities and the ineffectiveness of work inspections. Curiously, these are the arguments offered by the international firms in each of the research projects presented to them about relocated garment production, be it in China, Bangladesh, Honduras or India.

From the point of view of corporate social responsibility, employment codes of conduct and social audits have been developed. Both tools are intended to monitor the supply chain of international firms with the aim of ensuring that there are no breaches of national law or the fundamental conventions of the International Labour Organisation. However, the diversity of the verification methodologies and the different levels of commitment of international firms in this area means that the mere existence of a code of conduct and the carrying out of audits does not necessarily indicate compliance with basic employment standards.

In 2004, the international Clean Clothes Campaign conducted collective research work in India, Kenya, Romania, Bangladesh, Pakistan, Indonesia and Morocco to gather evidence on working conditions in the clothing factories that passed social audits, paying special attention to the ones that held the SA8000 certificate. The findings of the studies conducted in these seven countries were presented in the book *Looking for a Quick Fix* and were sadly conclusive. It documented the inability of the social audit system to reduce anti-union strategies, to ensure the right to collective bargaining, to ensure compliance with working hours and to ensure the payment of minimum salaries (Pruett, 2005). The book argued that a system of checks that does not take into account workers' organisations and that does not create channels for detecting problems and non-compliances with codes of conduct that are left open between audit rounds cannot detect whether the documents match the reality or the existence of anti-union activities. When the methodologies used by the audit companies schedule the conducting of random interviews with the workers, the employers sow the seeds of fear among potential interviewees at losing their job due to possible dismissal or the loss of contracts with international investors if the results of the audits are not favourable.

In conversations held with Moroccan workers, the figure of the auditors has appeared only vaguely. None of them has been interviewed in an audit process and although they state that there have been visits by foreigners

at the facilities in their place of work, they cannot say what the aim of the visits was. Since some of the workers interviewed are employees of factories supplying recognised Spanish firms, it is very probable that these audits have existed. Despite not having been interviewed, the workers recognise that the employers sow the seeds of fear at dealing with employment aspects with foreigners.

Although European companies include the improvement of these guarantee systems on their agenda, the wishes expressed through their social responsibility documents are in stark contrast to the production and commercial practices imposed by the new business paradigms. There is a transfer of the production risks from the commercialising companies (the ones that have the bargaining power and the brand image) to the weakest links in the supply chain. The policies for reducing delivery times from the suppliers to the brands and the fragmentation of orders are strongly linked to job instability and the feminisation of jobs (Newsome, 2003).

International competitiveness leads brands to cut back to force shorter delivery times with the aim of reducing the risks derived from production planning. Fulfilling orders as the product is sold reduces storage costs and the risk of taking on unsold stock. If a product has no commercial success, the following orders are modified based on sales. For the supplier company, this means receiving the production orders fragmented and always as urgent. So as not to endanger their profits, the factory owners choose to have a small workforce, which is required to do overtime when work accumulates, which it very often does. In a setting of a lack of protection for workers, this translates into long and unpredictable working days.

When working hours are unpredictable, the workers' ability to decide on their family life and their involvement with a union or association is minimal. Even the workers who say they have good working conditions (they receive the inter-professional minimum salary and their working weeks do not exceed 48 hours) complain that overtime is never predictable and that at the start of the working day they never know with any certainty at what time they will finish. Both excessive hours and the impossibility of planning the day hinder the holding of meetings and get-togethers that aid collective organisation and union bargaining.

When, despite the long working days, the human resources are not enough, the employers subcontract part of the work to other workshops to complete production. This occurs despite the majority of foreign companies explicitly prohibiting it in their contracts. The social audits that affect the supplier factories do not access these workshops, the existence of which they are unaware. A garment machinery repair technician who is active in the UMT told us in May 2009 that one of the warehouses of his work place, in the Mghougha industrial estate, is used to help out and receive the orders from two workshops that complement production. According to this worker, "when there's a lot of work, part of the production is done in two nearby workshops. The workers in these workshops don't

The causes of the labour problems and of non-compliance with legislation should be sought in the high degree of corruption of the public authorities and the ineffectiveness of work inspections.

“When there’s a lot of work, part of the production is done in two nearby workshops. The workers in these workshops don’t have contracts or Social Security. Sometimes, the owner of our factory has sent me round there to repair machines, so I suppose the relationship between the companies must be very close”¹⁷.

Garment machinery mechanic. Tangier, May 2009

have contracts or Social Security. Sometimes, the owner of our factory has sent me round there to repair machines, so I suppose the relationship between the companies must be very close”¹⁷.

The position of Morocco in the international economy and the role of the authorities

Although their historical and economic evolution is very different, since their independence and up until the 1980s, the Maghreb countries shared a model of development based on state leadership and the substitution of imports. Algeria leading the Third World movement, Tunisia with its collectivisation policies, the Moroccanisation policies of Hassan II and the state management of oil production in Gaddafi’s Libya are exponents of the iron-fisted control of resources and the economy shown off by the political leaders in the region until the arrival of neo-liberal reforms (White, 2007).

In Morocco, as in the other newly-industrialised countries, the life blood of the factories comes from workers living in urban and peri-urban areas with high levels of poverty and unemployment. This aids the acceptance of unstable working conditions and the appearance of irregular work places alongside the large factories. The banks of potential workers come primarily from the migrations from the country to the city which is explained, to a large extent, by the political and economic dynamics occurring in the rural environment.

The foundations of Moroccan agricultural production were laid during the French administration (1912-1956), when the integration of the sector in the global economy began through the transformation of extensive dry farming areas into irrigated areas producing vegetables. Alongside the French legacy, this time saw the foundation of a system of patronage hierarchical relationships that still bears a mark on the allocation of property deeds to crop fields and on decision-making in terms of agricultural planning.

During the reign of Hassan II (1961- 1991), the now independent Moroccan government consolidated the reforms begun during the French administration using the best crop lands for the production of exports, such as citrus fruits. The first credits from the World bank were granted in 1964 precisely for the expansion of irrigated agriculture following plans laid down by the colonial administration and leaving the traditional dry farming sector to stagnate (Davis, 2006). A result of this was the lack of adaptation of cereal production to the new needs derived from the increase in population and the start of cereal imports. A country with an agricultural system that had been self-sufficient until then suffered a significant balance of payments deficit due to the import of raw materials for food.

As a result of this crisis, Morocco received its first advice from the International Monetary Fund (IMF). Relations with the IMF intensified after the subsequent crises derived from such contingencies as the excessive

17.- The worker explicitly asked for neither his name nor his work place to be mentioned.

public spending to finance the march on the Western Sahara in 1975 and the fall in the price of phosphates. In 1975, the debt came to 20% of the Gross Domestic Product (GDP), generating the ideal context for the IMF to propose a Structural Adjustment Plan to Hassan II’s kingdom.

So began, in 1983, a decade of adjustments and economic protection by the IMF that has resulted in new plans and Morocco joining the GATT in 1987 (Morrisson, 1991). As in the rest of the world, the aim of the SAPs has been to encourage foreign investment, promote exports and abolish customs tariffs. However, there are a great many indicators that the IMF has not taken into consideration in the design of its plans for Morocco: by 1978, 68 families controlled 55% of the private industrial capital, 10 business groups (belonging to the 10 most influential families) held control of a third of the capital and the royal family had a fifth of the country’s wealth (Davis, 2006).

In the agricultural sector, the SAPs have heightened the process of closure and privatisation of common grazing lands. In the 1960s, USAID recommended that Hassan II’s government used this land for irrigated agriculture due to issues of environmental degradation, and in 1969 the same agency and the World Bank provided Morocco with technical assistance in drafting the “Code de Investissements Agricoles” with the aims of improving agricultural productivity, combating the fragmentation of farms and sharing out property deeds with the aim of modernising the country’s agriculture. The process was speeded up and established after the SAPs in the 1980s, which led to a wave of neo-liberal legislative reforms such as the “Privatisation Law”, the new employment code and regulations on water and agricultural land.

The majority of the modernisation projects have required intervention in areas of property and collective use. The six priority action areas included in the macro-projects financed by the World Bank had this system of operation. As compensation, the government tries to restrict traditional livestock farming to fifteen perimeters with “improved grazing” projects (Davis, 2003). The collective use areas that are outside the modernisation projects have been reclassified as “useful land” under state control. Parallel to this, traditional production methods have been criminalised, with penalties of up to six years in prison for anyone not abiding by the rules. For millions of people in the rural areas of Morocco, these changes, and especially the lack of access to collective usage land, mean the loss of an essential source of food, medicines and basic products which deepens rural poverty, pushing people at an age to be hired by a factory to migrate to the urban areas in search of employment.

If the nomadic livestock-farming peoples have been the most harmed by the wave of neo-liberal reforms, the direct beneficiaries of the restructuring have been the royal family and the elite surrounding them. The royal family’s holding company, Omnium Nord Africain, has bought most of the privatised companies (Coupe, 1997. Dillman, 2001). Similarly, it is the royal family that directly receives the profits of the Office Cherifien

The banks of potential workers come primarily from the migrations from the country to the city.

If the nomadic livestock-farming peoples have been the most harmed by the wave of neo-liberal reforms, the direct beneficiaries of the restructuring have been the royal family and the elite surrounding them.

des Phosphates, the state monopoly on the phosphates trade and the country's most profitable company (Dillman 2001, 2003).

The peasant families who retain access to a piece of collective land or who have modest means to produce and sell food try to preserve their way of life by sending their daughters to work in the factories in the industrial cities to bolster the family income. As in many other parts of the world, these young women are ideal workers, with no knowledge of their rights, with no tradition of union organisation, with no social support networks in the city of destination and with the obligation to survive on an extremely low income, sending part of their salary to their families.

The agricultural and industrial policies both share the orientation of productive resources towards exports, although unlike the global trend in customs liberalisation, Morocco (like its neighbour Tunisia) has shown a certain resistance to reducing customs tariffs. After an initial liberalisation between 1993 and 1997 (from 65% to 22%), customs tariffs have risen since then to stay at around 30% in recent years (Dennis, 2006). In contrast with other Arab and Maghreb countries, Morocco and Tunisia have not carried out any far-reaching customs reforms¹⁸. However, although the World Bank places the Maghreb countries in general, and Tunisia and Morocco in particular, among the countries with the most restrictive customs systems in the world, the existence of free export zones and a network of preferential commercial agreements have reduced real tariffs, turning the area into an attractive market for the EU.

In 1995, the EU signed an Association Agreement (AA) with Morocco, which came into effect in March 2000. This agreement led to the creation of the Free Trade Zone (FTZ) between the EU and Morocco in 2000 with the aim of progressively reducing customs barriers to reach 5.2% by 2012. However, Morocco already had special conditions for trade with EU partners prior to signature of the AA. Since 1976, its industrial products have had free access to the EU market and the quotas established by the EU permit the export of 20% of its agricultural products with preferential treatment.

Despite Morocco signing the free trade treaty with the USA in 2004, 96% of Moroccan clothes exports are for the European market. It should be stressed that the commercial tie between the EU and Morocco is not one-way, as 76% of its imports come from EU member countries.

The orientation of public policies towards exports is evident in their attitude in the relationship with foreign investors. The aims of the public authorities and the policy makers are to create jobs in industry and to attract investment capital. Work inspections and the Social Security place these aims before compliance with the country's current legislation. The employment authorities have permitted fraudulent and exploitative practices under the pretext that in emerging industries, maintaining an inflexible and hard-line stance can only lead to an exodus of investors.

It is a very widespread practice in the industrial areas of Tangier for employers to withhold Social Security contributions from the workers' salaries without subsequently paying them to the relevant authority. It is another way of reducing the salary. The worker believes that they have some protection against possible sick leave or unemployment, but when they try to assert their acquired rights, they realise that they are not on the lists in the Social Security offices.

In an interview conducted in May 2009, we put this problem to a Social Security manager in Tangier and they replied that "It's better not to know these situations. At the end of the day, people have a job and if we start pursuing companies that don't comply, they'll look for a less strict country". We should point out that at this point, the interview ended abruptly and the interviewee refused to appear in any study or publication.

"It's better not to know these situations. At the end of the day, people have a job and if we start pursuing companies that don't comply, they'll look for a less strict country".

Manager of the Moroccan Social Security in Tangier. May 2009

18.- In Jordan, the average customs tariffs fell from 22% to 13% between 2000 and 2003. In Lebanon, the reduction was from 15% to 5% between 2000 and 2002.

5. CASE STUDY



5. Case study: traceability of public authorities garments manufactured in Tangier

In light of the situation experienced by workers in the global clothing sector and knowing in detail the circumstances of the Moroccan labour market, the concern shown by European public organisations and authorities regarding the conditions under which the garments and clothing items bought by local, regional and state governments for their workers are manufactured would seem to be justified¹⁹. The uniforms or work clothes used by municipal cleaning or gardening staff, the fire service or the police, among others, are comprised of items manufactured by companies with international production lines and with relocated suppliers.

With this case study we have tried to trace the origin of the clothing bought by a group of public authorities subject to the European public procurement directive with the intention of identifying workshops and factories that produce garments for them in the Tangier area. This analysis has a dual aim: to find out the working conditions under which the items bought by the public buyers are made and to see what information channels exist so that institutional buyers can make an informed or conscious purchase.

Methodology and limitations of the research

The initial approach consisted of asking various European public authorities who their clothing and uniforms suppliers were to ask them if any part of their production was done in Tangier.

After over five years of joint work with a number of Catalan authorities within the framework of the Catalan Network for Ethical Public Purchasing, we applied to the four most active ones for collaboration with the aim of getting a list of suppliers first hand. Thanks to the city councils of Barcelona, Badalona, Manresa and Sant Boi and to the collaboration of

19.- It is not the aim of this report to show the work done in Europe in terms of Ethical Public Purchasing. For detailed information about this issue, please visit <http://networkwear.eu>

the Catalan Consumer Agency (of the Government of Catalonia), we drew up a list of 26 companies that had been awarded contracts to supply work garments and uniforms.

At the suggestion of SETEM and the Clean Clothes Campaign, some of the collaborating local authorities ask as the requirement for entering into a supply contract the list of suppliers to the contractor companies, which are obliged to provide the first link in the supply chain. As the available information was not homogeneous, and with the intention of updating the details, we sent the 26 companies a simple questionnaire about corporate social responsibility in which they were asked for the details of internal codes of conduct, verification mechanisms, transparency measures and the details of the supplier companies as well as the geographical origin of the garments. The appreciable lack of development of responsibility and transparency policies in the workwear sector imposed serious limitations on us as the data provided were very heterogeneous and incomplete. We should point out that the two biggest companies to which we sent the request for information have not provided any details about their suppliers in Tangier. We found these suppliers through research on the ground.

Based on the information obtained from the companies and having identified the work places in Tangier that supply some of them, we conducted a series of interviews with workers outside the factories to find out the everyday conditions under which they work there and the personal problems derived from these working conditions.

Although the process is extremely simple, the opacity of the production chain and the lack of interest of many of the actors in it to offer any transparency have imposed a number of methodological solutions on us that, although not to our liking, have marked the development of the research and the drafting of the report.

- The majority of the people interviewed, and especially those holding posts in factories or the authorities, explicitly asked to remain anonymous to protect their jobs. As the workwear sector is relatively small when compared with the fashion industry, we have decided not to give the names of the companies analysed. Consequently, this report describes the state of the issue and warns of clearly indictable situations without revealing the names of the European firms or the Moroccan factories. The specific details will be provided individually to each of the purchasing public authorities to urge them to develop their Responsible Public Purchasing policies and demand transparency and good practices in production control of their suppliers.
- The companies from which the public authorities had not requested the list of suppliers while processing the contract have not directly provided information about the geographical location of their production. Consequently, the production centres in Tangier have been identified on the basis of research on the ground by interviewing workers in the

different industrial areas of the city. It is probable that the European firms that have not provided the location of their Moroccan suppliers will want to refute the results of the research process. We will be very grateful if they can provide new data to check the results of this initial report.

- The distribution companies have stated that it is very complicated for them to obtain the addresses of the production centres from which the various firms with which they work are supplied. Further research work could analyse the supply chain of the firms that these companies sell.
- The European companies with their own factories in Tangier have had no problem in providing the addresses of their factories, both in the Mgouga industrial area.

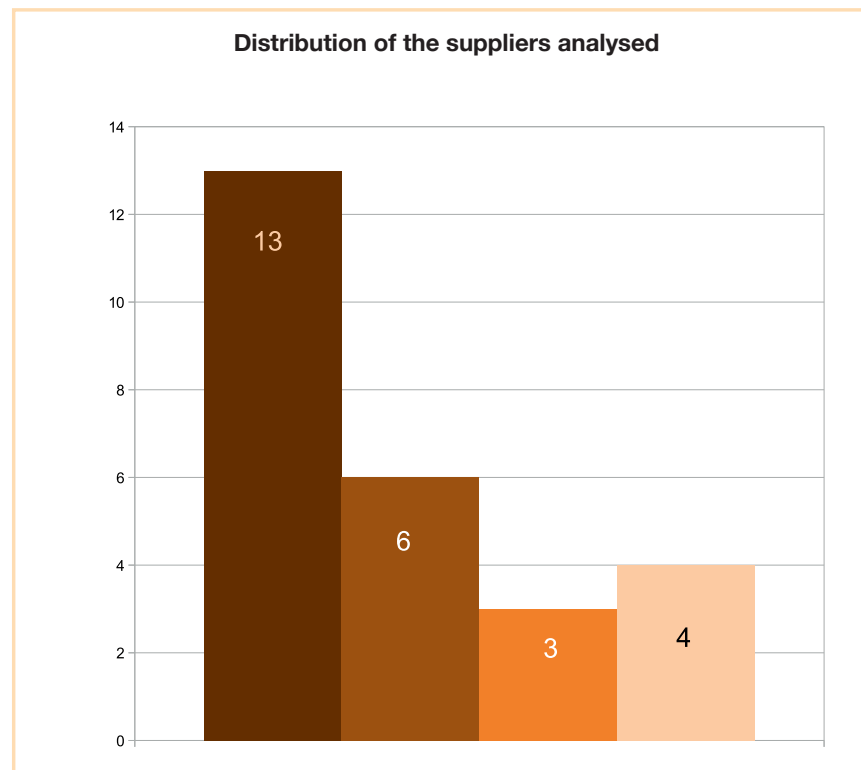
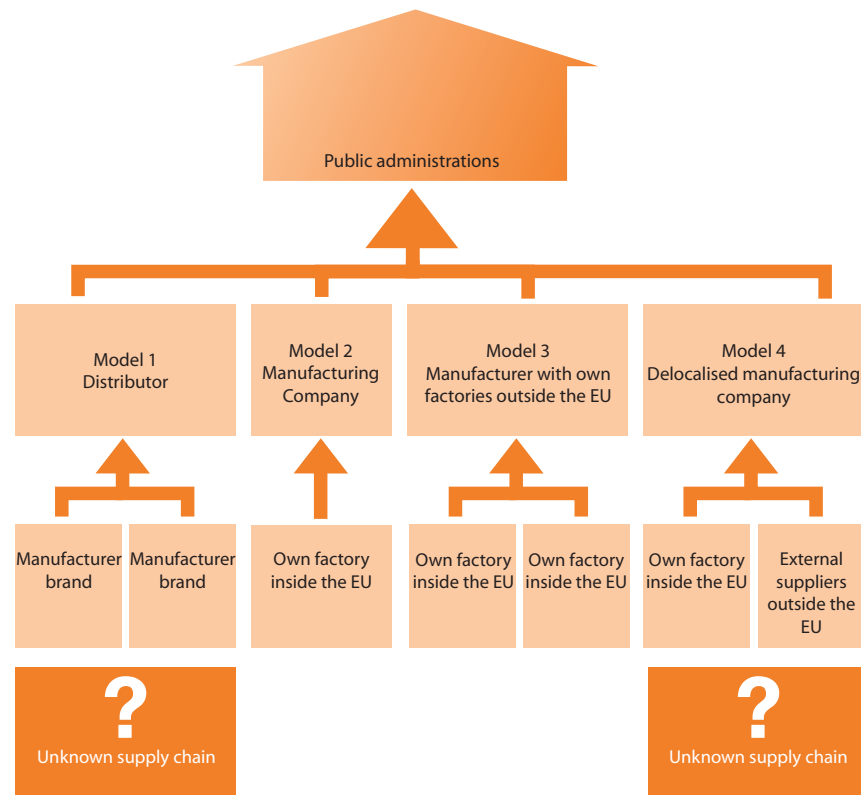
Structure of the workwear market

There are different types of actor in the workwear market for the public authorities and not all of them have the same ability to control the supply chain. Of the 26 companies identified, thirteen are distributors and they claim that only the production firms can give information. All of the distributors are local capital SMEs. This brings about the need to generate traceability strategies if the authorities are interested in knowing the origin of these garments. At the same time, it opens up a future field of research into social responsibility policies and the origin of the products of the European brands that the distributors and intermediaries offer to the public authorities.

The other thirteen suppliers are manufacturers and supply the authorities with their own clothing and textile items. Of these, seven state that they manufacture all of their garments in Spain. The other six use relocated production, and in four cases part of their products is made in Morocco. Consequently, four of the suppliers analysed work one way or another in Morocco, two of them in their own factories and two by subcontracting.

From the point of view of workers' organisations and organisations in defence of employment rights, transparency is an essential requirement to give credibility to corporate social responsibility policies.

Structure of the workwear market for the public authorities



- Distributors
- Manufacturers without factories outside the EU
- Manufacturing companies with their own factories outside the EU
- Manufacturing companies with delocalized production

The workwear market compared with corporate social responsibility and transparency

It should be stressed that the development of social responsibility policies in the specific area of workwear is very far from what we might see in the fashion or sportswear sectors. This can be partly explained by more recent relocation, but the most important explanation is the lack of any demands by the usual customers. The concern for corporate reputation and the ethical demands of customers is far higher among the international firms that live from their image than among garment and uniform suppliers for companies, corporations or the public sector.

Although 22 of the companies analysed have adopted some form of responsibility measures in the field of environmental impact, of the 26 companies analysed only five had a work code of conduct and only three submit their supply chain to any type of external control by securing the SA8000 certificate.

This market is outside the sphere of interest of public opinion even though a very significant part of their clientele is the public sector, which uses resources from them all to procure garment supplies. As in the fashion sector, the largest companies are the ones that have formally developed more complete actions plans in terms of corporate social responsibility. The small manufacturers or distributor have not considered the need in a market in which the consumers have not asked for any guarantee of responsibility. However, in the first stage of this research, it was the small- and medium-sized companies that answered our requests for information.

From the point of view of workers' organisations and organisations in defence of employment rights, transparency is an essential requirement to give credibility to corporate social responsibility policies.

Spanish-owned factories

The two companies that manufacture in Moroccan factories that they own produce technical uniforms for police, the fire service and gardening units. Both show their customers their SA8000 certification, which aims to ensure compliance with the fundamental conventions of the ILO throughout the production chain. Despite the effectiveness of the audit processes linked to the SA8000 having been questioned by the Clean Clothes Campaign on numerous occasions (Pruett, 2005; Hearson, 2010), the situation in both factories is appreciably better than we find in the factories in the area that work for other customers.

In the conversations held with the workers from both factories, no clear and systematic violations of Moroccan employment legislation were identified although they did complain of having had periods of excessive overtime worked with no prior planning. Two of the workers confirmed that during the year there had been at least four periods of over two weeks in which they had worked nearly 670 hours a week.

“Being paid the minimum salary (210 euros a month) is all very well if you don’t have to pay rent. A modest home in Tangier can cost almost 200 euros a month”

Saida, garment worker. Tangier, February 2011

“The conditions aren’t bad. I work nine hours a day, Monday to Saturday. Overtime is compulsory but they tell us the day before so that we know we’ll be leaving work late. And they pay us 8 Dh an hour. If I compare these conditions with the ones I’ve had in the past, they’re not that bad.”

Salma, garment worker. Tangier,

The peak work times last about two weeks and are repeated every two or three weeks. At these times of heavy production, the working weeks can reach 72 hours, with the workers having to go in on Sundays and holidays.

The workers interviewed stated that they were paid a salary of 11 Dh an hour, a little over the Guaranteed Inter-Professional Minimum Salary, which translated into a monthly salary of around 210 euros.

Factories supplying Spanish companies

Despite the lack of transparency of the two companies that subcontract production in Tangier, we were able to identify and analyse two supplier factories. According to the information from workers and from someone who carries out logistical tasks in one of the work places, the situation in the two factories is fairly similar.

The usual working day is nine hours a day from Monday to Saturday, with the working week usually being of 54 hours. Although the workers state that they are warned one or two days in advance, overtime is excessive and compulsory. The peak work times last about two weeks and are repeated every two or three weeks. At these times of heavy production, the working weeks can reach 72 hours, with the workers having to go in on Sundays and holidays.

The salaries of the workers we spoke to ranged from 8 Dh an hour to 10 Dh an hour, always below the guaranteed inter-professional minimum salary.

THE CONCLUSIONS



6. Conclusions and recommendations

The promise of “development” through the implementation of a textile industry geared towards exports is an unfulfilled promise in Morocco. The garment-making sector has reached significant relevance for the country’s economy and has created thousands of jobs, but the jobs that have been created do not lift the workers out of poverty. Workers’ living and working conditions have not improved in recent years and nothing indicates that the establishment of this light industry may be the first step in an industrialisation process towards activities of greater added value that enable a rise in the income of the workers, much less their ability to decide about their own lives.

With no perspectives for improvement in the sector itself and without new jobs being created in other sectors, garment workers do not have the option of using their unstable work as a springboard to other jobs or to what we in other employment markets would call a career. Their work in the factories constitutes a need by bolstering the income of their family unit. At the same time, the type of work in which they find themselves trapped severely limits their chances of building social networks to improve their situation and deteriorates their personal and family life.

The economic, political and social reforms that have been carried out in Morocco since the early 1980s have led to thousands of people and families leaving the countryside as a means of subsistence and looking to the new industries for income with which to survive. The modernisation of agricultural work has allowed food exports to grow, concentrated profits and reduced the number of households living from non-intensive agriculture and livestock farming. The same reforms have enabled the creation of light industry, primarily textile, which has employed part of the migrant population.

The garment-making sector has reached significant relevance for the country’s economy and has created thousands of jobs, but the jobs that have been created do not lift the workers out of poverty.

The economic, political and social reforms that have been carried out in Morocco since the early 1980s have led to thousands of people and families leaving the countryside as a means of subsistence and looking to the new industries for income with which to survive.

From a strictly economic point of view, a scarcely quantifiable number of these new workers continues to be submerged in poverty despite working extremely long days. The scarcity of official sources and the little collaboration of entrepreneurs and officials in the public authorities means that knowing how many workers are employed in the irregular sector, in small workshops and at home, is very complicated. However, their employment situation and the evidence of the existence of these workshops that anyone taking a walk through the peripheral areas of the industrial estates can see are enough for the matter to be a cause for concern, especially when it can be documented that these workshops work for suppliers of international firms, when they are not doing so directly for them.

In this work, we have also adopted a point of view in excess of the strictly economic and, based on the accounts by Moroccan unions and associations that the workers live in conditions of poverty of options and of a high degree of vulnerability and social instability, we have explored the causes of the processes of impoverishment and personal limitation. From this perspective, the patriarchal organisation of Moroccan society is a factor of impoverishment, yet no more relevant than what may affect European women. There is a subordination of women in the family and personal spheres, which overloads women workers with a double working day made up of over ten hours' work in the factory and more than 6 hours of tasks caring for the family, but with the lack of a quantitative study and systematic comparison with the results of the time usage surveys, the time spent on household tasks does not differ too much from that taken on by European women workers.

The length of the working day and its irregular nature entails a factor of over-exploitation with very serious personal and social repercussions. In addition to the limitations on having a minimally satisfactory private life is the deterioration of the social networks and the ability to create collective action to defend their employment rights at the level of the work place. This limits the possibilities that women have (including the most politically committed) to get involved in union activity. The organisational ability of women workers is incipiently being channelled in innovative ways that break with the traditional logic of considering the unions as the only legitimate social agents to defend employment rights. Taking the neighbourhood and not the work place as the basis for action, the workers manage to bring their associative life nearer to their everyday reality and find spaces in which to share their concerns and educate themselves in labour activism. Associations such as Attawassol become a space for creation of political activity which, in some cases, is compatible with subsequent involvement in classical union structures.

Although these movements are incipient and interact with the traditional unions, the political and business environment is extremely hostile and the bargaining ability of the workers is very small. In addition to the strategies of harassment and persecution of the more active workers is the spectre of relocation and factory closures, ever more present in the workers' huddles

of conversation, and the permissive attitude of the public authorities towards violations of employment rights.

The policies for Morocco's integration in the international markets fostered by the present monarch and by international institutions have had some clear winners. The rise in exports has resulted in an inflow of foreign currency that has benefited the leading national investors, but the supposed cascade of benefits that should reach the more modest classes does not appear to have worked properly. From the point of view of the garment workers, getting a job has not helped them rise out of poverty either in the short or the long term, and the promises of "development" of the 1980s are still too far away.

Faced with a situation of institutionalised instability and a lack of any real control by the transnational companies supplied from Morocco, it is extremely worrying that the public authorities that buy garments manufactured here are not able to demand the complete traceability of the working conditions under which the garments have been made. Public buyers are unaware of how and where the garments are manufactured and the only ones that have any information in this respect are the ones that have got involved in processes to foster responsible public purchasing and included information demands in procurement requirements.

Morocco is an extremely difficult market from which to get information and many of the companies that work there do not have credible information and monitoring systems. To a large extent, the underdevelopment of the verification systems is due to the lack of pressure by the buyers and the negligible demands that customers make on workwear companies.

Institutional customers that want to take the initial steps in terms of responsible public purchasing should be aware that information is fundamental in exerting pressure on the companies in the sector. Including the requirement that a list of suppliers should be added as an appendix to the contract is a simple measure that aids progress in the knowledge of the markets of origin and that brings pressure to bear on the companies in the sector to improve. When the suppliers are asked to undertake commitments or to sign declarations regarding compliance with the fundamental conventions of the ILO in their production chain, demands should also be made for the necessary information so that the truthfulness of the documents can be checked. Even though institutional buyers may not have the means to do so, the availability of a list of suppliers could help other actors (unions and NGOs) in this task.

As successive research projects by the Clean Clothes Campaign show, including this one, there is no certificate that offers a complete guarantee of respect for employment rights throughout the production chain. Certificates based on the international SA8000 standard have many gaps and social audits do not exert exhaustive control of the employment conditions in the supply chain. However, this does not mean that the authorities should reject the option of demanding these certificates of

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their suppliers as part of a process in which institutional consumers drive the workwear and uniforms sector towards monitoring models that take workers' organisations and unions into account.

Finally, and although it may seem obvious, we should warn that although this study focuses on the situation in Morocco, the textile sector is marked by employment instability worldwide. As the frequent studies by the Clean Clothes Campaign show, garment workers suffer exploitation in such distant places as the Maghreb, Southeast Asia and Central America. It is not a case of selecting the country of origin of the garments bought by institutional consumers but of demanding information and responsibility of their suppliers, introducing incentives to develop corporate policies that entail the respect for the employment rights of the workers.

Recommendations for public authorities buying garments and uniforms

1. Demand information about the production chain from the companies supplying the public authorities. We consumers need information to be able to take decisions. In the same way that public supply contract tenders demand technical information, they could also demand social information or geographical traceability. Having the list of suppliers of the companies that manufacture for the public authorities could be a way for the movements in defence of employment rights, NGOs and unions to bring indictments in the event of abuses against workers.

1.

2. Explore legal formulas for the progressive enforceability of compliance with the fundamental conventions of the ILO throughout the production chain of the companies that supply textile products to the public authorities. In this sense, networking supported by organisations and unions that know the labour relations in the producing countries is essential.

2.

3. Progressively foster the inclusion of companies supplying the public authorities in multistakeholder initiatives in which unions and organisations in defence of human rights take part. For this, the authorities must find legal formulas to reward companies that take steps in this direction.

3.

4. In the process to implement measures to control and verify working conditions, ensure that there is no preferential treatment for the large companies able to draft social responsibility plans that are apparently more effective than those of small- and medium-sized companies. The experience of the research process is that the desire for transparency of the latter companies is much greater than that of the large companies with transnational activity.

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