Design emergence in Morocco as an African country: a pending institutionalization.

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If design management is worldwide institutionalized especially in developed economies, little is known about African design even though the continent is becoming an attractive economy thanks to his exponential growth and more political stability. Oriented toward one specific country: Morocco, this study through a questioning embedded in institutional theory brings an overview about design in a specific context. This research captures design management emergence in Morocco by spotting the light on the state of design institutionalization toward the creation of design value.

keywords: Design management, institutionalization theory, Morocco, Africa

Introduction
Design management as a reference to the business side of design, shaping strategy, process and outcomes is gaining today more recognition as a practice and a discipline able to enhance innovation, growth and sustainable development. Furthermore, the value of design management for worldwide organizations is today established (Mozota 2003); (Cooper & al. 2013); (Buchanan 2015)

Nevertheless, if research shows logical interest about developed economies as design emerged in those economies, little is known about design in other parts of the world. An overview of the main research on design history such (Walker 1989), (Doordan 1995); (Burdeck 2005) Margolin (2005), shows that Design in Africa is little studied.

However, there is an existent research related to countries out of the circle of developed economies. A close look at this literature, highlight an approach shaped by a pioneer dimension and the perspective remains, for instance, an initiation discovery.

Correlated to Africa continent, under our knowledge, design as, management, cultural heritage, industrial, education, and research remains unknown, nevertheless South African research under engineering and technology perspective. The mentioned research mentioning “third world” classification reveals that the issue is little studied when it relates to the Africa continent. The same perspective is endorsed by Margolin (2005).

In the other hand, approaching not developed economies bring on the surface the challenge of country taxonomies economies. Shall we speak about a post-colonial country, third world, emergent economy, new industrial country, emergent market and so on.

Any classification here encompasses criticism, debate and political stance. The countries labelled "third world, post-colonial (Dirlick 1994), differs in their sizes, political regime, economic performance, cultural backgrounds and historical experiences (Tomlinson 2003) and even Africa as a continent made up of 54 sovereign states, presents globally huge heterogeneity because of geography, political regime, economy, religion beliefs and social factors.

For instance, out of the African geography classification, framing young country as South Soudan which gains independence in 2011 and Nigeria as an OPEC petroleum producer with a population about 186 Million, is obviously a challenging task.

Under this consideration, related to design issue, our assumption here lies in the fact that research encompassing specific countries “third world” “post-colonial”, “newly industrial” remains methodologically awkward.

However, another classification presenting significant structural transformation framed this time on market dimension (Luo and Tung’s 2007), appears more inclusive as the focus is on a specific market where designerly goods are brought to the user.

The context of Africa is today significantly different from the past. The continent is on a new path development thanks to important advances in economy and governance, breaking from a past dominated by wars and starvation which makes the continent a huge potential market.

Mc Kinsey report 2016 on Africa “Lions on the move 2” mentions that by 2025, the continent will benefit from strong fundamentals as young and growing population, which contrasts with aging population in the other continents. Urbanization rate in this study is considered as the fastest in the world, and technological change is beyond an important

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1 Cf. The international conference on design, development & research hosted by faculty of informatics & design cape peninsula university of technology, Cape Town, South Africa
acceleration. Rapid growth in consumer markets and business supply chains is then expected, which drives huge opportunities for national and international investors. Related to design, it’s important here to mention that the World Design Organization (W.D.O.) formerly known as the International Council of Societies of Industrial Design (I.C.S.I.D.) appointed for the first time an African president issued from South Africa. However, as an economic classification, the perspective chosen here is “emergent market economy” and “Global competitiveness index” taxonomy developed by the world Economic forum (Schaw 2016). It brings flexible approach and underline the transition concept meaning that an economy moves from a state to another one under specific fundamentals. Under this purpose, Morocco is classified as an “emerging market economy efficiency-driven” At this point, the current research humbly aims to bring an overview of design management emergence within a specific African emerging market which is Morocco. The issue highlighted here could be defined in these terms: how design management value is emerging? What components facilitates this emergence and what obstacles prevent more accurate design management presence?

![Global Competitiveness Index](image)

Figure 1 Global Competitiveness Index WEF 2016

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Morocco: an overview

As far as design issue is a matter of research investigation, a dedication to one specific country emerges with more pertinence, therefore we address here Morocco as a country.

Related to this grid, Morocco appears as an efficiency driven economy, the idea of transition is relevant thanks to the context of globalization and fast change brought by the digital economy.

Situated on the western tip of North Africa with population about 33 million, the country contains a mix of indigenous Berber, Arab, African and European influences. Since the 17th century, the country is under the same monarchy. In his history, the country has faced French and Spanish colonialism for 44 years (1912-1956). A constitutional monarchy with an elected parliament enhances a global political stability.

According to Oxford Report on 2015, the country presents a pragmatic and inclusive approach to social and economic development as the kingdom is reliant on imports for energy products. Diversified GDP mix around tourism industry, textile production, high-end manufacturing for automotive, aeronautics industries, solar energy, IT services drives in this context the economy. The kingdom is increasing cooperation with both its traditional European partners and new markets across Africa.

Theoretical Background

In Management and organizational theory, the notion of emergence is crucial as it establish management good practice and research path toward best management (Johnes 2001)

Related to this idea, institutional theory (DiMaggio & Powell (1983); Scott (2001) brings significant tools and a frame for studying and taking the value of new ideas, new practices toward better goals achievements.

The framework offers a broad perspective of the three dimensions of institutional theory to help for understanding how design may create opportunities and economic value within a specific environment. Fundamentally, institutional theory has proven to be an appropriate framework for understanding complex environment, fitting emergence of new practices.

Scott 2001 advances the idea that isomorphism is the processes by which structures, including rules, norms, and routines become established as authoritative guidelines for social behavior in a society or environment.

DiMaggio and Powell (1983); Scott (2001) defines isomorphism through classification into three major ideas: regulatory (coercive), cognitive (mimetic) and normative. The coercive isomorphism admits that firms are forced to adapt to some practices by the legal regulations developed under institutional settings; mimetic isomorphism is defined as firms copying some specific organizational practices associated with success from other firms; and normative isomorphism is where subnational institutions and social actors act as disseminators of best practices which are adopted by firms under the influence of social actors in their environment.

Institutional theory perspective is here questioned for the study of design management emergence in Morocco as an African country. However, by questioned, our intention is
rather than just bringing an overview about design in Morocco is to confront design emergence to the question of institutionalization.

Methodology
To respond to the problematic statement highlighted here, a qualitative documentary study was conducted, tracking what is relevance to design management with the idea of observing design interaction under institutional theory perspective. The author as a scholar in design management in B-School observed facts, attended events related to the question of design in Morocco and even organized public conferences related to the question of design, being in this perspective, naturally a normative isomorphism actor toward a design institutionalization. Informal discussions with designers were conducted as the researcher is perceived by designers themselves in Morocco as an adjuvant toward an establishment of design as a strategic asset for the organizations. This ultimate consideration drives us toward introspective analysis by the fact that we are for instance part of the process of the institutionalization. (Wood 2015)

Considering design under the scope of emergence, the perspective will investigate the question of design education emergence before analysing the role of designers as key players and the structure of design output as a product and a service. The main objective here lies in the idea of figuring out how design is emerging at a certain degree regarding the institutionalization.

Findings:

Toward normative isomorphism: Design Education landscape
Education is a central issue for questioning the emergence of design, nevertheless, the craft as a cultural heritage is fundamentally a starting point. Through design history even the interaction is a kind of “Dangerous liaison” (Lees-Maffei, G., & Sandino, L. 2004), craft is obviously a territory from where design is emerging as it occurring in Morocco.

Craft local heritage as a Moroccan Design Background
Design History since the experience of Bauhaus and design emergence in Europe demonstrates that original craft is the background from where design arise (Itten 1975). Observing then craft as a practice and an industry brings an idea about the possibilities for an emerging design value creation.

Morocco as a country at the intersection of Europe, North Africa, and west Africa, benefited through history from multiples sources and cultural influences which shape strong crafting industry.

Related to this idea, isomorphism process is initiated by the fact that industry plays important role in the local economy landscape. Socio-political pressure drives then different governments to establish a ministry dedicated for this purpose since the country independence in 1956. Since then a conflictual logic is observed when the government is dealing with the craft industry.

Former ministries have integrated the craft to industry, tourism, fine arts, solidarity, employment, finances, air transport and social economy. The latter remains relevant upon
the fact that craft is up today a key factor in social employment. Revenues in 2014 calculated by the ministry are More than 2 Billion U.S. $ with 7.5% growth per Year. (Ministry Report 2014)

A close look at the industry organization highlights a discipline taxonomy defined as pottery stone, carpets, wood, wrought iron, basketry, leather goods, traditional clothes, shoes, dinandry, and jewels. More than 400.000 urban and rural artisans were identified. (Ministry Report 2014) This point explains the mention of “solidarity” in the naming of the ministry as artisan jobs inside a young economy are tinted with precariousness and low incomes.

Nevertheless this perspective, a sensibility toward design is emerging. The ministry specifically through his institutional communication, mention design in his interaction with craft, through a regional program bringing to craftsmen a products catalog created by designers as a guideline fitting some contemporary trends.

In March 2017, just before leaving her seat thanks to a new government elected, the actual ministry, with a support coming from an art foundation issued from a corporate company, approved a two-year agreement with an American design school. The objective is defined as a craftsman initiation to design discipline under a specific goal: increasing Moroccan craft industry penetration in the American market.

Under the institutional theory, observation identifies that the logic of craft consolidation under ministry institution, generates an action appearing as a normative isomorphism with the potential of building a coercive isomorphism. If the experience delivers an expected measurable success, multiplication of agreement with international design schools could play a significant mimetic isomorphism in an idea to increase exportation toward a specific market.

On the basis of craft coercively institutionalized under ministry work institution, it’s important to observe this time the context of education by spotting the light now on a specific craft education school.

“L’Académie des arts traditionnels” : A Moroccan Bauhaus ?

In the context of craft as a fertile design background, it’s important here to mention the experience of a school dedicated to Moroccan craft education. The construction of the Mosque Hassan II at Casablanca city considered as, one of the six biggest in the world, brings to the light the richness of Moroccan craft and the fragility of the knowledge when craft masters retire without knowledge transfer to disciples.

Following the construction, a foundation depending on the mosque and the government initiates on 2013 the foundation of a public school dedicated to craft arts. The school mission is to contribute to give Moroccan traditional arts an essence and bring it into the area of knowledge through 3-year period education. The curriculum is divided into disciplines is defined as Wood Art, Calligraphy Art, Metal Art, Tapestry Art, Leather Art, Traditional interior exterior art (Zellige tilework, plaster, stone art) and Wood Art. The school gets his 1st graduated promotion in 2016.

For instance, it’s too early for getting a big picture about the effect of these graduates on design, but students interaction with multiple disciplines, through the exponential alumni
graduates, could let them play a key role in shaping future design value creation, inspired by the richness of the local heritage.

In this perspective, it’s interesting to observe similarities with the German Bauhaus experience, as the combination of several applied arts in one specific place, generates new thinking and new interactions leading to design emergence in Europe at the post world war II era.

As the school is government funded, which means that sustainability is granted, it’s conceivable to assume that future alumni work could be significant toward design value institutionalization at a cognitive and normative isomorphism, but right now, for instance, there is no institutional isomorphism logic interaction with industry highlighting design value. This point brings to the discussion design education at design schools.

**Design schools**

Related to design school, specifically, the foregoing discussion implies that mentioning the existence of three private schools stating that design is at their core curriculum is done regardless of their education quality.

The first one is “Artcom Ecole de design” created in 1988. The mention of design is assumed in the naming. The school states on his website that it’s a “Cumulus” member, in reference to the international network of design education schools. The official discourse extracted from the website emphasizes interior design and graphic design as the core school curriculum.

The second one is ESDAV (Ecole supérieure de design et d’arts décoratifs) created in 2006, the school develops in his discourse the idea of design at a strategic level.

The third one named (ESAD) was created just two years ago (2015) “Ecole des arts appliqués et de design” the particularity of this school lies in the fact that the mention of design seems to be understood at the strategic level. To advocate for this idea, the school mentions an international Moroccan designer as a sponsor for advocating design as a game changer in the economic landscape.

However, it’s important here to mention that two Moroccan Public School of arts with high selectivity at the entry: “École Supérieure des Beaux-Arts de Casablanca” and “Institut National des Beaux-Arts de Tétouan” provides design curriculum to their students.

Specifically, Casa Moda Academy, a public-private school created in 2008 dedicates itself to fashion design.

In this perspective, related this time to Business Schools, Esca Ecole de Management provides Design management, design thinking courses and initiates also partnership student exchange with a top ranked French Design School.

This overview of design education landscape states here that the background for the emergence of design value in the Moroccan economy at a strategic level exists from the education perspective, nevertheless, there is no logical isomorphism toward a design education institutionalization. Even, the indication of competition in an idea of mimetic isomorphism is deficient. There is overwhelming evidence that actors of design education are obviously young. A minimum of a decade seems necessary to observe the institutional dynamic logics toward institutionalization. Nevertheless, if design education exits at an
embryonic state, the consensus view seems to be that Moroccan designers are establishing the foundations for design management emergence.

**Toward Normative isomorphism: Design and designer’s emergence**

**Designers emergence**

As a post-colonial country, Europe proximity and historical openness and influences, several designers educated in worldwide school from the Moroccan Diaspora plays today key role in the emergence of Moroccan design. Thanks to their international visibility, they provide unique vision to different stakeholders about the strategic value of design in an idea of spreading design value, as all designers worldwide act.

In this context, Moroccan designers get a federation called “Fédération marocaine du design et du design industriel ». Since 2010, the organization is opened to all African Designers. The logic is to embrace the Moroccan new economic and geopolitical context in interaction with other African countries. As stated by African Bank Development, 85% of Morocco’s Foreign Direct Investment are right now targeting Africa.

The organization goal is to establish a link between designers, entrepreneurs, and design consulting agencies. According to his international designer it counts approximatively about 70 Moroccan and African designers and aims to establish concretes interaction and projects with the General confederation of Moroccan companies: the local employer organization. The output is local designers work exhibition and design activism toward the employer organization.

If designers emergence at the local context is significant. A nuance should be brought here as a factor reducing for now the institutionalization logic development. As design is not enough understood at a strategic level within local companies, the market is automatically reduced for designers working under consultancy mode. This issue increases badly competition rivalry among designers when this rivalry is expressed toward stakeholders in the state of design value initiation discovery. The mimetic institutionalization isomorphism is then slowed down. However, the main driver logic toward a design institutionalization remains the artifact and designers output.

**Design output emergence**

Following designers emergence as patricians, the purpose here is oriented toward designers outputs. In this context, two events: Africa Design Awards and Africa Design days plays a significant role as a normative isomorphism. Initiated by the same social design actor mentioned above, these events more than only Moroccan remains extended to the whole Africa continent. These events by spotting the light on talented and specific designers, highlights the results as design outputs to the public and stakeholders, showing the possibilities of design value creation. The web platform is dedicated for this purpose, in an idea of spreading Moroccan design work and African design creativity.

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3 Hicham Lahlou designer
**A Significant design emergence story in Urban design**

Design output is crucial toward more accurate design institutionalization. Upon this consideration, design for public services and especially urban design gives the opportunity to observe design value at a large scale.

When the project of the largest cable-stayed bridge with a length of 950 meters of Morocco capital was initiated, the project of a canopy roof for the Tolle station expecting 20,000 vehicles per day was entrusted to Moroccan designer in a collaboration with an architect.

The valuable idea here lies in the fact that an architect can make the canopy without the need of a designer, but hiring a designer was disseminated in the call of tenders by the government thanks to one specific person: The Highway CEO which appears to be aware of value design in an urban space.

Designer project through a specific concept challenges then architect work and brings specific value to the project. The designer concept was canopy taking the form of M as the first letter of the word Morocco. Getting a canopy with this specific form was a huge constraint and challenge for the engineers but it ends with an original canopy bringing significant value to the project.

This experience unique at the scale of Morocco and Africa brings a specific perspective and vision to design and architecture collaboration and provides a design reference to a
specific urban design in an emergent country, which enhances cognitive and normative institutional isomorphism.

**Figure 3  Urban design emergence through Canopy designed by Hicham Lahlou designer**

**A Significant design emergence story in Fashion Design**

When a holding family business company initiates a move toward fashion industry, a young CEO observes that traditional garments were never explored toward modernity. By hiring a young and talented fashion designer working on blurring the lines between modernity and tradition, the success was there. Moving from one store in 2002 to more than one hundred in 2017, the sales approximatively moves from one million $ to 10 million $ demonstrating by numbers how design can bring value. Under the branded name “Diamantine”, the company is still expecting growth. This specific story is expected to play a mimetic isomorphism when design will be understood as not specific to fashion among stakeholders.
A Significant design emergence story in product design
Related to products, the main designers took as inspirational source the background of Moroccan cultural heritage. Bringing to the light a unique design expression, companies from the west with design culture finds a new way to rejuvenate their creations.

In this context, a designer used Moroccan traditional patterns to create new products as a sofa used by Hollywood blockbuster movie and shoe shelf by luxury Italian shoe company. Thanks to international branded success, a mimetic isomorphism is expected under these creations.

Figure 4 Traditional Garment tunique designed in modern style by Safae Ibrahimi Fashion designer
Finally, designers work and the creation of network organizations appears in this context as big steps toward design institutionalization. However, the rhythm of these actions may appear slow, thanks to the obstacles inherent to the blurry vision that may get managers when they are not introduced to design management as a strategic value creation and the limited size of the market inherent to a new industrialized country. But, the work made here by designers, if it initiates a mimetic and normative isomorphism is still actually not sufficient toward better institutionalization.

**Leveraging design through intellectual property: regulatory isomorphism**

An interesting experience involving a partnership with public and international institution brings significant output enhancing at this point design institutionalization as regulatory isomorphism.

The first one is a national public institution which is the “Moroccan Office of Industrial and Commercial Property”: OMPIC reporting to the Ministry of Industry, Trade, Investment
and the Digital Economy. As a mission, the OMPIC oversees industrial property protection (trademarks, patents, industrial designs). The idea underlying this institution mission lies in the fact that intellectual property protection led to a better economy performance.

The second one is the international World Intellectual Property Organization in Geneva (WIPO). Through a pilot project launched by WIPO, two countries were chosen Argentina and Morocco to promote awareness and use of design-led strategies using intellectual property rights among small and medium-sized enterprises (SMEs). Morocco was chosen for this pilot experience and partnership with 26 selected companies was done.

This project called “Namadij” implemented in 2016 was a success and unique experience showing that design could be leveraged within an economy through knowledge dissemination within creative industries. The benefit lies in the fact that it unlocks the creativity of companies by teaching them how to protect their creativity as an asset.

Through coercive aspects inherent to intellectual property toward companies at the intersection of design and craft, the potential of design value is conveyed to stakeholders as an asset creator of tangible value. This experience as unique remains a significant first step toward a coercive isomorphism favoured by intellectual property principles.

**Obstacles toward better design institutionalization**

If a relatively background exists toward design institutionalization emergence, strong obstacles remain as a brake slowing down the process. These obstacles could be defined here in 5 points:

- As the market for design management naturally is emergent itself, competition between top designers could be fierce essentially on projects under prestige consideration, which brings to the front a rivalry when criticism over one designer philosophy work is constructed under rivalry. This discourse criticism toward one stakeholder discovering design or unaware yet about design value could blur and shape the wrong perception about design value creation. Informal exchange with designers demonstrates to us the existence of rivalry among leading designers.
- Our introspection thinking here led us to the idea that an existing rivalry in the context of design emergence could damage the comprehension of design. At this point, Morocco as an independent post-colonial country is French speaking, the word design is understood widely as a French word conveying an idea of superficial work in home interior rather than conception of artificial artifacts. (Krippendorf 2005) Despite the use of Arabic word “Tasmim” fitting more the English meaning, the word design in French-speaking conveys, unfortunately, an idea of decoration in the Moroccan context.
- The youth of design education institutions prevents them for more larger influence at a normative level. As mentioned above one of the school design cited was created in 2015! Decade or two are necessary for a wide normative and cognitive isomorphism.
- The weight and predominance of craft industry if it’s a fertile background for design creativity, the old perception dominates the perception even in the eyes of an official ministry dedicated to craft.
- The WIPO initiative with the partnership of Ompic demonstrates through the 26 companies selected that creative industries are unaware about design value and
intellectual property protection competitive advantage. A huge work is expected then toward SMEs working in creative industries.

- Lack of government institution dedicated specifically to design promotion as U.K. Design council for example.
- Lack of academia research in design management field, unfortunately, the author is the only researcher in the field within Moroccan academia.

Conclusion

As in the rest of the world, design management is emergent in Africa. In this research, we spotted the light on an African country Morocco.

Through institutional theory, a normative isomorphism was observed through a design educational ecosystem who shows a particular component. This characteristic is expressed by the existence of public art school showing similarities with the Bauhaus design school experience. As craft industry plays a key role in the economy of the country, graduated are expected to become designers with distinctive perspective.

Design value emergence appears then tangible in cognitive and normative isomorphism through top designers from the Moroccan diaspora graduated from European design schools. Nevertheless, the progression of design emergence remains slow thanks especially to the characteristic of an emergent economy.

At the regulatory isomorphism level, design value awareness regarding intellectual property and through an international project is contributing to the emergence of design in this specific country.

Nevertheless, if obstacles to fastest design emergence are important, upon institutional theory, the three isomorphisms are undeniably in a pending state. A decade or more is needed toward shaping the future of design management in this African country thanks to multiple normative initiatives as the upcoming world design organization event Design talks organized for the first time in Morocco. An upcoming research, up to five years could bring new insights able to bring better understanding of design emergence in this part of the world.

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