

# **DIVORCE AND PSYCHO - SOCIAL EFFECTS ON ADOLESCENTS IN ALBANIA**

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## **Abstract**

One of the biggest problems that societies are facing nowadays is divorce. Divorce can be considered a social wound, because it causes a huge emotional shock on adults and also to the children. In most of related cases divorce is caused by social problems like: unhappy marriages, sexual violence, psychological violence, crime etc. Divorce also acquires the status of being a social problem because of the social problems it is related to. Concern remains that of children who come from divorced families who compared to other children, are more stressed. Their psychological traumatization goes in proportion with the degree of parental conflict during the process of divorce. In this study I have chosen to work with the teenagers manage and adapt to the process of divorce of their parents. Also I have studied the effects that leaves the process of divorce on adolescents and how teenagers cope with the difficulties of this process. However the thematic of the analysis will focus on how a number of factors affect the adaptation of adolescents with the divorce process. Firstly it is very important how adolescents perceive divorce. Secondly it is also very important the connection that they keep with their parents. Thirdly are economic difficulties that accompany divorce and fourthly remarriage of parents.

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**Keywords:** Divorce, teenage, social problems, parents, marriages

## **Entry**

Divorce is now a prevalent phenomenon that has attracted the attention of various researchers, psychologists and social workers (Picard and Blain, 1994). Studies have shown that 50% of first marriages and 60% of second marriages end in divorce (Cohen, 2002). As a result millions of children and adolescents experience divorce of their parents and live with a single parent. Surveys and various studies have shown the presence of a number of factors, including increased economic dependence of women,

increased waiting fulfilling personal marriage and the acceptance of divorce as a normal factor of society (Amato & De Boer, 2001). The increased number of divorces, expansion of statistical broken marriages and families, today in the conditions of modern society, is considered as social phenomenon with universal proportions. Facing with this phenomenon, in these extended dimensions, sociologists have concluded that at the present time the institution of marriage is unsustainable. More and more holy marriages and their endurance are being reduced. Nowadays more and more people prefer what sociologists call "Suez marriage" or marriage with a contract. Nowadays the voluntary "Yes", which united couples to eternity, does not mean "Forever". Parallel relations, outside marriage relations, creation of erotic connections with other partners apparently are one of the main causes which is braking a significant amount of marriages that then suffer divorce. Physical and spiritual betrayal of partners that apply open marriage is like a Hiroshima for marriages. Our society also seems to abandon the taboo, the unique concept of eternal marriage. In the analysis of a quantity divorce made recently by the courts in our country, it appears a growth of the number of divorces performed in the civic culture, without trauma and physical violence. Divorce is a traumatic experience that in Balkan region is linked to deep and different emotions. Often there is a prior violence, especially when it comes to stay for women as traitors that in our mentality is considered more severe than the male traitor. This phenomenon is complex and clear psycho-analytical nature, which Freud analyzed. Dissolution of marriage is the most serious crisis that is affecting sentimental foundation of stable marriages.

### **What is divorce**

Divorce is a legal problem as well as social and mainly caused, when between the two partners has been broke the feeling, the intimacy, the communication and no doubt that the relationship no longer functions, including general stress all members. Divorce is an extremely stressful situation for all members of families who experience it and is presented as a major change in the life of the individual, who requires a considerable time to recover and adapt to it. In hundreds of files that are located in the offices of the courts we can fang a wide range of causes, starting with the *"inconsistency of character"* to finish to *"non-fulfillment of sexual pleasure"*. But based on the data is revealed that the main causes of divorce are *economic ones, violence perpetrated by a husband / wife and jealousy*. Poverty and unemployment are the main elements that lead a couple to divorce. Harsh conditions in which they live obliges one of the spouses, who is unhappy by that lifestyle, to go to the court to request a divorce. Another factor is the violence that is perpetrated mainly by

spouses. "Looking to divorce from my husband, because he beats me", - said in one of the claims filed in court. More and more such cases are being registered in the country's courts. But there were also spouses, which, fearing the opinion of others, continue to endure violence against themselves, making no move to stop it. Regarding to this reason, there is a certain category, which is not asking the court to divorce as a result of violence, but require to be protected by the police, forcing their husbands, who for a time stay away from it and for this fact, only the Tirana Court has examined 213 requests for "issuance of protection orders", where 90% are to women who have denounced the police violence perpetrated by husbands. Another major factor that leads couples to divorce is jealousy. Mainly this is more often seen to be filed in court by young couples who have married for only a few years. The division of property, child custody and pension are problems that come after the request for divorce. Most of the proceedings drag on for long, because couples do not agree with each other for custody of the children, which is seen as "trophy" that proclaims the conqueror in this process. In most cases, are mothers who receive the custody of the children and father is obliged to pay a monthly fixed fee, which is used for raising children. There are cases where both parents do not agree to the custody of kids and in regard, the court is obliged to call children themselves to decide.

### **The effect that divorce of parents causes to teens**

Divorce can be a form of trauma (loss of control, unusual behavior and behavior changing in a relatively long time) with specific implications for children and adolescents (Teachman, 2002). It was argued that divorce is a period full of stress for most teenagers because of various factors such as the new style of life, the formation of a new family as well as various emotional, social or financial aspect factors. In this context a number of studies have shown that divorce is linked to poor functioning of adolescents who exhibit a variety of problems that can persist in the years after the divorce. Also some have argued evidence the effects of divorce on personality of adolescents. It is observed that teenagers possess a low self-esteem, models of behavior that they cannot control, feel depressed, anxious and withdrawn (Cohen, 2002). The effects of divorce on children and adolescents involved are seen strongly associated with the development changes in their perceptions, beliefs and understanding of the phenomenon of divorce. Difficulties that have teenagers in their adaptation to the phenomenon of divorce is affected by how adolescents perceive themselves and how the environment accepts them with their status. How a teenager considers the issue of divorce is the way of his understanding, as well as specific requirements for that situation. Based on this, a number of studies have shown that adolescents who come from divorced families are usually

exposed to behavioral disorders, emotional instability, poor attention at school and threatening social conditions compared with their peers living in the normal family conditions (Video, 2002). A number of studies show that during the period of adolescence feedback and boys as girls are less different than in their youth. However, other studies show that girls are more affected by the divorce of parents than boys. About the period of teenage girls may feel more aggressive than boys, and less sensitive or sad These new changes are observed in the academic process. Boys who come from families with divorced parents have a higher self-control than girls who come from the same family. On the other hand it is believed that the guys who come from such families are more exposed to criminal behavior or abuse of the drugs. Other studies also point out that boys have more negative attitudes toward divorce than girls.

### **Divorce in Albania**

The survey data conducted by Beqja and Sokoli in 2000 show that marriage and the family play a special role for the Albanian people. They consider these two elements as of the most important elements in a person's life. These facts show that divorce is a very painful process. This happens even when after the dissolution of the marriage individuals find the missing happiness. Parental happiness is not always correlated or in fair with children. On the other hand Sokol in 2000 argued that the public attitude about divorce can affect how children adapt to the phenomenon of divorce and how they experience this change in the family. Moreover another important factor that contributes to children's attitude towards divorce is paternal figure. This may be related to the patriarchal nature of Albanian society where "Man of the house" or father is the one who takes the decisions without asking anyone and in this way he is perceived by children as the centerpiece of the family. When this figure is absent in the family after divorce, as is usually the tradition in Albanian culture, resulting in a negative reaction by the children. They can spend depressive moments, perform aggressive behavior, abusing drink and have poor academic performance (Shehu, 1998).

### **Methodology**

The purpose of this study is:

1. Identify the effects of divorce and the psychological impact that it has on adolescents.
2. To document the reactions of teenagers after experiencing parental divorce.

Research was selected to be of good quality because we are dealing with experience exploration (adolescent experiences) through instruments such as interviews.

Is used semi-structured interviews for two main reasons:

- ✓ Since they provided specific information which can be compared with those of other studies.
- ✓ Opinions were participants who were few in number but exploring more deeply and for a long time.

Are interviewed 15 adolescents who have experienced anxiety of parental divorce. Sampling is non-casual after our search is of good quality and generalization is not the goal but the description of the phenomenon is.

## **Conclusion**

After divorce, the relationship between children and parents is adapted to the new situation created. Generally they say that after quarrels and conflicts between their parents divorce was the best solution for all, being aware of the importance of a healthy family. They said they would like to live all together without debate and violence. By listening to their answers it is not very difficult to understand that they are still coping with the divorce part. Perhaps part of the mentality, part children and the rest economic problems make that part after divorce for women to be present even after some time on the psychological condition of many women. They do not realize that children grow up very quickly and it is grounds for them to continue to take effect uncomfortable situations after divorce.

Teens expressed that they felt needed communication with parents in this situation. Included in this situation they try to understand the problems of parents, especially their mothers' problems generally live with them. In cases where the harmony and understanding from their mothers absent, it seems that for them it is very difficult to adjust to divorce. The opposite happens when communication and parent-child relationship is more open because it is much easier to cope with this new situation for them. Most of them confirm that in most cases even the most minimal needs fail to be accomplished due to lack of money. Their mothers work hard but their salaries are ridiculous and father did not even try to contribute somehow to solve this situation. This is the reality experienced by most adolescents. They still do not know that it affects them in their way of living and their growth. Compared with studies in Western countries it noted the increasing number of divorces has become almost normal phenomenon and consequently the children experience it as something normal. In Albania, this phenomenon is not considered as such [Dervishi, 2001]. Recently Albanian culture and mentality play an important role in how teenagers adapt to the new way of life after divorce. Cultures as well as urban areas are affected by

this kind of mentality. It is very difficult for teenagers from rural areas to cope with their parents' divorce with this mentality inherited and spread [Sokol, 2000]. Many teenagers in this study even though they were from the capital of Albania worry about what others think of their parents divorce. This way of perception in Albanian society leaves a very significant impact on children with divorced parents [Taci, 2003]. Something else worth mentioning is that adaptation to life after divorce is also based on gender. This is an argument similar to what the literature says that "*boys and girls experience in different ways the divorce adaptation*" [Hetherington, 1993]. Even in Albania studies have shown that boys display more external problems than girls [Beqja & Sokol, 2000]. However some other studies show that girls display as internal problems, outer and academic as boys [Hetherington, 1993]. These conflicting arguments show that there are different ways in different cultures perception offering disproportionate roles between the sexes [Dervishi, 2001]. However, this argument also needs more consideration because the number of participants in this study may not be sufficient to fulfill the fact that boys and girls in Albania have different experiences of the divorce. Albanian culture although the integration process is still affected by the mentality that continues to be biased in these cases. However, this is just a study that monitors the effects of divorce in Albania to adolescents and how they experience this long period. It does not end here because other studies should be made to understand even better the situation.

### **Recommendations**

The study tells us that there must be other studies relating to the promotion of healthy factors of education, which would be a very important step in understanding and adapting to divorce. Systematic level programs at work or in service centers for children and divorced mothers, recently can be ancillary parts for the economic status of mothers and their children. Further studies are needed to develop the program to help adolescent accept parents' divorce as a social phenomenon like everyone else.

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