

Working Conditions in Morocco

Thursday, 01 May 2003 14:32

May 2003 report Working conditions in Morocco
Published by the Spanish Clean Clothes Campaign in
collaboration with Intermon (Oxfam Spain)

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Morocco and Spain

Historically, the relationship between Spain and Morocco has been as strong in the past as it is today, even though the demographic, social and economic structure of these two countries is very different.

In terms of demography, their situation is very different. Spain, a country that had its own "baby boom", is currently registering a very low birth rate. The current situation can almost be described as stagnation of the population. The demographic growth has slowed down year after year, due to the reduction in the number of children per woman. At the end of the 20th century this figure reached an average of 1.2 children / woman.

The consequence of this low growth is the increase in the elderly population. At the end of the 90s, almost 22% of the Spanish people were 60 or over 60, compared to 15% of the population under 15.

In Morocco, around one third of the population does not reach 15 years old and only 27.5% reaches an age above 60. In this sense, Morocco forms an age pyramid which is broad-based, meaning young. And the pyramid gets narrower as age increases. In Spain the pyramid has a structure with a much narrower top due to larger life expectancy, i.e., higher population with an older age.

Another very important aspect which differentiates both countries is that most of the Moroccan population lives in the countryside. In spite of this, Morocco is undergoing a process of urbanisation of its population. We must take into account that in 1960, Moroccan population living in cities accounted for barely 30% of the total population. The countryside environment, in which most of the Moroccan population lives, very clearly determines the demographic profile and influences the high fecundity index and the structure of families. The current urbanisation process of the population has a direct consequence on habits and institutions like the family.

In this sense, there is a strong trend towards the reduction in the number of children. In 1960 numbers showed 7 children per woman, and at the end of the 20th century 3.1 children per woman. At the same time, the nuclear family structure is quickly being adapted.

The speed of the demographic growth also generates another very important phenomenon: internal migration. It is estimated that 100.000 people migrate every year.

Moreover, internal migrations are predominantly inter-urban. For each 10 people migrating in Morocco, 4 move from one urban concentration to another. As a result of migration, these concentrations grow so quickly that new citizens arrive before services are created. Thus, in many cases, these urban concentrations lack the minimum infrastructures, such as sanitation and housing. The demographic capacity, together with the enormous difficulties encountered in finding a job, explain the migration from Morocco to other countries, which is estimated at around 40.000



people per year.

The literacy rate in Morocco is very low. More than half of the population aged 15 or older is almost illiterate. And the situation gets worse if we compare men and women: literacy rate for men almost doubles that of the women. Only one out of three Moroccan woman aged 15 or older is literate. The literacy rate among young people is much higher than for older people. However youth literacy rate is still at a very low level: 65.5%. Scholarship level, measured by registration levels, shows that primary school is not universal. One out of 4 boys or girls has never been at a school. Also, half of those attending a primary school interrupt their education.

Concerning other aspects related to health, there are 34 doctors for every one thousand inhabitants. Life expectancy, at the end of the 20th century, is 64.8 years for men and 68.5 years for women (in Spain it reaches 74.5 and 81.5 respectively).

The high demographic growth in Morocco results in an increase in the Gross National Product per inhabitant of only 0.7%. In this sense, the human development indicator created by the PNUD places Morocco at a medium level of 0.589 (the PNUD defines human development as the process amplifying the choices of persons, what the persons do and can do in their lives. This development indicator is based on several aspects such as life expectancy, education level and income per inhabitant. The human development indicator rates between 0 and 1. The PNUD considers that a level below 0.5 indicates a low level of human development, from 0.5 to 0.799 it shows a medium level and over 0.8 a high level). The distribution of income in Morocco is not balanced: 20% of the population has high income and accounts for 40% of the country's income.

Morocco is consolidating a new and democratic labour frame. Or so it seems according to the negotiations carried out to implement a Labour Code, in preparation since 1996. The acceptance of labour parties by the companies and the creation of mechanisms for collective negotiation are challenges which will have to be faced, as well as the lack of systems for social protection.

Most of the working population earn minimum salaries and buying power is very low. For example, rice and potatoes (basic consumption products) are much more expensive in Morocco than in Spain, where salaries are much higher.

Even though it is compulsory, most company managers do not comply with legal commitments. In this respect, it is calculated that more than half of the workers lack social coverage and only 3.5% of the active population in the city enjoys preventive medicine coverage.

Regarding the Labour Code, there have been negotiations for years between the Moroccan government, the CGEM (General Federation of Moroccan Companies) and the trade unions CDT (Democratic Trade Federation), UGTM (General Union of Moroccan Workers) and UMT (Moroccan Labour Union). For the moment, they have not been able to come to an agreement due to difference of opinion. The CGEM seeks to ensure work flexibility and limit the right to strike, while trade unions feel that a Work Code must be the opportunity to apply the international treaties issued by the ILO (International Labour Organisation) and to fully acknowledge trade unions and collective negotiation in companies, and also to limit the power of companies in terms of firing and penalties to banish arbitrary actions.

As a first approach to the business sector, we must highlight the employment rate, i.e., the percentage of the population in working age having a paid job, whether for themselves or within a company.

In 1999 employment rate reached 46%. The labour activity rate of women in the cities is low, though women who have entered the labour force rarely withdraw. Unemployment is a structural problem, with a huge difference between the urban concentrations and the countryside: unemployment is much higher in the countryside. Unemployment rate also includes, in many cases, underemployment.

Agriculture is the country's main economic activity. Half of the population dedicates itself to this activity. On the contrary, the service sector is scarcely developed and the industry sector only provides for less than 14% of total employment.

The main industrial activities are those related to food and agriculture, textiles, chemical and pharmaceutical, metallurgic and mechanic and electric. Without a doubt, the textile sector is the most important, accounting for slightly more than 42% of industrial employment. The textile industry in Morocco

Since its independence, Morocco has endorsed a policy to promote investment based on the set up of investment codes, with the goal of vanishing as many fiscal obstacles as possible to attract foreign capital. These codes grant several advantages and warrants in terms of taxes, customs and financing to those companies created with the approval of the Investments Commission. Since 1980 a promotion program for large industrial areas was created to support small and medium-sized companies.

The official objectives of this policy are not limited to the promotion of national and foreign investments, but also focus on the creation of employment, increasing support for exportation and the regionalisation of investment.

At present, Spain is Morocco's second commercial partner, behind France. However, there is a great difference between both countries. Between 1988 and 1999, the weight of Spain in Morocco's imports and exports was between 10% and 11% (in the same period, France represented slightly more than 25% of Morocco's imports and around 35% of exports). We must emphasize that since the end of the 90s, the commercial exchanges between Morocco and Spain have been quite dynamic, with an average annual growth rate of around 10%. However, for Spain the impact of the trade with Morocco is much lower, as it hardly accounts for 1% of Spain's total foreign imports and exports.

The commercial exchanges between both countries are mainly based on textile products: Morocco exports to Spain a variety of tissues (cotton, synthetic and artificial fabrics and wool), which after being manufactured in Morocco, are exported to Spain as clothing and garments. The contribution of the textile industry to industrial employment grew from 29% in 1986 to 39% in 1998. Thus, the level of employment in this industry doubled between 1986 and 1990 and tripled between 1986 and 1998.

Moreover, the textile industry in Morocco generates, directly or indirectly, more than 60% of female employment in the industry sector.

In terms of production, the sector registered an increase from 14% in 1986 to 16% in 1998, an average annual growth of 7.75%. In this sense, the high increase in exports is one of the causes. Exports boomed, multiplying by four between 1986 and 1998, with an average increase rate of 12%. This rate is quite high if we take into account that other industries registered a 9.7% increase. The textile sector represents 18% of Morocco's total exports, and it is the first currency exporter and importer (not including those generated by Moroccan population living abroad). The economic flow generated around the textile sector is the most important one, if we compare it to the rest of the industries in Morocco.

From this point of view, the regional impact of the textile sector in terms of economic and social balance is very important. Thus, there are some areas where the textile industry is, directly or indirectly, the source of more than 60% of employment.

In 1990, the clothing industry accounted for 84% of the textile exports. Most of the exports, over 80%, were directed to France.

The textile sector in Morocco has some characteristics which differentiates it from that of other countries. So, the limitation in terms of raw materials and the incapability to produce artificial or synthetic fibres, limits greatly the flexibility in production. Also, manufacturers do not usually control the design of the clothes or the policy for price ranges and brands.

Due to the weakness of the fabric-finishing sector, the textile industry in Morocco is formed by two distinct branches. On one hand a group of spinning mills and fabric companies, exporting 25% of their production. On the other hand garment companies, importing 90% of the fabric they are using. Both branches are well differentiated. The first one, producing thread and cotton fabrics,

belongs almost entirely to the State. The second, the garment sector, has developed almost exclusively with private capital. Most of the Moroccan cotton fabric production (83%) is sold in the domestic market.

Most Moroccan garment companies are small sized, family entities. In 1999, the 1200 companies producing clothing in Morocco employed an average of 34 workers/company and registered sales of 6 million Dirham.

However, spinners and fabric producers are manufacturing at a different scale and this sector is dominated by bigger-sized companies, with an average of 150 workers and 33 million Dirham in sales.

It is important to stress that it is in this small-sized companies that the exploitation of workers can be found and where labour legal frames are not respected, whether national (labour code) or international (international treaties signed by Morocco).

In this sense, salaries are well below the SMIG (Guaranteed Minimum Interprofessional Salary), social security payments are not made, the contract and the payroll are non-existent, the legal working day of 48 hours per week is not respected, annual holidays and national and/or religious holidays are not respected, there is no coverage for work accidents or professional illnesses, and often workers are threatened with being fired individually or in group at any moment and under any pretext.

One of the elements which make Morocco an attractive country for producers is cheap labour and geographic proximity. According to the consultant Werner-International, in 1990 Moroccan salaries amounted to 1.28\$/hour. In Taiwan 4.56\$/h, in Southern Korea 3.33\$/h and in Hong Kong 3.04\$/h. Reality shows that salaries are even lower, reaching on occasions 0.55\$/h.

In 1976 and 1982 Morocco signed agreements with the European Union, which on one hand limited exports, but which on the other hand additionally penalised Asian countries.

Due to historical and structural reasons, Moroccan investors prefer short-term and small investors. In fact, the creation of a garment company needs little capital and represents a limited risk.

In the textile industry, the fragility of entry barriers and the limited number of products and clients mainly explain the fierce competition and favour the current dynamism of the sector.

The importance of the textile industry (garment) in northern Morocco and the essential role it plays in maintaining economic and social balance in the region becomes evident through the implantation and density of the industrial web, its capacity to export its products in the international markets and its strong contribution to industrial employment in the region, mainly employment for women.

In fact, it is important to stress that the industry employs 84% of the total industrial working force in the region and accounts for 64% of exports, 59% of employment and 43% of investments. Spanish companies in Morocco

The presence of Spanish capital in Morocco is very important in the different economic sectors and particularly in the manufacturing industry.

Annual data from the Ministry of Industry obtained for the year 1997 shows that in Morocco industrial companies with foreign capital amount to 1038. These companies register sales of 50 million Dirham, which represents over one third of national production. Moreover, these companies contribute to one third of national industrial exports, around 11.6 million Dirham in exports.

The number of employees working in these companies this year is over 159000 people, which represents 33% of total industrial employment.

France is still the dominant country in relationships between Morocco and abroad, with slightly less than 50% of the industrial companies with foreign capital.

Spain has an important role, third behind Switzerland, with 8% of industrial companies with foreign capital. Spanish capital is present in most industrial sectors, with a clear predominance in the textile

and chemical industries.

According to the Moroccan Ministry of Industry, Spanish presence in the industry of Morocco involves around 200 companies and 14000 workers.

More than half of the workers employed in Spanish companies belong to the textile sector. Textile companies usually have a big workforce, offering employment on average to 157 people per company.

The food and agriculture sector is the other big player and also represents an attractive destination for Spanish capital. There are 47 companies registered in this sector giving employment to 1600 people. The prevalence of small size companies explains the low number of jobs generated by companies. The dominant sectors are canned goods, fruit, canned goods in general (mainly fish) and frozen products companies.

Other important sectors, although not at the same level as the previous ones, are mechanical construction and the electric/electronics industry.

In total, companies with Spanish capital employ around 3300 women. The textile and garment sector only accounts for 70% of this workforce.

In the research completed by the Clean Clothes Campaign four types of company structures have been identified, which account almost entirely for the Moroccan situation.

The first category is the one corresponding to delocalised Spanish companies. These are the companies based in Spain which transfer their production to Morocco through the creation of a subsidiary. This subsidiary produces exclusively the brands of the parent company based in Spain.

The second category corresponds to investing companies with Spanish capital. These are entities created in Morocco with Spanish capital whose production is directed to different clients and brands.

The third category corresponds to contracting companies. These are companies based in Morocco with national or foreign capital, and which are contracted by a Spanish company or brand to manufacture part of its production. There are all types of contracting companies: big, medium and small-sized.

The fourth category corresponds to subcontracting companies. These are companies contracted punctually by contracting companies. In many cases, the majority in some areas, these are irregular or clandestine factories.

The textile industry and the Spanish companies

The entire production network of Spanish companies directly or indirectly connected to Morocco (in any of the four categories previously explained) is related to the new globalising current in the Western economy. In this sense, Juan Somavia (General Director of the ILO), stated emphatically in the third WTO conference:

"In spite of the undoubted benefits that the liberalisation of trade and other aspects of globalisation may generate in terms of improvement in the assignment of resources, the increasing efficiency in economy and the increasing development, the process has not fully attained the objective of raising the standard of living, reaching full employment and a considerable and constantly increasing volume of real income and effective demand. There is increasing proof that globalisation is increasing the inequality between industrialised countries and developing countries".

According to the conclusions resulting from the Tripartite Meeting on Labour Practices in the Footwear, Leather, Textiles and Clothing Industries held in Geneva in October 2000, these industries generate important trade flows, generate employment and greatly contribute to the initiation of the process of industrialisation in many developing countries.

Morocco has modern labour legislation, based on agreements and recommendations from the ILO (International Labour Organisation). Parliament is debating this legislation to increase flexibility in the labour market. By presenting the labour code in the Parliament, the Moroccan government hopes to modernise and improve procedures related to dismissal and simplify the current legislation. In the meantime, companies agree with the publication of this law, whereas trade unions

and its representatives in the Parliament are against its adoption.

The work contract is established by the employer and the employee. There are two types of contracts, one for a pre-determined duration and the other for undetermined duration, which can be terminated by either of the parties.

It is not permitted by law to hire specific categories of workers:

those under 12

those under 16 and women (between 10 p.m. and 5 a.m.)

There is also a limitation on hiring women and children for some tasks which are considered dangerous.

The employer and the employee shall freely establish the salary, but this cannot be below the Guaranteed Minimum Interprofessional Salary established for every sector of activity. The Minimum Interprofessional Salary amounts to 1824.16 Dirham per month.

For years, the desire to reform the labour legislation has failed, due to differences between the companies and the trade unions in three main aspects: increase in wages, the suppression of permanent work contracts, and the marginalisation of the role of trade unions.

The industrial sector in Morocco is mainly urban and is marked by a strong concentration in production and employment in determined areas. The policies to promote employment were not able to absorb the masses of workforce coming from the countryside, and due to its weakness and the inefficient geographic distribution, they have caused the proliferation of irregular employment in the cities. This new population from the countryside, rooted out and detached from their familiar structures, are forced to work to survive.

In this sense, we see that even though all employees are protected by law by the social security system and if all employers are obliged to affiliate their employees to the CNSS (National Social Security Fund), almost all subcontracting companies do not comply with it.

In most cases, delocalised companies and companies with Spanish capital take pride in having all their employees affiliated with the CNSS and they even criticise Moroccan companies for not doing so.

However, contracting companies use very different arguments like: "it is impossible to affiliate all workers, we cannot make ends meet".

Even the CNSS (National Security Fund) asserts that in general the employers in the garment sector in Tangier only affiliate 50% of their workers and that European companies employ more workers than Moroccan companies due to education and culture.

It seems that absenteeism from work is one of the causes for the scarce affiliation by employers.

The high rate of absenteeism from work shows the hard working conditions in many companies. In this sense, we can observe that delocalised companies are the ones that treat their employees best - they are the ones who have personnel who have worked for more years.

In the irregular sector, subcontracting companies, it is an exception to be affiliated. Men and women workers in these kinds of factories do not usually have health coverage. They have to pay for doctors and medicines themselves. And we cannot forget that the population working in these companies is often the least favoured.

In relation to the duration of the working day, we must remember several things. The law marks the limits very clearly: 8 hours per day or 48 hours per week. Between 5a.m. and 10p.m., any extra hours are paid 25% more. And between 10p.m. and 5a.m. extra hours are paid 50% more.

In general, working hours are complied with, except in delocalised companies. In all the others, extra hours are compulsory, but they are paid. In subcontracting companies, the concept of working hours does not exist, i.e., it depends on the current orders. If there is a lot of work the working day may be more than 10 hours. On the contrary, if there is not much work, working hours are reduced. Thus, extra hours are compulsory and in many cases there are not even paid.

The Guaranteed Minimum Salary amounts to 8.77 Dirham/hour. Delocalised companies, companies

with Spanish capital and contracting companies usually comply with the minimum salary. Even in delocalised companies, many employees earn more than the minimum salary due to a premium system based on productivity and years of work. However, in the irregular sector wages are characterised by their arbitrariness and lack of equality: 3 Dirham/hour for cutting thread, 7 Dirham/hour for sawing and 5 Dirham/hour for ironing. Moreover, the norm is not to pay the whole of the worked hours, depending on completely discretionary reasons. In many cases, the wages depend on the relationship between the worker and the person in charge.

In relation to the security and hygiene conditions, the irregular sector is the one with the greatest difference, in a negative way. Underground garages are poorly ventilated and they are badly illuminated. Also, premises are usually very small and the heat from irons and machines is suffocating.

In another sense, the bad working conditions in subcontracting companies have as a direct consequence the degradation of the relationships in connection to power. Sexual harassment is frequent and represents a threat for workers.

The Moroccan labour legislation recognises the right of all workers to join a union. However, trade unions in the textile sector are almost non-existent in any type of company. Whichever the company, if a representative from a trade union works there he will be unfairly dismissed. To tell the truth, managers have an unhealthy view of trade unions and it has become taboo, a subject to avoid.

With regard to child exploitation, it does not seem to occur in delocalised companies, in companies with Spanish capital or in contracting companies. However, in the irregular sector the presence of children is frequent. We must remember that labour is authorised and legislated from the age of 12. Morocco signed the ILO Convention number 182 from 1999 related to Worst Forms of Child Labour, but not number 138 related to children exploitation, in which minimum age is established. Even though the average age of children at work is around 12, the conditions in terms of working hours, wages and security are much worse than the ones for the adults. In fact, they work under the same conditions as the adults and, if they ever get a salary, the wages are not more than 3 Dirham/hour.

In general terms, and after analysing the transfer of production of Spanish companies in this sector we can establish the different strategies used. Few brands contract clandestine factories directly due to different reasons: lack of quality, bad management in relation to deadlines, etc. However, if the clothes are not difficult to make, the price of these factories are much lower and may be contracted occasionally. Also, as Spanish brands diversify their providers to profit from the high competition in the sector, it obliges providers to subcontract in the irregular sector to meet the strong demands of their clients.

Analysis of the main problems

The most conflictive areas in the textile sector in Morocco are: women, minority rights and union rights.

Women entering the irregular sector in the cities mainly work in garment factories or doing domestic work.

They also carry out other activities working as dressmakers, embroiderers, seamstresses and weavers.

In general, the reasons driving women to enter the irregular sector are various. In many cases, jobs in this sector are the only professional opportunity for many women who have not been trained to get a qualified job in the regular economy. Also, irregular economy turns out to be the route for all those homes needing more wages, but which do not question the role of the man (husband) as the head of the group and main provider.

According to the conclusions on Labour Practices in the Footwear, Leather, Textiles and Clothing Industries issued by the ILO (International Labour Organisation), "Many women work in the non-structured sector and social security funds should be created for them. Employers should make an effort to provide them with training which would give them access to a wider range of jobs, with the

guarantee to have the same opportunities and the same treatment as men if they perform equivalent work. The decisions in term of hiring and promotions should only be based on qualifications and aptitude, instead of using criteria based on sex".

From the 30s, an improvement in labour conditions for women could be seen. But it was not until the independence of Morocco in 1957 that we allowed women to participate in trade unions. In April 1962, the UMT (Labour Moroccan Union) organised a congress of women workers and the first feminist organisation in Morocco was created: (The Progressive Union for Moroccan Women), with the goal of improving labour conditions. During the 60s and the 70s, the claims for women's labour rights were constant.

From the educational point of view, we must take into account that historically only men had the right to an education. Little by little women have increased their scholarship; however, there is still a huge difference between women coming from the countryside and those living in the cities.

Female illiteracy in the 90s amounted to 61% of those between the ages of 10 and 24 (45% in the cities and 96% in the countryside), to 81% of those between 25 and 34, to 86% of those between 35 and 49, and to 90% for the rest.

In the professional world, women have essentially worked in the irregular sector, especially the poorest women. Garment work and housework are the predominant activities.

In the case of garment work, women are the workers who are least protected. The most frequent case is to find single women, divorced women or widows (few married women) and youngsters who are not old enough to work in the formal economy.

If we take into account the conditions they work under, it is easy to understand why employers prefer to employ them rather than men. According to some men in charge of workshops women are "more meticulous in their work and more reliable than men, but above all they are less aggressive in their demands". Most of the irregular sector companies prefer a feminine workforce because it is cheaper and less organised in terms of unions. Given this situation, labour exploitation is something habitual and almost unquestionable.

In most cases, with only the wages earned working in the workshops it is not possible to subsist, as often these workers are in charge of a whole family.

The extremely low wages obtained in the workshops do not cover all their needs and they are usually obliged to seek other resources. For some, prostitution represents a possible source of income. Those who go out at night, as they are called by their colleagues, represent a high percentage out of the total number of female workers. The phenomenon is quite visible and evident in most Moroccan cities.

Together with the subject of women at work, child labour exploitation is another very negative aspect.

The International Labour Organisation defines the worst forms of child labour as:

- a) all forms of slavery or any practice similar to slavery, such as the sale and traffic of children, servitude as a result of debts and the status of servant and forced or compulsory labour, including forced or compulsory recruitment of children for their participation in armed conflicts.
- b) the use, recruitment or offering of children for prostitution, production of pornography or pornographic shows.
- c) the use, recruitment or offering of children for any illegal activity, particularly the production and traffic of narcotics, as defined in the applicable international treaties.
- d) any work which, by nature or by the conditions under which it is carried out, may cause damage to the health, security or morality of children.

There are not accurate statistics which allow us to determine the number of children working in the worked. According to UNICEF, the continent with the biggest proportion of children exploited at work is Africa, where one out of three children works.

In Morocco, the work of children is something which has always been linked to tradition, especially in the countryside. Historically, the image of the employer-tutor who taught an occupation to a

minor was very common in poor families. Thus, knowledge was passed on from one generation to the next and the child contributed to the family. Time and the huge migration toward the cities from the countryside have progressively faded tradition away.

In our days, tradition seems to repeat in some way but in its most wicked form. The role of the employer-tutor has been substituted by the employer-manager and the transmission of knowledge has become a mere exchange of money for workforce.

We must take into account that, with the law in the hand, Moroccan minors can carry out some kinds of work since they are 12. But this must be done under the concept of training or pseudo professional training. However, the irregular sector has often been the object of claims due to the current or punctual use of minors in working conditions representing labour exploitation and a high damage for their physical and mental health.

In this sense the Convention on Worst Forms of Child Labour, issued by the ILO, also includes the need to promote employment and the professional training for the parents and adults of the families of the children working under these conditions. This measure is very important, as very often child labour is the only source of revenue in the families.

Another very important and negative aspect is that workers do not belong to trade unions. Moroccan trade unions were very active in the national independent movement in the country. From this moment until today, trade unions have evolved, but they never acquired a major importance among the different workers' groups.

Paradoxically, article III in the Constitution of Morocco from 1996 states that "political parties, trade unions, local groups and professional associations contribute to organise and represent citizens...".

Moreover, Morocco has committed internationally in the Conventions and Recommendations of the ILO regarding Freedom of Association and Collective Bargaining.

In spite of the current legal frame, the general situation of trade unions is quite bleak and they are almost inexistent in the garment sector. Three of the most representative trade unions in the sector, the UMT (Moroccan Labour Union), the CDT (Democratic Labour Confederation) and the UGTM (General Union of Moroccan Workers) accuse the Moroccan government of attracting foreign investment by modernising legislation and by setting up new free trade zones; while speeding up administrative procedures to facilitate the entry of new capital. In the practice, speed up administrative procedures really means to smother with administrative, political or even police means any effort to get organised from workers, no matter how small the initiative.

In this sense, Rachida Bami, asserted in an article in Moroccan Finances News Magazine: "To join a trade union in Morocco seems to mean for many that you are a fighter or an anarchist who risks at any moment not only to lose his job but to make other lose theirs as well. Through vindictive speeches, some trade union leaders contribute to maintain a militant image of trade unions. However, trade unions are not only formed by exemplary militants. Some trade unionists do not doubt in using their position to ascend faster, and in some occasions internal fights were a characteristic of our trade unions (...) Some people feel a strange phobia against trade unions. Funny enough, it is in times of conflict when this rejection is more evident, accusing in most cases unionists on strike. Due to the lack of a clear and transparent strategy within the trade unions, the break between leaders and the supposedly leaded is growing, most workers do not believe any more in the myth of the trade union who defends their interests".

The responsibility of Spanish companies

For some time now, most companies, Spanish and non Spanish, started to take into account some new elements which seem to worry consumers. Thus, for example, nowadays, companies not taking into account environmental values are risking to be punished by the public.

In this sense, the scandals brought to the light by consumers organisations, trade unions and NGOs have captured the attention of the public opinion on the conditions under which some products are manufactured, by children or under very hard working conditions. The organisations do not only

denounce the violation of fundamental rights, they join forces, put pressure on companies and support the fulfilment of workers' social rights and the improvement of working conditions.

There are many causes for a company to get involved in social responsibility. In the last years, we have seen how this kind of initiative has multiplied. However, the different analysis are not fully developed and the studies do not give much hope. Most of the initiatives carried out have not caused an impact at the same level.

In many cases, companies fabricate codes of conduct allowing them to advance eventual regulations from States. In other cases, though, companies act only after detecting that consumers are starting to worry on the social conditions under which the product they are buying has been made.

Through social corporate responsibility, companies want to reduce the risks of facing negative consume reactions which could make them lose market share or damage its brand image. This is the reason why companies are increasingly taking into account their social attitude and why criteria to evaluate companies socially are being created by consumers and sometimes by the states. However, only in some countries such as Belgium, France, Switzerland and the north of Europe are these criteria being taken into account, and very slightly.

In this sense, Spanish companies are not there yet. The social pressure created in Spain by the Clean Clothes Campaign may be able to change things and really make consumers aware of their power.

But the situation is very different in the south. Most of the clothes manufactured in subcontracting factories is exported. France, England, Germany and Spain are the most frequent destinations for these clothes, which are very often made under working conditions just short of exploitation.

In the research carried out, there was a follow-up of 20 out of the 500 workshops in Tangier. From these 20, at least 12 produced or had produced garments for a well-known Spanish brand, such as Inditex, Mango, Corte Inglés, Mayoral and Visto Bueno (Eroski group).

The activity of Spanish companies in Tangier can be summed up in two big categories: 1) the ones owning production premises in Morocco, through the creation of a new unit or through their participation in an existing one, and 2) the ones subcontracting the product.

The first category of Spanish companies, or their Moroccan equivalents, do comply with current laws. The problem is subcontracting. The irregular sector depends almost exclusively on European brands, particularly on large-scale distribution, even though we may also find brands corresponding to high and medium-range products.

The most common situation is that Spanish companies install their premises in free trade and industrial zones, but clandestine workshops are scattered all along Tangier.

There are three forms of subcontracting:

- Occasional subcontracting (due to an unforeseen order)
- Current subcontracting (thus avoiding the hiring of more staff in the unit)
- Concealed subcontracting (subcontracting workshops belong to the same Moroccan workshops which have been contracted)

In this sense, the Spanish brands detected in Tangier may use any of these three systems. The data gathered by the research carried out in 2001 shows:

NAME OR LOCATION OF WORKSHOP (TANGIER)	SPANISH BRANDS MANUFACTURED
ANDALOUSSI WORKSHOP Rue Gotemberg	ESTRADIVARIUS, CORTE INGLÉS, DISNEY, PRINCESA
WORKSHOP Rue Ibn Marhal	MAYORAL
PLAMTEX WORKSHOP Rue el Hariri	MAYORAL
KHADIJA HOURIA WORKSHOP Place Mozart	MAYORAL
WORKSHOP	MAYORAL

Place El Medina	
ZIDATEX WORKSHOP Plaza Toros de Soad	ESTRADIVARIUS
MAKADA WORKSHOP Detrás Asociación El Mouatina	VISTO BUENO
CERVANTES WORKSHOP STE JANYL88 Rue Salh eddine Ayoubi	ZARA, BERSCHKA, MANGO, VISTO BUENO, CORTE IN GLES
ILCOTEX WORKSHOP Rue Med Al Mardassi 10	STRADIVARIUS, ZARA
AJYAD WORKSHOP S.A.R.L..Rue de la paix 12 Imb Nait Hamou	MAYORAL
NOMOTEX WORKSHOP Quartier Sweini	CORTE INGLES
SWISSTEX CONFECTION WORKSHOP Rue Omar Regrari, Bel Air	MANGO, ZARA

In this sense, the attitude of the Spanish companies follows the trend of the imposition of the law of economic globalisation: to get rid of the responsibility of production and transfer it to providers.

And, what is the consequence of this process?

First of all, lately there has been a strong increase in the number of workshops, which creates a situation in the sector where this type of practise is considered as normal. This change in mentality where something which is only habitual starts to be considered normal serves as a breeding ground for some to think that clandestine workshops, even if they are something negative, at least offer working opportunities.

Moreover, this type of workshops absorbs a great amount of non qualified workforce coming from the countryside and has become an important factor in attracting this population.

The Research

The Research carried out for this book was conducted in two phases. The first one from March to June 2001, and the second one from September 2001 to March 2002.

In the first phase, a research group and a group of co-workers were created. The research group was formed by a coordinator and some technicians specialised in the different research fields. The group of co-workers was formed by occasional workers who helped carry out fieldwork, particularly the life stories and interviews made.

The methodology used had the goal of creating action platforms and alternatives. This is the reason why a process to participate was promoted, based on the horizontal transfer of information and on reflection. It was also based on achieving the socialisation and return of information in the final process by increasing the participation of trade unions and associations.

In this sense, the fieldwork at this stage was based on an approach to corporations, working environment, trade unions and the state, by interviewing several representatives from each area. For this purpose, a list of the garment companies was set up and the brands manufactured by Spanish companies were investigated.

Also, different interviews were organised with the coordinator of the PNUD (United Nations Development Program) in Tangier, with an inspector from the CNSS (Moroccan social security), some representatives from trade unions, nine managers of textile companies and with different representatives from the textile sector (Chamber of Commerce, Technological Institute, etc.).

The final phase of this fieldwork was registered in a report called "Social and labour conditions in the textile sector in the north of Morocco and the transfer of the production of Spanish companies". The preparation of this report gave a more global view of the context and the problem of the working conditions in the textile garment sector.

In the second phase of the research, the goal was to extend the previous study and use the contacts which had already been established.

The first problem in this second phase was the complexity and instability of the sector. This is very frequent in subcontracting, but it is even more so in sub-subcontracting.

During the study of the social and labour conditions of the female workers, it was observed that conditions got worse as the irregularity of the working place increased.

Given this situation, it was decided that the objectives of the second study would be slightly different from the ones established for the first study. In this study, the goal was to find out which brands are manufactured in clandestine workshops, to get a more detailed profile of the social and labour conditions in the small textile production centres in Tangier, to study the responsibility of Spanish companies in the social and labour conditions in the textile sector, to detect and analyse the problems caused by bad working conditions and to consider possible actions and alternatives.

In order to find out which brands are manufactured, a network of informers was established, formed by male and female workers from several workshops in Tangier. Their collaboration was very important, and not only were they a fantastic source of information, but they also provided us with labels (some of them appear in this book) of the clothes being manufactured in their workshops. With this, we could follow up on the production of 10 factories in Tangier during a period from 1 to 3 months.

In order to have a more detailed profile of the social and labour conditions in the small textile production centres in Tangier, we interviewed 20 female workers from 10 different workshops and 5 male workers from 5 workshops.

To detect and analyse the problems caused by bad working conditions, it was decided that a long-term would be conducted to follow up of a standard family: the Laghribs.

The Laghribs have 7 children and they arrived in Tangier one year ago, from a rural area called Beni Harchan. Since then they have lived in one of the most underprivileged areas in Tangier, Choug, where most of the population is also of rural origin.

The four daughters of the Laghrib family work in the building sector and family subsists on their wages. Neither the father nor the mother has a stable job. Two of the daughters work in irregular workshops and the other two work in regular workshops. None of them has gone to school or knows how to read or write.

To study the responsibility of the Spanish companies and consider the possible alternatives, it was decided to interview 10 managers of regular workshops and 10 managers of irregular workshops.

Also, it was decided that different trade union leaders would be interviewed: the delegate of the Ministry of Labour, the director of the Institute of Technologies Applied to the Textile and Garment Sector in Tangier, several economists from the National Statistics Institute in Rabat, the director of the Spanish Chamber of Commerce in Tangier and a Moroccan lawyer specialised in labour affairs. The results of this entire process can be found in the pages of the book.