

1 Article

## 2 A study on Spinsterhood in Morocco: Students' Attitudes towards 3 Spinsterhood, FLDM, Fez

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### 10 Abstract:

11 The present study is an attempt to investigate the factors behind spinsterhood, the sort of  
12 perception popular mindset hold on spinsters and the consequences of being a spinster. It  
13 starts with a theoretical part as a background to the topic. Then, it moves to the practical part  
14 where the study depends a field work for testing the constructed hypothesis. The field work is  
15 conducted through distributing quiet a big number of representative questionnaires. Briefly,  
16 the findings proved that the majority of respondents, 51/° believe that the society considers  
17 spinsters as those who had never been proposed to. Moreover, 52/° of respondents believes  
18 that spinsters are old women who had never been married. Both may imply a negative  
19 connotation set by society and culture for unmarried women. As to the factors behind  
20 spinsterhood, the findings proved that the majority of the respondents, 75/° refer  
21 spinsterhood to the fact that women prioritize their education and careers on marriage. For  
22 the consequences of spinsterhood, the major result demonstrates that 53/° of respondents  
23 believe that spinsters' isolation and embarrassment is one major impact of spinsterhood.

24 **Keywords:** unmarried women, modernity and individuality, education and career priorities, social  
25 stigma, social pressure, psychological influences

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### 27 Introduction

28 First of all, it seems of considerable importance to start up with a concise definition for the  
29 term Spinster. Spinster is used to refer to an unmarried woman who is older than what is  
30 perceived as the prime age range during which women should marry. It could also indicate  
31 that a woman was considered unlikely to ever marry (Dictionary, 2016). Spinsterhood has  
32 probably existed as long as human history and all over the world, even in Western developed  
33 countries. For instance, in Western Europe, high incidence of permanent celibacy and high  
34 age at first marriage are the two distinguishing features of Western Europe marriage  
35 pattern(T.Engelen & Kok, 2003).Though a higher percentage of people still enters into  
36 heterosexual formal marriage, marriage rates have continued to decline in most developed  
37 and developing countries, including those known for conservative marriage culture.

38 In this study, it is hypothesized that spinsterhood is more likely to be affected by factors  
39 such as natural, educational and occupational ones. The present study is an attempt to  
40 investigate the factors behind spinsterhood, the sort of perception popular mindset hold on  
41 spinsters and the consequences of being a spinster. This paper attempts to answer main  
42 questions such as:

43 a. What are the implications of Spinsterhood

- 44 b. What are the factors behind spinsterhood?  
45 c. What are the impacts of spinsterhood?

46 I find it of outstanding importance to tackle social issues that are nowadays constantly  
47 spread worldwide such as spinsterhood. Moreover, I'd love to add my contribution to this  
48 subject, especially knowing that there are few researches that cover this phenomenon so far.  
49 Such issues and their effects do reflect real daily life situations and socio- psychological  
50 problems that could take place in spinsters' and single people' lives. I find the work worthy  
51 of considering because it addresses a social issue; not restricted to the location of the field  
52 work or the chosen sample for the study only, but it could concern large masses and  
53 communities all over the world. I relied on a general literature (theoretical background)  
54 which shows that spinsters may undergo similar situations across several countries of the  
55 world, especially the big traditional and underdeveloped part of the world. Moreover, the  
56 paper may contribute in understanding in depth the socio- psychological problems that surge  
57 up in spinsters lives and therefore sympathize with their cases. Thus, my rationale behind this  
58 work flows in this regard and for this purpose.

## 59 **1: Materials and Methods**

### 60 **A. Significant Factors and Spinsterhood as a Stigma**

#### 61 **a. Natural Factors**

62 It may seem, at first glance, irrational or inapplicable to include natural or biological  
63 factors behind spinsterhood as a social phenomenon. However, in traditional societies,  
64 natural factors such as beauty, fitness and woman's attractiveness may play important roles  
65 in determining woman's marriage or spinsterhood. In Morocco, the criterion of beauty is  
66 largely taken in consideration by the spouse and his families (Bihmidine, 2012). The latter  
67 claims that physical beauty is a decisive factor to spinsterhood and he adds that we usually  
68 find among spinsters only the unattractive women (Bihmidine, 2012) In Moroccan families  
69 with girls, Bihmidine(2012) clarifies that whenever a suitor knocks the door to ask for a girl's  
70 hand, he usually keeps an eye on the prettiest of the pretty. That is, suitors can be offered  
71 several girls to choose from, but they usually tend to choose the most beautiful. It is a bitter  
72 reality that girls face when men mercilessly consider beauty as one of the criteria by which  
73 they can marry some women and leave the rest to suffer spinsterhood (Bihmidine, 2012).

74 On the other hand, disabled women are marginalized and distanced from marriage as a  
75 consequence of a natural factor. That is, disability victimizes women and deprives them of  
76 many rights. Mernissi (1992) debates that in traditional societies; a woman is usually  
77 expected to be a good mother inside the marriage relationship. Woman, Mernissi(1992)  
78 demonstrates, is supposed to take care of children, do the housework and please her husband  
79 sexually. Her being and importance are mainly related to her ability of performing these  
80 functions (Mernissi, 1992). Since disabled women are incapable of performing neither of  
81 these roles; they are marginalized, neglected and doomed to spinsterhood. As Anderson &, k.  
82 put it "*Women's identity in western society is often defined around themes such as*  
83 *reproduction, home-making, and body-image .Disability disrupts these themes*» (Kitchin,  
84 2000). Moreover, Anderson &, k.(2000) claim that cultural representations reinforce the

85 stereotypes and lead to more rejection of disabled people. They argue that in modern  
86 western societies, disabled people are commonly portrayed as abnormal, child-like, damaged  
87 goods, freaks of nature, unattractive, dependent, in need of protection, a danger unto  
88 themselves, an object of pity, unproductive and anti-social (Kitchin, 2000)

89 Sexually arguing, cultural representations consider disabled people as asexual. (Giulio,  
90 2003). The latter announces that cultural representations of disabled people as sick and  
91 sexless is supported and sustained by a set of myths. Myths in relation to disability and  
92 sexuality include disabled people being asexual. That is, they lack a biological sex drive and  
93 are unable to take part in sexual activity. And that disabled people, particularly those with  
94 developmental/intellectual disability, lack the requisite social judgment to behave sexually in  
95 a socially responsible manner (Giulio, 2003). When these women are regarded sexually and  
96 socially unable, they are obviously destined to spinsterhood. Thus, we find that the dominant  
97 male ideology and cultural representations of disabled women may be major factor behind  
98 spinsterhood.

#### 99 **b. Educational/ Professional Factors**

100 One of the characteristics of modernization is individualism and families' fractions. A  
101 notable impact of modernization is later marriage for both men and women in nearly every  
102 non western country. One modernization factor responsible for this universal trend of later  
103 marriage is education. For example, a research conducted in Lagos, Negeria, by Ntoimo  
104 &,A.(2008) argues that several spinsters referred to education as personal or perceived  
105 reason for marital delay in Lagos (Abanihe, 2008). Moreover, formal education may stand  
106 behind marriage delay as women prefer to continue their studies and find a job. Education  
107 has been found to affect women's perception of marriage and decisions not to marry in many  
108 societies (Abanihe, 2008). The later stress that the length of time education takes inevitably  
109 postpones marriage for so many women because they would not marry while attending  
110 school. In other words, education refines women's world view and gives them a completely  
111 new value about ideal marriage and marriage partner. In the same interest, Alkohali argues  
112 that it seems like a rule that if a woman wants to complete her education and work to depend  
113 on herself, she will lose her marital life (Alkohali, 2014). This means that, Alkohali adds, the  
114 risk of women's rights in educational and public life and in male society is that women fall  
115 victim to spinsterhood. Moreover, Alkohali (2014) stresses that once families have begun to  
116 realize the importance of education and work, they become more interested to study and be  
117 employed, especially in the cities (Alkohali, 2014)

#### 118 **c. Spinsterhood Implications**

119 What may remain hardly unbearable is not only the problem of the various factors that  
120 may lead to spinsterhood but also and mainly the perception of the community and the weight  
121 of culture on the individual when he or she doesn't meet the social norms. Among this, there  
122 is the expectation that women ought to get married no later than a certain specified age. Thus,  
123 spinsterhood, as a social phenomenon, may carry negative implications in some societies,  
124 especially in conservative societies such as Morocco. Zahara (2003) argues that in many  
125 societies, to remain unmarried beyond a certain age is regarded as a misfortune. Such women  
126 are pitied and blamed for their status and negative stereotypes are associated with their civil

127 status (Zahara, 2003). Highlighting the significance of spinsters in traditional societies, Flah  
128 (2012) noted:

129 *“When women remain unmarried in an advanced age, they are outcast from the*  
130 *mainstream society. The regular use of words like spinster or Bayra are constant*  
131 *reminders that these women were not up to society’s expectations that require*  
132 *women to be physically attractive, compliant with the norms of marriage and most*  
133 *importantly kept under control”* (Flah, 2012)

134 Moreover, a spinster may not only be referred to as a woman who stays unmarried, but words  
135 like spinster in English, Aanissa in Arabic or Bayra in Moroccan colloquial may connote  
136 negative attributes to these women.

137 *“These words do not depict only the status of women who have not*  
138 *experienced marital relations. They bear a whole aura of negative attributes*  
139 *conducive to antagonistic attitudes towards the women referred to”* (Flah,  
140 2012).

141 The implications of spinsterhood differ from society to another according to the  
142 socio-cultural norms. Also, the rate of spinsterhood varies across countries and according to  
143 circumstances. Added to gender discrimination, the Socio-cultural rules prevalent in some  
144 societies may lie as unsupportable pressures on spinsters as well as its effects increase. That  
145 is, the social order in some conservative traditional societies, based on gender discrimination  
146 makes it hard for a woman to avert from marriage. In this regard, Flah (2012) says:

147 *“In most conservative societies, the female character at the risk of rejection and*  
148 *social stigma is required to fulfill a number of expectations. Women represent in*  
149 *patriarchal societies the subject of sexual desire, motherhood and virtue. When*  
150 *women fail to fulfill these anticipated attributes, society retaliates mercilessly”*.  
151 (Flah, 2012)

152 Flah, respectively, points out to the fact that the marital status, based on male  
153 dominance, imprisons woman’s freedom and liberty. Thus, as an escape from the burdens of  
154 marriage, some women decide to stay unmarried. However, these women receive much  
155 cultural insulation and symbolic violence from the surrounding people. They are considered  
156 against the stream and against the supposedly accepted norms. Flah (2012) confesses that  
157 when women remain unmarried in an advanced age, they are rejected from the mercy and  
158 benediction of the society. She reiterates that the regular use of words like spinster or Bayra  
159 is constant reminders that these women were not up to society’s expectations that require  
160 women to be physically attractive, compliant with the norms of marriage and most  
161 importantly kept under control (Flah, 2012). The socio-cultural orders, based on inequality,  
162 father dominance and patriarchal ideologies may create a phobia towards marriage  
163 institution. These above mentioned factors; divided between natural and educational ones,  
164 added to the negative socio-cultural perception on spinsters may yield unbearable impacts on  
165 spinsters.

## 166 **B. Spinsterhood Impacts**

### 167 **a. Socio-Cultural Problems**

168 Generally speaking, whenever there is a phenomenon; it is referred to the causes behind it.  
169 The causes, in turn, yield automatic consequences. There may be some positive

170 consequences of spinsterhood. Yet the challenges may outweigh the benefits. On one hand,  
171 spinsterhood is usually a matter of destiny; it is not always a choice like singleness. On the  
172 other hand, spinsters face many cultural burdens. The first expected impact is the problem of  
173 social identity. Due to the pervasive concept of motherhood, spinsters find difficulties to  
174 construct a positive identity of them. The social and the cultural problems spinsters encounter  
175 in their daily life are multiplying. Behmidine(2012) argues that when women stay unmarried  
176 for so long, they are instantly rejected by the society and even considered as good for  
177 nothing. Still worse, Behmidine stresses, is that in some homes, mothers blame their  
178 daughters for remaining spinsters as though they became so of their own accord. Mothers  
179 insist that their daughters get married the soonest possible for the trivial reason that  
180 spinsterhood has turned out to be an unbearable curse. He puts :

181 *“In the case of sons, it is different. Mothers rarely insist that their sons find a*  
182 *suitable spouse as soon as possible, for no one in society is going to blame*  
183 *them when the sons grow old. What is a real pity is that society sometimes*  
184 *cannot help considering spinsterhood as a sin committed by spinsters”.*  
185 (Bihmidine, 2012)

186 It is clear from the above citation how spinsters suffer under the cultural norms and the  
187 blindly social order which upsurge them in a confusion about themselves, their social identity  
188 and their femininity. On the other hand, social depression and constant anxiety could be  
189 inevitable impacts of spinsterhood. Eid (2007) puts:

190 *“Most spinsters suffer from anxiety, depression and multiple psychosomatic*  
191 *complaints, including headaches, epigastric disturbances, abdominal gases*  
192 *and discomfort. They tend to be suspicious and they make those around them*  
193 *uncomfortable. They are somehow viewed as abnormal because they do not*  
194 *go through motherhood – spinsters are the object of social pity. They feel they*  
195 *are unfulfilled, incomplete”* (Eid, 2007).

196 The above mentioned quote clearly shows the socio-psychological sufferance of spinsters,  
197 especially when stated by a specialist in medicine ( Wafeek Eid). That is, Eid meets usually  
198 spinster cases; therefore, his judgment is based on experience.

#### 199 **a. Psychological Impacts**

200 By most accounts, psychological consequences of spinsterhood are inevitable. The  
201 first psychological effect thought about in this study is loneliness and isolation. Loneliness  
202 is usually the first matter may be faced by spinsters, especially in traditional societies  
203 where spinsters are associated with negative implications. That is because, they are mostly  
204 rejected companionship and excluded as they don't meet the socio-cultural norms. On the  
205 other hand, spinsters may confront difficult times such as when they fall in a certain  
206 illness or when they are met with a certain life hardship that needs collaboration and there  
207 is no one to sympathize or help them. Moreover, inadequate finance and sole  
208 responsibility for domestic maintenance may aggravate the feeling of loneliness for  
209 spinsters and the lonely feeling increases with age (Abanihe, 2008)

210 Another psychological impact may be ensued is the fear of permanent childlessness and  
211 singleness. Ntoimo &,A.(2008) argue that the fear of permanent singleness and childlessness  
212 is found to be a major concern to older never married women. As Ntoimo &,A.(2008) stress,



213 they wish (these women) to marry but there is a looming fear that it may not happen  
 214 (Abanihe, 2008). For example, Ntoimo & A. (2008) add, they are (spinsters) usually troubled  
 215 by the thought of “*who will take care of me in old age! Who will inherit my property! And*  
 216 *who will bury me*”? (Abanihe, 2008). In their conducted research, in Lagos, Nigeria,  
 217 Ntoimo & A. showed the worry of spinsters through interviewing their respondents. For  
 218 example, one of their respondents said: “*But as a woman, I am now feeling it even to my*  
 219 *bone. You know why, if i grow old who will take care of me? When will I start having children*  
 220 *that will take care of me?*” (Female, 46 years old). In the same topic, another respondent  
 221 said: “*No matter what a man or woman possesses, without marriage and children, who will*  
 222 *inherit your money?*” (Female, 36 years old). (Abanihe, 2008), Lagos, Nigeria.

223 Morocco is another traditional society where we can expect similar findings. In  
 224 Morocco also, spinsters may remain possessed by the idea of motherhood and marriage and  
 225 may suffer similar society pressure, marginalization and condemning. That is because, like  
 226 many conservative patriarchal societies, the Moroccan society is based on a social order that  
 227 may create fear and pressure on the soul of spinsters. Choosing a sample population for  
 228 examining the attitudes of FLDM students towards Spinsterhood is a field work attempt for  
 229 further validity and credibility. Even though the sample population is inside the faculty, it  
 230 could be largely representative of the vast Moroccan population mindset on spinsters and  
 231 spinsterhood as their attitudes refer to the general culture of the nation. This will be the  
 232 mission of the second part.

## 233 **Second Part: Field Work, Findings and Analysis**

### 234 **2. Results**

#### 235 **3.1. Sub-section: Questionnaire Results**

##### 236 **3.1.1. Sub-section: The Profiles of Spinsters**

237 *First Figure: (a)*

- 238 • First Item : young woman who has never been married
- 239 • Second Item : women who voluntarily choose to be single
- 240 • Third Item c: women who want to get married but they cant find a husband
- 241 • Fourth Item d: divorced women who don't get married again
- 242 • Fifth Item E: old women who had never married

##### 244 **3.1.2. Sub-section: The Socio-Cultural Mindset on Spinsters**

245 *Second Figure: (b)*

- 246 • First Item: a woman who failed to find a husband
- 247 • Second Item: a woman who voluntarily refused to get married
- 248 • Third Item: an unlucky woman
- 249 • Fourth Item: a woman who has never been proposed to
- 250 • Fifth Item: a woman lacking beauty
- 251 • Sixth Item: a woman lacking education

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### 253 3.1.3. Sub-section: The factors standing behind spinsterhood

254 *Third Figure : (c)*

- 255 • First Item a: families guiding the choices of their daughters and not accepting any man to be their
- 256 daughter's husband
- 257 • Second Item: women getting old and exceeding the age of marriage
- 258 • Third Item : the high living costs
- 259 • Fourth Item : the unsuccessful marriages that frighten Moroccan women
- 260 • Fifth Item : women prioritizing their careers and studies over marriage
- 261 • Sixth Item : women not trying to find a husband
- 262 • Seventh Item : women refusing to get married with divorced men who have children
- 263 • Eighth Item : women refusing to be second/third...wives

### 264 3.2.1 Sub-section : The impacts of spinsterhood

265 *Fourth Figure: (d)*

- 266 • First Item : Moroccan society perceives spinsters as losers and poor girls
- 267 • Second Item: spinsters feel embarrassed within their families and in the society
- 268 • Third Item : having a spinster within a family is considered a shame
- 269 • Fourth Item : spinsters are usually accused of being the reason why they couldn't get married
- 270 • Fifth Item e: women are threatened by spinsterhood in order to pressure them to get married as soon as
- 271 possible
- 272 • Sixth Item : women are not perceived as complete females unless they are married
- 273 • Seventh Item: even though women might have a brilliant career, they are not perceived as successful
- 274 unless they can find a husband.

### 275 3.2. Sub-section: Figures and Tables.

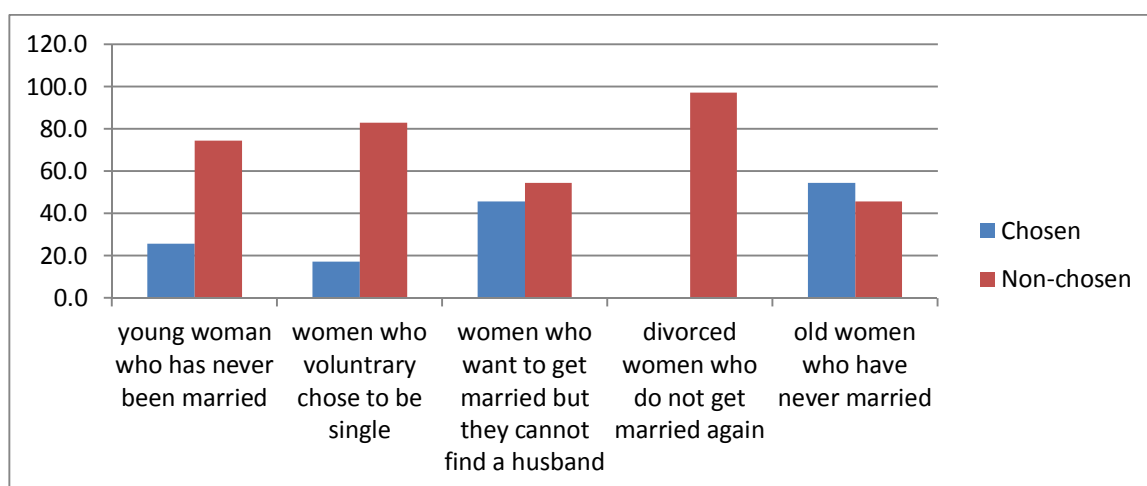
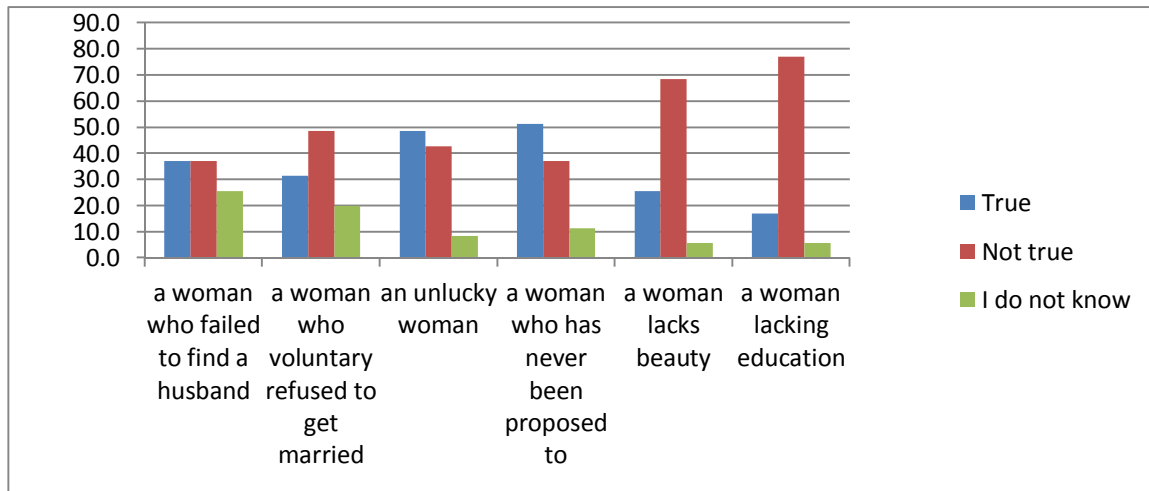


Figure (a): The Profiles of Spinsters

A close analysis of the first figure (figure(a): the profiles of the Spinsters) demonstrates that the majority of respondents, 95%, refuse to identify spinsters as women who had been divorced and not married again. Whereas, the majority, 52%; believe that spinsters are old women who had never been married. That is evident as long as culture and society are concerned. Not far from the previous percentage, 82% of the respondents reject that spinsters are those women who voluntarily chose to be singles. On the contrary, a close majority to the previous, 47% identify spinsters as those women who

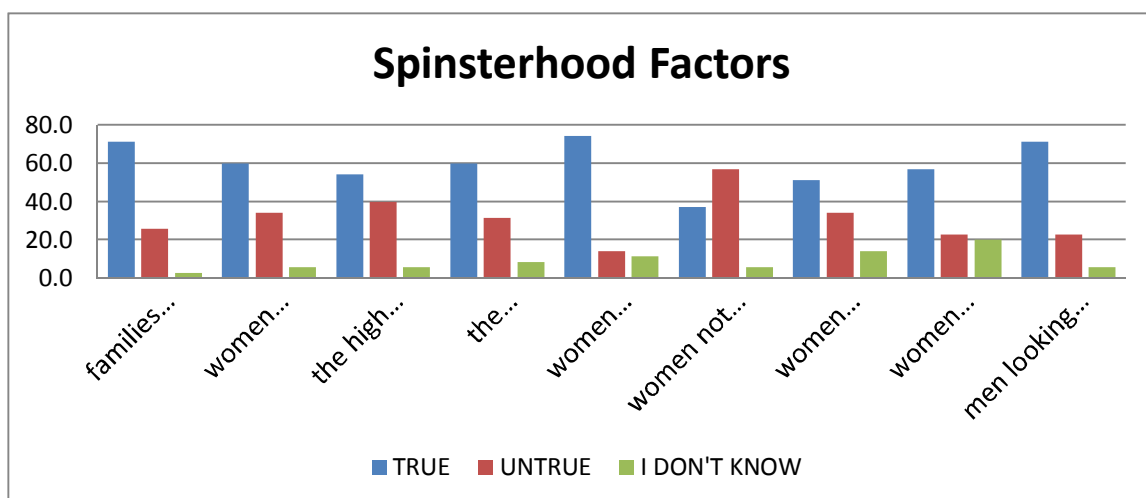
wanted to get married and didn't find a husband. This result and significance go hand in hand with the previous one which proved that spinsters are old women who had never been married. On the other hand, 70% of the respondents refuses to portray young women who had never been married as spinsters. Finally, only 18% thinks that spinsters are those who voluntarily choose to be singles. From this analysis, we are getting closer to the perception of a spinster in the Moroccan socio-cultural mentality. This will be analyzed in the next section.



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277 *Figure (b): The Socio-Cultural Mindset on Spinster*

278 A close analysis of the second figure (Figure (b): the socio-cultural perception on  
 279 spinsters) demonstrates that the majority of the respondents, 75% see the society as not  
 280 referring spinsters to those women who lack education. Whereas, a majority of  
 281 respondents, 51% believe that the society considers spinsters as those who had never  
 282 been proposed to. That is to say, the society and culture have a strong weight on  
 283 individuals and on spinsters. Close to the previous percentage, 68% of the respondents  
 284 views stress that spinsters are not those women who lack beauty. An important  
 285 percentage, 50% claims that spinsters are unlucky women. In a society based on chances,  
 286 lack..., it is evident to expect such claims.

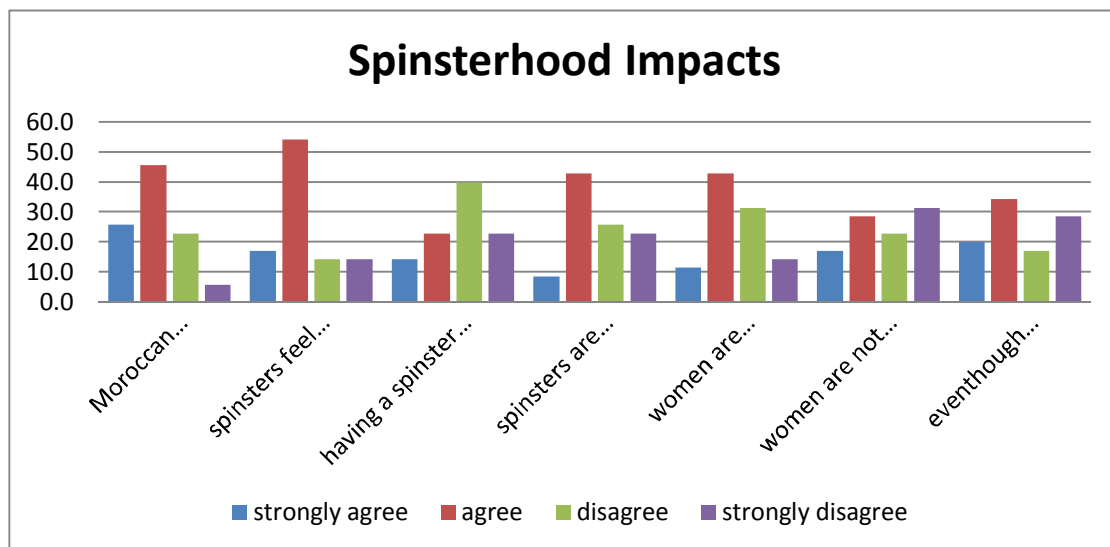


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288 *Figure (c): The factors standing behind spinsterhood*



289 A quick glimpse at the third figure (figure (c) : the factors behind spinsterhood) reveals that  
 290 the majority of the respondents 75% refer spinsterhood to the fact that women prioritize their  
 291 education and careers on marriage. This fact is not shocking as the needs of modern time  
 292 push women to prioritize such choices. This fact is reinforced by a percentage of 70% of the  
 293 respondents who believe that men's looking for working women is a principal factor towards  
 294 women's spinsterhood. On the other hand, an important percentage of the respondents, 70%  
 295 claim that families control of their daughters choices stand a major reason behind fates such  
 296 as spinsters. This has to do with the Moroccan culture and patriarchal dominance experienced  
 297 in Moroccan families. In addition, 60% of the respondents agreed that the fear to fall in  
 298 unsuccessful marriages prevent women from getting married. Once again, the Moroccan  
 299 society bears women much difficulty inside the marriage institution which leads to failure.  
 300 More worthy of mentioning is that 60% of the respondents, as the figure shows, stress that  
 301 once a woman trespasses a certain age, 35, she becomes a spinster. It is evident as the society  
 302 determines certain standards and age for women's marriage. If she trespasses that age, she is  
 303 doomed to spinsterhood. Finally, 55% of the results proved that the high living costs stand a  
 304 reason behind spinsterhood. This is not to be neglected as today's reality demands much  
 305 readiness before one's proposal to marry.



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Figure (d): The impacts of spinsterhood

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A close analysis of the last figure( figure (d) : impacts of spinsterhood) demonstrates that 53% of the students who were handled out the questionnaires believe that spinsters' isolation and embarrassment is one major impact of spinsterhood. In other words, psychological impacts are unavoidable out of such a phenomenon. That is, society's pressure and culture lead to psychological impacts on spinsters as the latter is unaccepted and damned. Not very far from this percentage, 43% of the respondents believe that the society's consideration of spinsters as failures is a negative impact on spinsters. That is to say, this further creates more psychological problems. Moreover, 42% stresses that the threatening of girls by spinsterhood in order for them to get married as soon as possible is another important impact of spinsterhood. All this shows the significance of marriage in Moroccan patriarchal

318 societies. This is further reinforced by 35/° of the respondents who claim that despite the fact  
319 that women could have a brilliant career they can't be considered successful unless they get  
320 married. However, 40/° of the respondent disagrees with the claim that a spinster is  
321 considered a shame within a family and only 20/° who think so. In this regard, the families  
322 who may not blame spinsters are very rare.

### 323 3. Discussion

324 From the fore- indicated questionnaires, findings and witnesses (look at figures and  
325 results), it is crystal clear how spinsters are hold in the popular mindset. That is, the society  
326 set rules and norms to relate to, and when these rules are not met, the community exercises  
327 influence and pressure on those individuals who are different, deviant and abbreviated. In  
328 this regard, spinsters are considered outside these rules; henceforth, society's mercilessness  
329 and pressure on them. Concerning the treasons that may lead to spinsterhood as the findings  
330 show, they could be either external and beyond one's choice such as natural factors (beauty  
331 and attractiveness) or chosen such as education and career priorities .Education is preferred  
332 than getting married, henceforth; the increase of spinsterhood. Thus, education is a long  
333 process that postpones marriage thoughts. Moreover, once it seems over, though education is  
334 always ongoing, a woman thinks about a job, not marriage. Looking for a job after a long  
335 process of education is justified by one's ongoing ambitions to be realized. Women, in this  
336 regard, neglect the marital side in search of a satisfying work and in hope of achieving  
337 economic independence. Yet we can't deny the weight and negative impression on spinsters  
338 even when educated. For instance, the third figure results shows that culture and society  
339 impact certain sects of the community, particularly, women and the spinsters. In this regard,  
340 the social order could be manifested as an oppressive tool against spinsters.

### 341 Conclusions

342 After a process of investigations, theoretically and practically, we reach that spinsterhood  
343 is; by most accounts, a socio-cultural phenomenon. Both, the theoretical and practical part  
344 had been in much agreement about the weight of culture and how large it contributes in  
345 determining and judging the spinsters image. Briefly, the findings proved that the majority of  
346 respondents, 51/° believe that the society considers spinsters as those who had never been  
347 proposed to. Moreover, 52/° of respondents believes that spinsters are old women who had  
348 never been married. Both imply a negative connotation set by society and culture for  
349 unmarried women. As to the factors behind spinsterhood, the findings proved that the  
350 majority of the respondents, 75/° refer spinsterhood to the fact that women prioritize their  
351 education and careers on marriage. For the consequences of spinsterhood, the major result  
352 demonstrates that 53/° of respondents believe that spinsters' isolation and embarrassment is  
353 one major impact of spinsterhood.

354 From the findings, it is evident that spinsters are negatively perceived within the lived  
355 community. Despite the variations in answers provided; a general look and comparison  
356 proved and agreed to the society's pressure and control of the individual; henceforth, an  
357 unbearable pressure on spinsters. In fact, not only are respondents aware of society's burden  
358 on the individual, but they also confess the fact that society should be respected and there  
359 should be conform to society's norms and rules. That is, the general system should be  
360 maintained in esteem. On the other hand, we can't disregard the hard burdens and financial

361 needs that modernity aggravated, which also contribute to the problem of spinsterhood on a  
 362 large scale as the findings prove. That is, the economic financial problems and the high  
 363 costs of living. This also plays a role in leading to spinsterhood. The findings, as above  
 364 indicated, analyzed also the impacts of spinsterhood on the individual. Usually, spinsters fall  
 365 in psychological matters due to the fact of staying unmarried. That is, being a spinster  
 366 engenders a set of pathologies ranging from social depression to isolation from the family  
 367 and feelings of continuous embarrassment. In other words, marginalization, negligence and  
 368 the condemning of spinsters become prevalent.

369 **Funding:** I sincerely declare that this research received no external funding

370 **Conflicts of Interest:** I sincerely declare that there are no conflicts of interests

## 371 **Appendix**

### 372 **3.1. Section: Questionnaire Results**

373 3.1.1. Sub-section: The Profiles of Spinsters

374 3.1.2. Sub-section: The Socio-Cultural Mindset on Spinsters

375

376 3.1.3. Sub-section: The factors standing behind spinsterhood

377

378 3.2.1. Sub section: The impacts of Spinsterhood

#### 379 **Sub-section 3.2.2. Figures and Tables.**

380 *Figure (a): The Profiles of Spinsters*

381 *Figure (b): The Socio-Cultural Mindset on Spinster*

382 *Figure (c): The factors standing behind spinsterhood*

383 *Figure (d): The impacts of spinsterhood*

#### 384 **Questionnaire Format**

385 This questionnaire's aim is to investigate the attitudes towards spinsters, as well as the reasons and  
 386 consequences of spinsterhood in Morocco.

387 The information you provide will be known only to the author of this questionnaire.

388 Thank you very much for your help and for the time you will devote to complete this questionnaire

389

#### 390 **Very important:**

391 1. Please write as legibly as possible.

392 2. Please answer all the questions carefully and with precision.

393 **Please complete either by adding the information needed or by ticking the answer that seems to be**  
 394 **the most suitable for you.**

395 1. What is your sex?

396 1. Male  2. Female

397 2. What is your age?

398 1) 15-20  2) 20-25  3) 25-30  4) 30-above

399 3. What is your marital status?

400

401 1. Single  2. Married  3. Divorced

402 What is your field of study?

403 1. Language department

404 2. Psychology

405 3. Philosophy

406 4. Sociology

407 5. Islamic studies

408 6. Geography and history

409

410 5. According to you; a spinster is a

411 1. Young woman who has never been married

412 2. Women who voluntary choose to be single

413 3. Women who want to get married but they cannot find a husband

414 4. Divorced women who do not get married again

415 5. Old women who have never been married

416 6. What is the appropriate age for a woman to get married?

417

418 1. 18 to 25

419 2. 25 to 30

420 3. 30 to 35

421 4. Over 35

422

423

424 7. At what age a woman is more likely to be considered a spinster?

425

426 1. 18 to 25

427 2. 25 to 30

428 3. 30 to 35

429 4. Over 35

430 8. In your opinion, a spinster is more likely to be perceived as

Statements	True	Not true	Do not know
A woman who failed to find a husband			
A woman who			

voluntarily refused to get married			
An unlucky woman			
A woman who has never been proposed to			
A woman lacking beauty			
A woman lacking education			

431 9 .In your opinion, what are the causes behind spinsterhood?

Statements	True	Not true	Do not know
Families guiding the choices of their daughters and not accepting any man to be their daughter's husband			
Women getting old and exceeding the age of marriage			
The high living costs			
The unsuccessful marriages that frighten Moroccan women			
Women prioritizing their careers and studies over marriage			
Women not trying to find a husband			
Women refusing to get married with divorced men who have children			
Women refusing to be second/third... wives (Polygamy)			
Men looking for working women who can help them with the living costs			

432 11. To what extent do you agree with the following statements ?

Statements	Strongly agree	Agree	Disagree	Strongly disagree
Moroccan society perceives spinsters as losers and poor girls				
Spinsters feel embarrassed within their families and in the society				
Having a spinster within a family is considered a shame				
Spinsters are usually accused of being the reason why they couldn't get married				
Women are threatened by spinsterhood in order to pressure them to get married as soon as possible				
Women are not perceived as complete females unless they are married				
Even though women might have a brilliant career, they are not perceived as successful unless they can find a husband				

433  
 434 12. Please feel free to add any additional information

435 .....  
 436 .....  
 437 .....  
 438 ..... **Thank you for your collaboration**

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