

CAUSES OF DIVORCES IN ALBANIA

Alketa Molla, PhD Candidate

European University of Tirana, Faculty of Social Sciences,
Branch of Sociology and Social Anthropology, Albania

Abstract

The statistics of divorce cases in Albania is very high compared to the number of population in the region. Various social and economic reasons have led to the separation of many Albanian families. Some of these reasons are related to immigration, which is a very widespread phenomenon in our society today.

Some of the social causes of divorce include "coldness" in the couple's relationships, adultery, ongoing conflicts between partners, and interventions from partners' parents. Other social problem which is the major cause of divorce is using violence against women, or the excessive drinking habit of their spouse. Economic reasons for divorce include unemployment; the economic plight in which many families are, as a result of difficult economic conditions in the country; abuse of wives; lack of household income; and gambling. Due to the high level of unemployment in the country, many Albanians have chosen to immigrate. This is because they believed they will have the opportunity to gain employment and earn a good source of income. However, even when the economic status of the family has been improved, other problems still accompany divorce cases.

In this article, I will be present some of the main factors which leads to divorce. The data of this study was obtained from the court statistics of Elbasan. The study included data obtained during the analysis of divorce files provided by the Office of the psychologist. The study was conducted in the region of Elbasan.

Keywords: divorce, spousal relations, immigration, divorce causes.

Introduction

Divorce is a problem that concerns us all. However, this is not only for the case of being divorced, but also the consequences that follows it. The increase in the number of divorce cases in Albania shows a degree of emancipation and formation of a culture of divorce. On the other hand, we need to understand the causes that lead to divorce between the two partners.

Consequently, Albania's constitution has certainly changed the rights and duties in couple relationships compared to a few decades ago. Partners seek for equality, which often results to serious problems between the couple. Therefore, they often react to themselves. Also, they do not hesitate to apply for divorce if the problems are aggravated, or if the marital relationship is not working.

If we refer to the legal side of divorce, the procedures and time for its implementation are reduced significantly. With a little trial sessions, the marriage ends. Nevertheless, divorce is the end result that has rocked several marriages.

The question is: What are the reasons that have caused many marriages to go towards divorce? What factors have favored these causes?

Certainly, an increasing number of divorce cases have affected several factors, foremost among which we can mention include the transition from a closed to an open society, immigration, and fostering a culture of divorce, which has barely existed before. Thus, all these factors have favored some reasons, which are related directly or indirectly to increase in the number of divorce cases in Albania.

The Purpose of the Study

The main goal of the study is to identify and highlight the main reasons that influence the increase in the number of divorces in Albania; present the level of influence that each of these causes in the deterioration of the stability of marital relations; and finally present and analyse the causes that are associated with the migration of one or both partners.

Hypothesis and Research Questions

The hypothesis of this study can be seen based on the increase in the number of divorces as a result of social and economic reasons, as well as immigration.

The research questions raised in this study include:

- 1- What type of couples go for divorce?
- 2- What are the social causes that affects their divorce?
- 3- What are the economic reasons that affects their divorce?
- 4- How many of these causes are related to immigration?

Method and Methodology of the Study

For this study to be realized, both primary data (interviews with partners who have committed themselves to the demand and claim for divorce in court) as well as secondary data (collected from the literature) were used. In the literature review, the collected data on causes of divorce includes statistics on divorce by the Court of First Instance, Elbasan. In

addition, it also includes data from the files of the Office of marital solutions Psychologist of this Court.

Furthermore, the study was conducted based on the model representative, which also includes qualitative data. In the study, we used primary data from semi-structured and unstructured groups that were conducted with the participants in the study (target groups).

The sample was constructed by non-probabilistic approach. In this study sample, it is intentional to answer the research questions. Participants in the study were men and women who have committed themselves to request for a divorce. Thus, this would enable them determine the reasons that have forced them to divorce their spouses.

Data processing was carried out through thematic analysis. However, it starts with unprocessed data, and was further interpreted, summarized, and categorized.

In addition, conclusions were drawn using the interpretive approach.

I.

In order to find and analyze the reasons that have contributed to the increase in the number of divorce cases in Albania, I referred to the data that I have received from the Psychologist Office in Court. However, I obtained the data from the office. This was possible because all couples who filed for divorce in court develop mediation sessions with the psychologist. During these sessions, they present their marital history, and the reasons they want a divorce.

1- How is the marital relationship of a couple who have gone through a divorce?

The analysis of these data highlights a number of causes that affect the dysfunction of a couple's relationship. Certainly, these marriages are not problematic as a result of a single cause, because a single cause does not threaten marriage. If a marriage has a combination of several causes that impedes the normal functions, there is a tendency for the couple to divorce. It is worth mentioning that the couple's problems begin with some small disputes which can be overcome by both partners at the early stages of their marriage. As time passes, these problems keep increasing, until there comes a stage where conflicts become ongoing.

In situation where the couple does not have a common language in conflict resolution, there will be an increasingly wide gap in their relationship. When analyzing the data, it was observed that the two partners especially at the beginning of marriage try to overcome any problems they encounter. As several years pass, the partners stated that they have not paid attention to problems in their marriage. This was because they wanted to keep the marriage for the sake of the children. Thus, they do not want to

create problems and concerns for their children. Eventually, there comes a time when partners do not tolerate the situation of their relationship, but still files for divorce. Consequently, the data shows that divorce majorly occurs after one of the partners has been removed from the apartment, taking their children with them, or leaving the other partner. This situation has continued for a period of several months to two years. What was most striking from the record was that the husband does not wait long to ask for a divorce when the wife is evicted. In cases where the wife is away from home, especially after a few months, the husband goes to the court to file for a divorce. Whereas in cases where women have left their husbands, they wait 1-2 years before they apply for divorce. Women seem to be more patient and get on with making the decision to delay the divorce. They say they have waited long with the hope that their partner would come back again to continue the conjugal life. Based on the cases we have studied, we never dealt with divorced couples with recent problems, but problems that have lasted several years. Therefore, this fact means that the spouses do not want a divorce. Therefore, they take this step because their relationship is not working, even though they are trying for a long time to keep the marriage.

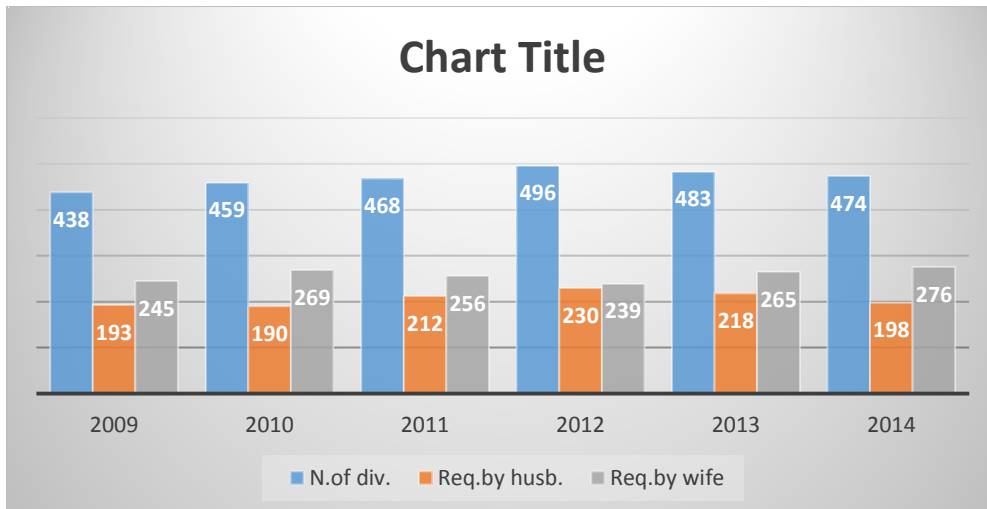
2- The number of requests and claims made by women was higher than men.

In reviewing the annual statistics of Elbasan Court, it is evident that the request for divorce by women was higher than the requests made by men. Hence, the analysis of their files shows that all of these women were mothers. Women are less satisfied by their husbands. They give a number of causes which impels them to seek for divorce. Immigration due to economic reasons has provided income for these families, but on the other hand, it has been accompanied by a series of social problems that have caused many couples to experience crisis in their relations.

Table 1.

Years	The number of divorces	Request by husband	Request by wife
2009	438	193	245
2010	459	190	269
2011	468	212	256
2012	496	230	239
2013	483	218	265
2014	474	198	276

Source: Statistical evidence on issues civil.Court of Elbasan.



3- The main causes for which couples makes divorce.

As we have mentioned above, we are dealing with some of the reasons that leads to divorce. Some of these reasons are described below.

Cooling conjugal relations is a cause that occurs in several cases during the course of the study. About 58% of the cases studied shows the loss of affection in the couple's relationships. Cooling has come for some reason, where immigration is mentioned in almost all couples who have had one of the partners in emigration, primarily the husband. Therefore, partners have been living apart from each other for a long time, as a result of immigration. Women with children stayed in Albania, while men also remain due to the difficult economic conditions and unemployment that accompanied the protracted transition instead of migration addressed as the only chance to earn income. Furthermore, being away for a long time apart has made partners not to feel more affinity between themselves. In addition, it makes marriage to lose its meaning.

From data analysis, conflicts between spouses have a significant weight in the dissolution of marriage. 53% of divorce cases have been studied as the main cause of divorce. Among other causes is the constant conflicts between the couple. Many couples who believe that the conflict only occurs at the first year of marriage are wrong. This is because the conflict intensifies after the arrival of children. However, another remarkable aspect of the data analysis is the fact that the reasons for conflict initiated by men differ from that of women.

Men feel neglected because some women are more committed to their children. For some of the men who have made an application-claim for divorce, they say that women pay greater attention to the children and show no concern for them.

Women have conflicts with their husbands for economic reasons. Conflicts have increased with the birth of children. This is because more money is needed to meet the family's needs, especially when the family's economic condition was weak. In this case, it is women who become the drivers of conflict, as they require more money to run the family expenses.

When analyzing the data, it appears that conflicts between the partners are due to the mismatch of character. This problem occurs more frequently among couples that have less than 5 years of marriage, but that constitute the largest number of divorced cases. Almost all couples who have divorced after 2-3 years of marriage have as a major cause of marital dissolution due to character mismatch between partners. Husbands accuse their wives to be disobedient and not to show them respect. Wives complained that husbands do not include them in decision making. Even when trying to discuss family problems, they are never in tune which often creates constant conflicts between them.

One of the reasons for divorce that is often encountered in the analysis of the data files, but also found in interviews is adultery. Our data shows that about 45% of divorce cases studied stems from adultery. This occurs because the wife or the husband might have another partner abroad. Partner who is in exile created new relationship there, and severed ties with their family they left in Albania. "Although he migrated in order to provide for his family, he does not care for me". In one of the interviews, a woman uttered these words:

"Our marriage almost did not exist. My husband is living 6 years in Germany. He's gone there because there was work. As he worked, he brought good money for me and the children initially. Then, after the last 2 years, he started to bring less. It is 6 months now, and he has not shown up. He no longer speaks on the phone with me or with the children. His parents told me initially that he got married to a German to secure a residence permit. The marriage was apparently somewhat true, and because of that, I asked for a divorce. I saw that it does not make sense to wait my whole life, so I decided to leave him. "

There are also cases where women who have stayed for a long time alone, have created new relationship after they have divorced their partner. Such cases are very limited in number. In couples divorced because of adultery, there are cases where both spouses were emigrants. Thus, there are cases where both spouses were in Albania. The cause of adultery is not necessarily connected to migration. In some of the files, the problem of adultery was "disguised" a little bit, and not expressed openly, especially when adultery is committed by women. The men in these cases say that women are disobedient, or do not respect them as husbands. As a result, this implies to the men that they have been betrayed.

Economic plight is a cause of fighting in a significant number of cases. Expressed as a percentage, we can say that 32% of divorce cases studied had economic difficulties as the main reason. This comes not only because of unemployment and difficult economic conditions in our economy, but is also related to other social problems. Serious economic problems in the family is caused by vices such as gambling, drinking, smoking etc., which not only destroys the household economy, but are often the reason for the couple's divorce. The women complain that their husbands misuse family income in gambling, leaving them in miserable conditions. Such cases often occur not only by men who do not work, but also by working men. Thus, they are not contributing economically to their families.

Another reason, which occurs less often than the others is the interference of parents of spouses in the couple's relationship. These interventions results in conflicts in most cases with the parents as well as between partners. During the analysis, the data shows that 29% of cases included in the study have had grounds for divorce. Among other causes is conflicts and disputes with the mother in law. In addition, the cases of the bride's mother in law conflicts are more numerous than conflicts of the bridegroom's mother in law. Conflicts with the bride's mother in law constitute about 78% of the cases, while the bridegroom's mother in law constitutes about 22% of them. Thus, these interventions are incentives to create conflict between spouses. By comparison, the parents of the man being closer to the couple (mainly are cases where both parties live in a flat), interfere more in his life than the parents of the woman. Such interventions have been fatal to many marriages, bringing it to a divorce. Although they did not have such a purpose, their interventions and conflicts would result to a devastating end of the couple's marriage.

There are two major problems faced in almost all files handled: alcohol use and violence by husbands against their wives.

From the analysis of our data, it was shown that 90% of divorce cases have come from women demand, and the accuse that their husbands are alcohol users. Men who are users of alcohol are generally unemployed. This category includes those who have lost their job, because they have been addicted to drinking, and those who cannot find a job. Women usually abuse them because they cannot provide for their family. In a state of violence, women who suffer more consequences under such living condition becomes unbearable.

"Whenever a man is returning home drunk, he often starts with quarreling," says one of the interviewees. One of the most striking facts is that men who are users of alcohol often rape their wives in front of their children. From the analysis of the recorded data, domestic violence and violence against women is done by an alcoholic husband. This is a major

problem that is evident in almost all couples who have been part of the study. Albanian husband have continued to be violent towards their wives. Physical violence prevails. In cases where there is no physical violence by women raped, it psychologically pressure you into different shapes.

In 99% of cases studied, the women claimed that they were physically and psychologically raped by their husbands. Violence is indeed a matter of concern for the Albanian society. It is widely spread in marital relationships, and is often a cause for divorce, especially when it comes as a result of other problems. Almost all causes of divorce mentioned above are combined with violence. Conflicts in couple relationships are generally associated with the violence of men against women. The same happens in the case of adultery, when men rape their wives physically, accusing them of adultery. When women accuse men of treason, they become aggressive and violate women. However, even more violence against women is common in marriages and families with social and economic problems.

Conclusion

Marital problems in the Albanian society have soared causing the number of divorce cases to increase year after year. The main causes that lead many couples to divorce are social and economic causes. One can cite social reasons such as: loss of affection in couple relationships, adultery, conflicts between partners, partner's conflicts with parents, and bad habits like alcohol use by men and gambling. Economic reasons have to do with unemployment, difficult economic situation in which there are many of these families, and the abuse of gambling revenue. Some of the social causes are as a result of the migration of one of the partners, mostly the men. The couple separated living promotes cooling of relations between the partners. Therefore, this often leads to adultery in many cases. These two reasons are the most important in terms of the frequency of findings in the analysis of data. The major problems of Albanian marriage and family today are domestic violence. Another is the use of alcohol mainly by unemployed men. Violence perpetrated against women by their husbands is present in all cases studied.

To reduce divorce, it would be effective for the state to intervene through its institutions undertaking social policy and cultural character and economic policy.

First, social and cultural policies should be aimed at raising the awareness of the role of women spouses in the family and society. The main goal of these policies is to minimize violence against women, domestic violence, and the rape of a woman by her husband in front of the children. Another solution is the implementation of awareness campaigns to curb

violence against women. If social problems are scarce in the family, it will lower the number of divorces.

Secondly, government policies of an economic nature to create opportunities for employment growth in the country should be put into consideration. By increasing employment opportunities in the country, it decreases the rate of immigration, which is high enough in Albania. Also, the minimization of immigration would consequently reduce the problems of divorce.

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