

DIVORCE IN ALBANIA AND THE PROBLEMS THAT IT CARRIES

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Abstract

Divorce is a current problem and a common concern in our society today. In Albania, divorce has become a common thing. Many new couples go for divorce, and not only couples in their first few years of marriage. Divorce basically results from the problems couple encounters in their relationship. These problems are caused by external factors which act indirectly on the couple's relationship. Here, we can mention factors such as the difference in the age of the partners, educational level, residing in part of the urban or rural areas, social and economic conditions of the couple, living sites of partners, and their parent's interference. The interior factors involve displaying love and support during the marriage. In addition, the level of recognition they have for each other before marrying is a very important factor. Also, their emotional state of feelings and affections they have for each other is also an important factor to be put into consideration. In this article, we will treat at length the problems associated with divorce by analyzing each of them. The study was conducted in the region of Elbasan. Study data were obtained from the Court of Elbasan, as well as NGO "Women's Forum Elbasan." A portion of the data was obtained from the interviews conducted with partners who have requested for a divorce.

Keywords: Divorce, spousal relationship, arranged marriage, love marriage, emigration

Introduction

Divorce is a phenomenon which has a negative impact on the society. However, this has affected a lot of families in Albanian today. The number of divorce cases has increased, and this may explain the need for the emancipation of the society or the family flaw. Increase in the number of divorces in Albania also reflects that the Albanian society has a problem. A post-communist society with a prolonged transition shows that social problems in the country also contribute to this problem. As a consequence,

this has added to the problems in the family, and as a part of society which cannot be seen to be detached from it. In this crisis which Albanian families are experiencing, they have had particular impact from outside factors, rather than from factors within. Thus, such a combination makes families to experience unpleasant crisis situation by any members of the family. No one wants tension in their relationship between their spouses. Thus, neither they themselves nor other family members especially their children, wants tension. Conflicts which often accompanied the couple relationship, degenerates into violence whereby children become the spectators. Consequently, Tushi G. (2012) claims that early marriage cools communications signal at the start of the silence of social and intimate relations in marriage.

In such cases when partners do not have a common ground, the marriage is likely to come to an end. Thus, this ends up with nothing, except going to the court for divorce. This is pretty much a picture of the situation before the divorce. Furthermore, majority of couples considers divorce as the only option to avoid the tension created between their partners. Generally, one of the partners chooses to leave the shared residence, move away with the children, or leave the other partner. The request for divorce might occur when each partner is frustrated by the other partner, accusing him of being the major cause of the problem in their relationship.

Consequently, divorce cases included in the study belongs to the period of 2008-2014.

The purpose of this study is analyze the impact of immigration and the opening of society, on the increasing number of divorce cases in Albania. However, these problems are usually common in the Albanian reality culture of divorce. In this study, we will have a detailed look at the anthropological terms, and the impact it has on the open society. In addition, we will confront the cultures of other countries in terms of divorce where Albanians have emigrated to. In this study, I want to highlight the impact of these other cultures in developing a culture of divorce in Albania.

More specifically, the problems that lead a couple to divorce can be seen in the relationship between spouses, as well as their character. The separation for a long period helps both couples to be at peace. Couples who previously had contradictions in the departure of migrant husband were added. Thus, this is because they still have more of these contradictions. A fact is that the migrant husband creates a new link where they are. Also, social and economic changes can influence the improvement of conditions in many families. This could possibly lead to curbing immigration as a phenomenon. Therefore, divorce cases are curbed due to immigration.

Divorce is a phenomenon that plagues our everyday society. This concern comes not only because there is an increase in the number of divorce

cases, but also because of social and economic costs. Thus, this leads to a psychological consequence on partners and children, as well as the economic conditions after divorce.

The hypothesis of this study is aimed to increase the number of divorces as a result of immigration and the opening of society.

The research questions posed in this study include:

- Why do couples go for divorce?
- How many of these couple's partner emigrated?
- How long is the distance for a long time in the relations between them?
- What are the changes in the social policies, cultural, and economic policies that will help these couples not to undergo divorce?

Consequently, this study was carried out using both primary (interviews with divorced persons) and secondary data (borrowed from literature). In reviewing the literature, data relating to the divorce cases due to the absence of one of the partner due to emigration for a long period of time were collected.

The study was conducted based on the model representative with qualitative data. However, in it is also included the primary data from semi-structured interviews and unstructured interviews which were conducted with the participants of the study (target groups).

The sample was constructed using a non-probability approach. Participants in the study were men and women who have made a request for divorce. Interviews were conducted with persons who have stayed away from their divorced partner for a long time, as a result of immigration. The purpose of these interviews is to see the significant impact it has on the relationship of distant couple, staying for a long time in a country with different culture.

Data processing was carried out through thematic analysis, starting with the unprocessed data. This was further interpreted, summarized, and categorized.

However, the conclusions are derived using interpretive approach.

I.

Divorce may not occur as a bolt opens. Of course, the relationship between partners passes through several stages until the decision is made. Nobody goes to court to file for a divorce without any good reasons, especially during their marriage. Children are the ones who experience the pain of divorce the more. Therefore, parenting partners should think more seriously before taking such step. Even when the partner leaves the family shelter, he does not break ties with his/her children despite the fact that they now have another parent. In addition, there is also a category of spouses who

after they have separated from their partners, shows no interest for the children.

What factors have led many couples to go for divorce?

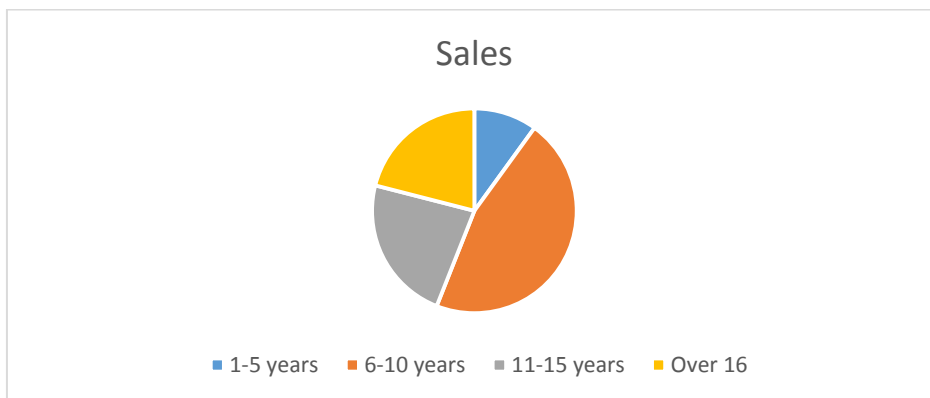
Consequently, these factors can be classified as external factors and internal factors.

What are the external factors that have rocked the wedding? Are they the determinant of the relationship? Can you avoid them?

When analyzing the data obtained from the interviews with the partners that have made a request for divorce, the findings shows that when two people have a connection with each other, age differences and educational level are not taken into account. Also, the social and economic conditions were not taken into account. They do not consider whether the partner is from the rural areas or the urban areas. If they love each other and have affection for each other, the relationship might end up with marriage. In the first few years after they got married, their marriage goes very well. Thus, the partners stated that they were very happy about their relationship. Over time, problems begin to emerge, especially with the arrival of children. During this period, the husband feels neglected because the wife as a young mother should care more for the child. On the other hand, when a new member is added, the family requires more financial income to meet its needs. This is no problem for spouses who are employed. However, if they are unemployed, this would result to a very serious problem, especially for our country with a weak economy and high rate of unemployment. The difficulty of finding a job makes it more difficult if partners have not completed their secondary education. Consequently, this results to the beginning of the problems in the relationship of the partners. Economic difficulties facing the family can be reflected in the couple's relationships. This therefore leads to disputes and contradictions between partners. Situated in such a situation where there are needs but no income, this category of families sees a unique opportunity to solve its economic problems e.g. immigration. Majority of the cases of emigration is common among men. Thus, it is uncommon when the whole family emigrates. In cases where only the man emigrates, the economic problems experienced by his family is easily resolved since he now works and provides a reasonable income. However, on the other hand, the couple is forced to have a life to share. Living apart fades closeness between partners. Their relationship begins to get cold, and with time, they look foreign to each other. This makes the partners to begin forging new links at where they emigrated to. And after several years of marriage, everything eventually comes to an end. Therefore, spouses go to court and files for a divorce. Divorce is usually the last resort for marriages that do not work, and that are eroded by strife, jealousy, conflict, difficult economic situation, and adultery (Tushi, G. 2012, p.77).

Marriage becomes endangered after 10-year-old at first. About 56% of divorce cases studied had a marriage that lasted 1-10 years. 23% of the cases studied have been married for 11-15 years. 21% of the cases studied went to court to file for divorce after more than 16 years of marriage.

Years of marriage	1-5	6-10	11-15	Over 16
Divorce %	10%	46%	23%	21%



Marital solutions files from 2008 to 2014. A Psychologist's Office. Elbasan's Court.

In this study, we obtained data on the divorced couple's educational level and their age to see the age difference between partners. Information was also received for the first distribution of the phenomenon of divorce cases in both urban and rural areas.

What are the age differences between partners?

If we compare the age differences between partners, what catches the eye is the fact that couples have an average age difference of 5 years with a fluctuation +2 and -2. Marriages are generally conducted with a small age gap between partners. Very few cases are negligible when couples have very large age difference between them, which is over 10 years. Consequently, these cases are mainly seen in partners who have been married before.

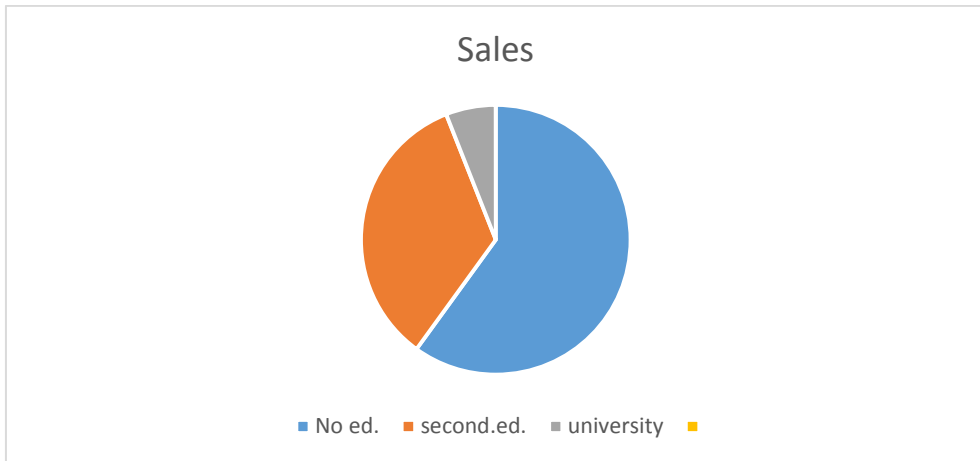
What is the level of education of divorced partners?

When analyzing the data, we see that about 60% of the divorced couples have not completed their secondary school education. However, the category of these people constitutes majority of the divorced couples. In the social group, there are more economic problems due to the fact that they are having difficulties in obtaining a job. Most of them are immigrants, and they include cases where the partner has migrated only when the whole family emigrated.

36% of divorced cases have completed their secondary education, and only 6% of divorced cases have completed their higher education.

However, the data show that higher education is a stabilizing factor in marriage. This fact was confirmed by Salvini & Vignoli (2011). About 80% of the divorced couples have the same degree of education. However, only 20% of the divorced partners have differences in literacy rates.

Education	No education	More than secondary education	With higher education (university)
Data %	60%	34%	6%



Marital solutions files from 2008 to 2014. A Psychologist's Office. Elbasan Court.

In what areas are the most frequent divorces?

Divorces have a wider spread in urban areas compared to rural areas. If we compare the data from rural areas to urban areas, we will note that about 64% of the divorced couples were from urban areas and about 36% of the divorced couples were from rural areas. Furthermore, about 67% of the bulk of the population of the district of Elbasan (INSTAT 2015) lives in these areas.

Generally, spouses live separately from their parents. In most cases, parents cannot interfere in the lives of the couple. There are many cases where disputes and conflicts between partners were born as a result of the intervention of their parents. Furthermore, continued interventions have a very negative impact on the relations of the couple. This fuels conflicts which are often accompanied by physical and psychological violence. In addition, this has led to the cold relationship between the couple, which later results to divorce.

What are the internal factors affecting divorce?

Love or matchmaking are internal factors which can result to divorce. Is the level of recognition that they have for each other before marrying

sufficient? Subsequently, they include their emotional state with the affection and feelings they have for each other.

What has been realized in marriages which have gone through divorce?

Traditionally, Albanians gets married for reasons more practical than character to ensure survival. Today, couples get married not only for survival, but also for affective reasons (Beqja & Sokoli, 2000, p. 44).

The data of the study shows that 52% of these marriages are performed by matchmaking. So, spouses are obtained through a third party, while 48% of them are made with love and with the mutual consent of the partners. In cases where the marriage was arranged, the couple had a recognition period. Thus, this recognition period is enough, according to the statements of partners. Coronation comes after their consent and approval. There is no case consort which is required for the marriage to be conducted. In cases of love, marriage occurs due to the love and affection that they had for each other. So in both cases, the marriages is performed in a normal mode where all primary gave their mutual consent to both partners. In both cases, marriage has been a normal flow prior to years. Furthermore, problems which rose up gradually between partners over the years for various reasons, subsequently forced them to end their marriage.

Conclusion

Conclusively, the biggest numbers of divorced couples belongs to the category with less education. This is explained by the fact that they face greater difficulties on the aspect of employment. Thus, they have more poor families. Also worth mentioning is the way they manage family and couple problems.

Divorce is more common in urban areas where employment and housing opportunities are in greater demand compare to rural areas. It is almost impossible not to find a house for rent in the rural areas. Spouses after divorce usually live in their parent's apartments, and they in turn find it more difficult in obtaining a job. Many couples have problems with their inability to find a job. Thus, this makes them economically dependent and gives them a reason to file for a divorce.

Indeed, the number of divorces in marriages performed by matchmaking is higher than in marriages entered based on love and affection. None of the married partner's marriages were arranged. Therefore, this does not constitute a reason for divorce because they don't know each other or never loved or liked each other before marrying. Couple's problems usually rise up after some years of marriage. Interventions of parents in couple relationships often have a negative impact on the longevity of their marriage. Thus, this fact is presented as a reason for divorce.

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