

SIT Graduate Institute/SIT Study Abroad

SIT Digital Collections

Independent Study Project (ISP) Collection

SIT Study Abroad

Fall 2019

The Commodification and Exoticization of Morocco: Tourism's Impact on the Weaving and Argan Oil Industries

Isabella Mancini
SIT Study Abroad

Follow this and additional works at: https://digitalcollections.sit.edu/isp_collection



Part of the African Studies Commons, Agricultural and Resource Economics Commons, Agriculture Commons, Civic and Community Engagement Commons, Fiber, Textile, and Weaving Arts Commons, Growth and Development Commons, Place and Environment Commons, Social and Cultural Anthropology Commons, Tourism Commons, and the Tourism and Travel Commons

Recommended Citation

Mancini, Isabella, "The Commodification and Exoticization of Morocco: Tourism's Impact on the Weaving and Argan Oil Industries" (2019). *Independent Study Project (ISP) Collection*. 3188.
https://digitalcollections.sit.edu/isp_collection/3188

This Unpublished Paper is brought to you for free and open access by the SIT Study Abroad at SIT Digital Collections. It has been accepted for inclusion in Independent Study Project (ISP) Collection by an authorized administrator of SIT Digital Collections. For more information, please contact digitalcollections@sit.edu.

The Commodification and Exoticization of Morocco: Tourism's Impact on the Weaving and Argan Oil Industries

Mancini, Isabella

Academic Director: Belghazi, Taieb

Advisor: Ait Mansour, Hicham

Location of Study: Africa, Morocco
Fes, Marrakech, Agadir, and Essaouira

University of San Francisco
International Studies and Middle Eastern Studies

Submitted in partial fulfillment of the requirements for MOR:
Multiculturalism and Human Rights, SIT Study Abroad, Fall 2019

Abstract

The Moroccan government has steadily focused its attention through governmental projects and marketing strategies on tourism, as tourism in Morocco grew 11% from 2017 to 2018 (“Tourism Statistics in Morocco,” 2018). Through the Vision 2020 plan, the Moroccan government plans to attract over 1 million tourists by the year of 2020 to what it describes as its emerging markets, which is expected to raise the overall Gross Domestic Product (GDP) by 2%, all of which has a significant impact on traditional sectors of production (“Vision 2020,” 2017). This research will focus exclusively on argan and weaving production, as these sectors have also seen an external influence from foreign ownership, corporation investment, and increased exportation of weaving and argan products. Both argan and weaving production have distinctively traditional methods of production that have originated with Amazigh people in Morocco. This research aims to focus on the interactions, experiences, and beliefs of those who are directly involved in the production process of argan and weaving products and discovers how tourism impacts the livelihood and wellbeing of those living in Morocco.

Key Words: Sociology, Cultural Anthropology, Tourism, Destination Imagery

Table of Contents

Abstract	2
Acknowledgements	4
I. Introduction	5
<i>Points of Interest</i>	5
<i>Weaving</i>	6
<i>Eco-Tourism/Ethical Tourism</i>	9
<i>Why This Matters</i>	10
<i>Positionality</i>	11
<i>Hypothesis</i>	12
<i>Parameters of Study</i>	12
<i>Research Question</i>	13
<i>Tourism and Markers of Sites</i>	13
<i>Exoticization of Morocco</i>	16
<i>Commodification of Morocco</i>	17
III. Methodology.....	19
<i>Anonymity</i>	21
<i>Interviews</i>	22
<i>Assumptions</i>	22
IV. Findings	24
<i>Economic Impact of Tourism</i>	24
<i>Cultural Impact of Tourism</i>	25
<i>Ecological Impact of Tourism</i>	26
<i>Influence of Peace Corps Volunteers and Foreign Investors in Morocco</i>	27
V. Conclusions	29
<i>Analysis of Findings</i>	29
<i>Implications of Study</i>	30
VI. Limitations of the Study	31
VII. Recommendations for Further Study	33
VIII. Bibliography and List of Sources	36
IX. Appendices.....	39

Acknowledgements

I would first like to thank everyone at the Cross-Cultural Center for Learning for being so kind-hearted and helpful throughout this whole program. A big thank you to Mina for being a continuous ray of light no matter what was going on, for checking up on me all the time and for always helping me and guiding me through any and everything. Thank you to Taieb for being an encyclopedia of wisdom, for bearing with me throughout the development of my research project, and for sending me endless sources of people to contact and articles to read.

I would not be here in Morocco without my dad. Thank you for singlehandedly raising me these past few years. I know it has not been easy but I am so appreciative of having you in my life. Thank you for every time you have listened to me, sent me words of encouragement, and believed in me. I owe a lot of this to you.

To all of the amazing friends I have met during this program, both Moroccan and American- thank you. Thank you to every single person who listened to me when I needed it, who was a shoulder to cry on when I needed that instead, and who pushed me to do more and learn more. To every single taxi driver who pointed me in the right direction, to every hostel owner who showed me kindness and made me feel like a part of a family, and to every friend I made along the way, I would be lost without all of you.

Lastly, I would like to dedicate this research project to my aunt who passed away from cancer while I was on this program. Thank you for listening to me hash out all my ideas for this project, for all of the time you spent reassuring me that everything would always work out exactly as it was planned to, and for stepping in and being like a mom to me, never once making me seem like a burden to you. I tried to carry out the project in the spirit of you, always extending kindness to every person I encountered, just as you would have done.

I. Introduction

Points of Interest

The purpose of this research is to examine how tourism and the exoticism of Morocco impacts cultural identity, particularly in regards to argan oil and weaving processes and production. I decided to look exclusively at the impact of tourism on argan oil and weaving because these were two of the most tangible production processes, where I could physically see the production process, and ones I felt had been the most heavily influenced by tourism.¹ I also was most interested in weaving processes, as this particular aspect of Moroccan culture was what first made me want to visit Morocco. My family would often decorate our house with Moroccan-style décor: rugs, woven baskets, and even Moroccan wedding blankets. My mother had worked for a chain of home and clothing stores in the United States that regularly sent what they referred to as “global buyers” all around the world, particularly in North Africa and Southeast Asia, where they would buy clothing and decorative items from these places. Back in the United States, this company would reproduce the items under their own label, not providing any of the profits to the people who had originally reproduced these goods or whose designs they had adopted.

This research project originally stemmed out of a deep comfort with the ability to be a tourist in Morocco: to travel to Morocco with ease and without complicated paperwork, when many Moroccans are not able to even obtain visas to enter Europe or the United States. To be able to benefit from the low prices of Moroccan goods and food. To take more than I gave during

¹ These assumptions were based on my own personal experiences and interactions within the markets in Morocco and the literature I had read prior to coming to Morocco.

my time here, which is inevitable in any traveling or study abroad experience, but still left me with feelings of guilt. It made me wonder why tourists could consume different parts of any culture and then walk away, taking the parts of the culture with them that had been neatly packaged and catered to them.²

Weaving

Moroccan rugs are said to have been dated back to the Paleolithic Era, as rugs were used for utilitarian purposes, such as sleeping mats, bed covers, burial blankets, and shawls to protect against the heat and sand from the Sahara Desert (“The Stories and Secrets”). The rugs contained a series of symbols, which were used as a means of communication and storytelling, meaning that the rugs served as a form of oral storytelling (the Amazigh language, Tamazight, was only established as an official language in Morocco in 2011; thus, language has not had a significant impact in the tradition of rugs). Moroccan weaving is traditionally dependent on women, as women have passed down the techniques of weaving to their daughters and other female family members (“The Secrets Behind the Symbols”).³

Different regions varied in the production and style of rugs and these variances existed between families who made the rugs as well. Listed below are some of the regions in which rugs are produced throughout Morocco, along with the general characteristics of the rugs of the respective region.

- Ait Bou Ichouen: Figuig province in Northeast Morocco. Referred to as Talsint rugs, traditional knots, utilizes red, purple, and orange colors (Cipollini, 2017).

² For the purpose of this research, the packaging and catering of certain elements of culture to the tourism industry will be referred to as cultural sanitation.

³ Men, however, have played a role in the selling of rugs to tourists, as they often serve as middlemen between the women who weave the rugs and the individuals who purchase the rugs.

- Azilal: Northern High Atlas to the southern Middle Atlas Mountains. Single knotted, intricate designs, neutral colors (“Kulchi Rugs,” 2009).
- Beni Mguild: Western Middle Atlas Mountains. Thick piled rugs, utilization of indigo, vertical loom (“Kulchi Rugs,” 2009).
- Beni Ourain: Northeastern Middle Atlas Mountains. Considered some of the most prestigious rugs to own, minimalist designs, geometric patterns, utilization of cream, white, brown, and black colors (“Beni Ourain”).
- Haouz: Between Middle Atlas Mountains and the Atlantic Ocean. Bold colors, symbols in reference to fertility, marriage, and spirituality, referred to as Boujad rugs (Kilkelly et. al, 2012).

Additionally, kilim rugs and boucherouite rugs are made by tribes throughout Morocco, not distinctive to one specific tribe. Kilim rugs are flatwoven, sometimes embroidered, and thin, making them a suitable choice for warmer climates. Boucherouite rugs are made of old scraps of fabric, sometimes old clothing, and are often made with bright colors. These rugs originally stemmed out of a lack of access to wool, where individuals still wanted to have a rug that was suitable for colder climates. (Kilkelly et. al, 2012).

Most recently, synthetic dyes have been used to produce rugs, as natural dyes are typically only found in rugs that are at least seventy to eighty years old. These natural dyes have included cow urine, almond leaves, indigo, iron sulphate, and cochineal (female scale insects). Because of this desire to have an “authentic” Moroccan rug, older rugs are highly treasured, often shipped to museums across Europe or to be featured in wealthy individuals’ homes as pieces of art. However, recently, the Moroccan government has made an extended effort to preserve culture internally. In 2014, King Mohammed VI announced renovations on what was previously known

as the Museum of Moroccan Arts in Marrakech, where what is now known as the National Carpet Museum in the building of Dar Si Said would house rugs and carpets from all across Morocco, along with carved wood, zellige tile work, and plasterwork (Williams, 2017).

Argan Oil

Argan oil has been utilized since the 12th century, with argan trees dating back to the Tertiary Period (66 million to 2.6 million years ago). Argan trees are native to Morocco, although people have attempted to grow argan trees in other countries, such as Israel. Argan trees can live up to 200 years when left without any major disturbances and can grow up to ten meters tall (“History of Argan Oil,” 2019). The trees bear most of their fruits during the months from May to June and each tree can only produce a few kilograms of fruit per year (“History of Argan Oil,” 2019).

The Moroccan argan oil industry has been impacted by tourism since the 1980s, when European cosmetic and beauty brands first took note of the use of argan oil. The Moroccan government estimates that “exports of argan oil have more than doubled in the past five years, to more than 700 tons,” with most of these exports going to international corporations such as L’Oreal and Unilever (Xingfei). Despite this increase in exportation of argan oil, the process has remained relatively unchanged.⁴ Amazigh women collect, dry, and store the nuts and crack them open to reveal the kernels (Britton, 2016). The argan kernels are subsequently crushed in a mill, which releases the oil. Culinary argan oil is made from kernels that are roasted, while cosmetic argan oil is made from raw kernels. Women on average earn about 40 dirhams a day, the equivalent of \$4 US dollars, while argan oil is sold on sites such as Josie Maran, a major

⁴ Although the process has remained relatively unchanged in terms of collection of the fruit and the overall methods of obtaining oil from the kernel, some cooperatives in Agadir that I have researched have introduced new machineries (such as those that mimic the purpose of the mill) to produce oil at faster rates.

cosmetic company that utilizes argan oil in a variety of their products, for \$49.00 US dollars for a 1.7 ounce bottle (Xingfei; see also “100% Pure Argan Oil”).⁵

Khadija Fajry, owner of Kenza International Beauty which utilizes prickly pear and argan oil in a majority of their products, began the process to register argan oil as a Protected Geographical Indication (PGI) in Morocco (Roberts, 2014). The PGI in essence assigns a specific product or good to a particular origin, where there is a “clear link between the product and its original place of production” (“Protecting Society and the Environment with A Geographical Indication”). According to the World Intellectual Property Organization, a PGI certification would ensure consumers of the product that the product meets certain expectations and regulations and helps to protect traditional knowledge and production methods (“Protecting Society and the Environment with A Geographical Indication”). PGI certification would also allow argan oil to be entered under global markets with more competition arising from the certification, which might allow Moroccan produced and owned argan oil companies to benefit over international investors that export the oil and produce it in locations other than Morocco.

Eco-Tourism/Ethical Tourism

Eco-tourism, sustainable tourism, and ethical tourism all consist of the same basic concept: that individuals visiting an area should be respectful of the environment and the people living within and around the area. Although the World Tourism Organization (WTO), a subset of the United Nations, has not agreed on a conclusive definition of eco-tourism, Elizabeth Boo, an American researcher and journalist of eco-tourism, stated that “Ecotourism is a way of traveling

⁵ This comparison, between average wage of an argan cooperative employee compared to the selling price of the pure product, is stated to demonstrate the disparity between the wealth that the argan industry creates versus the realities of those who contribute to the production of this industry.

responsibly in almost natural environments. It tries to reduce negative environmental effects and sociocultural transformation. It helps to finance protected areas and creates possible sources of income for local people” (Tecchio, 2019). Through Boo’s definition of eco-tourism, it becomes clear that eco-tourism revolves around supporting local communities and being cognizant of an individual’s impact on their surroundings. Eco-tourism is differentiated from classical tourism, as classical tourism does not provide a bridge between different cultures and limits interactions with local populations (Tecchio, 2019).⁶

In the context of weaving and argan industries in Morocco, ethical or eco-tourism involves being cognizant of which cooperatives to support and understanding how the purchase of such goods affects local communities. For example, one might choose to support female-owned and operated weaving cooperatives, as opposed to cooperatives with male managers or owners, as these female-owned and operated cooperatives may demonstrate how women receive direct profits from their work. In regards to argan oil, one may make the decision to buy argan oil with a Fairtrade or Protected Geographical Indication (PGI) marker, which will ensure that the argan oil has been produced in a regulated setting and has a certain marker of quality.

Why This Matters

As a tourist in Morocco, this research matters because how tourists interact with spaces that are not always theirs to benefit from is being mindful and cognizant of the impact they have on our surroundings. It also brings into question why tourists are able to benefit from certain spaces in Morocco. In any location that one is visiting, tourists should always be cognizant of

⁶ For this research, classical tourism is defined as the pre-packaging of a culture solely for the benefit of the tourist who is visiting the site; this may include set tours of a destination with “must-see sites,” tour guides by individuals who are not of the area (for example, European tour guides within Morocco), and an overall lack of interaction with the local population, where these interactions instead occur mainly between tourists at the destinations.

their privilege and realize the impact of the tourism industry on individual livelihood and the varying purchasing powers that may exist. In this same vein, it is important to remember which parts of culture are being highlighted by tourists through social media and even souvenirs and how these representations of a culture and location are sometimes altered to the benefit of and for the enjoyment of tourists. It requires a constant effort to not simplify locations and people into one category, as this is what it is easiest. Yet, there should be a general understanding that every individual living in a location has their own personal experiences, perspectives, and beliefs that make each individual so drastically different from one another. It is easy to walk into a certain place, speak to one individual from that place and hear their beliefs, and then apply these beliefs to an overarching category of how one views the country or a city but to do so would be vastly ignoring the distinctive nuances between individuals.

Positionality

My positionality has effected how I view the topic of tourism and exoticism of certain cultures. I grew up in a household that utilized parts of Moroccan culture without a thorough understanding of the context or, quite frankly, a knowledge of where Morocco was precisely located, where the culture was incorporated into goods and home décor that had largely been copied from tradition Moroccan wedding blankets and carpets. The very identity of being a tourist in Morocco affects the way I encounter spaces and people, as a power dynamic may exist in my interactions with individuals and the way I place markers on different sites. These markers shape how I view the site and how I pre-conceive certain aspects of culture, thus highlighting for me what I view to be important in my research. It is essential for me to continuously challenge these markers in order to not fall into the same conceptions of a model culture that I am attempting to research, understanding that no single site is homogenous in culture or identity.

Hypothesis

The Moroccan government, through the Ministry of Tourism, has continuously strived to make Morocco one of the top travel destinations in the world, which becomes beneficial when thinking of tourism as a sector for economic revenue. Through the Vision 2020 Plan, Morocco hopes to increase tourism revenue to a total of 140 billion Moroccan dirhams by 2020, hoping to attract tourists from Germany and the United States through new airline partnerships and routes (Hemidach, 2016). As tourism is increasing, the production of goods that utilize traditional methods and otherwise may be impacted by time and even weather (as is the case for rugs and carpets) will have to adjust to the demands of tourism. Furthermore, some people may benefit from an increase in tourism, as they see an increase in income through the sale of such goods. With an increased demand in goods, this may also potentially create more jobs in sectors that are popular or in demand to tourists. However, it could also potentially create an adverse effect, as those who maintain control over a business structure may rely on a limited amount of people to produce more and more goods, which would harm those who are employed to produce goods. People who are involved in the production of argan oil or carpets may feel a lessened connection to the process of making these goods, as I believe that these two industries will have drastically transformed business structures that prevent these people from truly profiting from the sale of the goods.

Parameters of Study

I will be limiting my interviews to individuals who shape or work in the tourism industry as it pertains to weaving and argan oil. This includes owners and employees of argan oil cooperatives and weaving cooperatives and tour guides. I limited my research to four locations: Fes, Marrakech, Agadir, and Essaouira. I chose to visit Fes because it is seen as the most

authentic city in Morocco with its medina that is often referred to as “untouched” or “unchanged” over time and with its relevance as the spiritual capital of Morocco.⁷ Marrakech was chosen as a location because of its influence by European tourists and the presence of European-owned concept stores throughout the city, notably 33 Rue Majorelle. Agadir and Essaouira were chosen because of their relevance as the major argan oil production sites, as almost all of the argan trees in Morocco can be found from the coast of Agadir going up to Essaouira.

Research Question

How is tourism impacting traditional production methods in Morocco, particularly focusing on argan oil and weaving? How do western notions of orientalism and exoticism of Moroccan culture influence or impact the goods that are being produced in regards to style and pace of production? Why are tourists able to select different parts of Moroccan culture to enjoy and ignore and how do tourists decide which parts of Moroccan culture they want to consume/enjoy? How is tourism impacting cultural identity for the people directly involved in the production of goods consumed by tourists?

II. Literature Review

Tourism and Markers of Sites

In “The Attraction System: An Empirical Analysis of Tourist Behavior” by Greg Richards of Tilburg University, Richards elaborates on Neil Leiper’s tourist attraction model, which an attraction site as a “system comprising three elements: a tourist or human element, a

⁷ These references to Fes as a site that has remained “untouched” or “unchanged” over time are derived from my own personal interactions with tourists in Fes, along with the literature and tourism blogs I have read prior.

nucleus or central element, and a marker or informative element.” The central element may be what persuades the tourist to visit the site and the motivations behind this element, while markers are elements that indicate information about the site, where these markers can be gathered from anywhere pre- and en-route to the site (Richards, 2002, pg. 6). Leiper’s model consists of the concept that the nucleus or central element is what draws a tourist to a particular site, where he distinguishes from a primary nucleus and a secondary nucleus by establishing the primary nucleus as the primary reason for visiting a site. Leiper believes that individuals gather information prior to arrival at the site, which shapes their preconceptions of a location and their motivations for visiting.⁸ Richards’ analysis of Leiper’s model expands further on the styles of tourism, ranging from particular interests in culture, such as art or history, travel form, to the duration of stay. Richards believes that, in general, tourists travelling longer distances to the site will have less knowledge of the site than those living within a closer vicinity to the site. With this disparity between different types of tourism (short-distance versus long-distance tourism), short-distance tourists will be exposed to a larger number of markers of a site, whereas long-distance tourists will often “tend to concentrate on ‘must-see’ sites as generating markers.”

Both Greg Richards’ and Neil Leiper’s theories of tourist attraction models are accurate in that many tourists a certain pull to a region or specific location due to a multitude of reasons, ranging from an interest in the culture, music, language, food, or previous notions of what the area looks like or which are “must- see” sites due largely to the influence of social media. In particular, social media has dictated where people go and what they choose to experience and governments have largely acknowledged the impact of social media in relation to economic

⁸ Information can be gathered prior to arrival at the site through consumption of social media, tourist guides, guide books, and local knowledge from individuals who have already visited the site.

revenue and tourism. For example, after the murder of Saudi journalist Jamal Khashoggi in October of 2018, Saudi Arabia attempted to correct its image on the international sphere by providing fully-funded vacations to Instagram and Youtube influencers. In an effort to encourage more tourism to Saudi Arabia, influencers, such as Jay Alvarrez and Aggie Lal, were given the option of attending the Winter at Tantora festival, with musical performances by Andrea Bocelli, an Italian opera singer, and Renaud Capucon, a French violinist, a five-day tour of Saudi Arabia and attendance at the Formula-E Grand Prix, a motorsport event, or a nine-day excursion led by Gateway KSA that was referred to as a “secretive cultural-exchange program” (Bostock, 2019). Through the increased use of social media in regards to destination imagery and marketing strategies, online influencers contribute largely to the perception of an area, as these captures images are broadcasted on online platforms for large viewer bases to see.

In “The Impact of Social Media on Tourism” by Radmila Živković, Jelena Gajić, and Ivana Brdar of Singidunum University in Serbia, the most influential factor in deciding where a tourist decides to visit is referred to as electronic word of mouth (eWOM), such as travel applications that allow individuals to share their experiences (TripAdvisor, Booking.com, AirBnB), where eWOM can also “solve problems and doubts during the travel and it can help discover what tourists think and say about their experience” (Živković et. al, 2014, pg. 760), I believe that eWOM significantly impacts and forms an individual’s perceptions and beliefs about a location. Thinking about the factors that influenced my decision to study abroad in Morocco, I recall the numerous travel blogs, Instagram accounts, and other students’ experiences in Morocco at my home institution that made my desire to study abroad in Morocco stronger, while also shaping which cities within Morocco I wanted to visit the most. eWOM can assure people which locations are deemed as safe to visit, which hotels are comfortable or in central locations

of a city, down to which bus line is the most reliable.

Exoticization of Morocco

In “Morocco as an Exotic and Oriental Space in European and American Writings” by Rachid Agliz of Sultan Moulay Slimane University, Agliz describes the Orient as a space in which “enthusiastic travelers and perverted European painters could project their own fantasies and at the same time vent their own sensual emotions,” rather than accepting the differences both between states and the variations within states and individuals themselves (Agiliz, 2016, pg. 30). Such ideals of Africa and Asia occurred primarily after the translation of Arabian Nights into French by Antoine Galland in 1704. Subsequently during the 18th and 19th centuries, the Orient was simplified to a very distinctive manner under a colonialist gaze. Agliz explains how French and British painters utilized the Orient to fulfill desires that otherwise might not be palatable in a Western landscape, as the Orient “host[ed] a whole range of sensations and evok[ed] a sense of violence and death” (pg. 31). I believe that Agliz’ analysis of the Orient and the subsequent interpretation of the Orient into American and European literature is accurate, as Morocco has largely served as a country for individuals to experience something new that still has an overall sense of safety. After speaking to numerous tourists through Morocco during my independent study project period, it became clear that many individuals come here to supposedly challenge themselves, which is beneficial in the sense that they are challenging their own preconceptions of an area and travel is often seem as an expansion of knowledge if approached in the right way. However, this sentiment of Morocco as a “challenge” has its roots in the Orientalist perspective, as these assumptions of a “challenge” are already placed upon a country that many tourists have a limited scope of. In labelling certain areas as such, tourists fall into the trap of focusing on these challenges and having them define the whole of their experience.

Commodification of Morocco

“Morocco: Restaging Colonialism for the Masses,” written by Claudio Minca and Rachele Borghi, describes the over-exaggeration of culture and commodification⁹ of Morocco, focusing specifically on the medina of Marrakech:

“Especially in its increasingly gentrified medina, the objectification and sacralisation of certain aspects of Moroccan life assumes almost grotesque manifestations, reflected in the tourists’ own performances. This is due both to a grossly oversimplified understanding of ‘Arab life’ and to the fact that tourists must depend on local ‘mediators’ and local organizations to help them negotiate complex urban spaces that would otherwise be extremely difficult to approach or even reach”(Minca and Borghi, 2009, pg. 3).

In this analysis, Minca and Borghi negotiate the burden of ethical tourism, emphasizing how local actors still have agency in the perception of locations due to their role as “mediators” that can help tourists discover locations that are not easily paved for tourism. This can include both formal and informal tourism, from tourist guides that can be hired through professional companies prior to arrival at the location to the young men who will offer to guide one around the medina or to one’s accommodations in exchange for small sum of money. Later, Minca and Borghi go on to describe the acquisition of riads in the medinas of Morocco and how these riads have often been kept in similar states since acquisition for the purpose of otherness or potential nostalgia of past periods of time (Borghi & Minca, 2009). In this paradox between

⁹ Commodification is defined as the simplification of a country, culture, or its people to distinctive products that come to identify the region over time, both by tourists and the local population that may benefit in some contexts from commodification.

foreign investment in medinas and the maintenance of existing structures, the medinas of Morocco effectively become packaged in a certain likeliness, one that may make tourists feel as if they are visiting an old relic or a living museum.¹⁰

Since the influx of tourism, Morocco has strived to align itself with Western liberalism, while still abiding by traditionally Arab and Muslim markers of culture and identity. Minca and Borghi describe this contrast in the context of Publicis, a French advertising company that the Moroccan government hired in 1993. Publicis created a campaign entitled “Maroc: l’éblouissement des sens,” which narrated a distinctive Moroccan experience that was then broadcasted by the Moroccan Ministry of Tourism as “an exotic yet at the same time easy-to-reach destination, characterized by an ‘uncontaminated nature’, picturesque” (pg. 3). This narrative still exists today; just read any of the travel blogs written by self-proclaimed digital nomads and world travelers. The typical Moroccan experience now includes getting lost in the winding streets of any of the medinas, exploring the various street food options, with recommendations on which food stalls are clean or will not get one sick, and where the best rooftop cafes are, where one can observe the chaos of squares like Jemaa El-Fnaa in Marrakech. A travel blogger by the name of Nomadic Matt describes in his article “Is Morocco Safe: 9 Ways to Stay Safe During Your Visit,” various tips and tricks that will supposedly ensure one’s safety, while still enjoying all of what the medinas in Morocco have to offer. His tips are simple, advising people not to walk alone at night (“as a female, especially do not walk alone at night!”), “avoid back alleys,” and overall, have a thick skin (Kepnes, 2018). I believe that these

¹⁰ A living museum is the concept that a location has remain unchanged over time and serves as a reference to a past time, which becomes problematic when thinking of locations as sedentary in their nature.

depictions of Morocco as a tourist destination ultimately harm local populations, as tourists may be more inclined to interact with local populations in a restricted manner. As mentioned previously, tourism bloggers and influencers largely determine how people view and perceive a set location, as tourists pre-departure may gather their information through travel blogs, which will inherently influence and potentially limit their interactions with a culture.

III. Methodology

In order to examine the impact of tourism on traditional production methods of weaving and argan oil, I set out to interview individuals working directly in the tourism industry or who have shaped the production of such goods. I narrowed my research down to the cities of Fes, Marrakech, Essaouira, and Agadir, as I felt as if these cities had drastically different markers that tourists have placed on them. Furthermore, Agadir and Marrakech are the most visited cities in Morocco in relation to over-night stays in established accommodations, such as hotels, hostels, riads, and all properties on AirBnB. Prior to the independent study project period, I had emailed and Facebook messaged multiple cooperatives and contacts that I had researched on my own and teachers at the Cross-Cultural Center for Learning had known prior. While meeting some of these contacts in the four different cities, the contacts were able to act as interlocutors, connecting me to more individuals and cooperatives in the industries I hoped to research.

I started my research in Fes, since Fes is often viewed as the most authentic city in Morocco, where I was in contact with a professor specializing in Amazigh culture and of Amazigh origin. Through him, I was connected to women weavers in the medina of Fes and a saffron cooperative just outside of Fes, named Sefrou. In addition to these connections, I had already researched a button-making and weaving cooperative in Sefrou and was able to interview both the manager and owner of the cooperative. These two women in Sefrou introduced me to a

woman who had been instrumental in providing funding through international organizations and connecting American university students to multiple cooperatives throughout Morocco to aid in creating clear business models and constructing websites. After discussing my research with her over email, she subsequently connected me to a weaving cooperative in Marrakech. I had also met a tour guide in Fes at a local café, who had kindly offered to take me along to see the town of Imlil and the surrounding areas of the High Atlas Mountains which have been heavily impacted by tourism. When driving to Imlil, we stopped at a few argan oil cooperatives, where I was able to both see the process and ask questions to the women grinding the argan into culinary and cosmetic argan oil.

In Marrakech, I had originally intended to interview the curators of high-end boutiques, ones who sold goods from women-owned and operated cooperatives. However, I was unable to connect with any of these boutiques so instead, I relied on my own participant observation in visiting these boutiques and seeing the ways in which these goods were marketed to tourists in Marrakech. In Essaouira and Agadir, I had already spoken to the owner of one of the argan oil cooperatives and the manager of another, both of whom had agreed to let me visit to see the production process and conduct interviews.

Most of these interviews were informal; I had compiled a general list of interview questions I hoped to ask but did not always adhere to the direct format or order of the questions. Instead, I hoped the interviews I had would act more as conversations, as I felt I had more to learn from the people who I was in contact with. In doing so, I found that I could gain more trust and established close relationships with these individuals. These interviews and/or conversations were conducted often in spaces that the individual had invited me to; for all of the cooperatives, this meant visiting their workspace or store and seeing the process of production, while for other

individuals, these interviews and/or conversations were conducted in restaurants and cafes. Many of the individuals I had met offered to stay in contact after I had met with them and to follow up with any further questions, so I was able to speak to with some of these same individuals if more questions arose on WhatsApp and Facebook Messenger.

I had wanted to interview shopkeepers in Fes and Marrakech, specifically those who sold rugs and carpets. I had visited many of these shops and when I was greeted by the shopkeepers and I told them my intentions and detailed my research project in French or English. However, these situations presented an interesting dynamic, as I was always welcomed to look around the stores but did not feel it was the time or space to speak to these individuals about their experiences with tourism and acquiring the products in their stores. I also felt as if there was an additional pressure to buy something, which I anticipated prior to conducting this research, and as if I was disturbing their workplace since other customers were in the shops that had more of an intention to purchase something from the shop than I did. Interestingly enough, this same dynamic was not present in the cooperatives I visited, as I had already arranged the visits to the cooperatives and had made my intentions more transparent than I did in the rug and carpet shops in Fes and Marrakech. This clearly limited my research, as I was unable to directly hear the experiences of individuals who were interacting with tourists potentially the most out of anyone I had interviewed.

Anonymity

To protect the anonymity and confidentiality of the individuals I had interviewed, I will be using both common Arabic and European names. I would like to still differentiate the varying perspectives of the individuals based on where they were born, as this influences their own perspectives. I have only included the names of individuals who I spoke with for long periods of

time, meaning that I did not include the names of individuals who I spoke to in passing during my visits to cooperatives or general discussions. Nonetheless, these conversations still contributed to my overall findings. I obtained consent to interview every individual I talked to and had permission to include their names within my paper. However, I did not feel fully comfortable including the true names of all of the individuals I talked to; some of the individuals I talked to had said controversial statements, where some of these individuals were figures that had written popular books or owned large companies within Morocco and I did not want this to be a source of bias.

Interviews

Changed names:

- Ulysses, Chief Executive Officer (CEO) of argan oil cooperative.
- Emily. Former Peace Corps Volunteer.
- Fatima. Sales person of argan oil cooperative.

Unchanged Names:

- Wafae. Manager of weaving cooperative.
- Amina, Owner and founder of weaving cooperative.
- Professor Reddad. Professor of Amazigh culture and identity.
- Rachid, Tour guide.

Assumptions

Prior to beginning my research, I had been highly critical of tourists themselves, as there is a common theme of individuals trying to simplify places and people to one distinctive form and make both homogeneous. I had believed that these assumptions that tourists have placed upon locations are detrimental, as an over-simplification of culture and people would lead to

much frustration between Moroccans and tourists. Being a tourist myself, many of these assumptions came from my own discomfort with being able to purchase goods for much cheaper than I am used to in the United States, while having a greater purchasing power. I also was uncomfortable with the fact that many European and American tourists, such as myself, are able to come to Morocco with much ease (staying for up to 90 days and being able to leave the country and re-enter for another 90 days), while many Moroccans are not able to obtain visas to enter Europe or the United States.

This disparity with ease/difficulty of travelling made me believe that many Moroccans would want to retain their culture in its original form, rather than having it be adopted by tourists and having parts of culture, such as traditional wedding blankets or carpets for distinctive purposes, being sold to tourists that do not truly understand its significance or do not utilize the good for its original intention. I also believed that tourism would generally be more exploitative than beneficial, as many people come to Morocco from Europe for a low-cost “exotic” vacation¹¹, since food, hotel, and flights prices are relatively inexpensive. Talking to many tourists along the way while staying in hostels had only further solidified this assumption in my mind, as many individuals spoke to me about how “brave” I was for being a solo traveler in a primarily Muslim country. Similarly, many tourists I spoke to throughout this whole program, whether it be in passing while giving them directions in Rabat, on excursions with the SIT program in the hotels, or staying in hostels during the independent study project period, all expressed the general fear they felt from catcalling or the desire to “experience something new,” as many put it, cementing the idea of the exoticism of Morocco into something that became a

¹¹ Morocco is referenced as a “low-cost” vacation because of the price of flights from European countries to Morocco, where many of the individuals I met staying in hostels throughout these four cities had mentioned how their flights had cost approximately ten euros each way.

reality for many of the people visiting. Needless to say, these interactions with tourists throughout my time in Morocco left me with bitter feelings, as many people spoke negatively about Morocco, but still had this incessant desire to visit.

IV. Findings

Economic Impact of Tourism

Every individual I interview cited the benefits of tourism from an economic standpoint. When I visited Cherry Buttons Cooperative in Sefrou, Amina, the founder of the cooperative, and Wafae, the manager of the cooperative, spoke in great detail about how the growth of the cooperative and subsequent increase in income that the women received allowed women to do things they were not able to do previously. For some, they were able to send their children to school or buy more food but for others, this increase in income extended far beyond livelihood, as it allowed some women to travel all across Morocco and even to Santa Fe, New Mexico to participate in the International Folk Art Market, which is held every year in July. Furthermore, Amina's cooperative in particular helps divorced, single, and widowed women, as Wafae stated that "they are the ones most rejected by society," meaning that otherwise it might be difficult to find a job due to stigmatization or discrimination against these women (personal communication, November 12, 2019).

Wafae and Amina both also described how women were able to make more profits through the complete control of their business, as men had traditionally controlled the financial aspects of weaving cooperatives. By having a women-run cooperative, women are able to determine the amount of time they spend working, whether they want to work within their own homes or in Amina and Wafae's house, and what they want to do with the money they earn,

since it goes directly to the women, rather than having men as a point of interference in money transfers.

Cultural Impact of Tourism

Observing the types of goods sold in concept stores throughout Marrakech, particularly 33 Rue Majorelle and the boutiques in the general vicinity of the Jardin Majorelle and museum, I noticed passport covers, pouches, and large metal trays, all with images of what I assumed to be African women with intricate, colorful jewelry and often, nude. These snapshot souvenirs are often brought back home for other's enjoyment or for individuals to show as markers of when they visited Africa; these representations of Africa become extremely problematic when individuals do not take the time or energy to question these snapshots, instead relying on these minute representations to come to conclusions about Africa or Morocco. Particularly, these souvenirs should also come into question, as one does not typically see images of European or American women on passport covers, pouches, or large metal trays to be displayed in houses as pieces of art. Instead, these souvenirs fall into the large narrative of exoticism and orientalism of Morocco.

All of the argan oil cooperatives I visited emphasized how women were paid fairly; yet, when I asked how much women made per month, week, or day, I never received a fully coherent answer, along the lines of it pays "enough to sustain life in Morocco" or that "women get paid according to the amount of work they produce" (personal communications, November 19, 20, and 21, 2019). In weaving cooperatives, it was a little more transparent, as women were paid based on a percentage of the price of the item they produced.¹²

¹² During the interview process for the weaving cooperatives I visited, I had asked each cooperative how much women were paid for the production of a certain good. The payments, on average, were about 40% of the price of the good.

One of the weaving cooperatives in particular has benefitted from the influence of tourism and increased interaction with study abroad students. Haverford College has partnered with Cherry Buttons Cooperative, as the cooperative hosts about four or five students per summer to work within the cooperative (Wafae, personal communication, November 12, 2019). Haverford students have effectively created a website for the cooperative to showcase its product, where they are in the process of developing an online retail site with goods available for purchase.

Ecological Impact of Tourism

When speaking to Ulysess, the Chief Executive Officer (CEO) of an argan oil cooperative in Essaouira, he described the negative aspects of tourism and overall impact of increased travel to Morocco on the argan oil industry. In Agadir, the argan trees are located within such close vicinity to the Agadir airport; as the planes fly over the argan tree fields, fuel from the planes infects the argan trees, producing argan oil nuts that are not suitable for cosmetic or culinary purposes (Ulysses, personal communication, November 10, 2019). Regardless though, these argan nuts are still crushed and turned into both types of oil, to later be sold in argan oil cooperatives, stores in the souq, and exported to different countries that utilize the oil.

Furthermore, Fatima, from the women's argan oil cooperative in Tahannout, spoke about the influence of goats on the argan trees from the coast of Agadir to Essaouira. From previous exchanges and conversations between other women working at argan oil cooperatives throughout Morocco, I was under the general impression that the goats were used as a pull to argan sites, rather than actually being beneficial for the argan trees, as many have claimed. Fatima insisted that the goats in the argan trees did no damage, instead suggesting that they actually helped the

process by swallowing the nuts of the tree, where the fruits would later be excreted and more easily collected by the women (personal communication, November 21, 2019).

Influence of Peace Corps Volunteers and Foreign Investors in Morocco

I was also able to speak over the phone to Emily, a former Peace Corps volunteer who has worked with weaving cooperatives all across Morocco and later established an online website dedicated to selling rugs from two specific villages online, where women received all the profits from selling the rugs. When I asked Emily about her sentiments in helping to sell rugs, often with specific meanings and purposes, to tourists who had a lack of understanding or even appreciation for the significance of the rugs, instead taking the rugs at face-value, Emily said she did not feel sorry for this; at the end of the day, women were making more money with her help of selling the rugs online, than they would be if she was not doing this project (personal communication, November 25, 2019). She asked me why I had felt guilt for being a tourist and when I explained that no matter how much I tried, I would always take more than I gave from my environment. In response to this, Emily stated that my view of tourism was a very “Western-centric one;” she explained how, when she was living in Morocco, “women were lining up to [her] door to work for [her]” (personal communication, November 25, 2019). At first, she felt as if it was wrong to hire women to work for her, where they would be cooking and cleaning for her and her husband in their house, but eventually she realized that by hiring these women, she was giving them the opportunity to earn money, allowing them to send their children to school, buy more food for them and their families, or travel outside of the village Emily was staying in. She also said this benefitted her as well, as hiring women to cook and clean created a bond of trust between her and the women she hired, where she was then able to gain the trust of the

community, all of which allowed her increased access to the individuals she hoped to interview for her new book.

When talking with Emily about the impact of her research for her book and also her time as a Peace Corps volunteer, I had wanted to discuss what she felt she had left behind in the communities she worked in. For the publication of one of her more popular books, where she interviewed, photographed, and wrote about women artisans all throughout Morocco, she said she left them with two or three copies of the book. For her research on adolescents in the village she worked in for her other book, she was debating whether to provide mosques with mats for prayer but she ultimately decided on photographing and printing pictures of the individuals she interviewed for them to keep. She also has done tours of Morocco for primarily American tourists to visit weaving cooperatives and tour Marrakech, where she emphasized how many of the tourists supported the local cooperatives by purchasing goods from them. Also, they often would eat at the cooperatives because Emily stated that she would rather have the money go to the women in the cooperatives for a meal, rather than a more formal restaurant.

When speaking to Ulysses, he told me that he works “with very simple people,” who do not know how to read or write (personal communication, November 10, 2019). He explained that he can have a translator detail how to store argan nuts or not to use dirty water to wash the kernels, as he claims they do, but if it is not in writing, then often times, this information will become irrelevant to the whole process of production. Ulysses described how he controls the whole process of production because of a lack of trust; if he were to store the argan nuts in someone else’s warehouse, he stated that the owner of the warehouse may claim that the environment is not humid but, in actuality, this may not be the truth. As he put it bluntly, “losing control means losing quality” and “it is up to the producer to know it and control it,” with “it”

referring to the entirety of the production process (personal communication, November 10, 2019).

V. Conclusions

Analysis of Findings

My conversations and interviews left me with much uncertainty, specifically when I talked to both Emily and Ulysses. They had assumed and created hierarchical business structures in Morocco and had a responsibility to ethically maintain these programs. For Emily, in particular, her online website had only lasted three years, after which she said it became too much work and was cutting into her own money. Therein lies the problem with foreign investors and non-profit workers coming into Morocco- many feel no obligation to stay in Morocco to contribute or give back to the processes they benefitted from. For Ulysses, in particular, he made no effort to ethically support the women who were working for him and who have been making argan oil for years; without these women, he would not be able to profit.¹³ Despite this, the fact that his entire business rested on Amazigh women making the argan, he demonstrated a lack of trust and, frankly, respect for these women, storing the nuts in his own warehouses and not trusting their own processes of producing argan oil.

However, my discussions with women in the weaving cooperatives in Fes and Marrakech left me with the positive implications of tourism. It seems apparent that tourism allows people to buy more goods, food, and overall achieve better lives through increased sales of products and services. However, what I failed to realize was how tourism could serve as a source of

¹³ My conversations with Ulysses all lend to the fact that he has not integrated women into the business process of his company, only relying on them instead for physical labor with he provided no clarity on existing pay structures within his company.

empowerment for women, particularly as it applies to travelling and identity. For the women in Sefrou, Wafae and Amina had said that their identity was tied to button-making and weaving and allowed them to save money and invest in doing activities they enjoyed. Wafae had stated that she loves American tourism, as she believed that American tourists take the time to understand what she is saying. She stated that she did not enjoy European tourism as much because she believed they wanted to control the business, which is a logical possibility or fear, given European countries' close proximity to Morocco. Overall, Wafae estimated that 80% of the cooperatives' business comes from tourism, whereas 20% of their business results from Moroccans (personal communication, November 12, 2019). Given this heavy reliance on external tourism to support the cooperative business, tourism, with all of its negative implications, can allow women the opportunity to further explore and shape their identity by giving them the means to invest further in education, travel, and leisurely activities that promote wellbeing and personal growth. Of course, this is not the case for every cooperative throughout Morocco; some cooperatives fully partake in the exploitation of their workers, not providing women with adequate pay or clean and safe working conditions. Other cooperatives may not focus entirely on the quality of their goods, instead focusing on the quantity of the goods being produced, as is the case for many argan oil cooperatives throughout Morocco. I was not able to speak to individuals who have been exploited or hurt by the processes of tourism, which severely limited my research in its scope and understanding of the impacts of tourism.

Implications of Study

The people I interviewed and my research primarily leads to the positive economic implications of tourism, which some may take to believe that tourism is beneficial in all aspects and forms. However, my research also has highlighted the negative impact of volunteerism on

the weaving industry and tourist's overall impact on the argan oil industry. With Morocco currently being the only country that the Peace Corps is situated in within the Middle East and North Africa region, the practice of Peace Corps volunteers attempting to empower women through selling rugs online should be re-evaluated, as the presence of these volunteers in the region is not sustainable unless volunteers dedicate their career to such work (which is very rarely, if ever, the case).¹⁴ Furthermore, the impact of air travel on geographically-sensitive regions through Morocco should also be examined, as the growing number of flights to Agadir and Essaouira only further harms the argan industry and the people who are purchasing the argan oil, as kerosene is also inherently processed into the oil when the trees are infected.

VI. Limitations of the Study

Much of my research has been limited by access- access to different people, to different locations, and to clear modes of communication. Many of the weaving cooperatives where carpets are produced are in rural areas of Morocco. I had wanted to visit some weaving cooperatives in Ait Hamza, near to Meknes, but with the combined costs of taxis, buses, and trains, it became too expensive to visit that area. Thus, I was not able to focus as much on weaving cooperatives as I had originally hoped. Argan oil cooperatives were significantly easier to visit, as many of these cooperatives have demonstrations of women making cosmetic and culinary argan oil for tourism, where tips are encouraged, and tourists are led to showrooms with products available for purchase. However, even in these argan cooperative visits, there were still challenges in directly speaking to the women who produced the argan oil, as I was always

¹⁴ During this research project, I had met only one former Peace Corps volunteer who had further continued his project as a volunteer, helping to sell rugs from women's weaving cooperatives in Morocco online.

accompanied by a manager or supervisor who translated my questions and then translated the answers she received. Because of this, I did not feel as comfortable asking more direct questions, since it was the equivalent of these women's boss that would be hearing all of their answers.

In hindsight, it might have been more beneficial to stay in one area, rather than travelling to four different cities, and focusing only on one sector, either argan oil or weaving. With traveling to so many different cities, I spent many hours on trains and buses attempting to get to the location, which could have alternatively been time I used to research and interview. Furthermore, going from city to city allowed for short-term relationships and connections; as much as I tried to keep in contact with individuals I had interviewed, I felt as if I could have gotten more in-depth with the individuals I interviewed if I stayed in a certain location for a longer period of time.

Another limitation to my research has been in my positionality as a tourist discussing tourism, as being a tourist clearly impacted the way I encountered these spaces. For some of the cooperatives I did visit, I was shown the same tours as tourists, which obviously provided a limited scope in that the tours were depicted in a certain light. Women were seen making the argan oil in demonstrations and the argan oil that was produced in front of us was claimed to have been the same type that was packaged and sold in the showrooms, which was highly unlikely given that many of the products were chain products that had been mass produced under the same labels, such as shampoos, conditioners, and lip balms. Although I cannot say with certainty, people that I spoke to and interviewed may have been less likely to speak negatively about the impacts of tourism since I was a tourist. However, for the most part, I feel like individuals were willing to discuss openly about how tourism was affecting their business directly and how they viewed it. When visiting an argan oil cooperative in Essaouira, however,

the owner of the cooperative was very hesitant to have me visit, stating that it might not be what I was looking for or beneficial to my research, which limited my research to only the spaces he designated to show me, rather than showing me the fields where the argan nuts were collected and the storage warehouses.

Four weeks of interviewing people, combined with the writing process, limited the depth of my research. If I had a year to do this research or were to further continue this research in my graduate studies, I would have liked to visit more cooperatives or stay with one particular cooperative for a longer period of time, as I could fully see the business process and the impact of tourism on the lives and identities of the individuals who work there.

VII. Recommendations for Further Study

Argan oil and weaving are just two sectors of production that have been influenced by tourism. If I had more time to develop my research than four weeks, I would have wanted to expand my research to include music, clothing, and food, as both sectors have changed, adapted, or been influenced by tourism, while also still being allowed to be kept in its original form because of tourism. It would have been interesting to do a case study on the ownership of restaurants in any of the medinas I visited, as many of the restaurants that are marketed as having “traditional Moroccan food” are under European ownership. In Marrakech, I would have liked to further explore the curation of products in concept stores, as many of the products sold in concept stores are marketed as having been made by women’s cooperatives. I would have liked to see how much the women employed to make these goods are being paid and how much the concept stores are benefitting from the sale of these goods.

In regards to music, many of the people I interviewed cited the impact of tourism on music, as many believed that Moroccan music would not exist if just confined to Morocco. The

increase in tourism has influenced the people living here and subsequently music through means such as the introduction of new instruments and the very presence of the expat community in Morocco. One could explore the variation of music within Morocco or focus on a distinct genre such as Moroccan rap or pop, and examine the various influences on Moroccan music, then see how traditional Moroccan music has survived or transformed.

Another point of study could have been Gnawa music in relation to tourism, as many tourists are first introduced to Gnawa music through excursions to the Sahara Desert or even sitting in restaurants and cafes in Marrakech and hearing Gnawa music performed. It would be extremely interesting to see how Gnawa musicians view their cultural identity and tourism overall, as much of Gnawa music is now sold as part of a “Moroccan cultural experience” without a complete understanding of the history of the music.

Prior to completing this research project, I had no knowledge of the presence or impact of Peace Corps volunteers in Morocco, as Morocco is at this time the only country in the Middle East and North Africa region that the Peace Corps works in. However, during this research period, I was exposed to numerous Peace Corps volunteers who more or less were attempting to accomplish the same objective: empowering women weavers by training people in different rural regions throughout Morocco on how to properly run the website, teach them English skills, and overall make weaving cooperatives achieve greater profits by selling goods online to a wider audience. In doing so, these current and former Peace Corps volunteers were establishing hierarchical business structures, where they controlled the profits. While many of them explained the process of online money transfers, postage costs, and website maintenance in transparent terms, the questions that often rose to mind were: how could this business possibly be sustainable and was it even ethical? For it to be sustainable, all of the Peace Corps volunteers I had spoken to

mentioned that they would need to find an assistant who was fluent in English to communicate with customers, had enough knowledge of computer skills to run and continuously update the website with new rugs, dimensions, and photos, and would not “cheat the system,” as many of the Peace Corps volunteers referred to it, meaning that they would not take money away from these women for their own personal profit. As someone who plans to apply for the Peace Corps in the Middle East/North Africa region, it would be interesting to further establish these business structures and see how women are benefitting from the existence of online rug sales, as many weaving cooperatives have previously been operated by men with men controlling the flow of money and women producing the goods but not seeing the full profits of their work.

VIII. Bibliography and List of Sources

100% Pure Argan Oil- Josie Maran Cosmetics. (n.d.). Retrieved from

<https://www.josiemarancosmetics.com/products/100-pure-argan-oil>.

Agliz, R. (2016). Fernea in Morocco: the womens exotic world. *The Journal of North African Studies*, 21(3), 453–469. doi: 10.1080/13629387.2016.1151790

Agliz, R. (2016). Morocco as an Exotic and Oriental Space in European and American Writings. *SSRN Electronic Journal*. doi: 10.2139/ssrn.2843953

Beni Ourain Rugs History. (n.d.). Retrieved from <https://beniourain-azilal-rugs.blogspot.com/p/beni-ourain-rugs-history.html>.

Benlafquih, C. (2019, November 25). What is Argan Oil and How Is It Used? Retrieved from <https://www.thespruceeats.com/argan-oil-uses-2394765>.

Berber Carpet Weaving Traditions of Morocco. (2009, April 24). Retrieved from <https://morocctravelblog.com/2009/04/24/berber-carpet-weaving/>.

Boom in Moroccan argan oil boosts rural economy but threatens forests. (2011, August 29). Retrieved November 3, 2019, from <https://phys.org/news/2011-08-boom-moroccan-argan-oil-boosts.html>.

Borghi, R. & Minca C. (2009). Morocco: Restaging Colonialism for the masses. In *Cultures of Mass Tourism. Doing the Mediterranean in the Age of Banal Mobilities* (M. Crang et al., ed.). Londre: Ashgate.

Bostock, B. (2019, September 30). Saudi Arabia is enlisting Instagram travel influencers to mend reputation. Retrieved from <https://www.insider.com/saudi-arabia-lavish-trips-instagrammers-2019-8>.

Britton, B. (2016, November 15). Argan Oil: Morocco's Desert Gold. Retrieved from <https://edition.cnn.com/2016/11/15/africa/argan-oil-morocco/index.html>.

Cipollini, M. (2017, May 26). A Comprehensive Guide to Moroccan Tribal Rugs. Retrieved from <https://www.1stdibs.com/blogs/the-study/moroccan-tribal-rugs/>.

Frequently Asked Questions: Geographical Indications. (n.d.). Retrieved from https://wipo.int/geo_indications/en/faq_geographicalindications.html.

Hemidach, A. (2016, January 5). Tourism in Morocco: Government's 2020 Vision and Plans for 2016. Retrieved November 1, 2019, from <https://www.moroccoworldnews.com/2016/01/176800/tourism-in-morocco-governments-2020-vision-and-plans-for-2016/>.

History of Argan Oil. (2019, August 2). Retrieved from <http://ayurvedicoils.com/tag/history-of-argan-oil>.

History of Argan Oil. (2019). Retrieved from <https://www.somemoroccan.com/pages/history-of-argan-oil>.

KENZA International Beauty. (n.d.). Retrieved from <https://kenza-international-beauty.com/>.

Kepnes, M. (2018, December 15). Is Morocco Safe? 9 Ways to Stay Safe During Your Visit in 2019. Retrieved from <https://www.nomadicmatt.com/travel-blogs/safety-in-morocco/>.

Kilkelly, C., Solovyov, M., & Cohen, A. (2012, October 30). Carpets, Kelims and Textiles, Your Morocco Tour Guide. Retrieved from <https://moroccotravelblog.com/2012/10/30/carpets-kelims-and-textiles-your-morocco-tour-guide/>.

Kulchi Rugs. (2009, December 7). Retrieved from <http://www.kulchi.com/rugs.html>.

Our Guide to Different Types of Moroccan Rugs. (n.d.). Retrieved from <https://anewtribe.co.uk/moroccan-rug-guide>.

- Protecting Society and the Environment with A Geographical Indication. (n.d.). Retrieved from <https://www.wipo.int/ipadvantage/en/details.jsp?id=2656>.
- Richards, G. (2002). The Attraction System: An empirical analysis of tourist behavior. *Annals of Tourism Research*, 29, 01–37. doi: 10.1016/S0160-7383(02)00026-9
- Roberts, N. (2014, July 13). A Moroccan entrepreneur brings argan oil to America by way of women's co-ops. Retrieved from <https://www.theguardian.com/money/2014/jul/13/argan-oil-morocco-entrepreneur-skin-hair-cosmetics>.
- Tecchio, C. (2019, July 3). Responsible Tourism: What It Is and How to Do It. Retrieved from <https://ecobnb.com/blog/2019/07/responsible-tourism-ecotourism/>.
- The Secrets Behind the Symbols on the Berber Rug. (n.d.). Retrieved from <https://benisouk.com/blogs/blog/the-secrets-behind-the-symbols-on-the-berber-rug>.
- The Stories and Secrets of Moroccan Rugs. (n.d.). Retrieved December 7, 2019, from <https://www.projectbly.com/blog/stories-and-secrets-of-moroccos-rugs>.
- Vision 2020. (2017). Retrieved from <https://smit.gov.ma/vision-2020-3/>.
- Tourism Statistics in Morocco. (2018, February). Retrieved from https://www.tourisme.gov.ma/sites/default/files/tbnat_02-18_anglais.pdf.
- Williams, S. (2017, September 5). Marrakech to Be Home to National Museum of Carpets. Retrieved from <https://theculturetrip.com/africa/morocco/articles/marrakech-to-be-home-to-national-museum-of-carpets/>.
- Xingfei, Z. (n.d.). Value-added argan oil increasing women's independence in rural Morocco. Retrieved from <https://www.unido.org/news/value-added-argan-oil-increasing-womens-independence-rural-morocco>.

Živković, R., Gajić, J., & Brdar, I. (2014). The Impact of Social Media on Tourism. *Impact of Internet on Business Activities in Serbia and Worldwide*, 01–05. doi: 10.15308

IX. Appendices

Interview Questions

Weaving Cooperative Questions (specific to Marrakech but adapted to other cooperatives):

1. When was this cooperative founded?
2. How many people does this cooperative employ? How many women and how many men?
3. Do any tourist groups visit the cooperative? If so, how many a year?
4. Who is your primary clientele? Europeans (which country)? Americans?
5. How has tourism impacted your business?
6. How do you think tourism has impacted the city of Marrakech? In what ways has tourism changed Marrakech?
7. How do you think tourists can be more ethical in their behaviors while traveling?
8. How have your production methods changed over the years?
9. How has your business adapted to the demands of tourism?
10. How do you think cultural identity is preserved or changed, as tourism increases?

Weaving Cooperative Questions in French:

1. Quand cette coopérative a été fondée?
2. Combien de personnes cette coopérative emploie? Combien de femmes et combien d'hommes?
3. est-ce que les groupes de touristes visitent cette coopérative? Si oui, combien par an?
4. Quelle est votre principale clientèle? Européens (quel pays)? Les Américains?
5. Quel impact le tourisme a eu sur votre entreprise?

6. Comment pensez-vous que le tourisme a eu un impact sur la ville de Marrakech? En quoi le tourisme a changé Marrakech?
7. Comment pensez-vous que les touristes peuvent adopter un comportement plus éthique lors de leurs voyages?
8. Comment vos méthodes de production ont changé au fil des ans?
9. Comment votre entreprise est adaptée aux exigences du tourisme?
10. Comment pensez-vous que l'identité culturelle est préservée ou modifiée à mesure que le tourisme augmente?

Questions for Emily, Peace Corps Volunteer:

1. What are the ways that you think tourism has been beneficial for women weavers in Morocco?
What are the negative impacts of tourism on women weavers in Morocco?
2. How do you think tourists can be ethical in their consumption of goods that aren't of the same culture? For example, how is it ethical that tourists can buy rugs with Amazigh symbols that have meaning and most of the time be unaware of these meanings?
3. I read about how you started [the website] to allow women to achieve more profits through their rugs? How did this impact the two villages you worked with? Are they still continuing selling rugs online through other sites? How were the women able to benefit from assumingly an increase in profit?
4. How many rugs did women produce per year for [the website]?
5. Was the process of selling rugs online an efficient one or were there difficulties, such as with money transfer?
6. I met with someone who was discussing Fatema Mernissi's work and heard about how a women had been approached by an American company wanting her to produce 100 rugs in the

same size and dimensions. After the seventh rug, she said she couldn't do it any longer because the rugs had no heart. How do you think cultural identity is preserved in the face of growing tourism and tourist demands?