

**Najwa Bouyarmane**

# Cyberculture in Morocco. How the internet impacts culture

**Master's Thesis**

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# **CYBERCULTURE IN MOROCCO: FEZ AS A CASE STUDY**

**A THESIS SUBMITTED IN PARTIAL FULFILMENT OF THE REQUIREMENTS OF  
THE M.A. PROGRAM**

**2008**

**NAJWA BOUYARMANE**

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# **INTRODUCTION**



Culture is an essential component in people's lives. It is considered as the patterns and behaviours that people in social groups learn, create and share. The culture of people introduces their beliefs, language, rituals, art, dress, ways of producing, food, religious and economic system.

Cyberculture came out from the invention of technologies especially the Internet. Through the Internet, culture is being reshaped and new means of communication are created. Therefore, cyberculture is the outcome from the use of computers; be it for communication, business, entertainment or research.

The cyberspace is the core of the Internet. The cyberspace is the boundless place where cultures interact. Sometimes, there are some problems that may merge in the cyberspace, causing people to indulge in virtual communities and restrict themselves to the on-line life. Through these virtual communities, people create identities which threaten to alienate them from reality.

The aim of this thesis is to study and analyse cyberculture on the Moroccan society, taking the city of Fez as a case study. The choice of this topic is justified by the fact that, although Morocco is neither a developed nor an industrial country, Moroccan people are updated about new technologies, as this is obvious in the proliferation of cybercafés all over the country.

Therefore, the aim of the thesis is to try to answer the following questions: Who are the people who go to cybercafés? Why do they go there? What are they looking for? If they come to talk, or in the Internet jargon "chat" are they aware to whom they are talking? Do they respect their online identities or do they create fake ones? What are the debates which are mostly raised there?

This thesis contains two major parts. The first part consists of a review of literature which relates what scientists, philosophers and other researchers have said about the emergence and issue of cyberculture in the world. The review of literature is approached in a critical way. It includes three chapters: popular cyberculture, cyberculture theories and cyberculture studies. The first chapter, popular cyberculture is concerned with the key words on which this research is based, such as: culture, cybercafé, cyberculture, cyberspace and the Internet. The second chapter deals with cyberculture theories, such as: the utopian theory and the virtual theory. Cyberculture studies dealt with in the third chapter includes: virtual communities, virtual identities, virtual bodies, MUDs (Multi-User Domains), features of the language of the cyberspace and gaming on-line, being the major activity online.

The second major part of the thesis deals with the data collection and data analysis. The tools used for the data collections are: the questionnaire, the participant and non-participant observation. These will be analysed and interpreted deeply in relation to cyberculture in the Moroccan context, and especially in Fez.

# **PART ONE: REVIEW OF THE LITERATURE**

“As the Internet increases in importance and pervasiveness, it will simply become part of the mundane fabric of social and cultural life”