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Resilience in Uncertainty: An Examination of a Moroccan Centre Serving Unwed Mothers

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Resilience in Uncertainty: An Examination of a Moroccan Centre Serving Unwed Mothers

By

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A thesis submitted in partial fulfillment
of the requirements for the degree of
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Keywords: gender-based violence, women's rights, civil society, social services

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TABLE OF CONTENTS

LIST OF TABLES

LIST OF FIGURES

ABSTRACT

Utilizing a gender-based violence approach, this study investigated service delivery realities for a Moroccan women's centre serving unwed mothers and their babies. Primary research methods included participant observation and semi-structured interviews (n=20) with unwed mothers and centre staff. This study aimed to determine what factors lead mothers to seek assistance, types of assistance offered, and challenges and future opportunities for services. Findings indicate a lack of social support to mothers, lack of social and economic support for the centre and reduced service capacity, and the use of deceit in interactions between mothers and staff rooted in cultural notions of shame. Future opportunities for program development and sustainability are discussed. This work hopes to contribute to a richer understanding of gender-based violence in local contexts through the investigation of unwed mother's experiences of gender-based violence in Moroccan society and how these experiences impact the reality and capabilities of social service provision.

Keywords: gender-based violence, Morocco, unwed mothers, social services

I. VIOLENCE TOWARDS WOMEN IN MOROCCO AND ACTIVIST EFFORTS

Gender-Based Violence

Gender-based violence (GBV) is a global public health concern. It affects the everyday lives of millions of women regardless of ethnicity, religion, place of residence, or educational level and is operative at society every level of (Merry 2009, Krug et al. 2002). While forms of gender-based violence can occur towards men (e.g. harassment/hazing in male organizations, homophobic assaults on gay men, etc.), women are disproportionately the victims of gender-based violence (Merry 2009). Violence against women is defined by the United Nations Declaration on the Elimination of Violence Against Women as, "any act of gender-based violence that results in, or is likely to result in, physical, sexual, or psychological harm or suffering to women, including threats of such acts, coercion, or arbitrary deprivations of liberty, whether occurring in public or private life" (United Nations General Assembly 1993, December 20). Merry (2009), extends this definition by stressing the dependence of such violence on gendered identities and social roles and its manifestation into varying forms and degrees of violence. Specific examples of the wide range of GBV include: sexual, physical, and mental assaults in the home or public spaces, intimate partner violence (violence inflicted by a romantic partner), human trafficking and sex trade, certain cultural practices such as dowry deaths, and even laws and policies which systematically repress women (Merry 2009).

Not only is GBV a violation of women's rights, but it is associated with marked deterioration of a multitude of short and long-term health outcomes (Olayanju et al. 2013).

Women facing GBV experience sexually transmitted infections, chronic pain, injuries, and physical disability, mental illness such as depression and post-traumatic stress disorder, and even death by homicide or suicide (Krug, et al. 2002). Sexual and physical violence places a particular risk to reproductive, maternal, and child health by increasing the risk of unwanted pregnancies, miscarriages and induced abortions, human immunodeficiency virus (HIV) infection and sexually transmitted diseases, malnutrition, stunting and low birth weight of babies, and at worst, neonatal, infant, and maternal mortality (Chibber and Krishnan 2011, Krug et al. 2002).

GBV is also detrimental to the economies of developing countries (Olayanju et al. 2013). This is measured by direct costs, or healthcare, social service, and judicial expenditures related to GBV, and indirect costs which include measures of loss of productivity (Morrison, Ellsberg, and Bott 2007). For instance, in the United States, an estimated $4 billion was spent on direct health care costs to intimate partner violence towards women (Morrison, Ellsberg, and Bott 2007). Such estimates have not been measured for most developing countries, including Morocco; however, given the available statistics on the prevalence of GBV towards women in Morocco, it is reasonable to assume that direct and indirect costs due to GBV are high.

Although comparable country level data on the prevalence of GBV is limited, largely due to differences in how GBV is defined and measured, it is apparent that GBV is prevalent in Morocco (Morrison, Ellsberg, and Bott 2007). In 2009, the Moroccan High Commission for Planning (HCP) conducted a countrywide GBV study among nine million women revealed that over 63% of Moroccan women between the ages of 18 to 65 years had experienced some form of violence in the past year. The most frequently reported forms of abuse were psychological at 48.4%, infringement of civil liberties at 32%, and violence from law enforcement at 17.3% (High Commisioner of Planning/Haut-Commissariat Au Plan 2009). Over three million of women

surveyed (35.3%) reported experiencing an act of physical violence and 2.1 million (22.6%) reported sexual violence at some point in their lifetime. Divorced, single, and unemployed women, were the most likely to experience such violence (Basty 2011, January 10). Another study, conducted in 2001, indicated 28,000 reports of domestic violence were received between 1984 and 1998 (Maghraoui 2001).

Beyond self-reported statistics, to understand GBV within Morocco requires a situated analysis. Moroccan women experience GBV by their social inequality, economic dependence, subordination in the home and broader community, and laws and policies that promote less autonomy to women relative to men (Bordat and Kouzzi 2009; Bordat, Davis, and Kouzzi 2011). The majority of Moroccan girls and women are uneducated. Overall, 55% of women in the country are illiterate with rural areas disproportionately holding this burden with nine out of ten women being illiterate (Edwards 2012). According to the Morocco's Ministry of Education, school attendance rates for girls are persistently lower than boys. In 2009-10, 65% of boys aged 12-14 attended school compared to 46.1% of girls. As girls reach their mid-teens, the rate falls to 14.1% (HCM 2009). Such statistics are worrisome when acknowledging that a lack of education and illiteracy reduces women's chances of securing a stable job, restricts women's ability to understand and claim legal rights, and places women at increased risk to unplanned parenthood (Edwards 2012, Majbar 2013)

Unemployment is also a major concern for Moroccan women. The unemployment rate of women is double that of men with comparable degrees and professions (HCM 2009). Women comprise only approximately 24% of the labor force (Bordat and Kouzzi 2009, Mason 2001). According to a World Bank Policy Research Report, nearly half of the women actually employed hold vulnerable jobs, or jobs less likely to provide income security (Mason 2001). According to

Fernea's (1998) work *In Search of Muslim Feminism*, Moroccan women cited that women's greatest challenge was not biology of being female versus male, per se, but their social positions and employment status. One activist, Madame Badia Skalli, stated "I would rather be a rich upper class woman than a poor working class man" (Fernea 1998: 106). She provides an example that if a woman confronts a legal concern yet has money, she can at least pay a lawyer to assist, whereas a poor woman could not afford such things and is also more likely to be illiterate, complicating the process further. These statements reflect the need to not view gender-based violence as an issue stemming from biological distinctions between men and women alone, but to discern how social, political, and economic realities impact women and men differently.

Muslim Feminism

Moroccan perspectives of feminism and women's rights are highly multifaceted in a country in which the vast majority (99%) of citizens are Muslim (Coleman 2014). Muslim women have approached women's issues through a multiplicity of viewpoints. A history of Islamic and Western influences of feminism and women's rights combine to influence how women perceive their own rights and how such rights should be actualized within society (Fernea 1998, Wuerth 2005). Along a continuum, activists have taken the approach of women's rights, human rights, and secularism while others have campaigned in Islamic terms (Ahmed 1992, Evrard 2014). The variety of viewpoints on the matter is significant as it, in part, determines the types of approaches activists utilize in their promotion of women's rights.

Feminism can be defined as "a critical awareness of the structural marginalization of women in society seeking to engage in transforming gender power relations in order to strive…gender justice, human equality and freedom from structures of oppression" (McKanders

2014: 165). However, the term is not so simply understood and applied by Moroccan women. According to one Moroccan activist, Nadia Yassine, "the history of the women's movement in the West has unfolded completely differently from here. It is based on other traditions and pursues different goals" (McKanders 2014: 167). Rather than the term "feminism" in its Western sense, these women seek to define their own form of feminism that promotes women's rights within their own particular Islamic context and are, generally, not too concerned with labels of "feminist" or "feminism" (Evrard 2014, Wuerth 2005). French colonial rule, up until Morocco's independence in 1956, certainly had an effect on perceptions of feminism. In part, colonization resulted in forms of hostility towards "imported" feminism and many Moroccans interpreted these discourses as a challenge to their Islamic beliefs (McKanders 2014).

The Islamic feminist discourse articulates women's rights in reference to the Qur'an and other religious texts and that the sacred texts allow for many rights to women (Ahmed 1992; Badran 2011, McKanders 2014). According to a prominent figure for women's issues in the 1940s, Zeinab al-Ghazali purported that "Islam provided women with everything- freedom, economic rights, political rights, public and private rights," even though Islamic society may not be implementing these rights as it should (Ahmed 1992: 199). She asserts that Islam allows women to be educated, engage in politics, and participate in public life, just so long as it does not interfere with her primary duty as mother and wife. In this view, while a woman's primary role should be to the family, she is still afforded an intellectual and professional life, as long as there is a balance. Furthermore, there seems to be a general consensus amongst Muslim feminists that it is not the religious texts themselves, but the misinterpretation of the texts by people in power that result in women's subordination in society (Ahmed 1992, McKanders 2014).

While a respect for religious and familial tradition often holds true, women are more frequently demanding what they want and/or need (Fernea 1998). This may be seen as reminiscent of Western individualism, commonly regarded as disrespectful and selfish in Muslim culture, but it is also complex. More so than generations past, Moroccan women of present day feel they should consider their own needs and wants in relation to the family needs rather than compromising these desires (Fernea 1998).

Notions of a "post-feminist" ideology are also present in Morocco, in which advocates support a gender-neutral, general human rights approach rather than an agenda geared specifically towards women (McKanders 2014). Within this multiplicity of perspectives, regardless of adherence to Islamic, secular, or Western viewpoints, Moroccan women and activists can all agree on the promotion of equal rights, gender equality, and increased opportunities for women (Ahmed 1992, Evrard 2014, Fernea 1998).

Women's Rights and Legal Reform in Morocco

Efforts to reform policy is a vital method to increase justice for women and reduce violence towards women (Evrard 2014, Morrison, Ellsberg, and Bott 2007). Morocco is currently entrenched in a crossroads of international rights doctrines and local Islamic activist efforts, and this crossroad demonstrates potential promise for addressing gender-based violence and supporting women's rights (Elliott 2009, Evrard 2014).

Moroccan Family Law

The legal system of modern Morocco is a collection of laws based on the Maliki tradition[1] of Sharia, local customary laws based in tribal laws, and the French Penal code which

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[1] The Islamic legal tradition has four independent schools of thought which emerged in the eighth century: Maliki, Hanafi, Shafii, and Hanbali. The Maliki tradition is dominant throughout North Africa.

dominates civil laws (Fernea 1998). At the time of independence from France in 1956, the choice to adhere to the Maliki tradition was a strategic one made by tribal leaders due to its "foundation in a tribal notion of family as patrilineal, clan based, and patrikin" (Evrard 2014: 29). While the family law is based in Sharia Law, the Moudawana is Moroccan founded as it was devised by Moroccan judges and *ulemas* (Islamic scholars), and lawyers (Fernea 1998).

Moroccan family law specifies rules and regulations for marriage, divorce, custody, and inheritance and, with its base in religion, also sets social norms and values. The law also sets a strict division of gender roles for men and women (Elliott 2009, McKanders 2014). According to its tenets and Moroccan social norms, men should be strong, dominant, and engaged in public life, while the woman should be modest, withdrawn, and uphold their primary duty within the household (Chomiak 2002, Fernea 1998).

According to the Moudawana, or the Moroccan Personal Status Code, sexual relations outside of marriage are illegal (Bargach 2013). Thus, women who have birth outside the legal framework of marriage are considered criminals and can be punished with fines and up to three years in prison (Bargach 2013). Interestingly, Moroccan women are marrying later and later with the average age of marriage in 2010 at 26.6 years old compared to the 1962 average of 17.5 years old (HCM 2009). In turn, the age of "sexual debut" is coinciding less and less with marriage with more Moroccans engaging in sexual acts before marriage (Bakass, Ferrand, and ECAF Team 2013, Elliott 2015).

Marriage is a key issue in Morocco. Moroccans are aware that marriage, in the joining of two families, determines the ways in which class is articulated for future generations (Fernea 1998). It is also a religious and social duty of Muslim women and men. Only after marriage and the birth of children is a couple considered as two mature Muslims. Marriage is valued for its

utility to form family alliance and combine social, political, and economic assets and is viewed in reference to what is good for the "group" versus the individual (Fernea 1998). Thus, the Code is written in terms of the family unit and rarely considers individuals rights.

Women's Rights Activism and Family Law Reform

The advancement of women's rights in Morocco has been in part influenced by international pressures. Morocco's collaboration with European actors, such as negotiations of the Free Trade Agreement with the European Union and adherence to international rights doctrines, has brought concomitant social and economic expectations for Morocco to uphold (Wuerth 2005). The intent of the United Nation's Convention of Elimination of all forms of Discrimination Against Women (CEDAW) of 1979 was to strengthen women's legal, political, and public status. Morocco ratified this agreement in 1993 (Elliott 2015). Of particular concern for Morocco was reform of the Penal Code, to criminalize violence against women, and the Personal Status Code (Moudawana), to give women more rights and autonomy within the family structure (Elliott 2009).

At the local level, Moroccan feminists have intensely advocated for women's rights since the early 1900s (Edwards 2012, Fernea 1998, Sadiqi and Ennaji 2006, Wuerth 2005). The women's rights movement is best characterized as encompassing a broad set of motivations with activists calling upon a continuum of secular, Western human rights, and Islamic discourses (Ahmed 1992, Badran 2011, Evrard 2014, Fernea 1998, Wuerth 2005). According to Evrard (2014), this multiplicity of viewpoints provides the movement with strength as it provides for greater numbers of women to back the movement.

At the turn of the century, activist groups held a mutual desire for a more secular state, yet some activists still believed religious discourse should still remain part of the discussion

8

(McKanders 2014). One prominent organization's efforts demonstrates well the blending of Islamic and western influences on women's rights advocacy. The l'Union de l'Action Féminine (UAF) instigated a "One Million Signatures Campaign to petition the King for reforms relevant to women (Evrard 2014, Wuerth 2005). Of particular concern were reforms to the family law - laws regulating marriage, divorce, inheritance, child custody, and polygamy practices (Fernea 1998, Wuerth 2005). This action was instrumental in voicing women's concerns and pressing the government for accountability to meet their concerns. UAF asserted their demands were based in western legal discourse such as the Universal Declaration of Human Rights, as well as sharia principles of justice, equality, and tolerance (Wuerth 2005).

After decades of intense advocacy, previously taboo social phenomena began to be publicly discussed and debated, popularized in the media, and addressed by local NGO programs (Bordat and Kouzzi 2009). Then in 2004, revisions to the Family Code that occurred under King Mohammed VI shifted the law from a patriarchal model to one that seemed more egalitarian (Badran 2011). Notable reforms include more mutual responsibilities for household management, minimum age of marriage for girls raised from 15 to 18, restrictions on polygamy practices, more channels for women to initiate divorce in front of a judge, and child custody granted to mothers first, then to fathers (Edwards, 2012; Elliot, 2009). The 2004 Moudawana reforms have been heralded by some to support the advancement of women's rights by redefining gender roles in Moroccan family and society (Bargach, 2005, Bordat, Davis, and Kouzzi 2011, Bordat and Kouzzi 2009, Majbar, 2013, Wuerth, 2005).

Laws on paper do not always translate to reality however, and many scholars have criticized the Moudawana as still lacking in some regards. Vague language and lack of stringent, clear requirements leave room for interpretation and discretionary practices and mechanisms of

9

consistent enforcement are lacking (Bordat and Kouzzi 2009, Chomiak 2002, Kreutzberger 2008, Majbar 2013). Moroccan NGOs have documented the consistent non-or misapplication of these laws by the courts and have exclaimed that when interpretation of the law is left to discretion, this could fall to the detriment of women (Bordat and Kouzzi 2009, Elliot 2009). For instance, at a judge's discretion, minors can still be married if the judge deems she is "ready" for marriage (Elliott 2009). This demonstrates there is still work to be done to ensure women's rights in the political sphere.

Unwed Mothers

Amongst the most legally and socially marginalized groups in Morocco are unwed mothers, who have had children outside of legal marriage and are thus in direct defiance of the Moroccan Penal and Family Codes and social expectations (Bordat and Kouzzi 2009). Due to this, the women are often ostracized from the family and the society at large.

Reliable statistics on the prevalence of unwed mothers and their children in Morocco are scant. One study, conducted by the Institution Nationale de Solidarité avec les Femmes en Détresse, reported the number of unmarried mothers in Morocco jumped from 11,016 in 2008 to 27,200 in 2009 (McTighe 2011, June 2). According to the same report, the majority of unwed mothers are young with 60% being under 26 years of age and approximately another 30% younger than 20 years of age. The HCP study (2009), the most comprehensive GBV study conducted in Morocco to date, does not present statistics stratified to depict rates of violence towards unwed mothers specifically. This unavailability of accurate statistics on unwed motherhood in Morocco is attributed to their legal invisibility by the state and social isolation (Bakass, Ferrand, and ECAF Team 2013, Bordat and Kouzzi 2009).

What is known, however, is that unwed mothers commonly come from impoverished

households. Across Morocco, the unemployment rate of women is double that of men with

comparable degrees, and unwed mothers are particularly at risk to unemployment, being fired, or

resigning due to stigma (Bordat and Kouzzi 2009, Fauster 2014, HCM 2009,McTighe 2012).

After childbirth, it is even more difficult to enter the workforce as mothers must find a way to

care for their children while also pursuing work. With few options available to them, single

mothers often must resort to vulnerable professions such as domestic housework (McTighe

2012). Research shows these professions tend to have low pay, have higher job turnover rates,

and place women at increased risk violence on the job and health problems (Chomiak 2002,

Hahn and Postmus 2013, Lloyd 2015). NGOs serving unwed mothers have reported that

approximately one-third of the women they assist have been sexually abused in such work

settings (Edwards 2012).

Virginity is an exceptionally important characteristic of girls. A woman's virtue is tied so

intimately to her sexual purity that women who engage in sex and/or become pregnant prior to

marriage, along with her family, are shamed by society (Bordat and Kouzzi 2009, Chomiak

2002, Edwards 2012, Elliott 2015, Fauster 2014). Yet this same standard does not hold for boys

(Elliott 2015). These social attitudes can result in rejection of the mother by even her own family

Non-governmental organizations in Morocco have even reported violence from family members

towards the mothers upon learning she is pregnant outside of marriage (Bordat and Kouzzi

2009). Thus, unwed mothers typically have a little to no social support from family and the

community.

While the Moudawana states that sex outside of marriage is illegal, the Code also does

not recognize "illegitimate" paternity for children born out of wedlock, thus these children are

legally unidentified and unrecognized (Bordat and Kouzzi 2009). Although the mothers can obtain birth certificates for their child, they cannot include their child's name in the Livre de Famille (the Family Booklet) as paternity is unknown. This document is essential for legal existence as it is required to obtain the National Identity Card, a passport, and driver's license (Fauster 2014, McTighe 2011, June 2). In effect, without these documents children born to unwed mothers fall into an undocumented status.

For mothers attempting to legitimize their child(ren) there are few options available. To establish legitimate paternity, both parents must claim that conception occurred during engagement and provide documentation (Bordat and Kouzzi 2009). This would require consent and cooperation from the father to claim paternity, which is often not the reality (Bordat and Kouzzi 2009). In these cases, DNA testing is an option to prove paternity, yet the law pertaining to this is also not in the woman's favor. DNA testing can only take place when court-ordered in situations of legal marriage or cases of rape (Bordat and Kouzzi 2009, Fauster 2014). These legal constraints taken together block women from claiming legitimacy for their child and do not hold fathers accountable.

Considering legal barriers and the social stigmatization of births outside of marriage, alternative options of abortion, adoption, or abandonment are highly desirable. However, abortion and adoption are also illegal in Morocco (Bordat 2009, McTighe 2012). It is estimated that 153 illegitimate children are born each day in Morocco, and much of these are subject to these alternative options (Fioole 2015, Kopchik 2015). Once again though, there is a shortage of accurate data available on these stigmatized practices (Bakass, Ferrand, and ECAF Team 2013). According to the Moudawana, "adoption has no juridical value and does not evoke any of the consequences of filiation," as in adopted children do not receive the same legal legitimacy and

12

rights entitled to biological kin (Fioole 2015: 250). Reasons for adoption can vary from cases of

orphaned children, to requested adoption, and illegitimate children. In a study on adoption in

Skhirat, Morocco, only the parents of adopted illegitimate children reported facing stigma for

their action which resulted in attempts to keep the adoption a secret (Fioole 2015). Bargach

(2002) states that adoption practices are often stigmatized as the act is considered a degraded

form of parenting.

The Role of Non-Governmental Organizations for Women's Advancement

NGOs have become important sites for feminist efforts. The proliferation of NGOs in

recent decades can be understood as entrenched in the neo-liberal economy and 'neoliberal

articulations of productivity, entrepreneurship, and power' (Grewal and Bernal 2014: 10). Since

the 1980s, Morocco has restructured the economy to reflect neoliberal motives; in part motivated

by the introduction of the International Monetary Fund (IMF) and structural adjustment plans

advocated by the World Bank (Zemni and Bogaert 2011). Due to these policies, disparities

between the rich and the poor have increased while government support for public employment

and social services have decreased (Evrard 2014). Resources for social service organizations are

nearly depleted by the time state resources travel through multiple state entities to reach social

service organizations as a last priority (Wies 2011). Some of these organizations where state

funds were withdrawn were previous sites of paid labor for women (Grewal and Bernal 2014).

As state and public resources are withdrawn from the welfare sector, NGOs seek to fill in these

gaps in coverage

The diversity of NGO orientations, ranging from conservative to progressive, has led to

multiple interpretations of their functions in relation to the state, including sites for grassroots

change, agents of civil society to fill gaps in state support, or drivers of neoliberal agendas

themselves (Grewal and Bernal 2014). The diversity of NGO approaches is mirrored in the perspectives witnessed in women's rights activists groups in serving women and unwed mothers in need. For instance, Islamist groups will provide direct financial and material aid assistance to often poor, economically marginalized women in the form of donations. Religious education usually coincides with this outreach and charity approach (Bordat and Kouzzi 2011). Through active outreach, these religious associations have successfully developed a client base. Another approach is one employing the language of human and legal rights, which expands women's knowledge of their rights and encourages them to take action in claiming their rights. More than delivering direct material aid, organizations based on this framework seek to empower women through advocacy for change (Bordat, Davis, and Kouzzi 2011). Although these two approaches could be juxtaposed as in tension with one another, it is important to not generalize across women's organizations as their wide variety of political leanings produce a broad spectrum of service approaches (Wuerth 2005).

Additionally, levels of support from the state shape civil society in Morocco. The alignment of NGO agendas with national priorities determine in large part to what extent the state supports their endeavors (Wuerth 2005). To assist with NGO funding needs, organizations may apply for *utilité publique* status, which allows for exemptions from certain taxes in theory, but in practice only those whose agenda is aligned with the state are granted this designation. The Union Nationale des Femmes Marocaines (UNFM), created by King Hassan II in 1969, is an example of a women's organization with state support and the *utilité publique* status, which works to advance women's status by providing professional trainings to women. However, this organization does not partake in policy reform efforts (Wuerth 2005). Typically, NGOs serving unwed mothers women are not granted such status and are presented with a significant challenge

14

as the state provides limited to no funds to these agencies (Bargach 2011). Furthermore, within Moroccan civil society, there is significant competition amongst organizations in acquiring national and foreign funds due to resource scarcity (Elliott 2015).

The Critical Need for NGO Support for Unwed Mothers

Given limited alternative avenues for support, unwed mothers often approach NGOs to request assistance to help support themselves and their children (Bordat and Kouzzi 2009; Chomiak 2002). Women's associations have been forerunners in educating the Moroccan public about the importance of promoting gender equality and how legal reforms impact women's rights and serve an important intermediary role between unwed mothers and political institutions (Elliott 2009, Merry 2006). Such intermediaries play critical roles for women's rights by "translating ideas from the global arena down and from local arenas up," in a process that Merry has termed as "vernacularization" of human rights (Merry 2006:38).

Forms of assistance unwed mothers commonly seek from NGOs include legal, employment, and material assistance (Bordat and Kouzzi 2009, Slenes 2014, Bargach 2005, Bordat, Davis, and Kouzzi 2011). Mothers needing legal assistance, such as registering their children in the family booklet, are faced with complex and confusing bureaucratic systems rife with procedural delays and non-transparency (Morrison, et al. 2007). According to Aicha Ech Channa, the president of L'Association Solidarité Féminine, an association serving unwed mothers in Casablanca, "Most of the single mothers are afraid of these procedures; therefore, they don't go register their kids" (Kopchik 2015). NGOs can play a critical role in clarifying unclear laws and helping women navigate such procedures. However, even with NGO assistance, the lengthy procedure of obtaining the Family Booklet could still extend from three to eight months (Bordat and Kouzzi 2009).

15

Women also turn to NGOs to facilitate finding employment and NGOs are increasingly focusing on education and economic opportunities for women to promote forms of empowerment (Bordat and Kouzzi 2009, Elliot 2009). Such efforts have demonstrated increases in household incomes, solidarity, and the encouragement of more equitable family relations (Bordat and Kouzzi 2009). Other services provided can include medical care, daycare, temporary housing, and family reintegration (Fauster 2014).

The need for such services offered by women's NGOs are pressing as more and more women are seeking assistance to an extent that far exceeds the capacity of the four shelters in country catering to unwed mothers (Bargach 2011). Compounding this growing need, NGOs face numerous challenges in providing services to unwed mothers. In addition to a general lack of state funding and support, public opinion of these organization's service to unwed mothers is generally non-supportive and at times, even hostile. Thus, NGOs must shoulder the task of providing for these women and must consistently work to find funds from elsewhere (Bargach 2011).

Contributions of this Research

Unwed mothers' perceptions and struggles are largely hidden from view in Moroccan society. Further research is needed to delineate what forms of gender-based violence, amongst other factors, prompt mothers to seek services, how they and their children have benefited (or not) from services, and the specific challenges in providing for this population. This research contributes to a better understanding of the kinds of services offered at a Moroccan centre for unwed mothers and the conditions under which they operate. Empirically, it hopes to contribute to knowledge on gender-based violence in local contexts by detailing the social, economic, and political ramifications of such violence towards unwed mothers and how this drives them to seek

16

services from non-governmental organizations. Furthermore, it seeks to elucidate service providers' experiences and challenges in serving this population in the Moroccan context. Insights from these findings could be used in comparative work on women's experiences with similar organizations. Lastly, recommendations for future service development from this work intend to provide a resource to reflect on current services and contemplate directions for future service provision.

II. METHODS

Research Setting

Research was conducted with a non-governmental organization serving unwed mothers called the Centre Amala.[2] Created in May 2001, Amala is a small, independent association in Southwest Morocco devoted to assisting unmarried mothers and their children. Contacts with Amala were made with assistance from Dar Si Hmad for Development, Education, and Culture, an independent, non-profit organization in Agadir, Morocco, newly founded in March 2010. Dar Si Hmad also provided translation services and office support for the duration of the fieldwork.

Amala's objectives are to "prevent abandonment of children, support mothers, promote a social reintegration in a familiar environment, open up for a legislation protecting the women, and organize a public awareness campaign" (Amala's webpage 2015). Amala provides a home, or *foyer*, for women to live before and after giving birth, as well as a daycare for their babies. The foyer is a two-room apartment that can accommodate up to 6-7 women at its maximum. Amala also provides women with material, financial, medical and legal assistance, employment and housing search support, and family planning education and family reintegration services. The main center and daycare are open Monday through Friday during normal business hours. The daycare is made up of two sections, one for babies under one year to 3 years old and another

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[2] For confidentiality purposes, pseudonyms are used in place of all formal names for the NGO association and participants.

section for 3+ year olds. The daycare is equipped with cribs, cradles, play pins, and toys and is attended by nurses and volunteers.

The daycare, listening center, and staff offices are located at the association's main center, while the foyer is located in another neighborhood a short drive away. The physical location of the main center is not readily apparent to the casual passer-by. One would likely need to actively seek out the organization to locate it. The entrance is set back off a small connecting roadway and marked by minimal, modest signs. Once near, the entourage of strollers parked outside the front doors indicate you have arrived at the daycare. The foyer's entrance is even more discreet as Amala does not wish to advertise to neighboring residents. It took several attempts of trekking up and down stairwells before my translator and I finally located it. Although the foyer was of decent size with two rooms, kitchen, and full bathroom, it was difficult to imagine that seven mothers, their babies, and Tahira (the staff member on day duty) could all fit comfortably in the residence.

Amala is located in Agadir, Morocco, a major urban hub located in the southwestern region of Morocco along the Atlantic Ocean coast and immediately to the west of the Atlas and Anti-Atlas Mountains. For hundreds of years, Agadir has been known as a fishing port and center, agricultural region, and major trading post (Paradise 2005). Tragically, on February 29, 1960 two earthquakes devastated the city. Buildings were leveled and 15,000 people were left dead (one-third of the population at that time) and 25,000 injured (Paradise 2005). Since then the city has been rebuilt with over a million dollars spent in its redevelopment and has attracted an every growing population. Agadir's growth can be partially attributed to the attraction of rural peoples from all around to seek employment in the city's tourism, fishing, and manufacturing industries (Findlay and Thompson 1985). Tourism is the primary revenue source for the region

as domestic and international tourists are drawn to the coastal experience, mild-temperatures, and a newly built, multi-million dollar beachside boardwalk and complex (Communication 2002). Despite the size and growth of the city, Amala is the only centre located in Agadir for unwed mothers.

Methodological Techniques and Analysis

Applied anthropological theories and methods can be utilized to promote understanding of the structural and social determinants of gender-based violence and produce social change through the provision of data, direct interactions with communities, and inform policy. This research is qualitative and exploratory and took place through summer 2015. The objectives of this research were: 1.) to determine what factors lead mothers to seek assistance, 2.) to report on what types of assistance are currently offered, 3.) to describe the present challenges faced by Amala in serving unwed mothers, and 4.) to suggest recommendations for future service development.

Primary research methods were qualitative in nature and included in-depth, semi-structured interviews[3] (n= 20) and participant observation at the Centre. Nine women currently receiving Amala services, seven Amala staff, and three other local social service agency staff constituted the participant sample. Other social service agencies were included in the sample at an attempt to elucidate possible junctures between their work and the work of associations serving unwed mothers. This combined methodology allows for a rich triangulation of data and provides a balance between structured, yet flexible data (DeWalt and DeWalt 2002). All Amala staff members and any mother currently utilizing services qualified for participation. All informants were adult women between the ages of 18 – 65. There were no restrictions on

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[3] Interview guides are included in the Appendix A

ethnicity of the study participants. A translator hired through Dar Si Hmad assisted with conducting interviews, interview transcriptions, and participant observation. Translation occurred between Darija (a variety of the Arabic language) to English and in a few cases, from French to English.

Separate but parallel interview guides were used for each participant group; a version for mothers, a version for staff members, and a version for other social service providers. Interview guides were semi-structured which included a set of specific questions to be asked of each participant, generally within a specific order (Bernard 2011). However, given the "semi" structure, the guides also allowed moderate flexibility to move throughout the questions pending the flow of conversation. Interview questions were designed to address the research objectives and allowed participants to elicit as much or as little information as they felt comfortable with. Table 1 (in the Appendix) shows how interview questions for the mothers and staff members link to each of the four research objectives.

Participant observation is a foundational, humanistic method within anthropological research (Bernard 2011). It is a strategic fieldwork method built on direct observations and "insider" engagement between the researcher and participants. Participant observation of staff, mothers, and babies were conducted during visits, volunteering, and while accompanying staff members and mothers on outings to the municipal arrondissement (administrative building). Most observational time was spent in the "Listening Center," daycare, and the foyer. By volunteering spare time at the daycare and participating in daily activities, I became a more familiar face and was able to establish some rapport with Amala staff. Recognizing how the personal and cultural background of the researcher directs research inquiries and the information recorded, observation notes were divided into separate columns for direct observations,

reflections and inferences, and personal journal notes (Neuman 2010).[4] This method ensures the inclusion, yet separation, of direct observations from personal thoughts and feelings. In discussion of research findings, observation notes are used as a supplement to the interviews to provide further context and reinforce and/or contest interview responses.

Interviews and observational notes were analyzed using ATLAS.ti software for qualitative data analysis. Data were analyzed thematically using open and selective coding techniques. Open coding, or coding in which raw data begins to be condensed into analytic categories, was used to elicit emergent themes throughout the data (Neuman 2010). Selective coding, or a technique to select data which represents a set of pre-determined coding categories, was based on interview question guides. Selective coding techniques allowed data to be linked directly to interview questions that aimed to elicit responses to the major research questions while open coding allowed for flexibility of emergent themes to arise from the data.

Limitations

While this research hopes to contribute to a nuanced understanding of unwed mothers and service provider experiences within the Moroccan social, political, and economic context, some limitations in this work were inevitable. The most significant limitation was language barriers. Amala staff and mothers interviewed spoke combinations of French and/or Moroccan Arabic, which necessitated the continued translation assistance during the interview, participant observation, and transcription process. As a result, more subtle nuances of communication through the foreign language may have gone unnoticed in the research process.

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[4] A Waiver of Documentation of Consent was requested from the University of South Florida's Institutional Review Board to protect the anonymity of research participants. With prior consent from participants, interviews were voice recorded. Five of the nine mothers and one staff member who participated in the interviews requested to not be recorded.

Another inherent issue in this work is women's possible reluctance to speak truthfully and openly about such sensitive topics with a foreigner researcher, from fear of judgment or general distrust. Furthermore, interviews with mothers were generally briefer and less detailed than interviews with staff, which could be related to the aforementioned reluctance. Thus, the discussion of research findings partially represents this imbalance in interview depth.

Lastly, it was apparent in interactions with some Amala staff members they felt a general distrust in foreign researchers and held low expectations in their abilities to produce a meaningful or useful product to assist the centre. These jaded notions are a result Amala's past experiences with researchers who have "taken" more than they gave back or depicted Moroccan women in, what they deemed, unrepresentative ways. Yet, this unreceptive attitude was not characteristic of the staff as a whole as some staff recognize the value of communicating their efforts and experiences to a wider audience, even if this does not mean an immediate benefit.

III. RESULTS AND DISCUSSION

Findings from this research are presented in relation to three of the four major research objectives: factors leading unwed mothers to seek service, services offered, and challenges in service provision, as well as emergent themes. This section starts with an overview of services accessed by the mothers who participated in the study and a description of why Amala staff members are motivated to work with unwed mothers. Then, descriptions of services and staff insights are offered in relation to the mother's needs. As previously mentioned, interviews with staff members generally elicited more lengthy and detailed information than interviews with mothers, thus more emphasis is placed on the responses of staff members in relation to services. Challenges in service provision faced by Amala staff in providing for unwed mothers are then discussed. Several case studies of mothers are presented in an effort to present a more detailed picture of the multitude of difficulties faced by unwed mothers in Morocco.

Amala Services to Unwed Mothers

Responses from interviews with mothers demonstrated a multitude of reasons for seeking assistance, which Amala attempts to address through various services. Figure 1 shows the types of services mothers requested from Amala. Note that one mother may have been in need of multiple forms of assistance in the past, present, and/or future, and this is represented in the graph below.
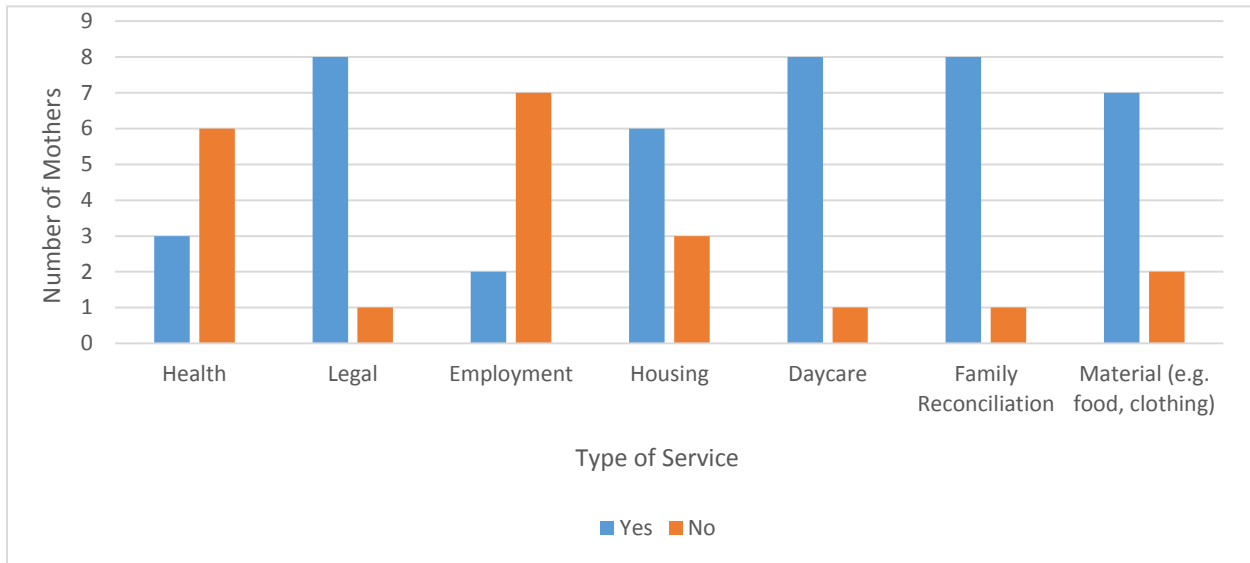
Figure 1. Services Requested by Unwed Mothers

The main objective of Amala in providing these services is to encourage women to keep their babies and prevent abandonment of babies. A few staff members reported that women would sometimes first come to the centre with the intent to abandon their baby, "and then we try to change their idea." Staff operate under the value that mothers should not be separated from their babies. An exception is made if the mother has mental problems, is alcoholic or is disabled. In congruence with their objective, it is mandatory for the woman to keep the child in order to receive any assistance. It is Mawara's belief that "good programs make good citizens" and is what she hopes to apply to the organization.

Unwed mothers face extreme stigma and alienation on a daily basis that exerts a toll on the mother's entire well-being. The mothers reported feeling "sad," "sick," "angry," "lost," and "scared." One staff member, Nasim, solemnly referred to this as, "the sickness, illness, and viruses. All of it is here." Staff were motivated to assist women from this exclusion and strife the mothers face from an unforgiving society.

Amala staff had numerous motivations to do this work aside from the desire to relieve some of the hardships the mothers face. Nasim claimed she only did this work because she cared for the babies' futures and needed the money. A nurse in Amala's daycare, Naila, cited these same reasons as motivations to do this work. Two staff members, Salma and Aesha, claimed they desired to work in social services such as this since their education were in related topics of human rights, law science, and social sciences. One staff member, Tahira, commented, "Amala chose me. I did not choose it… there's something about this social work, it's more than about the money; you can't buy it. When you see the mother holding her baby and you see her smile… it means a lot to me." Staff exclaim that it is not their job to place blame on the mothers, as they feel society has done this enough. Besides Mawara, the founder, Tahira had worked at Amala for the longest duration at eleven years. The rest of the staff members worked at Amala between nine years to less than one year.

Mawara's motivations for founding Amala stemmed from her extensive experience and knowledge base working in social service organizations, a personally devastating experience, and her individual will and temperament. Prior to founding Amala in 2001, Mawara worked with a social service organization for over twenty years engaged in two projects, one for handicapped people and one for unwed mothers, in which she was actively involved. Working in the field in this capacity provided Mawara with the knowledge of unwed mother's situation in Morocco and experience to start a new organization (Amala) to assist them. Overall, Mawara possesses a dominant personality. She is strong-willed, passionately opinionated, vocal, and authoritative. Her strong will and passion helped drive her to found the organization. Furthermore, Mawara can intimately relate with how unwed mothers feel in society. When she was pregnant in her teens there was an accident where she lost her husband. After this accident, her family did not accept

her or her babies or allow her to return to the family house since she was widowed. Despite being married at the time of conception, her family could not accept her pregnancy without a legitimate father figure. Mawara was left abandoned by her family in much the same way as the women Amala serves.

Social Support and Family Reconciliation

Of the mothers interviewed, four were not in contact with their families due to their pregnancy and received little to no support from them in caring for themselves and their child(ren). This is congruent with the literature on unwed mothers (Bordat and Kouzzi 2009, Chomiak 2002, Edwards 2012, Elliott 2015, Fauster 2014). Mothers demonstrated this need to seek service from Amala as they commonly remarked that there was no one else who could, or would, help. *"*My family is rich, but they do not want to help me… My mom and dad had sexual relations out of wedlock and had me, so I am illegal. My siblings are all legal…But none of my siblings want to help." Staff members echoed the mothers' sentiments, proclaiming, "Women seek services a lot from Amala because there is such a lack of family support and they will be in difficult situations."

Three mothers commented that they were in contact only with their mothers as they were too afraid to reveal their pregnancy to anyone else in the family. According to one of these three mothers, "At the beginning when I left the family house I told them I was leaving for work. My dad asks about me sometimes to my mother but she doesn't say anything." Another mother explained how her pregnancy has negatively impacted relations with her family, "Currently I feel like kind of rejected by society and the family because I am in an illegal situation of not being married but I have a kid. I feel like there is a gap between me and my family. That there is a piece of the puzzle there not solved." Lastly, just two of the mothers interviewed said they are

still in regular contact with their family as they were before the pregnancy. These results demonstrate that pregnancy outside of wedlock had a real, negative effect on familial relations in the majority of the mother's cases with the mothers either feeling exiled from the family or fear from revealing their pregnancy to the family.

When approaching Amala for the first time, mothers commonly came alone. One staff member noted, "I think it's very difficult for the mother in Morocco… because even their own families often don't accept their situation. They say 'goodbye, you can go.'" The few mothers who did have assistance were accompanied by their mother or a friend. Usually, unwed mothers exclaimed that upon becoming pregnant they were distanced and rejected emotionally by family members and even banned from setting foot inside the family house. One mother stated, "I was at my family's house, then I got pregnant and they were not accepting. I wasn't sure at this time if I was pregnant. Then I felt the pain from pregnancy start I began looking for housing, a place to hide." Thus, mothers needed assistance from Amala because they are unable to return to the family house and did not want to fall into homelessness.

Aside from the cases of four of the mothers who experienced complete exile from their families and the two mothers who did have regular contact with their family, three of the mothers stated their family was not even aware of their pregnancy or her real reasons for living away from the family house as they often kept this a secret from the family. As women exclaimed, "I have no friends, so no one knows what is going on with me. My family just thinks I'm working here in Agadir" and, "I didn't tell them about my pregnancy until I came here…. At the beginning when I left the family house I told them I was leaving for work."

Tahira, with the foyer, described how this non-disclosure to the family impacts the mother's health, "If she didn't tell her family, you can see it on her health. She is sick, pale,

doesn't eat well, has anxiety, uncomfortable…" Due to a lack of familial support, staff member's cited that "we play the role the family won't." Staff members attributed such lack of support to the family being "afraid of society and their reputation" and are concerned more about such a reputation than the well-being of their own daughter.

The absence of fathers was also a theme amongst the mothers. The mothers indicated attempts to contact the fathers, but in more cases than not, the man had fled upon learning of the woman's pregnancy: "Since he knew about my pregnancy, he has not been in contact… He changed his number and now he's in France" and "Since he knew that I was pregnant, he disappeared. I know nothing of him." Amala staff members also cited the common occurrence of fathers not claiming the child, "The challenge is that they deny. It is very common. Then even with the excuse of DNA… it's difficult to get the DNA then even if they do, it still works against the woman, because if the DNA is positive then the judge will send her to jail [as proof of her having had sexual relations outside of marriage]." In other cases, the mother may not even know who the father is. In terms of contacting family members, staff proclaimed that if they could reconcile with the father, "contacting the family is that much easier," although they similarly expressed the difficulty of contacting the fathers.

Amala offers family reconciliation services in which staff members contact the mother's family and attempt to persuade them to accept her. This service was provided to eight of the nine mothers interviewed, with most of whom stating that this service had a positive effect on their relationships. However, since contacting the family is obligatory at Amala, some women are uncomfortable with this. One mother confessed, "I didn't want them to contact them because my family did not know that I was having a boy."

Amala's approach to contacting the family varies by case and can be a smooth or a more time intensive process. "Some of them forgive the daughter the same day, they'll go hug and kiss her, but for some it takes a long while to accept it." The staff must prepare for the reconciliation and may visit the family up to four times at their home. In reaching out to families, Mawara tries to convince the family that this is something out of their daughter's control and that she's not the only one to have made this mistake. Mawara "argues with the words of religion" to explain how God is forgiving and the family should be forgiving as well and thus, "transmit the message in a good way." In particularly difficult family reconciles, where the mother indicates her family is not accepting at all, Mawara may exercise at tactic to not initially reveal to the family that the woman is pregnant and that this truth is why she is at the centre. Eventually, once the mother is housed and, ideally, has a job, then Mawara slowly reveals the truth that their daughter is pregnant. As one respondent stated "You could imagine if she [Mawara] told them the truth right away…" This method is intended to reduce the amount of shock to the family in learning that their daughter is pregnant outside of marriage.

According to Naila, "There are maybe two or three out of fifteen who are lucky and are accepted by their family. Otherwise, even if the mother is accepted by the mother, the father or brother could kill them." During a visit to Amala, one mother and her 18 day-old baby had to be escorted to the foyer because shame is so strong in her hometown it is dangerous for her to return. Thus, family reconciliation efforts can potentially place women in dangerous situations though, and must be handled with care, on a case-by-case basis. According to interviews with the mothers and staff members, this service is perceived to have a beneficial effect on promoting familial understanding and acceptance.

Health Concerns

Over the years, Amala staff have noticed certain recurring health concerns amongst unwed mothers. A few staff members cited AIDS/STDs as a common health problem amongst the mothers. The staff attributed cases of STDs/AIDs to multiple sexual partners and lack of medical care for screening. Other health conditions cited were skin problems and lung problems, such as asthma, due to living in inhospitable conditions with poor air circulation and ventilation. During observations at the Listening Center, one mother requested asthma medication for her child.

One mother stated "they [Amala] have helped in many ways. When I got sick. When I was giving birth." Mothers come to Aesha if need of medication and Aesha will accompany the mother to a local pharmacy. Tahira, at the foyer, looks over the mother's health in the foyer by monitoring their conditions throughout pregnancy and by transporting them to the hospital during labor and in times of complications. One mother also commented on the benefit of staying in the foyer for her mental health: "First, it's psychological. I was lonely living in a place by myself and talking to only myself. Here, I've been able to talk to others in the house [foyer]."

Tahira, from her experience working in the foyer, mentioned that women also suffer from health problems after giving birth too. Of the four mothers interviewed at the foyer, two of them suffered from post-pregnancy pains. One mother remained in abdominal pain for days after a C-section surgery and experienced painful engorgement in her breasts due to not breastfeeding for days. After giving birth, another mother suffered from a hip complication due to the hospital procedure. Days after being released from the hospital, she continued to report sharp pains in her legs, which made it difficult to walk.

The heath care network in Morocco operates in a pyramid-type formation with local clinics at the bottom, moving to health centers, then to large hospitals. Cases are referred up the pyramid based on need and urgency (Bowen 1985). While public health care in Morocco is free, dissatisfaction with the nation's public health services is not uncommon. Patient complaints consist of long wait times, inefficiency of referrals and scheduling, and corruptness. Rural areas are especially lacking in terms of practitioners (Bowen 1985). While Amala is stocked with donated medications for basic ailments, such as for colds and fever, for other specific sicknesses the staff must go to the pharmacy or refer the women to other organizations to ask for medication. Amala receives some assistance from volunteer doctors who will reduce or clear fees of the visits and medications. If the doctor is not trained in a specific health problem, s/he will write a referral. Doctor's volunteered time and services and donated medications are well received from Amala staff who exclaimed, "Without them, I couldn't even imagine."

Legal Assistance

As previously explained, unwed mothers commonly struggle to register their children in the Family Booklet due to the child's illegitimate status. This was also the case for this study's sample. Five of the nine mothers interviewed reported needing assistance with registering their children into the Family Booklet, three mothers who had recently given birth reported soon needing such assistance. Only one mother did not mention needing legal assistance. Thus, a vital service provided by Amala to unwed mothers is assisting with registration of their children into the Family Booklet.

To assist mothers in this way, Amala's social worker, Aesha, will describe which documents are needed from the mother for the registration process and will accompany the mothers to the Second Municipal Arrondissement of Agadir for registration. However,

registering children's names into the Family Booklet can be a complicated and lengthy process.

Three mothers cited numerous struggles in acquiring the appropriate documentation for

registration: the need for witnesses but no immediate family members willing to assist, a lack of

hospital registration records as a result of giving birth outside of the hospital setting, and the

need to renew their own IDs and other missing documentation. Due to the need for various forms

of documentation and struggles of acquiring these, the registration process is often a lengthy

endeavor. According to Aesha, "these things cannot just be done in a few days. It needs time,

passion, and strength to follow their situation to the end." Despite these challenges, this

registration assistance is a persistent and prevalent need amongst unwed mothers who come to

Amala.

Employment and Education

Figure 2 shows the number of unwed mothers interviewed who were currently employed

and/or pursuing education. Seven of the nine mothers interviewed were either currently

unemployed with three of these women being unemployed for the length of their pregnancy. Of

the remaining two mothers, one was currently working as a housekeeper and the other mother

was working as a cleaner at a hairdressing studio. According to Aesha, the majority of the

women they see throughout the year work as housekeepers and other vulnerable professions such
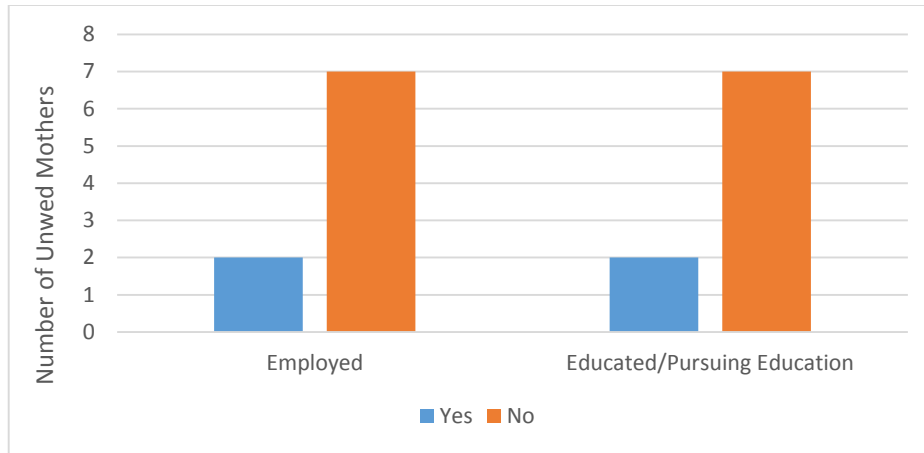
as restaurant work.

Figure 2. Employment and Education Status of Unwed Mothers

Amala staff provide some employment assistance by searching for jobs in hotels, cafes, and work in households. Individual home and business owners will also provide their numbers to be contacted if a mother is interested in housekeeping work. Unwed mother's employment in these professions in this sample echoes the literature which states such vulnerable employment is common amongst mothers seeking services (citation to show which literature you mean). Working as a housekeeper posed challenges for the women. The one mother currently working in housekeeping and two others who had worked as housekeepers in the past explained the difficulties of such work. In general, the position provides a low pay that makes it difficult to support oneself as well as children. One mother employed as a housekeeper noted that she is paid 150 dirhams (approximately US $10.50) a day, and felt this was a decent pay. Another mother's experience demonstrates the vulnerability of housekeeping work as she had quit after three months to find other employment. The third mother discussed the psychological abuse she endured as a housekeeper. Due to her status as an unwed mother, the family perceived her as "dirty" and "diseased." They did not trust her with their belongings and did not allow her to touch items without gloves or use the kitchenware.

According to Aesha, "those are the options for the uneducated" and, in general, Amala assists women who do not have an educational background. Two of the mothers interviewed were either currently pursuing education or had some previous educational background. Tahira stated that providing work and educational opportunities "is not the main role" of Amala. Aesha's comment adds to this by explaining, "At the beginning there were women who were lucky because Amala was providing education for women and we'd help them get diplomas for hotels and restaurants and some worked with their diplomas… but that was a long time ago." Tahira framed this issue in relation to other priorities that must be met: "the babies need food, then education. It's Maslow's Hierarchy of Needs[5]." Thus, Amala no longer has the resources available to meet such ends and thus, generally places emphasis on attending to the basic needs of women rather than more long-term agendas of education and employment.

Housing

Without assistance from Amala, mothers can run a risk of homelessness. As seven of the nine mothers interviewed had no access to a family home, and seven mothers did not currently have a job and little money to pay for rent, this placed them in a precarious living situation. Mothers cited having to sleep on the streets, in mosques, on the floor of a friend's or acquaintance's house. Amala apartment style foyer (women's home) allows mothers to stay from their eighth month of pregnancy to forty days after giving birth. According to a staff member, the main role of the foyer "is a place to stay and have [access to] basic things." The foyer can house up to eight women at maximum capacity. At the time of this research, only four women at a time

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[5] Maslow's Hierarchy of Needs is a psychological model that states physiological needs, such as shelter and food, are the most basic needs to be met prior to ascending towards the apex of self-actualization needs.

were allowed to stay in the foyer. When the foyer is at maximum capacity, or women are not eligible to be admitted, Amala staff attempt to find apartment rentals for the mothers.

The foyer is equipped with a fully operative kitchen and bathroom and has clothing and bedding for the women and babies and is staffed by two women who look after the mothers and their babies. Tahira remarked, "There really needs to be three to four staff members working" and explained it is a lot of work for just two people. One mother complained, "We had to do a lot of hard work. Four days after I gave birth they asked me to wash blankets." Possibly due to the limited capacity of staff, mothers had to take on such responsibilities in the foyer.

A set of rules and regulations must be abided by prior to admittance and during stay at the foyer. Women must be at least in their eighth month of pregnancy and women are taken to receive medical tests from local doctors to check for AIDs/STDs and other contagious diseases. Once she's accepted, "she needs to obey the rules: be respectful, so no fighting, help other mothers, housekeeping, and she has to keep her baby." The mother's daily schedule is set from breakfast until bedtime. According to one mother, "We wake up at 8 am and have breakfast, then do laundry or clean, prepare for lunch, nap, snack time, dinner, then sleep." Furthermore, mothers are required to relinquish their phones to Amala staff and are not allowed to contact anyone outside the foyer or have visitors without staff supervision. These requirements are set as safeguards in an attempt to protect the mothers from anyone outside Amala who may do them harm due to their status as an unwed mother.

It is not uncommon for such shelters to have strict regulations. According to a study by Hartnett and Postmus (2010), women's shelters commonly place regulations on length of stay, require residents' participation in chores, regulate and restrict phone access, and have scheduled wake-up and lights-out times. Although it can be argued that regulations are set in place to

provide a structure for increased organizational control, feminist scholars have also noted how

such regulations can inadvertently work against women by promoting a patriarchal structure

which confines their agency and autonomy (Hartnett and Postmus 2010, Rodriguez 1988).

Through the "perpetuation of common sense practices" (such as meal time and bed time)

imposed on grown women as if they were children, shelters can send a message of the women's

incompetence (Hartnett and Postmus 2010: 300).

Despite such regulations, mothers were generally appreciative that they at least had a safe

place to stay and people to interact with. There of the four mothers interviewed who currently

resided at the foyer reported feeling satisfied with the accommodations. They enjoyed being able

to converse with other women and be able to help one another. For example, the more

experienced mothers would demonstrate how to breastfeed and they would look after each

other's baby. As one mother commented, "there's a place to live instead of the streets. I'm safe

here." Overall, the foyer offered a safe place for the mothers to focus on their caring for their

pregnancy.

Daycare

Mothers commonly reported the need for daycare assistance provided by Amala. Four of

the nine mothers interviewed currently needed their child(ren) to stay at the daycare, one mother

did not, and the remaining four mothers had just given birth at the time of interviews and had not

yet enrolled their child in the daycare, but two remarked that they soon would. During

observations and volunteering at the daycare, there was an average of twenty babies in the

daycare on any given day, ranging from infancy to three years of age.

Mothers stated the need for a daycare while they go to work and because no one in their

family is supportive enough to help watch their child(ren) for them, as exemplified by one

mother's comment: "Amala is taking care of my son in the daycare, because there is no one else to take care of him because no one in my family is 100% supportive." According to a staff member, Nasim, "Just being able to keep their babies here while finding a job is huge."

Naila, a daycare nurse, also explained how the daycare served as a "link for three years" between the centre and the mothers to keep in touch as the babies grow. While this link is seen as a benefit to continue providing for unwed mothers and their babies should a need arise. A couple of other staff members noted the need to add a night nursery for mothers who work at night and extend the length of stay for babies in the daycare from three years to six years so that the "babies grow up in a good environment where everything is provided for them." These findings demonstrate the great need for daycare services and the centrality of such services to Amala's operations.

Challenges in Service Provision

Society's lack of acceptance towards unwed mothers largely restrains abilities to provide for this population. The challenges Amala face can be viewed as falling beneath an umbrella of Moroccan society's denunciation of unwed mothers. The government "has no responsibility for this issue" and Amala staff have even been confronted by authorities for their work. Mawara recounted a time the authorities came to arrest her after she informed a New York Times reporter about unwed mothers and women's rights in Morocco. She notes that she is still being "watched" by the authorities to this day. She and the association has been insulted for "doing things outside of religion." Compared to northern regions of Morocco, where centers for unwed mothers are more supported, Mawara states that for southern regions it is "more difficult because there are more traditional thinkers and so we needed more support from international donors. That's the difference." In this statement, she is referencing the relatively heightened animosity towards

38

unwed mothers and organizations serving them in the southern regions of Morocco in comparison to the North, where more European influence and less radical Islamism promotes more acceptance towards unwed mothers.

Funding

With limited governmental and social support, it is challenging to operate such an association not only due to the stigma and emotional strain, but also limited funding. Amala receives next to no funds from the State and must rely on individual donors and external funds from international partners in Sweden and France. As stated by every staff member interviewed the centre is in a financial crisis. This represents their greatest challenge.

Reliance on international donors and no consistent funding sources places Amala in a state of financial insecurity and vulnerability. There is a lack of assurance that from year to year that services will be supported. According to one staff member, "Since 2011, the association has been going down. We've been dreaming of a lot of things. We don't even have enough money to pay for our taxes and bills." At the time of fieldwork, several staff members also had not received pay for a couple months and were thus volunteering their time. Furthermore, services to mothers have been reduced given the financial situation. The foyer was only at half the usual capacity due to an inability to provide enough resources for any more residents and Amala has, for the most part, quit providing services beyond the basic necessities.

According to Nasim, potential sources of support are sought online, from partnering agencies, foreign agencies, municipalities, and even wealthy Moroccan company owners and managers. Staff generally feel the government should be providing funds. One staff member remarked, "It's a shame that we still need to ask people to give us money and ask for help and why the government should do this. It is a main role of the government to take care of this

category of people." At the time of fieldwork, efforts were being made to contact the King, Mohammed VI, to request more support, although staff commented on the difficulty in reaching him through numerous gatekeepers.

Leadership Sustainability

As the founder of Amala, Mawara's visions and leadership are at the heart of the organization. In Amala's case, there appears to be hierarchical, "leader-centric" relationship, in which Mawara sets the meaning and approach of the work which inspires the rest of the staff to follow in this vision (Shulman and Sullivan 2015). In this way, Mawara's leadership can be seen to possess the traits of what's been termed 'charismatic leadership' (Weber 1968). According to Max Weber charisma is "a certain quality of an individual personality by virtue of which he/she is considered extraordinary and treated as endowed with… specifically exceptional powers or qualities" which compels others to follow (Weber 1968: 242). Although powerful, in this form of leadership, researchers caution the need to "codify" leadership needs into tradition based on the follower's interpretations of the leader's original message; otherwise, it runs the risk of disintegration (Lindholm 2002).

During interviews and observations, three staff members noted Mawara's intention to retire soon. In this event, someone else will need to assume leadership. This tradeoff in leadership is precarious in Amala's case as once before Mawara came out of retirement due to multiple requests from staff for her to return and complaints in terms of the replacement leadership. At that time, Amala staff did not agree with the new direction Mawara's replacement was taking the organization; one that would replicate the model used by Solidarité Féminine in Casablanca. So, Mawara came out of retirement to assume this role.

According to one informant, when Mawara retires, it is likely the candidate who assumed presidency the last time will do so again. This would have obvious implications for the nature of future leadership and organizational directions. If Amala does not take proper precautions to ensure the association's sustainability, the organization runs the risk of inter-organizational conflict. Direct capacity-building efforts need to be taken between Mawara and the remainder of the staff, collectively, to strategize how the association's leadership, vision, and objectives will take place in moving forward.

"Secrets" and Deceit

As previously discussed, mothers commonly did not reveal their pregnancy to family members for fear of rejection and retaliation. This inclination for deceit can extend into their interactions with Amala staff. Staff members commonly complained that the mothers are "afraid to tell the truth at first" and would not reveal the whole truth. Amongst others, examples of topics where mothers often lied or "kept secrets" included: how they got pregnant, details on their contacts with the father or another man, about employment, and how many children were born to which man. Bordat and Kouzzi (2009) cited a reason for unwed mother's hesitation to reveal their whole story and needs is based in their nervousness of being judged and interrogated by the NGO.

Staff members recognize these actions also stem from the shame women feel for their actions. One Amala staff member stated that "When they lie and fake things we understand because in our society sex outside of marriage is forbidden. Even if we know about the problem, despite her excuses, we do not say anything." However, observations during fieldwork revealed that cases of direct confrontation concerning mothers' lies did occur. When one mother explained how she became pregnant by being drugged and raped, the advising staff member

laugh and exclaimed, "That's what all the women say!" In another case, Mawara openly yelled at a woman, "we are working so hard to help you, but you are not helping us" and said that if she [the mother] is lying they will find out. These two cases represent staff member's frustrations with mothers lying as this makes it more difficult for staff to assist mothers.

Experiences with such dishonesty has been noted in other NGOs in the country. Staff members at Solidarité Féminine, a Casablanca based NGO, have also often complained that the women "lied as much as they breathed" (Bargach 2013: 161). This tendency for deceit is likely associated with the shame mothers feel for their actions, societal stigma for unwed-motherhood, and fear of being judged (Bordat and Kouzzi, 2009). To manage this reality of dishonesty, staff must accept the fact that they cannot control what the mothers choose to disclose and just provide answers and solutions based on the information that women provide (Bargach 2013).

As challenging as the mothers' dishonesty can be, staff themselves used lies and deceit as well. For instance, when Mawara initially contacts the mother's family she does not always reveal the pregnancy. Sometimes she waits until subsequent contacts are made and when the woman is more settled (has housing, gave birth, etc.) before she reveals the truth to the family. So although these actions can present challenges in service provision for staff in interactions with mothers, the use of lies and deceit represent coping strategies used, by both the mothers and staff, to protect unwed mothers in an unaccepting context.

Case Studies

The following section details three short case studies of unwed mothers' experiences. These selections are not intended to represent a comprehensive picture of unwed mothers' realities, but rather present themes and challenges the mothers confront in their daily lives and in accessing services, which emerged from interview and observational data. These cases were

selected as they demonstrate common challenges unwed mothers face, as identified by the mothers and Amala staff.

Amina – A Struggle for Legal Existence

Amina first approached Amala to help register her four children as well as herself in the Family Booklet. Born in Agadir, illegitimately to wealthy parents, Amina was not wanted and was given up for adoption when she was just a baby. Since Amina is not registered in the Family Booklet she has been unable to register her own children. For years, Amina has attempted to get herself registered but has struggled with gaining her families' approval to assist in this process. This complicates matters as legitimate parental consent is requested to make her own identity legitimate under the Code. The rest of her four siblings on her mother's side and thirteen siblings on her father's side are all legal, yet none of them wish to assist Amina in this process or with child care. Only until recently has Amina even come into contact with her father after years of tracking him down.

Amina is informally married to the father of her four children. Informal marriages are not recognized by the state and hold no legitimacy, thus presenting another barrier to the Family Booklet registration. Currently, Amina has been working as a housekeeper in an apartment complex. She was not working before but a change in her husband's employment precipitated her need to get a job. She makes 150 dirhams a day or the equivalent of $10.50 US dollars; a rate she considers good money.

While accompanying Amina to the Second Municipal Arrondissement of Agadir where Amala's social worker assists her in the Family Booklet registration, Amina discloses that her husband sometimes beats her. She recounted an incident from eight years ago where he struck

her in the head, which she "still feels to this day." She remarks that having their four children together is what keeps her in the abusive relationship.

It safe to assume that Amina's vulnerable illegal status also does not afford her with the political resources of courtroom proceedings essential to change her circumstances. Her case represents the social, political, and economic challenges of an unwed mother. Born out of wedlock herself, she legally does not exist and possesses no social support from her family aside from her abusive husband. This is where Amala steps in to provide legal support.

Mehnaz – A Struggle to Keep Off the Streets

This case represents an ongoing struggle to acquire housing. On three separate visits, Mehnaz approached Amala wishing to stay in the foyer. Her first place of residence was where she worked as a housekeeper and claimed she was beaten there. Then she moved into another woman's house where she had to sleep on the floor. Wishing to change her circumstances to one more accommodating for pregnancy, she scheduled a meeting with an Aesha, Amala's main social worker. Mehnaz had missed her scheduled meeting the previous week and arrived late to this meeting and claimed that she could not remember the time. Aesha was not pleased.

Mehnaz recounts her past residences and repeatedly presses for a spot in the foyer, while Aesha proclaims there is no space available in the foyer at this time. As previously stated, the foyer's reduced capacity means a spot therein was always in high demand. Furthermore, in her sixth month of pregnancy at the time, Mehnaz did not meet the admittance requirement of being at least in the eighth month of pregnancy.

Their conversation quickly escalates to yelling. The social worker declared to Mehnaz that she should "have more responsibility for yourself" and come to Amala sooner when in need and keep meeting times. Mehnaz's wide-framed sunglasses disguise the discontent inevitably

reflected in her eyes and, in the social worker's mid-speech, stands and walks out the door without a word. The social worker slumps over her desk and shakes her head in frustration, then states how women like that are just so stubborn.

Several weeks later, Mehnaz visits the centre again. She proclaims she has been sleeping at local mosques. Amala's social worker offers to assist Mehnaz locate to an apartment residence where other unwed mothers referred by Amala stay. Mehnaz refuses this offer as in her past experience with this residence the landlord had scolded her for coming back very late at night. Upon her next visit Mehnaz had three more weeks to be admitted to the foyer. She asks if she can go early, but is told she cannot. Aesha proposes another option of calling Mehnaz's mother to ask if she may stay with her. Mehnaz states that she has not been contact with her mother throughout her whole pregnancy and feels that she will not be accepted by her mother.

Closing in on her eighth month of pregnancy, Mehnaz requests once again to be admitted. Mawara responds that the centre must contact her mother in order to move forward, an effort Mehnaz does not desire. Walking out a third time from Amala, again without a place to stay, she professes to my translator and me that she only needs a place to give birth safely and that there should be no need to contact her mother. She asks us if we know the contact information for another similar organization in Marrakech which she can go to instead, one that she could go to and not be "humiliated."

Mehnaz's case demonstrates the precariousness of housing for unwed mothers. As previously detailed, the mothers are commonly not accepted into the family home and struggle to locate their own source of suitable, affordable housing. Furthermore, it exemplifies an objection to Amala's customary proceedings to contact the family. Feminist scholars would argue such restrictions operate as a disservice to women's agency and empowerment by forcing control over

their already limited options (Harnett and Postmus 2010). Family reconciliation is an important objective of Amala, but this case demonstrates that women are not always willing or able to adhere to this objective.

Selina – A Struggle to Provide

Selina first came to Amala's foyer two days after giving birth to her baby boy. She also has a 17 year-old boy from a previous, legal marriage. After her time at the foyer was up, they helped her rent out an apartment room in the city. As Selina's family is not supportive of her pregnancy, she needs help taking care of her baby while she works as a housekeeper.

When Selina first became pregnant, she felt very lost, sad, and angry. Since her family was not accepting of the pregnancy, she had to move out of the family house and find "a place to hide." Her mother, afraid for the baby, assisted Selina to get a hotel room for a time. In a later stage of pregnancy, Selina admitted herself to the hospital under a fake name and told doctors that her family was far away so the hospital would not contact them. She was afraid they would find out her baby did not have a father. Eventually, she told a doctor the truth and he/she helped contact her mother.

Amala helped Selina get her position as a housekeeper, but after only three months of work Selina quit to find other work. As she began to recount her story she started to quietly cry. The woman she worked for was tough on Selina. She was not allowed to enter certain rooms of the house so she wouldn't get into things. The family held the belief that Selina may spread disease onto them, so they forbid her to touch anything without gloves, she was not to touch food at all or use kitchenware to eat or drink from. Under this treatment, Selina felt she was being punished and disrespected. "I'm asking for respect. Society should stop blaming us. We ae blaming ourselves in our own minds."

Selina's relationships with her family have changed for the worse from this experience. In addition to receiving very minimal assistance from the paternal father, she can seldom visit the family house (and when she does she cannot bring her baby boy), and her older son is beginning to reject her. Selina misses her family deeply and wishes she could go back to her family. "Now that it is Ramadan it is a time you should with family…"

All of these misfortunes taken together, Selina feels "that having a baby is like being in another world. It's like I've immigrated to another country." Although her situation is tough, it is apparent Selina feels wholeheartedly sorry towards her newborn baby and feels the need to take responsibility. According to her, she is just in need of the basic things, such as housing, food, and work, and Amala has been very helpful in meeting these needs. Her case demonstrates the extent to which an unwed mother status can derail a life, the pains of familial rejection, and the pervasive shame women are forced to feel for their actions. In cases such as this, Amala has been instrumental in providing women with the resources to meet their basic needs.

Lessons Learned from Women's Experiences at Amala

These case studies put faces to the issues of unwed motherhood in Morocco. While each case represents particular struggles, including legal non-existence, risk of homelessness, and difficulties to providing for children, among others, all cases represent the toll of social stigma on these women and how their fortunes drastically changed upon becoming pregnant outside of marriage. A mother may be simultaneously confronting hunger and food insecurity, homelessness, loneliness, and fear, amongst other adversities. Taken together, it is clear that one individual can concurrently experience a whole host of struggles that are common for unwed mothers.

Findings indicated that mothers experience heightened stigma due to their unwed status.

Generally speaking, mothers indicated a lack of social support and at times, outright rejection, from their families upon learning of the pregnancy. Mothers also faced significant difficulties in acquiring employment, housing, and demonstrated numerous health concerns, such as HIV/AIDS and pregnancy complications. Most jobs mothers work are vulnerable, low-paying positions which place them at risk to job instability and discrimination at work. Commonly without stable, well-paying jobs, coupled with an inability to return to the family home due to exile, mothers also ran the risk of homelessness.

Given the extensive needs of mothers, the most commonly accessed services at Amala included legal assistance, daycare, and family reconciliation. Nearly all mothers interviewed required assistance in registering their children in the Family Booklet given their "illegitimate" status and difficulty navigating the registration process. The daycare is an incredibly instrumental resource to take care of babies for the mothers who are pursing work or education during the day and provides the staff with a link to "check-in" with the mothers on a regular basis. Family reconciliation, unlike other services, is an obligatory service provided by Amala in an attempt to reunite the mothers with their families. While not all mothers were receptive to the requirement to contact their families, many mothers did comment on the helpfulness of this service for promoting increased understanding amongst the family.

Amala faces numerous challenges in providing to unwed mothers. While the staff's motivations to engage in this work stem from a desire to assist mothers from stigma and violence, underlying social conditions limit the capabilities of the centre. Amala experiences an extreme lack of social and economic support from the state and the community, in general. This lack of support has caused a reduction in services in recent years. Furthermore, the stigma mothers experience on a daily basis plays into their interactions with staff through the use of

deceit, which is rooted in cultural notions of shame and its avoidance. Staff often complained about this inclination for deceit as they believed this to be a barrier to providing fully effective services.

This study has demonstrated how violence towards unwed mothers occurs in a collective, persistent, and recurring fashion in Moroccan society. In this way, the mothers and staff at Amala have alluded to the "reality of the women's pain and its attachment to deep social structures" in Morocco (Bargach 2013: 154). The very challenges faced by mothers on a daily basis plays directly into service provision capabilities and interactions between mothers and centre staff. A major concern for organizations serving unwed mothers is the question of future viability and effectiveness in an unsupportive context. In recognition of the social context of service provision to unwed mothers, and challenges therein, the following section outlines some recommendations for future service provision.

IV. FUTURE DIRECTIONS

The following recommendations are suggestions and are presented in consideration of Amala's social and financial context. Furthermore, they attempt to address some of the constraints and challenges presented by mothers and staff in interviews and observed through fieldwork.

Funding Strategies

Considering Amala's immediate financial crisis, acquiring funding should take first priority in service development. A few additional strategies can be used to acquire funding in addition to methods already employed by staff. "Crowdfunding" and fundraising websites, such as GoFundMe, Indiegogo, and YouCaring, are designed to reach a broad and international audience. For these websites, the organizer sets up a page with a "heart-felt" description of their need for support and people from around the world can offer donations of any amount until the organizer reaches their funding goal. This could represent a useful first-step strategy to accrue funding.

Other proven tactics to acquiring funding include developing a "niche" to promote the association and set it apart from other similar associations to funding agencies and the development of "satisfaction reports" from mothers as documentation of success. Funders are more likely to support agencies that have proven success and satisfaction amongst their client base. Rodriguez (1988), found that a thriving Family Crisis Center, based in Hawaii, United

States of America, gradually gained more community support and funding through increasingly positive reports from shelter residents.

The role of external actors into local organizations is common and controversial (Wuerth 2005). Women's organizations receive funding from international actors, such as the World Bank, United States Agency for International Development, the European Development Bank. Some argue that this approach leads to agency dependence and shapes them into "pawns" of western agendas, and not their own; however, other scholars have noted that Moroccan women's organizations were active under their own agendas long before Western agencies took an interest and that this may better represent an alignment of initiatives (Wuerth 2005)

Though strategies to acquire external funds pose promise, this does not address the issue of Amala's dependency on foreign and external funds. Amala would likely need to create its own source of revenue to break this dependency. One option could be a replication of Solidarité Féminine's model in Casablanca, another NGO serving unwed mothers, which employs mothers at their own business conglomerate, SolFem (McTighe 2011). Funds accrued from these businesses go towards supporting the mothers personally and are also reinvested into services. SolFem had its beginnings as a small food producing business with private funds, which hired unwed mothers to work there and thus provide them with funds to support themselves and their children (Bargach 2013). From these modest beginnings, the organization expanded into a full establishment consisting of a restaurant, daycare center, *hammam* and spa and legal and psychological counseling center, and acquired housing for women to pay shared rent to stay (Bargach 2013)

A couple of Amala interviewees disagree with this model though and state that it further "humiliates" the women by setting them apart from the rest of society and marking them as

unwed mothers. They preferred the idea of similar revenue model, but one that would not market

services as provided by unwed mothers, but to all women in need. Current ideas include the

construction of an apartment style building or factory in which revenue from the business would

go towards assisting the women. In this way, it would put less emphasis on the status of the

mothers as "unwed," but still benefit in supporting women and services. To what extent such a

model helps empower unwed mothers versus humiliates remains up for exploration.

Partnership

As apparent at this point, the Moroccan political-economic environment affords limited

funding to women's organizations. As a corollary, women's organizations working towards

similar goals are forced against one another in a field of competition for finite resources (Wies

2011). Critics of women's activist groups have called out women's organizations for this

competition and lack of coordination and how this presents a marked weakness in their ability to

press for political support (Wuerth 2005).

Forming partnerships can serve as a vital strategy to managing resources and advancing

their missions. Groups working towards similar goals for women can create a national federation

of women's organizations, which would allow them to collaborate and coordinate limited

resources and efforts (Wies 2011, Wuerth 2005). For instance, if a mother could benefit from

professional development trainings, Amala could connect the mother to an allied organization to

access this service or others that they do not currently have the capacity to deliver.

Furthermore, a large collective could serve as a collective power, possessing more political clout

than organizations at the individual, in which to advocate for change and support and apply for

more funding (Wies 2011, Wuerth 2005).

In beginning to form contacts, social networks, and relationships, an organization can host an event and invite all interested parties to attend. Missions and objectives can be shared amongst one another in which to locate commonalities and, in collaboration, begin to form future directions. As the old saying goes, "there is power in numbers."

Support Groups

Social support networks are vital for the recovery from forms of violence (Tan et al. 1995). Research on support groups have demonstrated significant improvement in women's connections, social support, and perceptions of self-efficacy (Kamimura, Parekh, and Olson 2013). These groups have also shown to relieve stress and improve overall psychological health (Tan et al. 1995).

As previously demonstrated, unwed mothers have little social support from family and friends and commonly feel lonely and isolated. The foyer already facilitates communication and comradery amongst women just by being in the same vicinity and by sharing similar experiences. Amala could channel this communication into therapeutic support groups for women. Participation should be made optional however, so as not to impose further demands on the mothers and allow them to take initiative in their own healing (Hartnett and Postmus 2010). Bordat and Kouzzi (2009) describe that in their study of four NGOs serving unwed mothers, some women took the initiative amongst themselves to form such support groups and peer education. NGOs can encourage this sharing of experiences to promote an environment of support and mutual assistance (Bordat and Kouzzi 2009).

Support groups would provide a somewhat structured opportunity to discuss sensitive topics in which the mothers relate. If mothers respond positively to these groups, the relationships formed here can extend beyond Amala's walls once mothers leave the foyer. In this

way, support groups could be a potentially therapeutic and inexpensive option for mothers residing at the foyer.

Conclusion

Despite seemingly insurmountable barriers and challenges, Amala represents a Moroccan centre serving unwed mothers with adamant determination to provide for women in an unaccepting context. Although this study was constrained by limited resources and a short time span for fieldwork, it is hoped the insights provided here contribute to an increased understanding of unwed mother's experiences of gender-based violence in broader Moroccan society and how this impacts the capabilities of service provision, the mothers' experiences in accessing services, forms of recourse available to them, and the constrained conditions in which NGOs must operate in providing for this population.

Findings show a general lack of basic resources, economic opportunities, and social support in the family and community at large, and substantial legal barriers for the mothers. Findings also indicated a similar lack of social and economic support for the Amala centre, which has resulted in reduced service capacity and threats to organizational sustainability. This study demonstrates the multifarious and perpetual nature of gender-based violence in Morocco, which has infiltrated every realm of these women's lives. It is hoped that this work not only offers a greater awareness and understanding of the situation and struggles of unwed mothers in Morocco, but also a richer understanding of how gender-based violence takes shape in a local context. Research in this area would benefit from further exploration into comparative analyses of organizational approaches to serving women in need and additional strategies for organizational sustainability.

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APPENDICES

Appendix A: Interview Guides

Interview Guide for Mothers

1) How did you first learn about the Centre being here?

2) How long have you received help from the Centre?

3) Why did you decide to come to the Centre?

4) Did anyone assist you in getting to the Centre?

5) Have you previously sought assistance from the Centre? If so, when?

6) How is the Centre currently helping you and your child?

7) Which of these services have been most helpful? And why?

8) Are you currently in school?

    8.1. Has the Centre helped your ability to pursue education? How so?

    8.2. What challenges are you facing in school?

9) Did you work outside the home prior to entering the Centre? If so, please describe what kind of work you did.

10) Are you currently working?

    11.1 How have services helped your ability to keep and/or find employment?

    11. 2 What challenges are you facing in your work and/or finding work?

11) Are you currently in contact with your family?

    11.1.   IF YES - Do you receive any help from your family in caring for your child?

11.2.　　IF YES -: Has the Centre helped you be in contact with your family?

12) What challenges are you currently facing in caring for your child?

13) Have your relationships with your family members changed since receiving services from the Centre? How so?

14) Have your relationships with your friends changed since receiving services from the Centre? How so?

15) What are your plans for the future? (Childcare; employment..)

15.1.　　Do you feel the Centre has helped you to with these plans? How so?

16) Is there any other way the Centre could be of help to you?

17) Do you have any other comments/thoughts you would like to share?

Interview Guide for the Staff

1) How long have you worked here?

2) Why did you decide to work/volunteer here?

3) Why do women seek services from the Centre? (Cue: such as lack of family support, money, housing, etc.)

4) What are some of the benefits of receiving services from the Centre for women? For the children?

5) How do services impact unwed mother's ability to find and/or keep employment?

6) How do services impact mother's ability to pursue education?

7) How do services impact unwed mother's interpersonal relationships?

8) What health concerns do you notice in the mother? The child?

9) What efforts does the Centre take to mitigate these health concerns?

10) Do you ever attempt to contact the father?

     a. If YES – Why do you attempt to contact the father?

     b. If YES – If you successfully make contact with the father(s), how cooperative are they in working with you?

11) What sources provide support to the Centre? (Cue: The state? Private donors?)

12) In general, do women ever return or need services once they leave?

13) Do you keep track of women and children over time after they stop receiving services?

     a. If YES – How do you do attempt to do this?

14) What do you think are the major strengths of this organization?

15) Which form of assistance/program do you feel is the most helpful to women? To their children?

16) What challenges do you face in providing these services to women and their children? (Financial, logistical, material, etc.) – Staff role dependent

17) To you, how would you define success for your organization in caring for women & their babies?

18) How do you know you have been successful in caring for the needs of women and children?

19) How do you think your services to mothers and their children could be improved? How might these improvements be made?

20) What other programs would you like to see added to the Centre's services? How do you foresee this addition could be accomplished?

21) Do you have any other comments/thoughts you would like to share?

Table 1: Corresponding Research and Interview Questions

Research Questions	Interview Question- Mothers	Interview Question- Staff
What factors lead unwed mothers to seek social service assistance?	• Why did you decide to come to the Centre? • Did anyone assist you in getting to the Centre? • Have you previously sought assistance from the Centre? If so, when? • Are you currently in school? Or have previously received some education? • Did you work outside the home prior to entering the Centre? If so, please describe what kind of work you did. • Are you currently working? • Are you currently in contact with your family? • IF YES - Do you receive any help from your family in caring for your child?	• Why did you decide to work/volunteer here? • Why do women seek services from the Centre? (Cue: such as lack of family support, money, housing, etc.) • What health concerns do you notice in the mother? The child(ren)?
What forms of assistance are provided to unwed mothers by Amala?	• How is the Centre currently helping you and your child? • Which of these services have been the most helpful? And why? • Has the Centre helped your ability to pursue education? How so? • How have services helped your ability to keep and/or find employment?	• What are some of the benefits of receiving services from the Centre for women? For the children? • How do services impact unwed mother's ability to find and/or keep employment? • How do services impact mother's ability to pursue education?

	• Has the Centre helped you be in contact with your family? • Have your relationships with your family members changed since receiving services from the Centre? How so?	• How do services impact unwed mother's relationships with family and friends? • In general, do women ever return or need services once they leave? • Do you keep track of women and children over time after they stop receiving services? If YES – How do you do attempt to do this? • Which form of assistance/program do you feel is the most helpful to women? To their children? • To you, how would you define success for your organization in caring for women & their babies? • How do you know you have been successful in caring for the needs of women and children
What challenges does Amala encounter in service delivery to unwed mothers?	• What challenges are you facing in your work and/or finding work? • What challenges are you currently facing in caring for your child?	• What challenges do you face in providing these services to women and their children? (Cue: Financial, logistical, material, etc.)
What are some avenues for improvement and strategies that can be undertaken for future services?	• What are your plans for the future? • Is there any other way the Centre could be of help to you?	• What do you think are the major strengths of this organization? • How do you think your services to mothers and their children could be improved? How might these improvements be made?

Appendix B: Institutional Review Board Approval

May 18, 2015

Dana Goodlett
Community and Family Health
Tampa, FL 33613

RE: **Exempt Certification**
IRB#: Pro00021364
Title: Investigating the Experiences of Unwed Mothers in a Moroccan Women's Centre

Dear Ms. Goodlett:

On 5/15/2015, the Institutional Review Board (IRB) determined that your research meets criteria for exemption from the federal regulations as outlined by 45CFR46.101(b):

(2) Research involving the use of educational tests (cognitive, diagnostic, aptitude, achievement), survey procedures, interview procedures or observation of public behavior, unless: (i) information obtained is recorded in such a manner that human subjects can be identified, directly or through identifiers linked to the subjects; and (ii) any disclosure of the human subjects' responses outside the research could reasonably place the subjects at risk of criminal or civil liability or be damaging to the subjects' financial standing, employability, or reputation.

Approved Items:

USF IRB Protocol.docx

Consent Form_Morocco.rtf

Consent_form_French

As the principal investigator for this study, it is your responsibility to ensure that this research is conducted as outlined in your application and consistent with the ethical principles outlined in the Belmont Report and with USF IRB policies and procedures.

Please note, as per USF IRB Policy 303, "Once the Exempt determination is made, the application is closed in eIRB. Any proposed or anticipated changes to the study design that was previously declared exempt from IRB review must be submitted to the IRB as a new study prior to initiation of the change."

If alterations are made to the study design that change the review category from Exempt (i.e., adding a focus group, access to identifying information, adding a vulnerable population, or an intervention), these changes require a new application. However, administrative changes, including changes in research personnel, do not warrant an amendment or new application.

Given the determination of exemption, this application is being closed in ARC. This does not limit your ability to conduct your research project. Again, your research may continue as planned; only a change in the study design that would affect the exempt determination requires a new submission to the IRB. We appreciate your dedication to the ethical conduct of human subject research at the University of South Florida and your continued commitment to human research protections. If you have any questions regarding this matter, please call 813-974-5638.

Sincerely,

John Schinka, Ph.D., Chairperson
USF Institutional Review Board