

## **A sociological reading of the divorce phenomenon in Algerian society**

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### ***Abstract :***

*Social change gaining ground in the community has led to the emergence of several problems, including divorce. There are many disadvantages for divorced individuals and their children as well as for society, with these effects ranging from violence in all its forms, social isolation, delinquency, school dropout, and repetition; these effects remain inherent for a long time.*

***Keywords :*** *divorce, Social change, violence, society.*

## Une lecture sociologique du phénomène du divorce dans la société algérienne

### **Résumé:**

*Le changement social gagner dans la communauté a conduit à l'émergence de plusieurs problèmes, y compris le divorce . qu'il y avait de nombreux inconvénients à divorcées et leurs enfants ainsi que la société, ont ces effets jusqu'à la violence sous toutes ses formes, l'isolement social, la délinquance, le décrochage scolaire et la répétition ; ces effets restent inhérents à leur longtemps.*

**Mots- clés :** *le divorce , Le changement social, la violence, la société.*

## Introduction

The issue of divorce is as old as marriage and varies according to time and place, as it was widely observed in primitive societies and spread over the years. Its factors and consequences have varied until it became practiced for the most insignificant reasons, especially in Algerian society, leading to its emergence as a social dilemma that has a serious impact on all areas. Divorce is a phenomenon characterized by the nature of private life, although its impact extends beyond the individual to include society as a whole, as the parties to the relationship affected by divorce inflict material and moral damage for a long period. Divorce also has positive effects that sometimes benefit the divorced couple and their family, but its negative effects are numerous and impact the divorced man, the divorced woman, and their children, extending even to society, which hinders its growth and progress due to the consequences of divorce. Divorce has serious consequences, sometimes leading to delinquency.

Given the importance of the topic of divorce, which is considered one of the most interesting and worthy subjects in light of the economic and social conditions that have affected its increase and which is also regarded as one of the social scourges that have begun to impact the structure of our Algerian society, we have chosen to focus in this study on the social effects of divorce on the individual and Algerian society. That is why we have chosen to focus in this study on the social effects of divorce on the individual and Algerian society.

We are asking the following question here:

What is divorce and what are its repercussions on Algerian society?

### **1. Importance and objectives of choosing this topic:**

- Trying to identify the consequences of divorce.
- The impact of the phenomenon on the psychology of the family members of the divorced individual.
- The high number of divorces can lead to instability in society as a whole.

#### **1.1. Divorce as a Factor of Social Stress:**

Divorce is one of the general phenomena known in ancient and modern societies due to its great importance in modern thought, as it allows for the comparison of societies with each other, which would lead to the education of minds on one hand, and to obtaining a picture that is close to completeness on the subject to be studied on the other hand. Therefore, in this document, we will try to provide a definition of divorce and attribute divorce to social phenomena or social issues, and finally, to explore the theories explaining divorce definition of divorce:

-Divorce is the dissolution and release of a contract, which means abandonment or separation (Nasr slimane and Souad sathi, 2003)

-Divorce means separation and abandonment, that is, the removal of constraints, abandonment, freedom, release, and truth: All these words converge into a single stream, which consists of getting rid of all kinds of ties and restrictions that limit freedom. This material has been widely used in the divorce of a man from his wife due to the lifting of the restrictions that weighed on her in the marital home, and the abandonment and forsaking of her (Nasr slimane and Souad sathi, 2003).

-Divorce is defined as the lifting of the restriction of marriage in time and money by a specific word, whether that word is spoken, written, mentioned, or implied (hssein, 2004).

- It is also defined as the cessation of marital life in terms of time and money, by a word derived from the article of divorce or its meaning, explicitly or implicitly.

- It is defined by Mr. Badran : "This means that divorce lifts the provisions of a valid marriage and prevents it from continuing, so if the marriage is invalid and its provisions are lifted, it is not a divorce, but a dissolution of the contract that has fallen into corruption, because divorce is one of the provisions of a valid marriage and its effect is one of its consequences." (AYNAINE, W date)

"The dissolution of the valid marital bond by the husband through a specific word or what is equivalent to it in terms of status or money." (Shalabi, 1983)

## **1.2. Divorce is a social issue:**

Before approaching divorce from a sociological perspective, we ask the question: Is divorce a social phenomenon or a social problem?

A social phenomenon is defined as what is practiced by individuals in a society as collective behavior, or as what is affected by a group of individuals, suffering from its results and consequences. A social phenomenon is almost a problem if it has a negative dimension or negative consequences that cast a shadow over society in general and the individual in particular, because many social phenomena become problems and points of failure faced by the individual in society, or even society itself. A social phenomenon becomes a social problem if there is an imbalance or imbalance in some of the

social trends or behaviors of society. Therefore, we must be fully aware of these entanglements and complexities that occur between the actions that generally constitute a social phenomenon, because if these actions spread in the form of a widespread negative action, they constitute a social phenomenon.

The difference between a social problem and a social phenomenon is that a social phenomenon has an advanced societal model, and if this phenomenon produces a negative societal judgment, it becomes a social problem rather than a social phenomenon, because a social problem has an undesirable judgment, such as drug use, theft, murder, divorce, violence, and other undesirable social issues.

Divorce has become a social issue in most Arab societies, particularly in Algerian society, and we therefore define it, from a social perspective, as "the separation of the marriage bond through formal arrangements established by society, primarily based on the prevailing religious foundations." Islam considers divorce the most detestable act in the eyes of God because it leads to the disintegration of a family and the problems that arise from it, casting a shadow over both the family and society (hassan, 1981). Therefore, we say that the changes brought about by divorce are stressful because the protective role of the family has collapsed, and each member of the divorced family feels not only changed but also exposed to a more threatening danger, which is the potential impact of divorce on the family.

## **2. Theoretical explanation of the phenomenon of divorce**

### **2.1. Social exchange theory:**

The idea of this theory stems from its economic intellectual root based on the fact that "the best systems are those that bring the most benefits, well-being, and freedom to the

greatest number of people possible (gheith, w date)." Therefore, society offers several alternatives to the same behavior in order to allow the individual to more easily make the appropriate decision, and this decision has consequences, either in the form of social sanctions or in the form of rewards determined by society. Nevertheless, these decisions made by individuals ultimately become part of the social exchange process, which is part of the process of social integration and solidarity. One can therefore say that the individual, in the process of social exchange, engages in certain activities within themselves to obtain recognition, admiration, acceptance, social influence, or other rewards that they seek through the process of social exchange, which in turn explains social contradiction and cohesion from the perspective of mutual advantage, and this mutual advantage can be a tangible benefit or a feeling, recognition, or socio-moral acceptance.

By applying this theory to the phenomenon of divorce in an attempt to explain divorce and its causes at the individual level and its impact on society, the theory explains that the marital relationship cannot be abandoned unless the individual gains an advantage. Thus, when a divorced man or woman seeks separation and pursues it, they offer alternatives for a better life. The couple tends to continue their marital relationship unless valid or strong reasons for separation and divorce arise. Regardless of whether these reasons are economic, psychological, social, physical, or otherwise, they initiate a process of balancing and offering alternatives to this life.

## 2.2. Role theory:

The idea of role theory is that society is a set of interconnected social centers that encompass social roles, performed by individuals who occupy these centers (Kessler, 1988):

- **Ancestral expectations:** These are the ones that involve several social rules that determine the individual's behavior and show them how to act according to these rules and the conditions to which they are subject, and they exist before the individual's existence.
- **The expectations of others:** The expectations that the individual has of the other are the same as the expectations that the other has of the individual, because the moral and social postulate is the same for both in the same society.
- **The general expectations of the community:** They can be real or imaginary expectations that the individual perceives and which act as one of the means of social control by adjusting and monitoring the individual's behavior, who must submit to what society decides and obey what may be a kind of order, more than to their pursuit of personal interest or freedom.

## 3. Consequences of divorce:

The family is an integrated social system, functionally interdependent with the other educational and economic systems of society. It is also the social environment in which the child grows up and receives the principles and social values that guide their behavior in society: "It is the source of morality, the first pillar, and the framework in which a person first learns the lessons of social life." (Atia, w date) However, it is observed today that most families in general face numerous problems due to the development and social changes occurring in societies. The breakdown of the family

is one of the most significant problems affecting all societies, particularly Algerian society, and its implications for the family members themselves.

### **3.1. Implications for the divorced man:**

- Divorce is the dissolution of the marital bond, whether it is requested by a man or a woman, the effect is the same for both of them, because the man will lose many things, perhaps the most important of which are (morsi, 1991).
- Loss of social stability and thus psychological stability.
- The divorced man may become socially isolated, fearing how he will be perceived by society.
- Loss of social balance.
- Fear of the idea of establishing another marriage.
- Loss of confidence in himself and those around him.
- Losing the support that marriage used to provide.
- The financial burdens on the divorced man affect his social relationships, especially for those with low incomes.
- Poor status of the divorced man: Divorce makes a man lose his status and it becomes difficult for him to accomplish some of the tasks that he must do, in addition to that everyone around him will change their perception of him.
- Difficulty trusting women: One of the most negative effects of divorce on a man in the long term is the difficulty of trusting any woman or trusting anyone, while the man at this stage needs to overcome all the negative effects resulting from the divorce, but he does not prefer to deal with another woman so as not

to repeat the same pain again. This leads to not entering into new relationships, as this new relationship may make him get rid of this stage.

- Children ignoring their parents: This stage is more difficult for a man from an emotional point of view in the presence of children, as children's contact and attachment to the father is usually less than their contact and attachment to the mother, so when the separation occurs, the father may find some disregard from his children, which causes him to feel sad and depressed.

### **3.2. The effects of divorce on divorced women:**

Despite the effects of divorce on men, it is women who suffer the most consequences, as divorce itself reduces the social status of divorced individuals, because society's perception of them changes and the divorced woman becomes vulnerable to criticism, notably:

- The divorced woman is the only one to blame because she didn't try to maintain her family's stability.
- The divorced woman is the only guilty one because she didn't try to maintain her family's stability.
- That look of contempt makes her feel isolated from the surrounding community. That look of contempt makes her feel isolated from the surrounding community.
- Loss of confidence and dissatisfaction .Loss of trust and dissatisfaction.
- The divorced woman becomes the sole financial support for the children, which forces her to look for work, in the case of women who do not work.
- Censorship from parents. Censure from the parents.

- She is blamed for the failure of the relationship and is the subject of suspicious looks.
- In most cases, the divorced woman wants to remarry to change her social status after her divorce. In most cases, the divorced woman wants to remarry to change her social status after her divorce.
- The responsibility for the children, which has become her sole responsibility, causes her obsession and fear for the future. The responsibility for the children, which has become her sole responsibility, causes her obsession and fear of the future.

### **3.3. The effects of divorce on children:**

Children are the most affected party by the problem of parental divorce, considering that the family is a source of protection for them. Any disruption in this relationship will inevitably impact its members, especially the children. However, the degree of their impact varies according to several factors, the most important of which are: age group, the child's ability to comprehend and endure the severity of this problem, and the extent to which one of the parents or family members supports the child. Among the negative social impacts of divorce on children, we find that:

- The parents' divorce is a huge shock for the children.
- Their separation from one of their parents is like a social-psychological earthquake. Losing trust in those around them.
- Fear of the social future
- Their lack of familial warmth.
- Difficulty adapting to the external social environment.

- Escaping reality, sometimes through homelessness and delinquency.
- The distance from parents, especially, leads children to adopt various forms of delinquency, school failure, school dropout, violence in its different forms, smoking, addiction

### **3.4. The effects of divorce on society:**

Society is a holistic system, composed of a collection of families considered as sub-systems. Any disruption in these sub-systems inevitably leads to the disintegration and collapse of society. Among the negative effects of divorce on society, we find:

- The psychological and social pressure that divorce places on the divorced man may lead him to constantly think about providing the required financial support, sometimes forcing him to resort to negative methods such as theft or fraud.
- Similarly, a divorced woman's pursuit of finding a source of livelihood may lead her to make mistakes due to a lack of self-confidence, difficulty in finding suitable work, and the psychological pressures resulting from the problem.
- The homelessness of children and their risk of falling into crime and destitution reflects on society itself, which thereby loses the meanings of security, stability, and justice.
- The dissolution of marriage is a means to sow hatred, conflict, and quarrels among the families of the divorced, instead of reconciliation.
- The widespread issue of divorce in stills fear in single men and women from getting married.

## Conclusion:

The effects of divorce are numerous. We have attempted in this study to highlight some important points, as they affect individuals and become ingrained in them over the long term. Therefore, every member of society must understand that if divorce deviates from the concept and purpose that God Almighty has permitted, it will lead to complex social problems and the spread of all kinds of afflictions that hinder the achievement of security, stability, and social adaptation for both the individual and society.

Consequently, specialists and those interested in the field of family should seek solutions that may reduce the severity of the divorce problem, thereby achieving a higher level of adaptation and continuity, and eliminating most of the psychological and social disorders prevalent in our Algerian society.

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