

## Family Structure Transformations and Social Reproduction in Algeria: A Field Study in wilaya of Tébessa

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### **Abstract**

*This study examines the profound effects of social change on the structure and functions of the Algerian family, with a particular focus on families in the city of Tébessa. Amidst rapid global transformations, the family has remained a vital yet vulnerable institution, subject to both internal and external pressures. The research explores how modernization, industrialization, urbanization, and technological developments have reshaped family structures, roles, and social values. Using a field research approach, data was collected through interviews with 150 households selected randomly from five neighborhoods in Tébessa. The findings reveal a significant shift from extended to nuclear family patterns, a reconfiguration of power dynamics with increased participation of women and children in decision-making, and a noticeable evolution in social values, notably regarding women's education and employment. Despite these changes, elements of family solidarity persist, albeit with weakened traditional functions. The study concludes by emphasizing the necessity of further research on family dynamics in both urban and rural settings, the impact of media, and the evolving role of women within the family unit. The results underscore the resilience of the Algerian family in adapting to social transformations while highlighting the need to address emerging challenges through targeted social and cultural policies.*

**Keywords:** Algerian Family, Family Structure, Modernization, Social Change, Social Values.

# **Transformations De La Structure Familiale Et Reproduction Sociale En Algérie : Etude Dans La Wilaya De Tébessa**

## **Résumé**

*Cette étude examine les effets profonds du changement social sur la structure et les fonctions de la famille algérienne, avec un accent particulier sur les familles de la ville de Tébessa. Au milieu des transformations mondiales rapides, la famille demeure une institution vitale mais vulnérable, soumise à des pressions internes et externes. La recherche explore comment la modernisation, l'industrialisation, l'urbanisation et les développements technologiques ont redéfini les structures familiales, les rôles et les valeurs sociales. En utilisant une approche de recherche de terrain, les données ont été recueillies à travers des entretiens avec 150 ménages sélectionnés aléatoirement dans cinq quartiers de Tébessa. Les résultats révèlent un passage significatif des modèles familiaux étendus aux familles nucléaires, une reconfiguration des dynamiques de pouvoir avec une participation accrue des femmes et des enfants dans la prise de décision, ainsi qu'une évolution notable des valeurs sociales, notamment en ce qui concerne l'éducation et l'emploi des femmes. Malgré ces changements, des éléments de solidarité familiale persistent, bien que les fonctions traditionnelles soient affaiblies. L'étude conclut en soulignant la nécessité de poursuivre les recherches sur les dynamiques familiales en milieu urbain et rural, l'impact des médias et l'évolution du rôle des femmes au sein de la cellule familiale. Les résultats mettent en évidence la résilience de la famille algérienne face aux transformations sociales tout en soulignant l'importance de relever les défis émergents par des politiques sociales et culturelles ciblées.*

**Mots-clés :** *Changement Social, Famille Algérienne, Modernisation, Structure Familiale, Valeurs Sociales.*

## Introduction

The family is the cornerstone on which society is built. The rapid transformations taking place in our contemporary world have made the family the focus of intellectual and philosophical debates. The family, like other institutions of society, has been deeply affected by these changes, prompting thinkers to confront the threats posed to it by the changes of modern civilization. Thinkers' opinions varied between a pessimistic view that the contemporary family is threatened with collapse due to its gradual loss of affection and warmth, and an optimistic view that the family has been able to adapt to the changes and has remained steadfast despite the challenges surrounding it.

In the same context, Algerian society underwent profound economic, social and political transformations, most notably industrialization, modernization and urbanization, as well as the implementation of development policies that included the fields of education, agriculture, industry and housing. These policies were accompanied by major shifts in urbanization, geographical mobility, social mobility, and the expansion of employment opportunities in the public and private sectors, which had a major impact on the pattern, structure, and functions of the Algerian family. Opening up to the world and being influenced by new organizational models and cultural values also contributed to accelerating this change. The contemporary Algerian family is the basic social unit that performs pivotal functions in the societal structure, as it performs the biological role by contributing to the supply of human elements to society, as well as the educational and nurturing role by transmitting cultural heritage to children, including language, customs, family values

and religious teachings, as well as providing them with the behavioral and social skills needed to interact with others throughout the various stages of development from childhood to adulthood. Through these roles, the family contributes to shaping the individual and social behavior of its children.

However, social change, as a year of life, has not exempted the Algerian family from its effects, and it has been at the forefront of these transformations. The family, which has long been a bastion of values and traditions, sometimes finds itself confronted with currents of change that may not serve its unity or interests, and it adopts or rejects this change based on the extent to which it is compatible with its structure and functions. These transformations have resulted in different manifestations, on the one hand contributing to the development of some family functions, and on the other hand leading to the decline or weakening of others.

Based on the above, we will try through this contribution to shed light on the topic of social change and its accompanying social and economic effects on the structure and functions of the Algerian family by answering the following questions:

- Q1 : To what extent has the change of the Algerian family - Tibsa - been linked to the factors of modernization and social change that occurred in society?
- Q2 : What are the effects and implications of social change on the mechanisms of family interaction within the Algerian family - Tibsa -?
- Q3 : Has social change affected the values and social norms of the Algerian family - Tibsa?

## 1. Highlights :

This contribution seeks to:

- Monitoring the change in the structure and functions of the Algerian family and its internal relations.
- Analyze the changes that the Algerian family has undergone as a result of modernization, industrialization, urbanization and the technological revolution and its impact on social values and norms.
- Explain the nature of socialization and the nature of authority in the family and their role in activating the mechanisms of social interaction within the family.

## 2. Concepts Of The Study

### 2.1 Definition Of The Family:

Scholars face great difficulties in defining the human family, since it confuses general biological elements common to all human beings, including the regulation of sexual activity, reproduction and preservation of the human species, and other social and cultural elements in which they differ across space and time, namely the marriage system, the form of social organization of the family, the nature of the relationships between the various personalities that form social roles within it, and what personal functions the family performs for its members and the social functions it exercises as a social institution. Kingsley Davis defined the family as "a group of individuals linked by blood and social ties."

As for Burgess and Locke, they defined it as a group of people linked by ties of marriage, blood, and adoption, living one life and interacting with each other within the roles of husband and wife, mother, brother and sister, and forming one common culture.

Murdoch defines the family as "a social group characterized by a common residence, economic cooperation and reproductive function, and at least two of its members have a sexual relationship recognized by society, and the family consists of at least an adult male and an adult female. At least an adult male and an adult female, and a child, whether from their offspring or through adoption.

In light of these definitions provided by sociologists and anthropologists of the family, it can be said that it is difficult for the social researcher to establish a definition of the family that everyone agrees on, as each definition focuses on some aspects that seem more important than others in the emergence and continuation of the family, if anthropology focuses on the kinship unit, and demography focuses on participation in housing and economic independence, sociology focuses on forms of interaction and the continuation of the

## **2.2 Types of families:**

The nuclear family consists of spouses and their children and is characterized by its independence in terms of housing and finances, making it the most common type of family in our society today. In contrast, the extended family includes spouses, children, sons, daughters-in-law, grandchildren, and grandparents; it encompasses multiple generations living together under one roof. Members of the extended family typically share daily responsibilities and are not financially independent, maintaining strong interdependent relationships. Despite the persistence of the extended family model, the nuclear family has become increasingly preferred, especially among those about to get married. This preference is largely due to the greater independence it offers, allowing couples more freedom to shape their household dynamics

and lifestyles without being bound by traditional familial structures.

### **2.3 Family functions:**

Despite the different image of the family from one society to another, and despite the changes that affected the family system in various social activities, it remained recognized in ancient and contemporary societies, and there is no doubt that this is due to the important and basic functions that it performs, which are of universal prevalence, and these functions are:

- **Sexual function:** The family provides an appropriate framework for individuals to satisfy their sexual needs and desires, but the need for sexual satisfaction is not considered a sufficient factor for the establishment of the family and the continuation of marital relations in all societies, and there are many cultures and societies that allow their members to establish sexual relations before or outside marriage.
- **Reproductive function:** The family is the basic cell responsible for providing society with new members, or compensating for individuals who have died or emigrated, and thus it works on the continuity of life from generation to generation, and works to vaccinate the labor force with new energies.
- **Socialization function:** This function has cultural, social, psychological and educational dimensions, as the child within the family learns the values, symbols, traditions, beliefs and skills of his community, and it is in it that his personality traits are formed, because it monopolizes the influence on his upbringing in early childhood.

The family is still the mainstay of reproduction and socialization, although some other institutions of society, such as nurseries and care homes, can fulfill other family responsibilities. "It has been clearly shown that children who are placed in special institutions after birth suffer from many problems and diseases, despite being surrounded by new physical care, as there are very bad effects on children who are separated from their mothers after birth, such as mental retardation, failure to learn to speak, dullness, loss of sensitivity, regression and sometimes death.

- Economic function : The division of labor between men and women on the one hand, and between adults and children on the other, is one of the features of economic solidarity within the family in most societies. While men are usually engaged in work that requires great effort and muscular strength outside the home, women are entrusted with household chores and child-rearing, and adult children may be assigned some work related to the care of their younger counterparts.

### **3. Sociological Approaches to the Study of the Family**

#### **4.1 The study of the family as a system:**

It is one of the earliest approaches to emerge, and its interest revolves around the origin and development of the family system and making comparisons across space and time. What distinguishes this approach is its interest in descriptive comparative study with the aim of reaching universal generalizations about the family with regard to its functions, with more attention to the ancient functions that the family used to perform. This approach views the family

as an open and changing pattern and has overlooked the impact of the family on other social systems.

4.2 . Interactionist approach: It describes the family as a unit of interacting personalities and explains family phenomena in the light of internal processes of role performance, center relationships, communication issues, and decision-making. This approach is mainly concerned with internal family matters, as it focuses on mate selection, marital compatibility, and parental relationships with children.

#### **4.2. Attitudinal Approach:**

Despite the global consensus that the family is the basic pillar of society, the rapid transformations witnessed by the contemporary world have made it the subject of deep intellectual and philosophical debate. The family, like other institutions of society, has been affected by the changes of the times, prompting thinkers to discuss the threats posed by modern civilization to its structure, between those who believe that the family is on the brink of collapse due to its gradual loss of passion and warmth, and those who believe that it is able to adapt and withstand the challenges. In Algeria, society has witnessed major economic, social and political transformations, most notably industrialization, urbanization, and the implementation of development policies that included education, agriculture, industry and housing, accompanied by geographical and social mobility and the expansion of job opportunities, which deeply affected the pattern, structure and functions of the family. Opening up to the world and being influenced by foreign organizational and value models also contributed to accelerating this change. The Algerian family, as the first social cell, continues to play vital roles that include biological, educational, and

cultural contributions to the development of individuals, transmitting language, customs, traditions, religious and behavioral values to children. However, social change, as an immutable law, did not overlook the family, which was the first to be affected by it and the first to respond to it when it threatened its cohesion. These transformations have resulted in changes in the nature of family relationships and the roles of individuals, which is reflected in the overall social fabric. Although change often comes from outside the family, it can sometimes originate from within it, leading to shifts in its structure and functions. With this in mind, this study seeks to review the most prominent manifestations of social change and the resulting economic and social effects on the Algerian family, both in terms of structure and function.

#### **4.3.Social Change:**

Social change is defined as changes in social organization, both in its structure and in the functions it performs. This change falls within the broader framework of cultural change, which encompasses all changes that affect various aspects of culture, including the arts, sciences, and technology, as well as changes in the rules of social organization itself. Social system change refers to shifts in the forms and contents of social organization and roles, such as the shift from polygamy to monogamy, or shifts in the positions of individuals as they assume new roles within the social system.

Change is generally defined as the difference between a new state and an old one, or the change of something from what it was during a specific period of time. When the social dimension is added to the concept, social change becomes the shifts or changes that occur within society and affect its

various aspects. In other words, it is any transformation that occurs in the social structure during a certain period of time.

Social change is characterized by the fact that it is a general phenomenon that affects the lifestyles and ideas of individuals, and affects the social structure, affecting the structure of the system, whether fully or partially, as it is reflected in social institutions such as the family and the economic and political systems. Social change is also time-bound, beginning in one period and ending in another, which allows comparing the previous state with the current state to monitor the magnitude of the transformation, and these changes can only be realized by returning to a point of reference in the past. In addition, social change is characterized by permanence and continuity, which allows its dimensions to be clearly measured, unlike rapid and transient changes that are difficult to track. Based on the above, social change can be considered a continuous shift in the social structure that affects the lives of large segments of society, leaving a clear and lasting impact on their lifestyles. Gerth and Mills addressed the concept of social change by emphasizing that it is a shift in the social roles of individuals and the social systems and rules of control contained in the social structure over a certain period of time.

## **5. Methodological Procedures of the Study**

The current study was conducted in the state of Tebessa, in the year 2018 AD, and this city was chosen for the study because of its different composition, which includes all the social segments intended for research, by which we mean Algerian families that have been affected by social change in all aspects, and given the nature of our topic, which seeks to monitor the change in the structure and function of the Al-

gerian family due to modernization, industrialization, urbanization and the technological revolution, and its impact on values and norms. The nature of socialization and the nature of authority in the family and their role in activating the mechanisms of social interaction within the family. We relied on the field research method as it enables us to describe the impact of an independent variable on a dependent variable in order to collect as much information and facts as possible on the subject of social change and its accompanying social and economic effects on the structure and functions of the Algerian family. As for the study sample, it was a random sample of 150 households selected from five neighborhoods. As for the field data collection tool, we relied on the interview form, where we conducted an exploratory study in which we distributed 35 forms for the purpose of demonstrating the validity of the dimensions of the study and obtaining more accurate data, and after completing the distribution process, the forms were retrieved This exploratory study enabled us to rearrange some questions, and reformulate some other questions that we found ambiguous for families, and therefore the final interview form in its new form included 21 questions divided into three axes, each axis related to one of the dimensions of the study " The first axis : Related to changes in family structure, The second axis : We dealt with the changes in the relationship of power and decision-making within the family ; The third axis: The impact of change on social values and norms .

## **6. Field study**

### **6.1 Changes in the Family Structure :**

The Algerian family - Tébessa - has lived in the past few decades and is still living important changes in the characteristics of its social structure due to economic changes and

cultural and technological communications that all Arab societies experience, and the most important of these changes that have occurred in the family structure are:

- Change in its size and pattern of construction,
- Change in the social characteristics of its members ,
- Change in the social roles and decision-making authority of these members at the family level and at the level of society .

**Table 1. Changes In Family Structure**

<b>Family Type</b>	<b>Frequency</b>	<b>Ratio</b>
<b>Extended Family</b>	40	26.66%
<b>Nuclear Family</b>	110	73.33%
<b>Total</b>	150	100%

**By ,Authors , 2024**

The table01 shows us that the size of the Algerian family - Tbessa - has shrunk steadily, as most of the families we interviewed were simple (nuclear) families consisting only of parents and children (73%). This confirms that the family pattern has changed and no longer lives within the family home more than one generation, as was the case before in the case of the complex pattern, and although the transition to the simple family pattern is a manifestation of urbanization, a large percentage of the families 75% of the respondents admit that this family pattern does not mean the final abandonment of kinship units or individuality and independence, there is a large degree of exchange of visits based on They also do not deny that this pattern has major disadvantages, the most important of which is the loss of the family's loss of some of the socialization roles in which grand-

parents used to play a major role by achieving communication with their cultural heritage, as well as taking care of the family or the child in the absence of one of the parents for any reason, especially the psychological and moral role.

## **6.2 Changes in Power Relations and Decision-Making Within the Family:**

The forms of daily communication between family members are the best evidence of the nature of power and the social relations existing within it, when analyzing the system of power in the contemporary Algerian family reveals to us that although men retain a deadly position within the family, whether in rural or urban areas, factors have entered this power that led to a change in the system of patriarchal power within the Algerian family, such as the participation of the wife and children in the process of making decisions related to family affairs, and there are some indications that such participation, especially in cities, is related to the level of education of the husband, if the higher his education level, the higher his degree of democracy or tolerance, which is reflected in Change in some of the values and controls that govern their behavior, choices and social actions ..... etc. This is indeed what was confirmed by the field study, through Table No. 01 related to the changes that have occurred in Algerian families.

**Table 2. Regarding the Factors that Change the Power System Within the Family**

<b>Factors changing power within the family</b>	<b>Frequency</b>	<b>Ratio</b>
<b>Changing the type of family</b>	35	23.33
<b>Women going out to work</b>	49	32.66
<b>Influenced by the Western family</b>	16	10.66
<b>Loss of some of the family's functions</b>	50	33.33
<b>Total</b>	150	100

**By ,Authors , 2024**

It is clear from the table shown above that most of the sample members attribute the factors of change in authority and decision-making within the family to the family’s loss of some of its functions, with a percentage of 33.33%. They attributed the reason to the fact that modern institutions have removed many of its functions from the family, so that the school has removed the function of socialization, and the function of security. Social protection has become the responsibility of the police, army, social security, and social care homes. The economic function has become the responsibility of huge factories and contracting companies that carry out the production process and provide services, while 32.66% of the total sample attributed the change in the system of authority and decision-making within the family to women going out to work, as education enabled women to acquire the skills and experiences necessary to enter the world of work and enjoy an independent job income. This access allowed her to participate in family expenses and support her chances in decision-making within them. While the percentage of 23.33 attributed the reason for the change in authority

to the change in the type of family from extended to nuclear, as they stressed that limiting the family to the husband, wife, and children is a violation of one of the important rules on which the family depends in its formation, by which we mean the rule of living with the husband's family, which means a set of duties that must The wife performs it Therefore, the spouses' residence under a roof independent of the family's residence constituted a factor in weakening authority and influence within the family.As for 10.66% of the respondents, they attribute the reason to being influenced by the Western family through means of propaganda and media that present a family model in which it is keen to highlight the nature of the freedoms enjoyed by women and children., Some local women's movements are working to put pressure and demand more equal rights and freedoms for women, following the Western model and based on human rights and women's rights

**Table No.3, Changes In Values**

	<b>Frequency</b>	<b>Ratio</b>
Girls' Education	<b>150</b>	<b>100</b>
Women going out to work	<b>133</b>	<b>88.66</b>
Lack of family solidarity	<b>90</b>	<b>60</b>
Absence of exchange of aid	<b>128</b>	<b>85.33</b>

**By ,Authors , 2024**

It is clear from Table No.3 regarding the changes that have occurred in values in Algerian society as a result of modernization and industrialization that the most important values that have changed are the value of sanctity, which is evident in society's attitude towards girls' education and women's going out to work in mixed places, in addition to the values of family solidarity and mutual Aid, Regarding

the first value, the study showed that 100 percent of the total sample members believe that girls should pursue higher studies in order to be able to obtain work in the future, while 88.66 percent support women going out to work, while 85.33 percent confirm the absence of the exchange of aid, especially in the urban area.(The city) They attributed this to an inverse ratio in income and request for assistance While we find that the percentage of 60 is due to the lack of family solidarity due to the desire for independence and to live in a different way and away from one's family.

## **7. The Results Of Study :**

The field study concluded that social changes have actually affected the structure and function of the Algerian family – Tebessa - its repercussions on the system of social relations of authority and taking flight and on social values and customs,

- With regard to the family structure, it has become certain that the Algerian family is moving towards the karyotype, although this does not negate the continuation of the extended pattern because it has not abolished the role of adults in the family, as they are referred to in essential matters.
- The participation of women and children in the decision-making process, especially with regard to marriage and profession, with a change in women's roles within the home.
- Women go out to work and bear the burden of the economic job.
- The role of the father and mother in the modern family has changed to become directly responsible for raising and supporting children, not the family.

- Changing the traditional view of girls and increasing their education rate.
- Family solidarity continues despite its scarcity.

## **8. Recommendations**

- Conducting many family studies in urban and rural communities that are currently facing many social and cultural changes
- Conduct more studies in rural communities on the wrong social values and customs that exist in the countryside.
- Conducting studies on the family and kinship relations in rural and urban communities and the changes that have occurred in them.
- Studying the impact of the media on the family and child upbringing.
- Studying customs and traditions and the changes that have occurred in them.
- Studying the role and status of women inside and outside the family.
- Study of family problems

## **Conclusion**

This study has demonstrated that the Algerian family, particularly in the Wilaya of Tébessa, has undergone profound transformations under the influence of modernization, industrialization, and globalization. The shift from extended to nuclear family structures, the redefinition of gender roles, especially the increased participation of women and children in decision-making processes, and the evolution of social values such as girls' education and women's employment all reflect the broader currents of social change

impacting Algerian society. Despite these significant changes, elements of traditional family solidarity persist, albeit weakened by the erosion of some historical functions once essential to the extended family model. The study's findings highlight a complex dynamic where the Algerian family shows both resilience and adaptability in the face of shifting socio-economic and cultural landscapes.

These transformations underscore the urgent need for continued sociological investigation into family dynamics, particularly in contexts where traditional structures are being challenged by modern imperatives. Future research should focus on the long-term implications of these shifts, including the role of media, evolving gender roles, and the changing nature of kinship and solidarity in both urban and rural areas. Addressing these challenges requires informed social and cultural policies to ensure that the family, as a foundational institution of society, continues to fulfill its vital roles in socialization, support, and cohesion in a rapidly changing world.

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