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This Is the Price We Pay: A Study of Divorce in the U.A.E. From Divorced Women's Perspectives

Wadha Al Nuaimi
Western Michigan University

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THIS IS THE PRICE WE PAY: A STUDY OF DIVORCE IN THE U.A.E. FROM DIVORCED WOMEN'S PERSPECTIVES

by

Wadha Al Nuaimi

A Thesis
Submitted to the
Faculty of The Graduate College
in partial fulfillment of the
requirements for the
Degree of Master of Arts
Department of Sociology

Western Michigan University
Kalamazoo, Michigan
August 2001
ACKNOWLEDGEMENTS

This researcher desires to praise Allah (God) for the great gift that he gives us, the gift of mind and intellectual living life to fulfill the ultimate goal of their creation. The goal of building the world to be a better place to live under his own will, by the power of knowledge and searching in the universal to discover the laws of Allah in all life aspects—physical, chemical, psychological, social, astronomical, etc. The researcher also desires to express appreciation to her parents who have suffered a lot from being far away from her. Thanks also to my family, each individual person, who have been great supporters. My thanks go to the professors in the United Arab Emirates who supported me so much. Thanks to Dr. Timothy Diamond, Chairperson of the thesis committee for his assistance and advice, also Dr. Subhash Sonnad and Dr. Douglas Davidson, thesis committee members for their support and advice. The researcher would also like to thank those who allowed her to administer her questionnaires and the participants who gave her the great trust when they shared their experiences with her. Finally, the researcher would like to express the utmost appreciation to those invisible people who are around her through support, wishes, and prayers.

Wadha Al Nuaimi
This study aims to answer these questions: What is the process of divorce in the U.A.E? When do women in the U.A.E reach the point where they can’t stay with their husbands? Why does a close intimate relationship break up? What are the connections between social, economic, and cultural environment in the U.A.E and the divorced women who live within them?

Qualitative methods based on interviews of 20 divorced women citizens who initiated the divorce process in the city of Al Ain have been used. The study showed that there are six stages in the divorce process: disillusionment, expressing concern, trying to reconcile, physical separation, mediation, and divorce. Women reach the point of divorce under these cases: husbands’ violence, husbands’ family involvement, husband’s pursuing other relationships, and husbands’ inflicting emotional abuse. The marriage breaks up when it wasn’t based on a primary agreement about the relationship, when partners didn’t discover in deep the other partner’s characteristics and when serious problems did show up. The study showed that social, economic, and cultural environments influence divorced women’s lives by shaping their expectations, forcing them to marry certain people, and shaping the types of problems they have faced.
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CHAPTER I

INTRODUCTION

Divorce rates have markedly increased since World War II and some countries have seen an increase since the early 20th century ("Frequency," n.d, paragraph 1. In the United States marriage rates have remained fairly stable, while divorce rates have steadily increased. The number of divorces in the United States has increased 71% since 1970, while the number of married couples increased only 19% (Ahrons, 1994). "Attitudes toward divorce have changed dramatically in this period, with the general trend toward tolerance of the practice. Although the statistics are highly variable for overall rates, a number of correlations can be drawn between divorce and other factors" ("Frequency," n.d, paragraph 1).

First, national conditions are one of the factors that affect the divorce rates. Historical studies have shown that fewer divorces occur in times of economic depression and more divorces occur during times of prosperity or war. For example, the frequency of divorce in the United States nearly doubled during World War II ("Frequency," n.d, paragraph 2).

Second, social circumstances including ethnicity, religion, class, and economic background are other factors that affect the divorce. For example, divorce rates can be expected to be higher in groups that apply lesser stigma to divorce than in those that attach
more. For example, in the United States studies of racially mixed marriages "show that these may yield specific divorce patterns within specific cultures. For example, one study in the United States, suggested greater stability in marriages between black husbands and white wives than of white husbands and black wives" ("Frequency," n.d, paragraph 3).

Third, family cycle itself could be another factor in varying divorce rates. For example, many studies have pointed to the fact that the longer a couple has been married, the more likely they are to remain so. Divorce rates are highest among the young, and, if a marriage survives its first few years, there is an increased likelihood that it will continue. Another factor often cited as a deterrent to divorce is the presence of children. Empirical studies have shown, however, that this factor is much less significant than commonly believed ("Frequency," n.d, paragraph 4).

I believe that the topic of divorce is particularly important in social science research. Moreover, my experience in the Ministry of Labor and Social Affairs in the United Arab Emirates (U.A.E.) in the social affairs section, led to a painful experience. I saw many young women, less than 22 years old, who came to the social affairs department for support after a divorce. The picture is still in my memory. It raised many questions in my mind. Why did these young women get divorced? What were the personal and social circumstances that put them in that situation at such an early age? How did the women get married? What kind of men were they married to? And how
did their situations intensify to reach the dissolution with marriage?

I believe that women's experiences need to be researched. Even if divorce is the only option to end the marriage, a person can be absorbed by the conflicts associated with making the stressful decision. It often leaves one feeling disorganized, unsettled, and extremely stressed. "The decision to end a marriage is usually far more difficult than the decision to marry" (Ahrons, 1994, p. 86).

Uncoupling, How Relationships Come Apart by Diane Vaughan (1986) (hereafter referred to as Uncoupling) came at the right time for my work. I was preparing my graduate thesis and realized that I could combine my commitment to researching women's experiences of divorce with my master's thesis. More specifically, I have researched the experiences of divorced women who initiated the divorce process in the U.A.E. Dr. Robert Emerson, at a meeting in the sociology department, suggested examining the idea of divorce from another dimension - that of the process of divorce rather than the factors of divorce. His presentation helped me realize the need to shift the starting point for the research from the more usual scope in the local (U.A.E.) studies, which typically look at the factors of divorce, rather than the process of divorce. Dr. Timothy Diamond supported the idea when he suggested the book Uncoupling.

The exact replication of Vaughan in the Uncoupling study (1986) would not be possible in my society, the U.A.E., especially in the conservative areas such as the city of Al Ain. The city is
modern in terms of material aspects, but traditional in terms of mentality, especially when it comes to a subject like marriage. Unlike the research in the Uncoupling, it is not possible to meet both parties "the initiator of the divorce process" and "the partner" who is being left behind. Men, in general, are not willing to talk about their relationship with their wives, especially if the interviewer is a woman.

Divorce is a sensitive issue in a very sensitive society in terms of the personal relationships between men and women. Local studies have shown that in the past men initiated the divorce process, but in recent-years there is a significant increase in divorces initiated by women (Rashed, Al Kubaisi, & Tahboob, 1998; Ministry of Labor and Social Affairs [MLSA], 1981). For this study, I chose to interview the women who initiated the divorce process because this is a new shift in the society.

For this research I chose the city of Al Ain, where I received my training in the social affairs department in 1992. My familiarity with this office and the city offered unique access to the information and potential participants. The city of Al Ain has a total population of 225,970. It has 9.4% of the total population of the country, with 64% male, and 36% female. This city is considered a conservative city compared with many other areas in the country, such as Dubai. Al Ain can be considered as a small closed and tribal society in terms of its people's mentality and traditions, especially the traditions related to marriage customs.
In many cases, the power of family controls the future of children. In this age, we assume couples marry a partner of a free decision, for personal satisfaction, romance, and intimacy; however, some families are still living in an age of arranged marriages, which serve the family’s interests of supporting the kinship. It is, as one divorced women said, “The price that we have to pay” – until now.

In the U.A.E. marriage itself is very expensive. In addition, there are many families that still think about prestige and conspicuous consumption, which is often displayed during the marriage ceremony. The high cost of marriage leads to delaying the age of marriage. Another way men deal with the high cost of marriage is to seek foreign brides and thus result in less expensive marriages. This resulted in a few local women to become old maids. In an attempt to solve the high cost of marriage and the problems that may arise afterwards, the government has initiated a program to help local people cover marriage and wedding expenses.

The U.A.E. Marriage Fund was established in 1992 under the auspices of the Ministry of Labor and Social Affairs. It contributes $19,000 to every U.A.E. bachelor bridegroom that marries a U.A.E. woman. It includes the maximum dowry for brides at $5,450 and limits wedding ceremony to last one day long instead of two to seven days, as many marriages do. The legislation also set an $8,220 limit on divorce settlements. This funding could encourage more couples to get married on one hand, but on the other hand it did not reduce
the divorce rates. Plans are being considered to confront the increasing rates of divorce among local people. One of the most important steps has been counseling young men and women at high schools, colleges, and universities on what the basic elements of good mate selection are and how couples can confront marital problems.

This study could be viewed as a contribution to the divorce problem, especially in that it deals with a dimension ignored in previous local studies. These local studies tended to look at the "why" of divorce instead of the "how," or in other words, the factors of divorce instead of the process of divorce (Vaughan, 1986). Furthermore, it could help social policy makers in dealing with divorce problems, which have been a concern for the last several years.
CHAPTER II

UNITED ARAB EMIRATES

Demographic Information

The U. A. E. is located in the Arabian Peninsula. It is bordered to the north by the Arabian Gulf (Persian Gulf), to the east by the Gulf of Oman and the Sultanate of Oman, to the south by the Sultanate of Oman and Saudi Arabia, and to the west by Qatar and Saudi Arabia.

It encompasses an area of 83,600 sq. km. In 1995, it had a reported population of 2,411,041, which grew to an estimated 3,108,000 in the year 2000. This population consists of 66.6% males and 33.3% females, with an average annual population increase of 5.6% between 1985 and 1995 (Ministry of Planning, 1999).

The estimated participation in the labor force is 58.6% of the population of which 75.6% are males and 23.3% are females in the year 2000. Unemployment as a percentage of the total labor force is 2.1%, consisting of 2.1% males and 2.6% females in the year 1999 (Ministry of Planning, 1999).

Industries in the U.A.E. include petroleum, fishing, petrochemicals, construction materials, some boat building, and handicrafts. The industrial production growth rate is 6.1% (1995). The total value of exports is $33.2 billion (1996). The commodities are crude oil 66%, natural gas, re-exports, dried fish, and dates.
Economic partners include Japan 38%, South Africa 7%, Singapore 7%, India 6%, Oman 4%, and Iraq 3% (1996). The total value of imports is $23.5 billion (1996). The imported commodities are manufactured goods, machinery and transport equipment, chemicals, and food. Economic partners include the U.S 10%, Japan 9%, UK 8%, Italy 6%, South Korea 6%, and India 6% (1996). Budget revenues are $5.1 billion, expenditures are $5.4 billion, including capital expenditures of $294 million (1997est.) (Central Intelligence Agency [CIA], 1999). The U.A.E. currency is the Dirham (Dh.) US$=3.6725 Dh.

The Socio-historical Background

The following points of interest represent economic and social characteristics and activities, which are representative of the U.A.E. society.

Before the Discovery of Oil

Before the discovery of oil, (prior to 1963) the U.A.E. was a traditional society in its economic and social structure.

The Economic structure was based on four basic activities (Helmi, 1999):

1. Diving for pearls was the main activity, which attracted 85% of the people.
2. Fishing.
3. Trading was an important economic activity in the coastal
cities since the nineteenth century. Most of the trade in the past was outside the country and it was based on exchanges such as horses, carpets, and seeds for pears, dates, and dry fish.

4. Agricultural activities, which were restricted to the oases.

The social structure can be outlined as follows:

1. The social structure was based on the tribal system. A tribe is a group of related people who are affiliated with the same familial stream. The tribal society was based on social classes that were varied according to family bloodline, authority and wealth (Al Qasemi, 1993).

2. Extended family unites (two generations or more living in the same house).

3. Maintenance of the endogamous marriage (individuals who marry from inside their families). It was common for parallel cousins (the brothers' children) to marry each other.


5. Having monogamous marriages (one man gets married to one woman) and polygamous marriages (one man gets married to two, three, or four women). However, polygamous marriages were not popular due to the weakness of the economic conditions at this stage of time.

6. Keeping the tribe under the patriarchal authority.

7. Following the Patrilineal system.

8. Maintaining the traditions, values, and mores of the tribe as unwritten laws.
9. Authority exercised by a group of males (decisions were not made by one person, they were made by many males inside the family such as grandfathers, fathers, brothers, and sons).

10. Keeping the solidarity and tribalism.

11. The role of a woman was based on taking care of her husband and children. Especially when her husband went diving for pearls. There was no significant participation of women in the financial role in the family. The husband was the main source of family income.

12. Education was very simple based on a teacher called al motawa.' He was an elderly male who taught students the holy book "Qur'an," basic religious information, the principles of math, and reading and writing. He was paid by his students' families (Mohammad, 1995).

After the Discovery of Oil

Oil was the main factor of change in the society. All aspects of life were changed after the discovery and marketing of oil in 1963. At this point, the economy started to grow very rapidly. This marked the beginning of the modernization of the country along with another significant factor, which was the unionizing of individual states (Abu Dhabi, Dubai, Sharja, Ajman, Ras Al Kayma, Om Al Quwain, and Fujaira) into a single country on the second of December 1971. This unification initiated even more changes.

The most important processes of change at this stage as Helmi
(1999) has described:

1. The internal migration from rural and desert areas to the center of the cities.

2. The external migration from other countries (Arabic and non-Arabic countries).

3. Establishment of the political, educational, financial and health institutions, and other public facilities.

4. Changes in the human ecological shapes of the society, such as the movement of inhabitants throughout the desert and variance in the ethnicity and cultures within the society (Helmi, E. 1999).

There were also many economic changes in this stage such as:

1. Setting a goal of Increasing the Gross Domestic Product to reach 25% by the end of the 1980s from the original 5% in the beginning of the same decade (Abu Al Eneen, 1999). After this increase, centered on the oil, the emphasis moved to other industrial goods such as food, beverages, tobacco, and metals. The Manufacturing Value Added (MVA) in the same year was $2700 million based on the oil price in 1980 (Abu Al Eneen, 1999).

2. Increasing Arabic and foreign investments.

3. Increasing population and foreign labor through immigration and migrant work from many foreign countries.

4. Established new social groups: Civil servants; who changed from diving, pasturage, and agriculture work to governmental jobs with a regular salary. New merchants, especially in the importing of
goods, who played a main role in connecting local markets with global markets, and immigrants, who came to the oil countries after the discovery of oil (Abu Al Eneen, 1999).

5. The changing economy controlled by a single government.

The changes in the social structure of the U.A.E. after the discovery of oil can be outlined by:

1. The movement of the family structure from an extended family to a nuclear family.

2. Changing functions of the family.

3. Increasing in the number of exogamous marriage (marriage outside the family).

4. Increasing age of marriage for both sexes.

5. Having both monogamous and polygynous marriages (husband with multiple wives), especially after the increase in wealth.

6. The role of women started to change, especially when women became educated and entered the labor force. Many women now participated in easing the family's financial burden.

7. Increasing the formal education with both sexes going to colleges including graduate school (See Table 1).
Table 1

Population (10+ Years) by Education and Sex

<table>
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<th>Education</th>
<th>Males</th>
<th>Females</th>
<th>Total</th>
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<tr>
<td>Illiterate</td>
<td>294,949</td>
<td>97,432</td>
<td>392,381</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Read &amp; Write</td>
<td>235,561</td>
<td>102,196</td>
<td>337,757</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Primary</td>
<td>245,985</td>
<td>97,832</td>
<td>343,817</td>
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<tr>
<td>Preparatory</td>
<td>224,137</td>
<td>92,958</td>
<td>317,095</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Secondary</td>
<td>201,381</td>
<td>114,135</td>
<td>315,516</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>University</td>
<td>40,194</td>
<td>24,731</td>
<td>64,925</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>University</td>
<td>127,343</td>
<td>61,496</td>
<td>188,839</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Above University*</td>
<td>11,154</td>
<td>3,359</td>
<td>14,513</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td><strong>Total</strong></td>
<td>1,380,704</td>
<td>594,139</td>
<td>1,974,843</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

Source: Ministry of Planning (Final Results, 1995 Census)

*Graduate Education

Socioeconomic Development Indicators Compared With Other Countries


Demographers know the residents of the United Arab Emirates generally rank third (after Japan and the United States) among the world’s top non-European nations in annual surveys of per capita gross domestic product. First time visitors in the Middle East also note that two U.A.E. cities, the ports of Abu Dhabi and Dubai, have the most spectacular urban skylines in the region, comparable to the familiar row of glass and steel towers rising abruptly from the water’s edge in Hong Kong and Manhattan. Middle East experts also marvel at the tens of thousands of acres of dense green date plantations, vast fields of wheat and vegetables that make the country self-
sufficient in those respects, sprawling grassy city parks planted with flowering tropical trees and shrubs, and seemingly endless windbreaks along the highways of arid lands - trees and shrubs - all in sun-baked wind-blown desert sand dunes.

There are many socioeconomic development indicators that could be used to illustrate the U.A.E. society. For example, according to the Ministry of Planning in the 1999 estimates, the dependency ratio (inactive Population/labor force) is 74%. The average household size in 1995 was 5.3 compared with 5.2 in 1985 (Ministry of Planning, 1999).

When comparisons between the U.A.E. and other countries such as the United States, United Kingdom, and Japan are made, the indicators show that the U.A.E. is not only a developed country, but it has also achieved in thirty years what most countries took much longer to achieve (See Table 2).

Table 2 shows that the U.A.E. has similarities with countries in the case of some indicators and has differences with the other countries in other indicators. The similarities with other countries are in the age bracket of the 15-64 year olds, which is 66%, but U.AE. has a big difference in the age bracket of 0-14 year olds, which is 32%. So the U.A.E. has a higher percentage of children compared with the U.S, the U.K, and Japan, and a lower percent of the elderly.

The U.A.E. has a higher population growth rate of 1.78% compared with 0.87% for the U.S., 0.25% for U.K, and 0.2% for Japan.
Table 2

Selected Socioeconomic Indicators of the United Arab Emirates Compared with Other Countries-1998

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Indicators</th>
<th>U.A.E.</th>
<th>U.S.</th>
<th>U.K.</th>
<th>Japan</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Age Structure:</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>0-14 years</td>
<td>32%</td>
<td>22%</td>
<td>19%</td>
<td>15%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>15-64 years</td>
<td>66%</td>
<td>66%</td>
<td>65%</td>
<td>69%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>65 years and over</td>
<td>2%</td>
<td>12%</td>
<td>16%</td>
<td>16%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Population Growth Rate (Annual)</td>
<td>1.78%</td>
<td>0.87%</td>
<td>0.25%</td>
<td>0.2%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Birth Rate (births/1,000 pop.)</td>
<td>18.61</td>
<td>14.4</td>
<td>12.01</td>
<td>10.26</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Net Migration Rate (migrants/1,000 pop.)</td>
<td>2.25</td>
<td>3</td>
<td>1.2</td>
<td>-0.36</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Sex Ratio (male(s)/female(s)):</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>At birth</td>
<td>1.05</td>
<td>1.05</td>
<td>1.05</td>
<td>1.05</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Under 15 years</td>
<td>1.04</td>
<td>1.05</td>
<td>1.05</td>
<td>1.05</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>15-64 years</td>
<td>1.86</td>
<td>.99</td>
<td>1.01</td>
<td>1.01</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>65 years and over</td>
<td>2.10</td>
<td>0.70</td>
<td>0.70</td>
<td>0.71</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Infant Mortality Rate deaths/1,000 live births</td>
<td>14.77</td>
<td>6.44</td>
<td>5.87</td>
<td>4.1</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Life expectancy at birth</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Total pop.</td>
<td>74.93</td>
<td>76.13</td>
<td>77.19</td>
<td>80.00</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Male</td>
<td>73.5</td>
<td>72.85</td>
<td>74.57</td>
<td>76.91</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Female</td>
<td>76.44</td>
<td>79.58</td>
<td>79.96</td>
<td>83.25</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Total Crude Fertility Rate (children born/woman)</td>
<td>3.56</td>
<td>2.07</td>
<td>1.7</td>
<td>1.46</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>GDP Real Growth Rate (1997 est.)</td>
<td>5%</td>
<td>3.8%</td>
<td>3.5%</td>
<td>0.9%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>BDP-Per Capita:</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Purchasing Power Parity (1997 est.)</td>
<td>$24,000</td>
<td>$30,200</td>
<td>$21,200</td>
<td>$24,500</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

Source: Central Intelligence Agency (1999).
The total fertility rate in the U.A.E. is 3.56% compared with Japan, which has 1.46%, the U.K., which has 1.7%, and the U.S., which has 2.07%. Comparing the births per 1000 of population, the U.A.E. has the highest rate of 18.61 compared with the other countries.

The sex ratio at birth and under age 15 are the same for all countries 1.05, but the big difference is the sex ratio of the 65 years age group which is 2.1 in the U.A.E. compared with 0.7 in all other countries. It also has the highest sex ratio of males who are between 15 and 64 compared with other countries (U.A.E. 1.89, U.K 1.10, Japan 1.01, and U.S .99). This may be due to the higher rate of male immigrants compared to female immigrants.

The total life expectancy at birth for both males and females in the U.A.E. is 74.93 years, which is considered a high number even for a developed country (Libya is 65.44 years, Albania is 68.64 years, Somalia is 46.23, and South Africa is 55. 68). However, the infant mortality rate is very high compared with the other countries 14.77 compared to 4.1 in Japan, 5.87 in the U.K, and 6.44 in the U.S. (CIA, 1999).

Looking at the migrant rates per 1000 population, the U.A.E. has lower rates than the U.S. which has 3 migrants per 1000, and higher than the U.K which has 1.2, and Japan which has -0.36. The U.A.E. is considered a rich country that attracts labor forces to work inside the country, especially since the U.A.E. is a young country, which depends on the foreign labor to participate in social
Regarding the economic level of the U.A.E., the purchasing power parity is similar with Japan and other countries in the table (U.A.E. is $24,000, U.S is $30,200, U.K is $21,200, and Japan is $24,500). The GDP real growth rate, which calculates GDP (Gross Domestic Product) growth on an annual basis adjusted for inflation and expressed as a percent (CIA, 1999), is the highest for the U.A.E. (5%) compared with the 3.8% U.S. and 3.5% U.K., and Japan 0.9%.

Summary

This chapter delineates the demographic, social, and historical background of the U.A.E. before and after the discovery of oil. It also presents the social and economic indicators of the U.A.E. compared with the U.S, U.K, and Japan in order to gain a better understanding of the social and economic situation in the society.
Women Before the Discovery of Oil

Many sociologists are looking at the stage prior to the discovery of oil as a traditional stage in an age of the society when living conditions were very simple. In this stage, the position of a woman in the family was limited. The role of a woman was based on taking care of her husband and children. A husband in the traditional family had complete authority in the family. He was the main supporter and also the political leader of the family. If he had enough economic power, experience, and many male children, he would participate in all family affairs including the type of work, places that his family members could go, the type of mates they would marry, and the type of roles and positions they could take in their own future, especially in the desert society (Al Qasemi, 1998).

Women in the diving society also had a better position than the desert society, because of their level of responsibility during the absences of her husband. He may have been gone three to four months at a time while diving for pearls in the sea. So, women in this society were taking care of children, providing them with basic needs, receiving guests, and making family decisions. Sometimes women worked making handcrafted items such as dressmaking and straw spinning to supplement the family income.
Women in the rural society had a better position in the family than the desert society because they had a larger role in the economic side of the family. For instance, they helped in the production process in agriculture, brought water from remote sources, cared for animal husbandry and dairy products, and raised the family income by making simple handmade items. This economic role was reflected in her social position within the family (Al Qasemi, 1998).

Even though women have participated in raising the living conditions of the family, from the sociological perspective this participation was limited compared to the economic role of men. Men took many risks, such as diving for pearls in the sea for a period of three to four months. Because of this type of work, they gained more authority and prestige than women (Gilman, 1994).

In the traditional society there were no formal schools. Families sent their children of both genders to a teacher called al mutawa who taught them basic religious information, the principles of math, and reading and writing.

Women used to get married at an early age. The priority of the marriage relationship was the kinship relationship and the blood-line of the groom, especially the grooms who were first cousins. A woman did not have any right for selection of her mate. Her father and more often her older brothers were the ones who decided when she would marry and who she would marry. Her refusing of the groom did not change anything. Women had to obey their fathers or the one who represented them, such as their uncles (father’s brothers) or their
old brothers.

Women After the Discovery of Oil

The economic and social developments after the discovery of the oil have changed all aspects of life. These changes have shifted the roles and the positions of women both inside and outside the family.

The economic and social changes in the entire society have influenced women's roles and positions in many ways. One of these factors is education.

Women and men have equal educational opportunities in the U.A.E. Moreover, statistics show that females' attendance in the educational institutions is higher than that of males. The census of the Ministry of Planning clearly showed that female enrollment at the university in 1997/1998 was higher than male. Of the total number of students enrolled at the university, 72.9% were women (Ministry of Planning, 1999). Moreover, 66.4% of total graduates of colleges and higher education were women in 1997/1998 (Ministry of Planning, 1999).

Employment opportunities for women is another factor that has affected the roles and positions of women. The educational opportunities currently provided for women allow them to participate in the labor force and to change their social position inside and outside the family, even though the percentage of participation of women in the labor force is low (11.6%). It may be that women still
prefer to work in places such as the public, personal and social services (Aisa, 1994). To illustrate this, 70.5% of women work in public, social, and personal services (Ministry of Planning, 1999).

The third factor is communication with the outside world. After the discovery of oil, the entire society, including the economic and social sectors, opened to the outside world. This opening to the world has influenced the culture and value systems of the society. The U.A.E. society is now in contact with both the Arabic and non-Arabic cultures, especially because the country uses foreign labor to participate in the economic development of the country. Television has also opened up the western world to the citizens of the U.A.E. The changing of the social structure from a tribal society to a developed country influenced the social, political, and economic aspects of the society. All of these changing circumstances have influenced the people in the county and created conflicts between the conservative values of the traditional age and the new values of the modern society. Women have also changed through their involvement in this process of modernization. On one hand the women encourage the new values that support their improved social position and frees them from the patriarchal authority, and on the other hand, they still want to maintain many other features of the traditional cultural system (Al Qasemi, 1998).

Despite the fact that life in the U.A.E. is surrounded by new cultural artifacts such as skyscrapers and cars, there are still a lot of people who have traditional and conservative mentalities,
especially when it comes to the woman and marriage issues.

Marriage is one of the critical issues in the U.A.E. Since women have been allowed access to education and work, they have a different position inside the family. Even if they cannot choose their own mate, they can still refuse anyone they do not want to commit to. The kinship and bloodline of the groom are still important considerations for the woman's family. The family still supervises, and in some cases may force the marriage of their daughter to the man they choose. Looking at the census of 1995, one can see the differences in the mate selection process among different areas of the country (See Table 3).

Consanguineous marriage (marriage within family) is less common among urban couples (38%) than in rural areas where nearly 44% of couples have a blood relationship to their marriage partner (Fikri & Farid, n.d). The results also indicate that in all the regions the popular choice for marriage couples is to have no blood relationship, which means a huge change in the marital choice of partners from the traditional stage.

As a result of education, participation in the labor force, and contacts with the outside world, women now participate in many social and political institutions. For example, the first lady of the U.A.E. established the U.A.E. Women's Federation in the 1972. It is an autonomous body with its own budget.
Table 3

Percent Distribution of Ever-Married Women Under 50 Years of Age

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Background/Characteristics</th>
<th>First Cousin</th>
<th>Other Relations</th>
<th>No Relation</th>
<th>Total Women</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Residence: Urban</td>
<td>22.8</td>
<td>15.1</td>
<td>62.1</td>
<td>100 3,969</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Rural</td>
<td>27.4</td>
<td>16.4</td>
<td>56.2</td>
<td>100 1,776</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Region: Abu Dhabi</td>
<td>25.4</td>
<td>22.2</td>
<td>52.4</td>
<td>100 1,155</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Al Ain</td>
<td>32.7</td>
<td>16.7</td>
<td>50.6</td>
<td>100 860</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Dubai</td>
<td>18.6</td>
<td>14.8</td>
<td>66.8</td>
<td>100 1,214</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Sharjah</td>
<td>22.4</td>
<td>12.9</td>
<td>64.7</td>
<td>100 830</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Ajman &amp; UAQ</td>
<td>21.9</td>
<td>5.7</td>
<td>72.4</td>
<td>100 453</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Ras Al Kayma</td>
<td>25.2</td>
<td>16.6</td>
<td>58.2</td>
<td>100 919</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Fujairah</td>
<td>23.9</td>
<td>8.6</td>
<td>67.5</td>
<td>100 314</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Work Status: Working</td>
<td>19.9</td>
<td>14.7</td>
<td>65.4</td>
<td>100 491</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Not Working</td>
<td>24.6</td>
<td>15.6</td>
<td>59.8</td>
<td>100 5,254</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

Source: Fikri, M. & Farid, M. (No Date). The Executive Board of Council of Health Ministers of GCC States.

This federation is concerned with women's development in all life aspects, in that, it has many sectors such as cultural affairs, heritage and the arts, social affairs, religious affairs, and mother and child care. It conducts activities in the local areas, national level, and international level. It represents the U.A.E. women in all international conferences and it is also involved with the United Nations development programs in the country. In recent years, the federation has made efforts to involve women in the Federal National Council which represents the U.A.E. citizens in front of the government.
It is not just the U.A.E. Women's Federation that pays specific attention to the interests of the U.A.E. women and children. Currently, in the Ministry of Labor and Social Affairs, the Social Affairs section is headed by the country's top female civil servant. The Ministry is responsible for paying welfare assistance to those in need, including widows and divorced women as well as the poorer members of society. It also makes specific allocations to women's organizations in the country. The Social Security Law which came into effect in 1977 enumerates the following groups of people as being among those entitled to financial assistance from the state: the totally disabled, unmarried women who are "old maids," orphans, those with limited income, married male students, the old people who do not have supporters, divorced women, women separated from their husbands, families of those serving prison sentences, and those married to foreign nationals.

The aim behind the Social Security Law is to guarantee help for individuals and families who are facing seemingly insurmountable financial problems while simultaneously trying to help them become productive members of the society once again.

Summary

This chapter discusses the roles and positions of the U.A.E. women before and after the discovery of oil. There is a shift from the traditional age when women had subservient roles under the authority of men to an age where the women have different roles inside
and outside the family due to their education, work, and communication with the outside world after the discovery of oil in the U.A.E.
CHAPTER IV
LITERATURE REVIEW

There are many studies of divorce in the U.A.E. Some of these studies take the divorce phenomenon as a primary topic and others take it as a secondary topic or as a subtitle of a primary topic. In this chapter, both types of studies will be included. Moreover, studies from other Arabic countries will be included in order to compare the U.A.E. society with other Arabic societies concerning divorce.

Primary Studies in the U.A.E.

The 1981 study of "Divorced women in the United Arab Emirates: Statistical and Social Study," by the labor and social affairs ministry concluded that 70.4% of divorced women in the sample had not been asked for their opinions concerning their husbands, it was a family decision. Only 29.6% had been asked their opinion about getting married to their husbands. The study also concluded that conflicts between spouses started in the engagement stage for 3.4% of the spouses studied, 48.7% of the spouses started having conflicts in the early stage of the marriage (before the spouses had children), and 48% of the spouses started having conflicts after the children were born. Of those who had conflicts before having children, 25.5% of the conflicts started because of lack of children and
33.1% because of disagreements between both spouses. The study also focused on the reasons of the divorce and it showed that the major reasons of divorce were that the husband married another woman 31%, the weakness of the financial ability of the husband 29.7%, sterility of the wife 23.4%, family involvements 21.4%, despotism of the husband 16%, and alcoholism of the husbands 12.8%. The study showed that husbands had initiated the divorce process in 59.6% of the cases, and 34.9% of the cases were initiated by wives. 2.7% of the cases were divorced by the mutual consent, and 2.8% of cases were divorced for other reasons (MLSA, 1981).

In the study, "Divorce in the Emirates Society: The Reasons and Social Impacts," (1998), Rashed Mohammed Rashed, Adel Al Kubaisi, and Omran Tahboob indicated that the higher the education people has, the more likely they were to divorce early. They indicated that 91% of the divorced spouses chose to get married in the traditional ways. Also they indicated 43% of the wives initiated the divorce process, while 39% were initiated by husbands, 12% of the divorces were by mutual consent, 3.7% of all divorces were initiated by the husband's family and 2.1% by the wife's family. They also indicated that the reasons of divorce were related to changes in the values of the society and the major problems that cause the divorce are alcoholism of the husband, mistreatment, insincerity of wives, insincerity of husbands, getting married to another woman, family involvement, husbands' neglect of family duties, and the husbands failure to fulfill his financial obligations (Rahsed,
Comparing the two studies mentioned above, one can see how the changes in the society have influenced the process of initiation of divorce. According to the first study, the husbands initiated the divorce, 59.6% in 1981. However, in the second study (1998) only 39% of husbands initiated the divorce. On the other hand, by 1998 43% of divorces were initiated by the wives compared to 34.9% in the 1981 study.

These changes were related to women’s social position, their education and their chance to work that led to a shift in roles with women having more decision-making ability in family matters.

In their study "A Diagnostical Study of Divorce Phenomena in the United Arab Emirates: An Empirical Psychological Educational Study," (1987) by Faisal Al Zarad and Atoof Yaseen identified the following factors related to divorce: Increased consumers’ demands because of fashion imitation and "trend to pretend", polygynous marriage and the husband’s failure to act in a fair way between wives, husband being away from the house, wasting money, family involvements, endless fighting, stubbornness and mental fixation, ambitions and not being content in life, the weakness of religious restraint, and a difference in age (Al Zarad & Yassen, 1987).

In a study "Divorce Phenomenon in the United Arab Emirates: Reasons, Attitudes, Risks and Solutions," (2001) Abdel Razak Al Maliki concluded that 76% of divorced women are under 40 years old. He also concluded that there was a correlation between lower edu-
cation of the woman and the increasing cases of divorce, which is an opposite finding to the study of "Divorce in the Emirates Society: The Reasons and Social Impacts," by Rashed Mohammed, Adel Al Kubaisi, and Tahboob. Moreover, 69% of divorced women were not employed and 65% of them were supported by others. Moreover, 45% of divorced women initiated the divorce process, 16% of divorced women shared their husband's divorce decision, and in 39% of divorces the husbands initiated the divorce process. Furthermore, the study concluded that 50% of divorced women got their divorce because of mistreatment by their husbands, 22% because their husbands got married again, and 10% because of financial problems of the husband. Maliki also gives other general reasons of divorce, such as the poor mortality of the husband, drinking alcohol, family involvement, sterility, the difference in the educational level between spouses, and not knowing the other partner (Al Maliki, 2001).

Secondary Studies in the U.A.E.

There are also other researchers who have studied divorce as a subtopic. One of these studies titled, "Those Who Married to Foreign Women: A Statistical and Social Study of Circumstance of Those Who Married to Foreign Women in the United Arab Emirates," by Belal Mohammed and Taha Husain, indicated that the divorce factors from men's perspectives are different than what was concluded from the study of "Divorced Women in the United Arab Emirates" (1998). This study showed that 79% of those who divorced their wives got married
to foreign women, and 62% of those who got married to foreign women were married before that. Sixty percent of those who married foreign women had divorced their local wives. The study showed the husband got married to a foreign wife because he considered her as an alternative wife when conflict inside the family occurred (Rashed, Al Kubaisi, & Tahboob, 1998).

As an alternative wife, the husband would often select a young woman whom he could mold, and who would obey him. Because this woman was foreign, she was also not expensive to obtain (as in dowry gifts). The factors involved in divorce of married men to foreign women are disagreement between spouses (51.4%), family involvements (26%), insufficient reproduction (19%), financial disagreements (10.1%), differences in age (7.3%), the desire of rejuvenation (4%), and other reasons (23.5%). Other reasons include sickness, death, wife does not take care of her husband’s affairs, wife does not obey her husband’s orders, wife does not want to live with her husband’s family, and a demanding wife (Rashed, Al Kubaisi, & Tahboob, 1998).

Both studies showed family involvement had an effect on divorce rate. In the case of women, 21.4% cited family involvement as the reason of divorce and men did so in 27.7% of the cases (Rashed, Al Kubaisi, & Tahboob, 1998). This is the commonly cited reason of divorce in all studies. It is a cultural phenomenon that family tries to stay involved in its children’s lives. Children try to be obedient and accept their authority, but in this age, being inde-
dependent from the family is the most important factor that both men and women try to maintain in their marital life.

One study, "Familial Problems and the Socialization," (1993) by Abas Ahmad Mohammad, concluded that these familial problems affect the socialization process. He concluded that divorce leads to a breakdown in marriage and the family in general and has negative effects on socializations specifically. That is, 52% of children live with their mothers and 21% live with their fathers. Half of the children of divorced women are under 10 years old. Moreover, 83% of the children of divorced women are under 20 years old, which means most of them are children or adults who may not have received adequate care from their parents, especially when their parents remarried again. If they did not receive adequate care from them, it could lead to deviant behaviors such as stealing, vandalism, and drug using (Mohammed, 1993).

Studies of Divorce in Some Arabic Societies

Divorce is a human phenomenon that can be found in many societies in different degrees. Following are some studies in Oman, Kuwait, Saudi Arabic, and Syria about divorce, which will demonstrate a cultural connection in divorce patterns.

"A Comprehensive Study about Marriage Issues and Problems in the Gulf Societies." (2001) by the Ministry of Labor & Social Affairs and Vocational Training concluded that divorce is definitely a problem in Oman. The Ministry of Local Economics showed that the
total number of divorced women in 1993 was 13,948 which was equal to 5% of those who were married or had married before. Moreover, the social security census showed that the number of divorced women who got support from social security was increasing each year. For example, the percentage of increase from 1995 to 1999 was 9%. The reasons for divorce in Oman are different for women and men. For divorced women show the reasons of divorce were a husband getting married again, friction with husband’s family, husband’s disregard and debt. In addition, reasons mentioned less often were differences in age and education, sterility, wife’s health conditions, and a husband staying outside of home for long time (Ministry of Labor & Social Affairs and Vocational Training [MLSAVT], 2001). Divorced men stated that the reasons of divorce were tenacity of the wife, the wife being careless of her husband’s requirements and her family involvement. Other reasons mentioned less often included husband’s family not being happy about the wife, getting married again, wife’s sterility or just having girls, and differences in age and education (MLSAVT, 2001).

Another study, “Woman and Divorce in the Kuwait’s Society: the psychological, social, and economic dimensions,” (1999) by Fahad Al Thageb, showed that the rate of divorce in Kuwait in 1988 was 5.2 per 1000 population. The study also showed that 70% of those who got married because of their families’ desire asked for divorce. In contrast, 48% of those who got married because their own desire asked for divorce. The reasons for divorce in Kuwait as this study
showed, were the husband’s mistreatment, not having an independent home and consequent conflict with husband’s family, sexual problems, not having interaction regarding couples’ financial problems, polygynous marriage, unconvinced partner or dislike of the other partner, problems of psychological and physical illness, and jealousy and doubt (Al Thageb, 1999).

The study “Divorce and Social Change in the Saudis’ Society, an Empirical Study in Jeddah City,” (1990) by Tharwat Shalabi showed that the divorce rate is increasing. The study showed similar reasons for divorce: mistreatment of wife (34%), family involvement (17%), and cheating (17%) (Shalabi, 1990).

“Reasons of Divorce in Syrian’s Society,” (1994) by Amaal Abed Al Raheem and Adnan Muslim showed that mate selection in Syria was conducted by the family in 42.6% of the cases, 20.3% by neighbors, 11.3% by a woman matchmaker and 7.2% while at a university. More than half of the sample did not have a separate home. The study also stated that reasons for divorce included lack of toleration of married life (33.2%), family pressure (20.1%), and dissatisfaction with sexual relationship (3.5%) (Abed Al Raheem & Muslim, 1994).

“Divorce Phenomenon in Jordan,” (1986) by Mohammed Barhoom showed that the reasons for divorce in Jordan were family involvement (37.6%), mistreatment (23.3%), a husband having other women in his life (19.8%), sexual problems (8.5%), economic problems (5.2%), sterility (3.4%), and not having male children (2.3%) (Barhoom, 1986).
The reasons for divorce in most of the Arabic societies are about the same. They generally include mistreatment, family involvements, polygyny, and mate selection in traditional ways such as family, neighbors, and women matchmakers.

These studies in the U.A.E., Gulf societies, and Arabic societies have concentrated on searching the reasons for divorce. The investigator of this study tried to find a study about the process of divorce (as opposed to factors involved), but was unable to do so. Thus, it can be stated that this study extends beyond the usual scope of studies concerning divorce in that it will consider not only factors - analyses of divorce, but also more specifically, the process of divorce in the U.A.E.

Sociology of Divorce

In her study of uncoupling in the U.S. (Vaughan, 1986), Diane Vaughan examined the process of how relationships came apart, a process she called 'Uncoupling'. In this study, Vaughan interviewed 103 people who came from a variety of social backgrounds and educational levels. There was diversity in this group in regards to age, gender, sexual orientation, and whether subjects were married or living together. Initially, Vaughan interviewed people she knew and from these people she gathered additional references for subjects. She found potential subjects in the newspaper's divorce column, by advertising, and by recruiting from singles groups, counseling centers and lesbian and gay organizations. She also interviewed pro-
professional counselors, such as social workers, psychologists, psychiatrists and clergy (Vaughan, 1986).

The questions she devised were designed to find out how divorce or uncoupling came about. For instance, she asked people to consider the first moment they sensed that there was a problem in the relationship. Then she asked them to write down events in chronological order as a way to follow the process. In order to keep the interview experience separate from the subject's experience of divorce she spoke with them about the interview after they completed the process (Vaughan, 1986).

By having her subjects examine their experiences from the first moment they realized there was something wrong, Vaughan was able to note many similarities and patterns in the uncoupling process, regardless of sexual orientation, age, marital status, or gender. She stated that her intention was not to reduce these widely differing experiences down to the samenesses and has also pointed out differences in her study. Vaughan looked at the process from the viewpoint of both the initiator of the process of divorce and the one who was left behind.

Vaughan found that there were similarities among the participants in her study. For example, regardless of gender, orientation, or social class, one partner began the process when he or she felt that they no longer "fit" in the relationship. Interestingly, many of the subjects felt that there were problems before the move-in or marriage, some at the wedding or on the honeymoon. Another simi-
larity was that the partner who was first unhappy tried to change the other partner, or sought help from the other to change the relationship.

What frequently happened, however, was that the initiator would keep their dissatisfaction to themselves, and would instead complain about everyday problems. Often, the initiator did not realize that their dissatisfaction was with the relationship, instead believing that they were actually unhappy because of the everyday problems they were experiencing. And, of course, the partner could respond in many ways to these complaints, but since these were not the true cause of unhappiness, no response would work.

Vaughan found that the initial displays of dissatisfaction were usually subtle because the initiator either wanted to avoid confrontation or was not sure about how they would fare outside of the relationship. Some of the initiators also still felt protective of their partners, did not want to hurt them, or did not want the guilt associated with initiating a separation. "[Or] they may hope that the bond can be transformed in some way that makes staying in touch possible. Direct confrontation raises the possibility of total loss and the initiator may not be ready for that" (Vaughan, 1987, p. 94).

Interestingly, the partner might have seen signs of the initiator's discontent but allowed them to slip into the everyday world, apparently unnoticed. Many of the partners held particular expectations on duration of marriage "The idea of divorce never occurred to
me," or "I was sure I was going to be married for the rest of my life" (Vaughan, 1986, p. 100). They followed these thoughts with actions by actually helping the initiator keep their secrets by not asking too many questions for fear that they might find out more than they wanted to. Often, the initiator would not open up completely until the cost of staying in the relationship outweighed that of leaving (Vaughan, 1987, p. 100).

Once the idea of separation was out in the open, other concerns came into play. The initiator may have been concerned that the partner was too dependent on him/her, and so would prepare their partner for a life on his/her own. Generally, before the separation actually took place, the initiator contacted attorneys about procedures, counselors, and possibly realtors to consider alternative living arrangements. "Many initiators are prepared to cope with all the costs of leaving except one: the social consequences of being responsible for the break-up" (Vaughan, 1986, p. 127).

The initiator generally wondered how the partner, the children (if there were children), and friends and relatives would react. And these concerns often held the initiator in place for quite some time. Avoidance of guilt over the initiation of divorce is a large motivator in this society. Frequently, the initiator so dreaded this guilt that they worked to make the partner take the blame. Vaughan found three examples of how initiators accomplished this. The first example she called the "fatal mistake." In this, the initiator showed his/her discontent more obviously and more frequently until the
partner would overreact and commit a fatal mistake. The initiator then grasped the mistake and used this as the cause for his/her desire to leave.

The second method Vaughan found for shifting blame was decreased interaction, in which the initiator found ways to gradually spend less time with the partner - sometimes by withdrawing psychologically at home and sometimes by spending more time away from home.

The third method, rule violation, was used to shock the partner into action. The initiator might have broken a rule (spoken or unspoken) that dealt with fair treatment of each other in order to get the partner's attention. Interestingly, the more public these violations of the rules were the less tolerable they were, and the most public violation mentioned was that of having sex with other people.

Once the confrontation stage was reached, both partners generally acknowledged that the relationship was in trouble. However, while the partner still wanted the relationship to work, the initiator had already passed this point of hopefulness. The initiator had already tried to help the relationship when he or she first recognized signs of trouble. This stage did allow negotiation, but again the two partners focused on different areas of concern. The initiator had focused on the bad elements in the relationship for quite some time, thus this focus continued through the negotiation stage.
On the other hand, the partners generally focused on the good times and worked to change themselves and the relationship to better meet the needs of the initiators. By this point, however, many of the relationships were beyond repair. Sometimes the efforts of the partner were enough to bring the relationship back together. Sometimes these changes were only temporary. Regarding a complete recovery of the relationship Vaughan states, "those who claim victory are a select group" (Vaughan, 1986, p. 159).

There were many ways in which the partners tried to keep the relationship going. Often these included changes in their actions in the home and reactions to the initiator. For example, the partners may have tried to make life more comfortable for the initiators "by taking on more of the household chores, catering to particular wishes, allowing free pursuit of alternatives, giving attention and granting solitude" when sought (Vaughan, 1986, p. 167). Other partners demonstrated signs of emotional weakness or self-destructive tendencies and thus encouraged the initiators to stay out of a sense of guilt. Both of these responses generally resulted in temporary changes in the initiator. But even if he or she stayed with the relationship physically at this point, emotionally the distance would have been too great to recover.

The open conflict allowed for negotiation. This time of negotiation served a larger purpose related to the social expectations regarding separation. Vaughan states, "[I]f both partners have tried and failed, and if both agree the relationship is over, the
potential negative social consequences are reduced" (1986, p. 170).
In the instance of a trial separation, the relationship became pub-
lic. Up until this point, troubles within the relationship had been
private. So much so that sometimes the children who lived in the
household were unaware of the impending separation. Frequently, the
separation made it more difficult to reconcile.

As these couples continued to uncouple, the partner began
his or her own transition. This usually included sorting through
memories of discussions, arguments, and so forth, looking for rea-
sons for the deterioration of the relationship. The partner then
began to see (and most often missed) signs of trouble in the
relationship. The partner was then able to separate emotionally from
the initiator by redefining some of those moments in more realistic
terms and by finding negative elements in the initiator. Thus, the
initiator separated emotionally first, then physically, whereas the
partner has had to follow the opposite track. In order to succeed as
an individual, the partner has had to reorder the chronology of the
relationship in order to legitimate its demise. This then allowed
the partners to create their individual identity, something that the
initiators may have begun much earlier, when he or she first became
aware of the problems in the relationship.

According to Vaughan (1986),
uncoupling is generally and correctly perceived by those who
experience it as woefully chaotic and disorderly. Yet, despite
the dubious gifts of confusion, anger, sorrow, and pain be-
stowed on both partners, there is an underlying order that ap-
ppears across all experiences, regardless of sexual preference,
regardless of the unique characteristics of the partner and
their relationship. Amidst diversity and disorder, patterns and natural sequences of behavior prevail. Each partner redefines self, other, and relationship. Each partner is in the social process of mourning, finding confidants and transitional people, each experiences the sifting and sorting friendship groups, and so on. (p. 290)

To summarize Vaughan’s findings, the research investigator created the following chart to illustrate the process of uncoupling regarding Vaughan’s findings (See Figure 1).

The investigator of the current study will try to replicate Vaughan’s work conducted in the U.S. society to the extent possible in the U.A.E society. The questions in this study will similar to the study of uncoupling, however, the group will be more narrowly defined. In the current study, the investigator will interview just married women who have dissolved their marriages by divorce, specifically those women who initiated the process by asking their husbands for a divorce. The original study could not be replicated in all respects in the U.A.E. For example, female investigators will face difficulties interviewing males, or gays and lesbians. The questions purpose of the that this study will investigate will be similar to Vaughan’s questions: What are the processes of divorce? What are the connections between particular social, economic and cultural environments in the society and the divorced women who live in them? Why do intimate relationships, such as marriage, break up? And when do women reach the point where they cannot stay with their husbands anymore?
A partner feels unhappy in the relationship

He or she displays indirect signals of discontent

He or she covers up the discontent

Both partners try to resolve the issues

How intimate relationships come apart?

Uncoupling

Partner’s transition

Going public

Temporary separation

Figure 1. Process of Uncoupling.
Summary

In this chapter, a review of the divorce studies in the U.A.E. and other Arabic societies has been presented. Two kinds of studies, primary and secondary, have been discussed. These two kinds of studies examined factors of divorce in the U.A.E., Oman, Kuwait, Saudi Arabia, Syria and Jordan.

All Arabic societies deal with similar divorce factors or variables, though to varying degrees. Again, these factors include mistreatment, family involvement, polygyny, sterility, and traditional methods of mate selection. These studies have examined the factors involved in divorce.

This chapter also discusses research carried out by Diane Vaughan regarding social aspects of separation within the United States. Vaughan also includes the study of the process of separation. The current study examines the process of divorce in the U.A.E.
CHAPTER V

THEORETICAL PERSPECTIVES

Islamic Perspective on Marriage and Divorce

In this section, the Islamic perspective will be searched as the ideological background of the social and cultural context of the U.A.E. society. For Muslims, the Shari'ah is the law of God. God alone is the giver of law; the function of man is to comprehend the law and to obey its divine provisions. The Shari'ah covers all aspects of life and every field of law—constitutional, international, criminal, civil and commercial—but at its very heart lies the law of the family (El Alami & Hinchcliffe, 1996).

**Islamic Perspective on Marriage**

Marriage in Islamic law is a contract that includes an offer (ijab) by one party and acceptance (qabul) by the other. There is no particular form of words that is required, as long as the intention to conclude a marriage contract is clear. This process of the offer and the acceptance must take place in the same meeting (majlis) and in the presence of two adult male witnesses (El Alami & Hinchcliffe, 1996).

Many countries in the Muslim world have required the registration of marriage and in these countries obviously the best means of proving a marriage is by the production of the certificate of mar-
riage (El Alami & Hinchcliffe, 1996).

All conditions of man and woman have to be included in the marriage contract. Bride dowry and (Mu’aker) amount of money or property that the husband has to pay for his wife after the divorce must also to be included in the marriage contracts.

The two principle factors of marriage in Islamic law are the duty imposed upon the husband to pay a dowry to the wife, and the duty of the husband to maintain his wife as long as she fulfills all her duties to her husband. According to El Alami and Hinchcliffe, (1996),

Maintenance includes the provision of food, clothing and lodging for the wife. The law requires that the dwelling that a husband provides for his wife must fulfill certain requirements. It must be safe structurally and situated in a safe location so that the wife is not afraid to go outside. Further it must be free from the presence of other members of the husband’s family. This means that if a man has several wives he must provide each one with a separate lodging. The only exception to this rule is that the husband can require the wife to share a house with the infant children of a former marriage. (p. 20)

**Islamic Perspective on Divorce**

Marriage in Islam is a bond that should not be broken except for in compelling circumstances. Spouses are instructed to pursue all possible remedies whenever their marriages are in danger. Divorce is not to be resorted to except when there is no other way. In other words, Islam recognizes divorce, yet it discourages it by all means. Islam does recognize the right of both partners to end their matrimonial relationship. Islam gives the husband the right
for (Talag) divorce and Islam grants the wife the right to dissolve the marriage through what is known as Khula’ (divorce at the instigation of the wife in which she pays compensation in return for being released from the marriage contract) (El Alami & Hinchcliffe, 1996). If the husband dissolves the marriage by divorcing his wife, he cannot retrieve any of the marriage gifts he has given her. The Qur’an (Holy book) explicitly prohibits divorcing husbands from taking back their marriage gifts no matter how expensive or valuable these gifts might be: "But if you decide to take one wife in place of another, even if you had given the latter a whole treasure for dower, take not the least bit of it back; would you take it by slander and a manifest wrong?" (Quran 4:20).

In the case of the wife choosing to end the marriage, she may return the marriage gifts to her husband. Returning the marriage gifts in this case is a fair compensation for the husband who is keen to keep his wife while she chooses to leave him. The Quran has instructed Muslim men not to take back any of the gifts they have given to their wives except in the case of the wife choosing to dissolve the marriage (Abedel Azim, n.d, paragraph 12):

It is not lawful for you (Men) to take back any of your gifts except when both parties fear that they would be unable to keep the limits ordained by Allah. There is no blame on either of them if she gives something for her freedom. These are the limits ordained by Allah so do not transgress them" (Quran 2:229).

There is a reference in the book of “sunnah” (Islamic rules) about a woman who came to the Prophet Muhammad seeking the dissolution of her marriage; she told the Prophet that she did not have any
complaints against her husband’s character or manners. Her only problem was that she honestly did not like him, so much so that she was not able to live with him any longer. The Prophet asked her: "Would you give him his garden (the marriage gift he had given her) back?" She said, "Yes." The Prophet then instructed the man to take back his garden and accept the dissolution of the marriage (Bukhari) (Abedel Azim, n.d, paragraph 14).

In some cases, a Muslim wife might be willing to keep her marriage but find herself obliged to sue for a divorce because of some compelling reasons such as cruelty by the husband, desertion without a reason, or a husband not fulfilling his conjugal responsibilities (Abedel Azim, n.d, paragraph 15), a husband being truant without a reason for more than one year, a husband staying in a jail by judge as punishment for a crime that takes his freedom for three years or more (in which case a wife can claim for divorce after one year) (Mahjoob, 1983), or a husband swearing not to have a physical relationship with his wife for four months or more. In these cases, the Muslim court dissolves the marriage (Ashoor, 1984).

In short, Islam has offered the Muslim woman some unequalled rights: she can end the marriage through Khula’ and she can sue for a divorce. A Muslim wife can never become chained by a recalcitrant husband (Abedel Azim, n.d, paragraph 16).

However, Islam discourages divorce in many ways. The Prophet of Islam told the believers that: "among all the permitted acts, divorce is the most hateful to God" (Abu Dawood).
A Muslim man should not divorce his wife just because he dislikes her. The Qur’an instructs Muslim men to be kind to their wives even in cases of lukewarm emotions or feelings of dislike (Abedel Azim, n.d, paragraph 18): "Live with them (your wives) on a footing of kindness and equity. If you dislike them it may be that you dislike something in which Allah has placed a great deal of good" (Quran 4:19).

Prophet Muhammad gave a similar instruction: "A believing man must not hate a believing woman. If he dislikes one of her traits he will be pleased with another" (Muslim).

The Prophet has also emphasized that the best Muslims are those who are good to their wives: "The believers who show the most perfect faith are those who have the best character and the best of you are those who are best to their wives" (Tirmidthi).

However, Islam is a practical religion and it does recognize that there are circumstances in which a marriage can be on the verge of a collapse. In such cases, mere advice of kindness or self-restraint is not a viable solution. So, what is to be done in order to save a marriage in these cases? The Qur’an offers some practical advice for the spouse (husband or wife) whose partner (wife or husband) is the wrongdoer. For the husband whose wife’s ill conduct is threatening the marriage, the Qur’an gives four types of advice, detailed in the following verses (Abedel Azim, n.d, paragraph 24):

As to those women on whose part you fear disloyalty and ill-conduct, (1) Admonish them, (2) Refuse to share their beds, (3) Beat them; but if they return to obedience seek not against them means of annoyance: For Allah is Most High, Great. (4) If
you fear a break between them, appoint two arbiters, one from his family and the other from hers; If they wish for peace, Allah will cause their reconciliation (Quran 4:34-35).

The first three are to be tried first. If they fail, then the help of the families concerned should be sought. It should be noted, in the light of the above verses, that beating the rebellious wife is a temporary measure that is resorted to as third in line in extreme cases in the hope that it might remedy the wrongdoing of the wife. If it does, the husband is not allowed by any means to continue any annoyance to the wife as explicitly mentioned in the verse. If it does not, the husband is still not allowed to use this measure any longer and the final avenue of the family-assisted reconciliation has to be explored (Abedel Azim, n.d, paragraph 26).

The Prophet Muhammad has instructed Muslim husbands that they should not have recourse to these measures except in extreme cases such as open lewdness committed by the wife. Even in these cases the punishment should be slight and if the wife desists, the husband is not permitted to irritate her (Abedel Azim, n.d, paragraph 27): "In case they are guilty of open lewdness you may leave them alone in their beds and inflict slight punishment. If they are obedient to you, do not seek against them any means of annoyance" (Tirmidthi).

Furthermore, the Prophet of Islam has condemned any unjustifiable beating. Some Muslim wives complained to him that their husbands had beaten them. Hearing that, the Prophet categorically stated that (Abedel Azim, n.d, paragraph 29): "Those who do so (beat
their wives) are not the best among you" (Abu Dawood).

The Prophet advised one Muslim woman, whose name was Fatimah bint Qais, not to marry a man because the man was known for beating women: "I went to the Prophet and said: Abul Jahm and Mu‘awiah have proposed to marry me. The Prophet (by way of advice) said: As to Mu‘awiah he is very poor and Abul Jahm is accustomed to beating women" (Muslim).

For the wife whose husband’s ill conduct is the cause for the marriage’s near collapse, the Qur’an offers the following advice:
"If a wife fears cruelty or desertion on her husband’s part, there is no blame on them if they arrange an amicable settlement between themselves; and such settlement is best" (Quran 4:128).

In this case, the wife is advised to seek reconciliation with her husband (with or without family assistance). It is notable that the Qur’an is not advising the wife to resort to the measures of abstention from sex and beating physically as using her husband. The reason for this disparity might be to protect the wife from a violent physical reaction by her already misbehaving husband. Such a violent physical reaction will do both the wife and the marriage more harm than good. Some Muslim scholars have suggested that the court can apply these measures against the husband on the wife’s behalf. That is, the court first admonishes the rebellious husband, then forbids him his wife’s bed, and finally executes a symbolic beating (Abedel Azim, n.d, paragraph 38).

Islam offers Muslim married spouses much viable advice to
save their marriages in cases of trouble and tension. If one of the partners is jeopardizing the matrimonial relationship, the other partner is advised by the Qur’an to do whatever is possible and effective in order to save this sacred bond. If all the measures fail, Islam allows the partners to separate peacefully and amicably (Abedel Azim, n.d, paragraph 39).

Divorce (Talaq) is used by husbands who are determined to end the marriage completely and finally. In this form, the husband pronounces divorce during three different times. The law allows a husband to repudiate his wife three times only. Once he has used his three divorces statements, his wife is henceforth barred to him and he may not remarry her until she has contracted and consummated an intervening marriage and has been widowed or again divorced (El Alami & Hinchcliffee, 1996).

This leads to the three types of divorce in the Islamic law (Al Saboni, 1987). The first one is called Tala’a raj‘I. In this form, the husband may take back his wife during the idda, which is the waiting period for a woman following divorce and widowhood during which she also is not permitted to remarry, which will last for three menstrual cycles, or if wife is pregnant, until delivery of the child. If the wife has not yet begun to menstruate, or if she has reached the menopause, she must observe an idda of three months (El Alami & Hinchcliffee, 1996).

The husband is free to revoke it until the third divorce statement (Talaq) is pronounced. If he has a change of heart or he
does not want the divorce, he can bring his wife back (El Alami & Hinchcliffee, 1996).

The second type is called *talaq ba'in baynuna sugra*, which means lesser irrevocable repudiation, whereby the spouses may only return to each other by a new marriage contract (El Alami & Hinchcliffee, 1996). If spouses did not return to each other during the *idda* (waiting period), the divorce will be counted as a third type of divorce.

The third type is *talaq ba'in baynuna kubra*, which means greater irrevocable repudiation, whereby the spouses are permanently forbidden to each other, unless the wife subsequently marries another man, the marriage is consummated and she is then widowed or divorced and completes the appropriate waiting period. Marriage with the former husband is then permissible and he will have the normal right to three divorce statements. During the *idda* following the third divorce statements neither party will have inheritance rights from the other because the marital relationship is ended (El Alami & Hinchcliffee, 1996).

Islamic law maintains these three types of divorce as stages of divorce to let spouses be sure of their decision to divorce by giving them several chances to resolve the issues. This also allows the spouses to enter the divorce experience to see if they really want to end the marriage. Also, Islamic law maintains *Mu'aker* (an amount of money or property that the husband has to pay for his wife after the divorce) and any other stipulations that the woman has
included in the marriage contract to be paid by her husband after the divorce, to protect the woman from irresponsible or careless med.

Current Perspectives on Divorce

Andrew Cherlin sees that the divorce phenomenon has been increasing since 1850s. The present rate of divorce is higher than in the past, even though divorce could be the solution for many marital problems (Steven, 1987).

Exchange theory is one of the theories applicable to the divorce process. The conceptual framework, as George Levinger called Barriers and Attraction, states basically, that people stay in relationships because they are happy or because there are barriers to their separation or leaving a partner. If the barriers become weak and their happiness (or attraction to the partner) becomes weaker than attraction to an alternative person, they generally choose to separate (Levinger, 1979). Although it spotlights the dyad, this perspective does not intend that the pair be seen as a closed system. Both cultural norms and social networks have important effects, which can be translated into forces of attraction and restraint (Levinger, 1979).

Norton and Glick present a perspective based on a demographic overview of the U.S population statistics. They found that there was a peak in the divorce rate following World War II, which then dropped to a lower level during the 1950s. In the mid-sixties the rate began
to rise sharply again, and by 1977 almost 4% of American married women aged 14 to 44 were divorced during one year alone (Norton & Glick, 1979). They also found numerous variables influencing the marriage and divorce behavior of people in the country. For example, they discovered that, although level of education and income used to be a predictor for divorce rates, they had become less important. One significant correlation they found, however, was the age factor. Couples who divorced by middle age were found to have married an average of two years younger than those who divorced later in life (or did not divorce). Norton & Glick also proposed that although the divorce rate is high, so is the remarriage rate, which suggests that the population still desires a compatible family life. They also found that both marriage and divorce behavior appear to be sensitive to major political and economic events. For example, when inflation is high or financial stress is present couples contemplating divorce generally try to negotiate or rethink their positions, at least temporarily (Norton & Glick, 1979).

Jaffe and Kanter proposed that for the separation process to unfold four factors must be present. They are "contextual conduciveness" which emanates from the structure of a couple's immediate environment; "systemic strain" or the experience of strain against the bond of the couple; "generalized beliefs" which suggest that strain in the relationship is a just cause for separation; and "precipitating events" that include instances of friction, arguments, violations of trust, and eventually the spouses' trial separation.
Jaffe and Kanter emphasize that this general model is applicable to the process of couple separation in any context, to protest against and to disengage from any kind of institutionalized relationship. "Any couple’s context, the style of household or community in which it exists, is either more or less conducive to its continuing solidarity" (Jaffe & Kanter, 1979, p. 133).

Goode concluded from his study that it is more often the husband than the wife who first wishes to escape from the marriage; and the husband more often than the wife is able to adopt a strategy of divorce which forces the other spouse to ask first for the divorce. He analyzed the steps toward the divorce, and he has shown that these divorces were not precipitated. The median time from first serious consideration to filing the suit was one year. Couples with a rural background were more likely to spend a relatively longer time for these steps than urban couples, and blacks more than whites. These relationships are complex, and Goode tries to analyze them in terms of predisposition, background factors, alternatives to the marriage, the consequences of divorce given the wife’s situation (e.g., more or fewer children), and the conflict themes (Goode, 1956).

Ma’an Khalil Omar classifies reasons for divorce into three types of factors. First, these consist of personal factors which are in the early age of marriage. These include a short time period for couples to get to know each other, parents of one partner experiencing a failed marriage, friend or relatives discussing about their
experiences of a failure of their marriage to one partner, difference in the social background of couples, difference in modes and hobbies, different outlooks on life, and jealousy regarding concern of extramarital affairs. The second set of reasons consists of legal issues, such as physical violence, breakaway, criminal judgement, drug addiction, intemperance, unreason, undutifulness, not supporting the family, and pregnancy from another mad. Thirdly, there are social factors that can lead to divorce due to assistance factors (not primary factors) such as race, nationality, and religious differences (Omar, 1994).

The Investigator's Perspective

Many local studies in the U.A.E., specifically, and local studies in many Arabic societies lack information regarding the divorce phenomenon as a process. The dimension of factors related to divorce is the only route that these studies have taken. This investigator's perspective is that to understand divorce adequately it is necessary to gather more information than just the factors or variables associates with it. Divorce is filled with intellectual and emotional concepts. Quantitative studies are important in terms of measuring the divorce phenomenon and they help to see the reasons behind the numbers. But quantitative studies cannot give us the people's experiences, emotions, and everyday or occasional experiences in depth. By conducting both qualitative and quantitative studies about divorce, we can gain better understanding of the di-
orce phenomenon. The new dimension of looking at how the divorce happened instead of just asking why the divorce happened can give a deeper and more comprehensive understanding of divorce in the Arabic societies. It can also probably identify as to when an intervention should take place. In addition to that, searching the process of divorce within the social context can give a better understanding of the social, economic, and political spheres of the society during that particular period.

The investigator hopes to gain a better understanding of divorce in the U.A.E. and the divorce process in the framework of the social, cultural, and economic contexts.

Each experience could be different or unique from other experiences, but sociologists are expected to associate this experience in the intersection of society in a certain time period (Mills, 1959). This is what the current study is about. Women's experience in the U.A.E. is unique; women have achieved high status and important positions in less than three decades. Taking a gutsy step such as initiating the divorce process is still a hard decision that it is needed to be deeply searched, especially in a contradictory society: A traditional society in terms of the social and cultural context, and a modern society in terms of material aspects.

Summary

This chapter is an examination of the Islamic perspective on marriage and divorce, which is based on the social and cultural con-
text. Theoretical perspectives about divorce from both the western world and Arabic standpoints have also been discussed. In addition, the investigator's perspective about divorce as a phenomenon that contains many intellectual and emotional dimensions individuals individual living in certain social, economic, and cultural contexts in a certain period has been presented.
CHAPTER VI

RESEARCH PROBLEM AND METHODS

The Research Problem

The research emphasizes a different facet concerning divorce of women in the U.A.E. in that it includes a description of the process of divorce rather than variables and factors correlated with it. Many other studies have examined the divorce issue in the U.A.E. and they have focused on the divorce issue from the point of "why the divorce in the U.A.E." Indeed, knowing reasons of divorce is an important step in order to discover the factors of divorce in the society, but this is not everything in the divorce issue. There is a need for an effort to study this issue from another dimension, focusing on the process of divorce that will answer the question pertaining to the stages involved from the process of marriage to a divorce.

This research will describe the process of divorce in the U.A.E. that focuses in the processes starting from the choice of a marriage partner and ending in a divorce. The research will explore how women in the U.A.E. reach the point where they cannot stay with their husbands anymore. Lastly, she will examine what the connections are between particular social, economic, and cultural environments in the U.A.E. and the divorced women who live within them. Using data collected through interviews, this research will allow a
better understanding of the process of divorce in the U.A.E. It is expected that this study will benefit social policy makers in dealing with this issue of divorce, which has been matter of concern for the last several years. The researcher believes that the knowledge of process of divorce in the society and the influence of the social, economic, and cultural conditions on the process of divorce will give social policy makers an outline of how they might resolve some of the problems that lead to divorce in society. Furthermore, the investigator believes that through qualitative methods, a more in-depth understanding can be attained not only of divorce, but also of women’s lives in the U.A.E., in general.

Study Description

Research Questions

In this study, the Investigator wants to answer the following four questions: First, what is the process of divorce in the U.A.E.? Second, when do women in the U.A.E. reach the point where they cannot stay with their husbands anymore? Third, why do close intimate relationships like marriage break up? Lastly, what are the connections between particular social, economic, and cultural environments in the U.A.E. and the divorced women who live within them?

Methods of Data Collection

Qualitative research methods were used in this study because these methods provide rich and detailed data, and generate a com-
prehensive and deep view of the issues related to the divorce from women's perspectives. Face-to-face and telephone interviews were the two primary methods of data collection. The interviews were semi-structured and the instrument contained many open-ended in-depth interviews (see Appendix A for the instrument).

**Instrument**

The instrument used in the research was a 64-item question designed by the researcher and divided into three parts. The first part, which was a 15-question section was about general demographic information related to the participants' age, their educational level, employment condition, economic status, age of ex-husbands of participants, their economic status, number of children, participants' previous marriage(s) and children (prior to the last marriage). The second part, which was a 38-question section, was about marital information related to the participants' lives with their ex-husbands starting from the choice of husbands and ending at the point of separation from their husbands. The third part, which was an 11-question section was about divorce information related to the issues such as asking for divorce, attempt to keep the marriage, general view of reasons of divorce, and life after divorce. All parts of Questions were administered orally, either face-to-face or via telephone interview.
Interviews

There were 20 participants in this study. Two kinds of interviews were conducted: 12 participants chose to be interviewed face-to-face and eight chose to be interviewed through the telephone because they considered divorce a sensitive issue and they preferred the confidentiality. Contrary to expectations, the investigator found that the participants who were interviewed by phone were more likely to present their experience more openly compared to the face-to-face participants.

The interviews were confidential. The participants signed an informed consent document that included information about the study (see Appendix A for HSIRB clearance and Appendix B for the informed consent form). Face-to-face participants signed the informed consent immediately before the questions were asked. Telephone participants signed the informed consent form one to four days before the interviews and returned them by mail prior to the interviews.

The interviews took place during the weeks of February 1 through March 20, of 2001. Each interview lasted between two to four hours. Some participants contacted the investigator by phone when they wanted to add anything new to the interview such as conflicts stories that they remembered later after the interviews or different suggestions about the best solutions to solve problems of divorce.

The confidentiality and privacy of women was protected at all times. Their real names were not used in this study, instead numbers were assigned to identify each participant.
Study Participants

There were twenty participants in this study. All of them were divorced women who initiated the divorce process by asking their husbands to divorce them. All of them reside in the city of Al Ain, United Arab Emirates.

The investigator contacted two local institutions to identify potential participants: ARRA Consultancy, Studies, and Training Center and the Ministry of Labor and Social Affairs, Division of Social Security. The majority of divorced women were selected by the Ministry of Labor and Social Affairs and it provided the investigator with names of 55 possible participants. The investigator had a deific reason to be concerned about these women because of the special concern of the Ministry to the divorce issue, and also because the investigator had training in the Ministry as a part of the undergraduate program of the Sociology and Social Work Department. The investigator contacted all of the 55 participants by phone, 27 divorced women agreed to be interviewed. The investigator excluded seven of them who had not initiated the divorce process.

Regarding the demographic characteristics of the sample, the investigator interviewed divorced women the youngest being 18 and a few were older than 42 years. There were six women between 18 and 25, seven between 26 and 33, four between 34 and 41 and three 42 and over. In terms of the educational level, four women were university students, five were high school graduates, five were middle school graduates, two were elementary school graduates, and four had no
formal education. Two women were working as teachers and eighteen were not employed. In terms of income, eighteen women did not have any source of income except their husbands' income, one woman had income of $27,793 per year and one had $40,218 per year. Nineteen women had husbands who were employed with salaries ranging between $14,500 to over $44,000 per year. Five of these women's husbands had yearly salary over $44,000. Six had yearly salary between $24,001 and $34,000, eight of the women's husbands' yearly salary was between $14,000 - $24,000, and one woman's ex-husband was unemployed. One women’s ex-husband was a businessman, two were working in the royal house, three were working officers, three were policemen, and 10 were working in the armed force.

In terms of age at marriage, eight women got married when they were 18 and below, seven between 19 and 21, three between 22 and 24, and two from 25 and over. (See Table 4).

Table 4
Participant's Age at Marriage

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Age</th>
<th>Frequency</th>
<th>Percent</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>18 and below</td>
<td>8</td>
<td>40</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>19 to 21</td>
<td>7</td>
<td>35</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>22 to 24</td>
<td>3</td>
<td>15</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>25 and over</td>
<td>2</td>
<td>10</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Total</td>
<td>20</td>
<td>100</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>
Participants' ex-husbands' ages ranged between 19 and 55: four between 19 and 21, nine between 22 and 24, seven 25 and over (See Table 5).

Table 5

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Age</th>
<th>Frequency</th>
<th>Percent</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>18 and below</td>
<td>0</td>
<td>0</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>19 to 21</td>
<td>4</td>
<td>20</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>22 to 24</td>
<td>9</td>
<td>45</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>25 and over</td>
<td>7</td>
<td>35</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td><strong>Total</strong></td>
<td><strong>20</strong></td>
<td><strong>100</strong></td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

The difference between the participants' age when they got married and their husbands' age was varied, though the men were generally older than the women. In one case there was no age difference. In two cases the difference in their age was one year. In one case the difference was two years, in two cases the difference was three years, in one case the difference was four years, in three cases the difference was five years, in one case the difference was six years, in one case the difference was eight years, in one case the difference was ten years, in two cases the difference was 12 years, in one case the difference was 29 years, in one case the difference was 30 years, and in one case the difference was 31 years. In one case the participant was older than her husband by five years (See Table 6).
Table 6
Difference of Participants' Age at Marriage and Their Husbands' Age

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Difference of Age (Years)</th>
<th>Frequency</th>
<th>Percent</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Same Age</td>
<td>1</td>
<td>5</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>1</td>
<td>2</td>
<td>10</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>2</td>
<td>1</td>
<td>5</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>3</td>
<td>2</td>
<td>10</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>4</td>
<td>1</td>
<td>5</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>5*</td>
<td>4*</td>
<td>20</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>6</td>
<td>1</td>
<td>5</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>8</td>
<td>1</td>
<td>5</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>10</td>
<td>1</td>
<td>5</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>12</td>
<td>2</td>
<td>10</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>21</td>
<td>1</td>
<td>5</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>29</td>
<td>1</td>
<td>5</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>30</td>
<td>1</td>
<td>5</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>31</td>
<td>1</td>
<td>5</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Total</td>
<td>20</td>
<td>100</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

*In one case the wife was older than the husband.

Of the fifteen divorced women who had agreed to marry the husband chosen for them, nine of them did not talk with their husbands before the marriage and six of them had talked with their husband before marriage. Five of the divorced women upon whom the choice of their husbands was forced, two of them did not talk with their husbands and three had talked with their husbands prior to the marriage.

The duration of the marriage ranged between seven months to 20 years: three women stayed with their husband for less than a year, three women spent a year, one woman spent two years, three spent four years, one spent five years, two spent six years, one spent
nine years, one spent 11 years, one spent 12 years, one spent 13 years, one spent 15 years, one spent 17 years, and one spent 20 years (See Table 7).

Table 7

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Duration (Years)</th>
<th>Frequency</th>
<th>Percent</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Less than a year</td>
<td>3</td>
<td>15</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>1</td>
<td>3</td>
<td>15</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>2</td>
<td>1</td>
<td>5</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>4</td>
<td>3</td>
<td>15</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>5</td>
<td>1</td>
<td>5</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>6</td>
<td>2</td>
<td>10</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>9</td>
<td>1</td>
<td>5</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>11</td>
<td>1</td>
<td>5</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>12</td>
<td>1</td>
<td>5</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>13</td>
<td>1</td>
<td>5</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>15</td>
<td>1</td>
<td>5</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>17</td>
<td>1</td>
<td>5</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>20</td>
<td>1</td>
<td>5</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Total</td>
<td>20</td>
<td>100</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

In terms of children, eight participants did not have children and 12 participants had between one to eight children.

Five participants were married more than once: three of them had children prior to their last marriage. Of these five there were two who had their children living with them and one participant had her children living with their father.

Methods of Analysis

First, all the interview data were collected codes and trans-
cribed for analysis (Ruf, 1998). Then, a thematic conceptual framework that cut across cases was constructed and the analysis of the data was based on the thematic categories. A qualitative descriptive method was used in this study.

Analysis

Like Diane Vaughan in Uncoupling (1986), the research investigator of this study examined each person’s experience for what appeared to be major changes in the relationship. She selected one particular change in the relationship, which served as the first event or moment of realization for the participant that the relationship had problems. Also, she examined the patterns of separation by looking at the similarities between the experiences of all the women in the study. As in the study of Uncoupling, the purpose was to point out the similarities as well as the differences.

Validity Issues

In terms of the validity of information, the investigator is confident that respondents provided correct information from their own perspectives. There are no means by which the degree of accuracy and validity of the information can be checked.

Definitions of Terms in the Study

This study has some of concepts that could have different meaning from culture to culture. These concepts are defined as
follows:

Gulf Societies refers to six countries: the United Arab Emirates, Saudi Arabia, Oman, Qatar, Kuwait, and Bahrain.

Cousin means the first cousin, who is the son or daughter of the brother.

Cousin Marriage refers to sons of a brother getting married to the daughters of other brothers.

Engagement is the pre-period of the marriage when the marriage contract is documented.

Divorce is dissolution of a marriage legally, socially, and physically.

Summary

This chapter describes the problem of the research, the research questions, and the methods that have been used in this study. The general demographic characteristics of the participants were analyzed. In addition, the method of data collection, organization, and analysis were discussed in this chapter.
CHAPTER VI

THE STUDY FINDINGS AND ANALYSIS

Statistical Data

"The simplest and most common statistic of marriage dissolution by divorce is the crude divorce rate. This rate is expressed as the number of divorces per 1,000 of the total population" (Shryock & Siegel, 1973, p. 570).

Using the formula of crude divorce rate in the U.A.E. shows that the divorce rate in 1996 was .86, in 1997 was .91, and in 1998 was .77. Unfortunately, rates for 1999, 2000, and 2001 could not be measured because of lack of available information, as it is not yet published.

The divorce rate could be also measured based on the number of married couples (Shryock & Siegel, 1973). By using this formula (based on the denominator of marriage contracts in a certain year times 100), one can see that the percentage of divorce in 1996 was 34.9%, in 1997 was 36.4%, and in 1998 was 32.7%. In any case, it is apparent that the rate of divorce from 1996 to 1998 was about the same. The percentages do show a slight decrease in the number of divorces in 1998.

The percent distribution of the household population by age, sex, and marital status in 1995 shows an overview of the relative frequency of the possible standings (See Tables 8 and 9).
Table 8
Marital Status for Males by Age (Percentages)--1998

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Age</th>
<th>Single</th>
<th>Married</th>
<th>Widowed</th>
<th>Divorced</th>
<th>Number of Persons</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>15-19</td>
<td>99.3</td>
<td>0.6</td>
<td>0.0</td>
<td>0.1</td>
<td>3,414</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>20-24</td>
<td>80.1</td>
<td>19.3</td>
<td>0.0</td>
<td>0.6</td>
<td>2,058</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>25-29</td>
<td>38.4</td>
<td>60.4</td>
<td>0.0</td>
<td>1.2</td>
<td>1,367</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>30-34</td>
<td>12.2</td>
<td>85.1</td>
<td>0.2</td>
<td>2.5</td>
<td>790</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>35-39</td>
<td>4.5</td>
<td>93.6</td>
<td>0.0</td>
<td>1.9</td>
<td>793</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>40-44</td>
<td>1.1</td>
<td>97.9</td>
<td>0.2</td>
<td>0.8</td>
<td>631</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>45-49</td>
<td>1.2</td>
<td>97.2</td>
<td>0.3</td>
<td>1.3</td>
<td>683</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>50-54</td>
<td>0.5</td>
<td>97.3</td>
<td>1.3</td>
<td>0.9</td>
<td>549</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>55-59</td>
<td>0.4</td>
<td>98.4</td>
<td>1.0</td>
<td>0.2</td>
<td>493</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>60-64</td>
<td>0.8</td>
<td>97.5</td>
<td>1.7</td>
<td>0.0</td>
<td>513</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>65+</td>
<td>0.9</td>
<td>90.3</td>
<td>7.1</td>
<td>1.7</td>
<td>848</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Total</td>
<td>47.2</td>
<td>51.3</td>
<td>0.7</td>
<td>0.8</td>
<td>12,139</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

(Total in Age groups = 100)

They show that few women between the ages of 15 and 19 are married. The proportion of the population that is single declines very rapidly with increasing age. By about age 50, the percentage remaining single is less than one percent among both women and men, suggesting that marriage is almost universal in U.A.E. (Fikri & Farid, n.d.).
Table 9

Marital Status for Females by Age (Percentages)--1998

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Age</th>
<th>Single</th>
<th>Married</th>
<th>Widowed</th>
<th>Divorced</th>
<th>Number of Persons</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>15-19</td>
<td>91.8</td>
<td>7.7</td>
<td>0.0</td>
<td>0.5</td>
<td>3,365</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>20-24</td>
<td>58.3</td>
<td>40.3</td>
<td>0.3</td>
<td>1.1</td>
<td>2,152</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>25-29</td>
<td>26.5</td>
<td>67.8</td>
<td>1.9</td>
<td>3.8</td>
<td>1,506</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>30-34</td>
<td>9.6</td>
<td>83.2</td>
<td>3.6</td>
<td>3.6</td>
<td>1,128</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>35-39</td>
<td>2.8</td>
<td>88.2</td>
<td>4.7</td>
<td>4.3</td>
<td>1,248</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>40-44</td>
<td>0.7</td>
<td>85.2</td>
<td>10.6</td>
<td>3.5</td>
<td>711</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>45-49</td>
<td>0.9</td>
<td>82.8</td>
<td>11.2</td>
<td>5.1</td>
<td>569</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>50-54</td>
<td>0.5</td>
<td>70.5</td>
<td>21.2</td>
<td>7.8</td>
<td>798</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>55-59</td>
<td>0.7</td>
<td>62.9</td>
<td>30.5</td>
<td>5.9</td>
<td>440</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>60-64</td>
<td>0.3</td>
<td>46.2</td>
<td>48.1</td>
<td>5.4</td>
<td>333</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>65+</td>
<td>0.6</td>
<td>23.4</td>
<td>71.8</td>
<td>4.2</td>
<td>671</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Total</td>
<td>38.0</td>
<td>49.7</td>
<td>9.4</td>
<td>2.9</td>
<td>12,921</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

(Total in Age groups = 100)

As the proportion of single persons declines with increasing age, the proportion of the population that has ever been married rises by a corresponding amount. The proportion of currently married women increases rapidly up to ages 35-39 and then starts to decline due to the effects of widowhood and divorce. Between ages 25 and 49, the occurrence of divorce among women ranges from three and five percent. The percentage of women who are widowed climbs steadily
with age, but is not substantial until about ages 50-54, at which point it reaches 21% (Fikri & Farid, n.d).

The results also show that widows outnumber widowers by a substantial margin, for which there are two explanations: mortality is earlier among males than females, and the remarriage rate is much higher among widowers than among widows. Of women aged 65 years or older, 72% are widowed, as compared with 7% of men of the same age (Fakir & Farad, n.d.).

The Concept of Marriage

Our concepts of ourselves and the world around us predict our behavior. It also can tell us about his or her ideology and background. Searching people’s concepts can give us rich information about their lives today and their lives tomorrow, although we believe that our concepts are rapidly changing from time to time and place to place.

Marriage is one of the general social systems that had been taking place since very early in recorded history. All over the world it is a legal way to build a family. Some social scientists point out that marriage is important as the accepted institution for a number of reasons: religious, arranged marriages, kinship bonds, to pool resources (both financial and manpower), children, and romantic love (Cyr Barbara. n.d). They point out that marriage is an accepted institution for the expression adult sexuality. Sexual life is important to both sexes, but marital roles involve much
more than sexual life.

Cultural Influences on Women’s Perspectives

In Islamic societies, marriage is considered a holy relationship where men and women join together to build a new cell in the body of society. Getting married in these societies is the only acceptable way to strengthen the meaning of a bond between a man and woman.

In this study, this notion of a bond of same type reflects the concept of marriage in most of the divorced women’s perspectives. Most of them used the words bond, linkage, bringing together, and getting along.

‘Marriage is a bond that has mercy and repose between two persons’ (a 27-year-old, divorced after six months).

‘It is a linkage between two persons by commitment to let each one enjoy one another under a lawful contract and with stability and repose’ (a 23-year-old, divorced after one year).

‘It’s bringing together a family’ (a 35-year-old, divorced after 12 years).

‘It’s repose, attaching, and getting along’ (a 27-year-old, divorced after four years).

Marriage is also the thing that keeps people living a healthy life; away from a violation of the values that society as a whole respects and keeps. Indeed, marriage is abstinence that keeps people out of immoral behaviors, including sex before marriage, having a relationship with the opposite sex who is not a relative, etc.
Marriage is abstinence' (a 45-year-old, divorced after two years).

'Marriage is repose, abstinence and serving exigencies' (a 45-year-old, divorced after 11 years).

'Marriage is abstinence' (a 45-year-old, divorced after 17 years).

'Marriage for woman is abstinence..' (a 35-year-old, divorced after 13 years)

Marriage is the only accepted way to have children in the eyes of Islamic societies. It is also the way that ensures the endurance of society.

'In order to continue the societies, there are children' (a 28-year-old, divorced after nine months).

Islamic societies and Arabic culture encourage having children. Marriage could be useless if children were absent. Moreover, children are considered an important bond that could bring couples together and keep their relationship stronger. Children also could play important roles in any problematic situation that could occur between couples. Moreover, children could be a future insurance for couples when they get old to have someone that can take care of them.

'When a person gets old, he/she starts to think who is going to take care of him/her, so in order to continue the society, there are children' (a 28-year-old, divorced after nine months).

In the marriage, children are always there as an important element of marriage. Most of the women, who have met, consider children an essential element in the marriage.
'Marriage is building a family and children' (a 21-year-old, divorced after a year).

'Marriage is getting along first, it's respectability, and it's love between spouses with children' (a 28-year-old, divorced after 9 months).

'Marriage is a bond between two spouses and children' (a 37-year-old, divorced after two years).

'It's abstinence and children' (a 45-year-old, divorced after nine years).

'It's a home with responsibility and co-operation between a consensual husband and wife, and they have children' (a 26-year-old, divorced after five years).

'Women without marriage can't live because of the children and a man who supports her financially' (a 35-year-old, divorced after 13 years).

'...People who share with each other sadness and happiness' (a 27-year-old, divorced after a year).

'Marriage is not useful. It's children with responsibility' (a 32-year-old, divorced after seven months).

Although most women are influenced by the culture that they live in regarding the children as an important element in marriage, marriage means to them more than just children. It is love, respect, understanding, stability, repose, and attachment. It is two people involved in a relationship that is full of feelings between each other.

'Marriage is a life of a woman with a man who understands her all
his life' (a 30-year-old, divorced after 20 years).

'Marriage is repose, attachment, and getting along' (a 27-year-old, divorced after four years).

'Marriage is getting along and first, respectability and second, love between spouses with children and they treat children with respect. The husband treats the mother of his children with respect because if the husband doesn’t respect her, her children will not respect her too.' (a 28-year-old, divorced after nine months).

'Marriage is a stable life (an 18-year-old, divorced after four years).

'..A lawful contract and with stability and repose' (a 23-year-old, divorced after a year).

'Marriage is participation between two persons who love and understand each other..persons who share with each other sadness and happiness..' (a 27-year-old, divorced after a year).

Marriage Is Forever

Marriage is also a bond that is expected to last forever. It is true from the cultural perspective that when one decides to get married, one decides to keep the marriage forever. It’s out of line to get married for a temporary period or for temporary goals. In the eyes of the culture, marriage is stated to be a lifelong relationship.

"A kind and lifelong relationship between two persons’ (a 24-year-old, divorced after five years).

Marriage also is participation and responsibility between spouses.
Each person expects that the other will share with him/her the feelings and duties of marriage.

'Marriage is participation in all life aspects from sadness to happiness..' (a 21-year-old, divorced after a year).

'Marriage is a home with responsibility and co-operation between a consensual husband and wife' (a 26-year-old, divorced after four years).

'Marriage is participation between two persons..' (a 27-year-old, divorced after a year).

Culture influences people's expectations and behavior in many ways. How people are raised in a certain place and time affects their concepts of the things around their world. For example, the society views women as those who frequently took their social status from their husbands and this socialization to the people in the society influences the perspective of woman about herself.

'Marriage is the life of a woman with a man who understands her all his life. She follows him in everything he says. If he is saying night, she has to say night. If he is saying daylight, so she has to say daylight, and she should never say no to her husband. This is how my family raised me' (a 30-year-old, divorced after 20 years).

Impressions Based on the Most Recent Experience

It is obvious that many women were defining marriage either as a concept that they did not have in their last marriage, so they were repeating the things that they missed, or as a concept they defined from their previous marriage.
'Marriage is getting along and it's first, respectability and second, love between spouses. They have children and they treat children with respect. The husband treats the mother of his children with respect because if the husband doesn't respect her, her children will not respect her too.' (a 28-year-old, divorced after nine months)

This woman focused on respectability as something she missed about her ex-husband.

'Marriage is to marry a woman to a man who understands her, and they live a stable life without any involvement from their families, and they solve their problems by themselves' (a 23-year-old, divorced after six years).

This woman defined marriage as life without family involvement because her main problem with her ex-husband was his family involvement.

'Marriage is not useful. It's children with responsibility. being single is more comfortable than getting married' (a 32-year-old, divorced after seven months)

This woman viewed marriage as not useful based on her experience with a husband who still loved his previous wife.

'Marriage is pain, troubles, and an incomprehensible man' (a 40-year-old, divorced after two years)

This woman defined marriage as pain and troubles because of her experience with a husband who beat her because his family forced him to get married to her.

However, there are women who look at marriage in an objective perspective, not related to their previous experiences. Most of those
women are more highly educated women (college degree or higher).

'Marriage is a bond that has mercy and repose between two persons' (a 27-year-old, divorced after six months).

'Marriage is participation between two persons who love and understand each other. Persons who share with each other the sadness and the happiness, and of course children' (a 27-year-old, divorced after a year).

Choosing a Husband

As Bert Adams says in his article, "Mate Selection in the U.S.: A Theoretical Summarization," we have to discuss mate selection not only as an independent variable that we can measure, but also as a process (Bager, n.d).

Historical Background of Mate Selection

From this point of view, we can look at four stages that the Gulf societies (United Arab Emirates, Saudi Arabia, Qatar, Kuwait, Bahrain, and Oman) have passed on to the mate selection process. This process is different from country to country, but it can be generalized under the following four stages (Bager, n.d)

First Stage

It was the oldest and longest stage of mate selection. This stage was extended in most of the Gulf societies to the beginning of the 1960s. Mate selection was an arranged process by a family who had
complete authority to choose the other mate of the marriage. A couple did not have any opinion in choosing each other. They also did not have the right to express the characteristics that they wanted in the future mate who would spend the rest of life with him/her. Usually, the couple did not know each other until the wedding night. Marriage was considered a family affair. Boys or girls were not able to select their mates or even to express their opinion.

Second Stage

This stage was started when men started to study abroad, especially men from Kuwait, Saudi Arabia, and Bahrain studying in Egypt. Men in this stage were fascinated by the modern life in Egypt. They made a comparison between Egyptian women who were educated, and their cousins and relatives at home who were not educated and not opened to modern life.

This mixed marriage (marriage from outside the family) put the mediator (family and relatives) that arranged the marriage in a weak role of mate selection. There were many effects of this mixed marriage, where a man can choose his wife directly without mediation. One of the biggest effects was shifting men away from getting married to the local women, which encouraged people to think about the reasons for this shift. One reason was the huge gap in intellectual and educational level between local women and foreign women. Because of that, many Gulf countries established formal education systems to educate women in the beginning of the 1960s to enable them to compete with foreign women.
They also started to know the world and the demands of a modern life in order to practice their social roles as they should be practiced. To protect Gulf families from breaking down as a result of marriage to foreign or Arabic women, many Gulf countries set laws to encourage men to get married to their local women. Other Gulf countries enforced more restricted laws that did not allow men to get married outside the Gulf countries.

Third Stage

This stage had started since the middle of the 1970s. It was concurrent with the oil upswing and continues until now. This stage took the marriage system and chose another partner in a different way. The mediator was presented with a different look. A sister and an educated woman relation are the mediators of the marriage instead of the mother and an old woman relationship. They are the same age as the man for whom they are searching a girl for marriage. They are in the same generation and with education and probably a job, which means they are meeting a lot of girls in the university and at work, which makes their task much easier. The mediator in this stage for men and women is a person who understands their desires, interests, and ambitions more, which means that in this stage the mate selection is based on emotional, psychological, and desired characteristics. Schools and universities allow different girls from different social environments, classifications, and places to meet, which have presented new marriages that would not have existed before.
In addition to all of that, modern life and a rich economy extends the mix between men and women in universities, in traveling abroad during the summer vacation, or in public life.

Family also encouraged women to educate themselves until the college level, and sometimes beyond college, and participate in the labor force and public life, which enhances the role of the woman inside the family and in society as a whole. Women also started to be responsible for their decisions, and the most important shift was when the family began asking the daughters about their acceptance of the future mate. Fathers in this stage were more likely not force their daughters to get married to a person they did not like, even if this person is one of their relatives. Their refusal did not become a social issue that had a lot of negative indications against the girl. Getting married from outside the family increased and the age of getting married increased too.

Fourth Stage

Although there were big changes in the mate selection process, the family still prepares the engagement ceremony and the marriage contract. The family also has the right to refuse any proposal by any man that the family does not see as qualified to marry their daughters, even if the daughter wants to marry him. It is obvious to see that economic, cultural, and social changes transform society and redefine the social groups. It is clear that there are a lot of new changes coming which will reduce the accumulated traditions. It is obvious, for example, that
there are many precursors to free choice between girls and boys through the telephone, the Internet, universities, and shopping malls, that allow for both sexes to meet each other directly. Although these ways exist in many Gulf societies because of higher education and women’s work, families have an aloofness toward these ways because of the fear of emotional choices that do not take into account the rational standards that families depend on to accept or refuse a marriage.

Moreover, there are a lot of institutions that seek the direct acquaintance between both potential partners of marriage in these traditional societies. For example, there are a lot of magazines, radio programs, and TV programs that try to find a good match for girls and boys that are not able to know their potential partner. Moreover, there are a lot of charitable organizations, especially the Islamic organizations that try to expand the choices of choosing the partners and motivate youths to get married.

It can be seen in these stages, education in general, and woman’s education, specifically, has the main role of creating changes in the Gulf families, especially in the choosing process in the marriage. For example, the empirical research on Jeddah City in Saudi Arabia shows that 72% of the educated people want to get married outside the family and only 26% of those people who prefer to get married inside the family (Bager, n.d) Education also has a big affect on the age of marriage. A study of Abu Baker Bager and Fawzeya Bashteh, “Choice of Marriage and Social Change,” shows that the preferred age of marriage for male adults is between 24 and 30 and for female adults is between 16 and 25. This
gives an indication of a delay in the age of marriage in societies that
tend to have early marriage (Bager, n.d.).

Even though women’s education and work have a big affect on
shifting the position and the role of the women in the family, women in
the Gulf have the right to accept or refuse the proposal, but not to
choose their potential partners.

The United Arab Emirates is one of the Gulf countries involved in
four stages, but still, as it has been mentioned, there are special
considerations of each country.

Ways of Choosing a Husband

From current research, it is obvious that there are many ways of
getting married. Marriage to a cousin is one of the ways that most women
used to get married. It is an expected way of getting married in a city
like Al Ain, where all the divorced women who were interviewed live. It
is a city that has very conservative families, especially when they get
to the marriage issue. They become more conservative because most of
these families are related to tribes and are proud to be associated with
them. So most of them prefer the woman’s first cousin on the father’s
side for marriage with their daughters. In the past, this was the way
that protected the tribe politically because it gave more power to the
tribe by increasing the number of the tribe’s members. Economically,
it kept the wealth inside the tribe. Socially, it gives a woman
protection through her authority of her father over her husband who is
his nephew. Conservative families still keep a lot of traditions,
especially in the matters related directly to the family such as marriage. As Abu Baker Bager says in his article, "Mate Selection in the Gulf Families," "It is true that Gulf society is a traditional society, and still the world of the family is the field of determining the identity, but the social and economic changes that have passed the Gulf society in general and change all the life aspects in this society, will not influence the structure and life of family in specific" (Bager, n.d).

It can also be interpreted that cousins are preferred for marriage by looking at the Homogeneous Theory. This interprets mate selections based on the idea that similar people, regarding physical, economic, and social characteristics such as religion, race, economic and social position, age, educational level, tall, color, etc., are more likely to get married to each other (Bager, n.d).

Usually, cousins are in the top list of men who are ready to marry woman. Even if the cousin is not qualified enough to the woman, it is enough that he is her cousin to marry him.

'I didn't accept my cousin in the beginning, because he had little education and he was completely dependent on his family. He also was coddled, he didn't have a job, and he didn't have any goals set for himself. Maybe because he was the only boy in his family between seven girls?! ... My father told me you will change your ideas about him after marriage and you will change him too. My father insisted on the marriage because my husband is his only nephew. He told me if you get three daughters from a stranger husband it will not be the same as having one
daughter from your cousin..’ (a 27-year-old, divorced after six years).

It is obvious how a very conservative family such as the case above insisted on the woman getting married to the cousin even if he was not qualified for her. It is the traditions that force people to do something even though it is against their convictions.

‘He is my cousin. In the beginning, I didn’t accept him because I felt that he looks like my brother, because we were living together in our childhood. My family pushed for the marriage and they told me he is a poor guy and loves you. I said okay then I will marry him. In fact, my uncles were mad at me because I refused him, so I wanted to make them feel happy so I accepted him. I didn’t feel that he is my husband. I felt that he is my brother’ (a 21-year-old, divorced after one year).

‘He is my cousin; my father forced me to marry him because he is his brother’s sod. I fought against this but it was to no avail’ (a 27-year-old, divorced after one year).

It is not necessary that a woman to refuse to get married to her first cousin from the father’s side. She could accept the marriage because she was raised in the way that she has to get married to him. This is how it works and she prepares herself emotionally to get married to him from an early age.

‘He is my cousin. I accepted him because I was raised in a way that says girls are to marry their cousins. Because of that I said yes. Moreover, I didn’t say no because I was too young when I got married’ (a 23-year-old, divorced after one year).

Marrying a neighbor is another way to get married. Many women got
married to their neighbors who they were familiar with to some extent.

‘He was my neighbor, I felt he loved me so I accepted him.’

‘I knew him from my neighbors.’

‘Our neighbors told my husband about me. I was a divorced woman and I accepted him because he was a responsible and modest person’

As an Arabic saying says “The one you know is better than the one you do not know.” Those women who got married to their neighbors were following a safe way to get married. At least they saw him once or knew him from neighbors’ conversations.

Also getting married to neighbors could be interpreted from the point of view that people are more likely to get married to the people who live near them because the chances to meet and know them are more likely to be numerous. This can be developed to include the people who go to the same school, university, or who work with each other (Bager, n.d).

There are a lot of empirical studies that emphasize this theory. They show that there are many people getting married to the people who live near them. This trend is more likely to be strong in the traditional societies where the population density is increased. It is also increased between those who have little education, low incomes, and are older people. But when the transportation and communication ways are more available, the place adjacent theory becomes less important (Bager, n.d).

Marriage to a relative is another way to get married. Many women got married to relatives or someone they knew through their relatives.
'I knew him from my relatives; he was a good man so I got married to him.'

'He was from my family, he asked for marriage so I accepted him.'

Sometimes getting married to someone provides more protection and well being to a woman who lived in a society full of beliefs that a woman staying alone had questionable morals.

'I was divorced with four children while working in one of the royal family houses when my relatives came to me and told me that there is a poor Saudi guy interested in marriage. They persuaded me to get married to him because that would be best for my well-being.'

Using a matchmaker is another way of getting married. Women can meet this woman in parties, with their neighbors, or at the schools, universities, or work. A matchmaker could know many people who want to get married and work as a mediator of the marriage in the traditional society. The husband's family could pay the foreign woman, if she succeeds in getting the girl that they want.

'I know my husband through a foreign woman (Syrian woman). She said that she chose me for my ex-husband because I am a good girl. She sent my ex-husband's family to my family to ask for marriage. I spent a month contemplating the offer because he was divorced with two children living with their mother. After I thought about it, I accepted the proposal.'

Marriage to a friend is also another way to get married in a traditional society. They can meet in the schools, universities, work, or through neighbors, social clubs, etc. They could introduce their
brothers or sisters. Usually, friends know the characteristics of each other and they can present these characteristics to their relative such as brothers, sisters, etc. So, she or he can say yes I accept. After that, both of them can tell his/her family to find their acceptance or refusal. Finally, the brothers’ family goes to the girls’ house to meet her family and ask them officially for marriage.

'I knew my husband from my sister’s friend. I accepted him when he came to ask my family for my hand'

After the economic upswing in the Gulf, there were a lot of people who traveled abroad for studying, business, or tourism. Many of them went to India for touring, curing, or for getting married there because of the cheap cost of marriage compared with marrying local women.

'I was in India when my husband saw me. He asked my family to marry me and after a day we were married. My father was poor and he was rich, so my father accepted the marriage proposal.'

An empirical study by the Ministry of Labor and Social Affairs, "Divorce in the Emirates’ Society, the Reasons and Social Impacts," (1998) showed that 72% of mate selection was by the family, 7.9% was by friends, 6.1% was by neighbors, 5.5% was by matchmaker, 4.2% was by traveling, and 2.1% was by work. It is obvious that the traditional ways (family, friends, neighbors, or matchmaker) of getting married are still the most likely ways of getting married in the U.A.E. Of divorced women, 91% got married by those ways. However, those traditional ways have negative effects which have often led to the breakup of the marriage (Rahsed, Kubaisi, & Tahboob, 1998).
Another empirical study of the Ministry of Labor and Social Affairs in 1981, "Divorced Women in the United Arab Emirates, Statistical and Social Study," showed that 70.4% of the women did not have an opinion in choosing their husband and 29.6% did. In the city of Al Ain, where all of the present sample lived, 30% of the divorced women said they did not have an opinion about choosing their husband, and 18% did have an opinion about choosing their husband. This is because the city of Al Ain is a closed society which has very conservative families. When comparing these percentages with Dubai City, which is an open society with a variety of subcultures, the percentages show that there were 29% of divorced women that did have an opinion about choosing their husband and 15% who did not (MLSA, 1981). So, different places inside the country have different percentages related to the cultural and social status of these places.

In this study, most of these women had the right to state their opinions about choosing their husbands. Those who refused their husbands frequently did so because they were too young for the marriage, so the reason of refusal was not the husband but the marriage at that particular juncture.

"...It was a traditional choice. I refused him because I was too young (16 years old), but my mother forced me to marry him because he is her relative" (a 21-year-old, divorced after one year).

Or because they are not applicable to each other,

'I didn’t accept him because he had little education and he was dependent on his family, he was coddled, he didn’t have a job, and
didn’t have any goals set for himself."

'He is my cousin; my father forced me to marry him because he is his brother’s sod. I fought against this marriage, but it was to no avail.'

Moreover, the majority of the women did not talk to their husbands before the marriage because they cannot do that according to family customs.

'I didn’t talk with my ex-husband before the wedding day because my family is based on the culture that doesn’t allow women to talk with men before the marriage.'

'I didn’t talk with him before the wedding because my family is not the type that would allow the women to talk with men before marriage.'

However, some women talked and met their husband before the marriage, especially when he was her cousin or relative.

'He is my cousin. Our engagement’s duration was a year. In this stage what ever I wanted he did it for me. His way of dealing with me persuaded me to marry him. He was something different before the marriage.'

It is true that the first step to happy marriage is selecting the right partner. Compatibility, education, economic status, and family background are all important factors to take into account.

**Honeymoon Stage**

This is the stage of the relationship where each one enters a new life with new wishes to have a great life with the other partner. It is the stage where couples are deeply and openly trying to be in love with
one another. Couples usually fail to see the faults and nuances of the other partner. This stage may last for a few minutes, days, or a lifetime. It could be going into these feelings many times, as with all of the other stages.

It is a natural stage between people knowing each other deeply after the marriage, especially in religious and traditional societies that are conservative with men and women's relationship before the marriage. Each partner tries to know the other in-depth and to explore the real personal characteristics of the partner. Each one tries to present the best she/he has to the other. Moreover, each one tries to accept the other partner's characteristics and desires, and to overlook the faults and the mistakes of the other partner. It is a transitional stage that completely alters the life of the man and woman who are committing to each other, especially in a traditional society like the city of Al Aid.

The majority of women in this study presented this stage by saying, "at the beginning" which means directly after the wedding day directly. This indicates the cultural influences on the women, who considered the real beginning of their relationship between men and women as after the marriage.

Types of Relationships

There are three types of relationships shown in this stage regarding the study sample. The first type is the happy relationship in this stage. The majority of women said that in this stage their relationship with their husbands was happy. Most of them expressed the happiness of this
stage by using different words.

‘Our life at the beginning was wonderful. It was the best life that I have ever had in my life..’ (a 26-year-old, divorced after four years).

‘At the beginning, he was a very kind man; sometimes I feel it’s more than I need. I was comfortable during the first two weeks.’ (a 21-year-old, divorced after one year).

Others expressed this stage by less passionate words such as comfortable and good.

‘Everything was good, thank God..’ (a 45-year-old, divorced after 17 years).

‘My life with him at the beginning was good even though I found some involvement from his family’s home..’ (a 35-year-old, divorced after 13 years).

‘At the beginning, I felt comfortable with him..’ (a 35-year-old, divorced after 12 years).

Others expressed their feelings by “fine” and “okay.”

‘Everything was going fine after the wedding..’ (a 45-year-old, divorced after nine years).

‘Our relationship at the beginning was fine. He was listening to everything I said..’ (a 45-year-old, divorced after four years).

‘At the beginning of the marriage everything was fine’ (a 40-year-old, divorced after two years).

‘At the beginning everything was fine, thanks God..’ (a 23-year-old, divorced after one year.)

‘At the beginning, we were okay, everything was fine. he has good
morals and is a kind, understandable, and rational person' (an 18-year-old, divorced after four years).

'Everything at the beginning was fine. We were going to other cities having fun..' (a 23-year-old, divorced after six years).

'At the beginning, he was okay' (a 30-year-old, divorced after 20 years).

'The first two months were okay..' (a 32-year-old, divorced after seven months).

The second type of relationship was a neutral relationship, which means it was not happy and at the same time it was not bad. It was a silent feeling. Marriage did not shift their feelings right or wrong and it was a normal relationship as the women have said. Those women got married to their neighbors or relatives who loved them and they accepted them.

'My relationship with my husband at the beginning was okay. I can say everything was normal' (a 27-year-old, divorced after four years).

'Our marriage at the beginning was normal..' (a 24-year-old, divorced after five years).

The third type of relationship was an unhappy relationship, which reflected the relationship between the couples later. They described this stage negatively. Those are the people who were forced to get married to a person they refused to commit with, or those who expected much more than they got.

'My father told me that after the marriage your cousin would change for the better. I found he became worse. He still lives to eat, drink,
sleep, and get supported by his family. I can’t live with a person like that. There was no conversation between us. His thinking was not like mine. We are completely different. He considered educated women to be over-proud women’ (a 27-year-old, divorced after six years).

Some women expected a more romantic relationship than they had with their husbands.

‘After the wedding, I noticed some strange things about my husband. If he wanted to be playful with me he said, ‘I will get married again.’ I was surprised that he is saying this thing at the beginning of our marriage. Sometimes he was saying, ‘I am going to choke you.’ He is playful with me like that. From my side, I didn’t like anything about him except that he loved me. I noticed when he wanted to enter the home; he knocked on the door strongly. When he was talking, he was talking too loudly like someone screaming. I thought these things like talking loudly and knocking on the door this way were not polite and I considered that he was not a respectful person to those around him. The most important thing is that a man doesn’t talk loudly with his wife. I was feeling that he had a psychological problem, maybe because he lived in his mother’s husband’s house. When he is talking, he is talking about something and then directly goes to another topic that didn’t have any connection, and then suddenly he would stop talking. I was reading in magazines about the effects of the divorce on children, and today I experienced this thing with my husband after his mother divorced’ (a 38-year-old, divorced after nine months).
What Women Liked and Disliked About Their Husbands' Characteristics

There are many characteristics that the majority of women liked about their husbands. Most of them liked their husbands that were kind and rational. They also liked generosity, good looks, cooperation, honesty, faithfulness, coolness, understanding, respectfulness, love, morality, and religious faith.

About the disliked characteristics, most of the women did not like it if their husbands did not have strong personalities, because the women did not feel free to lean on them. They also did not like dishonesty, carelessness, laziness, and lack of religious faith.

Love

Love is the fundamental feeling in the marriage relationship. When it is absent, a great link between the couples will disappear. Many women liked that their husbands loved them, and it was what made women tolerate the undesired characteristics of their husbands.

'From my side, I didn’t like anything about him except that he loved me' (a 27-year-old, divorced after seven months).

'I really like his co-operation and that he loved me' (a 26-year-old, divorced after four years).

On the other hand, there were women who expressed that they loved their husbands too much, and it was this feeling that made them tolerate other disliked characteristics.

'I loved him too much during the marriage.' (a 30-year-old, divorced after 20 years).
'I loved him too much. The most attractive thing to me was that he was a very handsome man' (a 37-year-old, divorced 2 years).

'I loved him. This was the thing that made me tolerate his relationship with other women' (a 24-year-old, divorced after five years).

**Duration of the Honeymoon Stage**

The duration of this stage was different from case to case. In general, the duration of the happy and neutral relationships in this stage was between one week to two months depending on the kinds of disliked characteristics.

**Problems in the Honeymoon Stage**

Even though this stage is filled with positive attitudes regarding the relationship between couples, the introduction of unhappy things would start appearing between the partners. A partner could feel that there are a lot of question marks searching for answers, or contradictory things that need explanation.

One of the unhappy things that appeared with many of the women were the husband’s family involvement, sexual problems, the husband’s staying outside until after midnight, and lack of work.

Family involvement was the main problem for the majority of women who faced problems in this stage. All of the problems that they faced later on were related to the problems in this stage, especially that all of them were living in their husband’s family house. This strongly
allowed the involvement of the husband's family since they were all living in the same house. Moreover, all of the women who faced their husband's family involvement complained that their husbands had a weak personality in front of their families, especially the husband's mother and older sisters.

'I was comfortable during the first two weeks of our marriage, but we were living with his family, so the problems started to appear' (a 21-year-old, divorced after one year).

'My life with my husband was good at the beginning, even though I found some involvement from his family in our life. We were living in his mother's husband's home..' (a 35-year-old, divorced after 13 years).

'I liked him at the beginning when he used to not listen to what his mother was saying to him about our lives. It was just two weeks and then he started listening to her. I lived with his family. His mother controlled everything. When he was sitting with me, he was fine and when his mother told him that she wanted to talk with him, everything changed. He returned back to me and he became a different person. In the first days of our marriage, his mother fired the housemaid in order to let me cook for all the family..' (a 23-year-old, divorced after one year).

'Everything at the beginning was fine. We were going to other cities to have fun. But I felt his family was not happy about this. After two months of our marriage, he told me that he had prepared a surprise for me at the end of the week. When the end of the week came, he said we would go to other cities to have fun. It was great but his
family kept calling us and we were not answering the phone. When we came back, his family started to blame us for not answering the phone. After two months he had an accident. He stayed at the hospital, and when his mother knew that, she was shocked and stayed at the same hospital for psychological treatment. His family did not invite me to go with them to see my husband. They went to see him at the hospital and I stayed crying at home alone. I called my father and he came to pick me up to see my husband. My husband gave me his cell phone to contact me while he was sleeping at the hospital. His mother was mad because he gave me his cell phone. I went to visit her where she got her psychological treatment, and there was my husband’s cousin sitting with her. He was 10 years old. I was sitting with my mother-in-law and his cousin told me I want to talk with you outside. I went with him outside and he told me, your husband was talking all the night with a woman. I laughed because this woman was me. When I came back inside with my mother-in-law, she said, you are talking with a man in the outside? How shameful is that? I said he is just 10 years old. He is a kid. She said okay, go to your family so they can teach you the morals. I said they already did and I am not waiting for you to teach me morals. Then I left her room and I went to my husband’s room. I told him what was going on. He said, do not worry everything will be just fine. I noticed from that time that his mother would do something, but I was not sure what it would be’ (a 23-year-old, divorced after six years).

‘His mother and older sister were involved in our life. When we wanted to go outside to have fun, we did that undercover. We had to be
hidden till we reached the car so that no one could see us, because if they did, they would ask to go with us and we were just married and we wanted to be alone. Aaah, really it was a miserable life, especially when you got a husband who didn’t have a real personality to face the others” (a 27-year-old, divorced after one year).

Sexual problems were another problem that many of the women were facing in this stage. Most of the women did not talk about the sexual problems, but that did not mean that they were not there, because sexual issues are sensitive issues that women could not talk about to a stranger in the first interview. It could take a lot of time until they could talk, but many of them still were not able to do that because, as it was stated before, sex between couples is a sensitive issue in a sensitive society, especially in a conservative society such as Al Aid.

‘Sexually, although he was married before, I noticed that he did not know anything about sex. I used to teach him how to have sex, but still I felt nothing with him sexually’ (a 28-year-old, divorced after nine months).

Culture could play a role in discussing the unhappy sexual relationship, such as the shyness of a woman about talking to her husband about sex. Many of them considered that the man had to start this process.

‘I am a very sexy woman. He did not recognize that, and I was shy to talk with him about this thing.’ (a 24-year-old, divorced after five years).

‘I am a very sexy woman and I feel shy to start inviting him to
have sex. I think a man has to start this, not the woman’ (a 26-year-old, divorced after four years).

‘He was a very boring cold man in sex. He didn’t know how to start sex. I really didn’t feel anything with him’ (a 21-year-old, divorced after one year).

Staying outside the house until midnight was another problem that many women have faced. That is related to husbands who did not change their life after marriage.

‘I noticed that he stayed outside until midnight. Sometimes he was coming home at 4a.m. Moreover, he traveled with his friends as they did before during our two months. I asked him to take me with him, but he said I will go with my friends and there is no place for women. I asked him to not go. He said I got used to doing that before the marriage, so why change that now?’ (a 24-year-old, divorced after five years).

A husband without a job was the main problem for one woman. She knew that her husband did not have a job, but she hoped that he would work after the marriage, especially since he is her relative. She faced a financial problem with him during the first weeks because her needs were growing and there was no main source for support.

‘At the beginning, I felt comfortable with him, but then I felt not because he did not have a job and we needed money. It was not enough that his family gave us some money’ (a 35-year-old, divorced after 12 years).

It is the hope of change after marriage that led this woman to accept marrying her relative, and it is the hope of change that led
another woman to accept marrying her relative (cousin).

'My family told me that after marriage your cousin would change for the better. I found he became worse. He still lives to eat, drink, sleep, and his family gave him money. I cannot live with a person like that. There was no conversation between us. His thinking was not like mine. We are completely different. He was looking at educated women as over-proud women' (a 27-year-old, divorced after six years).

Disillusionment

After the honeymoon, couples start recognizing the differences between each other. The positive ways of looking at the other partner start shrinking. Couples now start thinking more rationally instead of emotionally. They see more the differences than similarities and regard the differences now as trouble (Vaughan, 1986).

"This stage is mostly triggered by loneliness, monotony, and non-communication. In many cases, good communications at this stage will hold the marriage together. Counseling usually works during this stage of the relationship. People at this stage look outside the relationship for solutions such as, having children, buying a new house, moving to a new area, or changing jobs" ("Divorce process," 1999, paragraph 10).

It is also the stage where each one thinks about the choice to marry the other and the standards that they used for making this choice. Indeed, they are thinking about the validity of their standards of marriage.

It is the stage where comparisons start taking place. Couples
compare social environment that they came from and the social
environment that both spouses now live. Many women found that their
social backgrounds related to their living style with their families
have different characteristics than the new lives with their husbands,
especially if the women are living with their husband’s families.

‘When I sit with his family I hate the life. Everyone in his family
did not respect the other... For me it was a shock. My life with my family
were so different... All my family’s members respect each other... When
something happened in my family’s house, all the family’s members were
discussing what happened. But in my husband’s family’s house... There was
no discussion, no dialog.’ (a 23-year-old, divorced after one year).

‘I noticed that his mother was involved in everything in their
house. My mother was not involved in our lives. My husband’s sister was
my brother’s wife. My mother did not ever get involved in their life.
My husband’s family is different than my family even though we are
cousins, but in my family’s home, we were raised a different way’ (a 21-
year-old, divorced after one year).

‘My husband’s family life was totally different. It is not like
my family’s life. Maybe because we are from different tribes, but there
is common sense in all tribes, which I didn’t find in my husband’s
tribe. Men and women were eating with each other and sitting with each
other, which is completely different from my tribe’s customs’ (a 35-
year-old, divorced after 13 years).

The comparison is not only related to the social background of
each spouse, but also to the relationship between couples before and
after the marriage.

‘He was something else before the marriage. I didn’t accept him at the beginning, but the way that he was treating me encouraged me to accept him. If I needed anything, he would bring it to me. If I called him and told him I was tired, he would come in quickly to see me. He totally changed’ (a 23-year-old, divorced after one year).

However, it is the stage of overlooking what each one considers mistakes. They still have the hope that everything will get better, especially if the time could be too early for making any risky decisions.

‘I thought of getting a divorce but I said it is shameful to do that now; it’s too early to ask for divorce’ (a 28-year-old, divorced after nine months).

Problems During This Stage

Different types of problems are shown in this stage regarding these women. There were a variety of personal, social, psychological, and financial problems.

Personal Problems

The personal problems are those problems that related to the couples themselves. It is related to their personal characteristics and ways of living. Many women had different types of problems with their husband related to their husband’s personality.

One of these problems was lack of trust. A husband doubts his
wife’s behavior, which leads him to eavesdrop on her phone conversations, especially those husbands who had several relationships before the marriage.

‘...The gap between him and me started widening, especially when he started doubting all that I was doing. When I wanted to go outside, he said, “You have to call me and tell me when you will leave and when you will come back home in hours and minutes.” He also was eavesdropping on my telephone conversations. When he was outside, he was calling me to see if I was talking on the phone or not. My husband had many relationships with women before the marriage and I knew that, but I didn’t think that this would influence his relationship with me, too’ (a 28-year-old, divorced after nine months).

Beating women was another problem that women faced in this stage.

‘After a period of our marriage, he started beating me without any reason. While I was sitting he came from outside to beat me. I did not do anything for him to do that’ (a 40-year-old, divorced after two years).

"He beat me when he was angry about anything outside or inside. He also beat his children for any reason." (a 45-year-old, divorced after 17 years).

Incompatibility was another problem that appeared in this stage. Many women found that there was no compatibility between them and their husbands. Most of those women are the women who were forced to marry their husbands or those who did not have a chance to talk them during the engagement period.
‘The incompatibility and the misunderstanding between us were standing out’ (a 27-year-old, divorced after six years).

‘There was no compatibility between him and me. His type is totally different than mine’ (a 28-year-old, divorced after nine months).

‘No compatibility between both of us. He is an old man with no goals’ (a 45-year-old, divorced after 17 years).

Breaking the marriage contract conditions was another problem that has shown up in this stage.

‘Before marriage, he was insisting on getting married to me. I stated as a condition in the marriage contract that I have to complete my studies. After the marriage, he refused this condition. I told him you couldn’t do that after marriage. I can do anything except this. I was really searching for one good thing about him. Unfortunately, I didn’t find anything good’ (a 27-year-old, divorced after six years).

‘My husband had a Saudi passport. I helped him to have an Oman passport and then a U.A.E. passport to live here as a citizen and improve his salary. He was living in my own home. I had 4 children from my previous marriage. My condition to get married to him was to let me raise my children. He accepted that. But after he got what he wanted from my marriage, the U.A.E. passport, he refused to let my four children stay with me. He wanted me to give them to their father and I refused that’ (a 45-year-old, divorced after four years).

Husbands staying out late or leaving the house for a couple of days were other problems that many women have faced.
'I noticed that he was a stingy man. Spent the whole night outside the house.' (a 24-year-old, divorced after five years).

'He was disappearing two to three nights and I didn't say anything to him. Sometimes he disappeared for two months.' (a 30-year-old, divorced after 20 years).

'He was going outside and sometimes staying in Dubai a couple of days without getting my permission or even telling me. Most nights I was sleeping alone and he knew that I was afraid to sleep alone' (a 28-year-old, divorced after nine months).

Social Problems

The social problems are those problems that are related to the social environment that spouses are living in. The biggest problem that many women faced was family involvement in their children's lives. This problem was taking different forms: one of these forms was the mother-in-law setting her son against his wife. It was a part of the mother's jealousy by controlling the things that related to her son. She tried to show that she still has influence on her son and he is still listening to her. Indeed, the mother-in-law wants to control her son's wife and the smartest way is the indirect way, which is through her son.

'His mother's involvement in our life started to take place. It never ended. When he was coming home at night at 10 PM, his mother called him to discuss whatever she had in her mind. He did not stay with me 10 minutes and she was calling him. He went to her and stayed till midnight with her. When he came to me he totally was changed. In fact
his mother turned him against me. I did not know what she exactly told him but she turned him. He did not talk when he came to me and his face seemed to be mad’ (a 21-year-old, divorced after one year).

Family involvement could take the form of fighting with the wife. The husband’s family, especially the mother-in-law, creates problems for the son’s wife and involves the son in these problems with the absence of husband’s personality in front of his mother.

‘His mother started controlling everything. She woke me up early morning in the to prepare breakfast, especially at the time when I was pregnant. I did not even like to smell food. But she forced me to do what she wanted. When I told her I cannot prepare the food now, she would turn everything upside down and start screaming in my face. My husband did not have a strong personality in front of his mother. When we planned something, he would change everything just because his mother did not agree with our plan. I hate this life’ (a 23-year-old, divorced after one year).

‘I cooked all three meals for his family. His sisters when they came from college said the food was not good... They said that in front of my husband. I did not say anything. And when I went to the kitchen I found them eating from the food that I cooked. They just wanted my husband to blame me’ (a 23-year-old, divorced after 6 years).

‘His mother controlled everything. We wanted to travel but his mother said no, and when she allowed him to travel, his sister said I will go with you. I told my husband if your sister will go with us I won’t go. Then I canceled our trip. His salary was not in his hand. It went
directly to his mother. And then she gave him some money. I felt this was not the life that I wanted... I really was upset’ (a 27-year-old, divorced after one year).

Encouraging the husband to get married again is another form of family involvement that many women have faced.

‘I discover that his family wanted him for his cousin. But he did not want her and he got married to me without his family’s permission. I found that they were involved in our life because they wanted him to marry his cousin. We had problems everyday about this matter. He was telling me that there was no other woman in the world, that he won’t get married to his cousin. I found his family encouraging him to have a relationship with other women. They were encouraging him instead of saying to him you are a married man and it’s prohibited to do that. I found that he did not care about his home and children. When he met women I could not stop him because his family was encouraging him.’ (a 35-year-old, divorced after 13 years).

Eavesdropping on the wife’s phone conversation was another form of family involvement. This was especially true if the wife was talking to her family so that they would know what the wife said to her family about her husband’s family and what kind of advice her family gave in order to be aware of what would happen next.

‘When I talked on the phone, his family was eavesdropping on the telephone conversation. I asked my husband to open a separate phone line to avoid that and he did’ (a 2 -year-old, divorced after one six years).

‘..His family was eavesdropping on the telephone conversations.'
Once my mother was talking to me by phone, she told me: “my daughter, keep your eyes on your husband, put daily perfume in your room for your husband, and always look good in his eyes by putting on make up and so on.” My husband’s father was eavesdropping on the telephone conversation and he was recording the conversation. Then he came to my room. knocked on my room door and said “give me all my son’s clothes” I said “why? What’s happened?” he said, “to stop you doing deviltry to my son” I was shocked when he said that. but what can I do? ... He was always warning me when I got mad at them that he would give the recorded tapes to the judge so if the judge knows that he will punish me for that... Do you know? I was laughing in his face and said okay you can do that, the judge will laugh too because what is inside the tape is no more than good advice from a mother to her daughter. My husband did not really exist in the conflict between myself and his family. He did not have a strong personality’ (a 21-year-old, divorced after one year).

Polygyny is another problem that women had to face. It meant another woman will share the woman’s life with her husband. Moreover, it means that another woman could take her husband from her hands. It is a situation that could put a woman in critical position in front of her family and friends, especially when a woman doesn’t see any serious reason for getting married again.

‘He was a complete man and he was able to let me live in a very good condition. Our life together was fine till I heard that he was engaged to another woman. Her family lived close by. I faced him and I asked him, “Is what people are saying right?” He said, “Yes, right but I will not do it.”
After a period of time, I heard people saying the same thing. He was engaged. I faced him again and he told me, "Since I give you everything you want, why do not you want me to get married?" I told him "no you won't" but he insisted. I did not miss any of my duties as a wife, but because he is an old man and has a lot of money he wanted to get married again, which put me in a critical situation in front of my society' (a 45-year-old, divorced after nine years).

'Everything was going okay between us. There was nothing disturbing us till I traveled with my two daughters to the U.S. for treatment (I had a heart problem). At this time he had military training, so he couldn't come with me to the U.S. I traveled with my brother and his wife. I was calling him and he did too. After that I noticed that there was something that bothered him, and I felt that he was not honest with me. When I was asking him, "Is there anything disturbing you?" He said, "Nothing, I don't want to bother you." I was telling him that I am your children's mother and you have to tell me everything.. I have to share you your problems, but he didn't talk. I noticed also that he was losing his temper excessively, until I found out that he was in love with another woman in his department and planned to marry her' (a 26-year-old, divorced after four years).

'I found that my husband had another wife in another home. People told me your husband has a wife, and when I investigated that, he was really marrying wife number ten and I didn't have any idea about them' (a 45-year-old, divorced after four years).

Another social problem that was shown at this stage was an
unwanted mad. The reason for marrying him was kinship. Spouses in this stage found that they could not live as spouses. They have the same childhood in the same house, which makes them feel like brothers and sisters, not spouses.

'I started feeling that he was like my brother, no more. I felt that he was not like my husband. He also was feeling the same because we grew up in the same house. I could not see him as my husband' (an 18-year-old, divorced after four years).

Financial Problems

Financial problems also surfaced during this stage in many cases. It was usually a husband who did not have a job and depended on his family for support, or a husband who did not understand his children’s growing financial needs, and a flustered husband.

'He did not have a job. I tried to persuade him to go to work. His family also tried a lot, but he did not want to work. Yes he was a kind person. But he did not have a job, did not have a strong personality, did not pray, and he lied a lot. His life was just food and sleep' (a 3-year-old, divorced after 12 years).

'I found that our life is less than others... He spent a lot of money to serve us, but he didn’t know how to do that in a correct way. He didn’t understand that his children’s financial needs are growing. And when I asked him to give them money because they became older, he would start screaming and fighting. He couldn’t understand the dialog language... When I talked; he was misunderstanding me and always took
what I was saying in the negative way... He didn’t like my family because I am Indian. he was shouting in my face without any reason’ (a 45-year-old, divorced after 17 years).

‘I started recognizing that he was very flustered. He did not give me the money that I need’ (a 23-year-old, divorced after one year).

Psychological Problems

Psychological problems are another problem in this stage. Women want to change their lives in many ways. One of the ways is by having children. The barriers of having children could be a big problem in the traditional societies where children are the most important element in the marriage. Not having children--even within the first year of the marriage--could lead to problems either from the woman herself or from the husband’s family who wants to see the husband’s children. The woman could start thinking about why she didn’t have the baby until now. This could cause psychological problems, especially if her husband didn’t have a satisfied response with her.

‘I felt it’s enough. He is working in Abu-Dhabi city and I was staying in Dubai ... He came back home just on the weekend. I told him “Why do not you rent an apartment in Abu-Dhabi and I will stay with you there?”... He refused. I told him we are far away from each other. He said many people live like us. I said okay but I want a baby and you are far away from me.” I had some problems in pregnancy... and I had treatment ...this makes me nervous. When I told him that, he says, “Are you too young, so why you are in a hurry to get pregnant?” In front of me he was
saying I do not want children, but in front of the others, he was saying everyone wishes to have children. This made me nervous. He did not care about what I was saying to him. I wanted to be with him to have children. I told him several times why do not you go to check because I already went to the hospital. He refused. But finally I forced him and he went to check. The doctor said we have to stay with each other more often. How can I do that if he just comes to me on weekends’ (a 27-year-old, divorced after four years).

There were also sexual problems that started taking place at this stage, which had psychosocial influences on the women. Many women had sexual problems with their husbands related to husbands who were unsatisfied sexually; they started recognizing the physical nature of their husbands.

Expressing Concerns

This stage is where each spouse talks to the other openly and seriously. They discuss their problems together and try to find an explanation of what is going on in their relationship together and to find a solution to their problems. In this stage, the spouse is willing to do something to let the other feel comfortable or to reform their relationship.

The majority of women expressed their concerns with their husbands. They discussed their problems together during all their marriage. The subject of the discussion was always about what had been discussed in the disillusionment stage. The expression of concerns was
like a habit, and was the everyday conversion between spouses. It is
like all of other stages; couples can be going into and out of this
stage many times.

'I was expressing my feelings in extreme way..You know, I felt that
I was like a tape recorder, which plays back itself every day every day
till it became without taste' (a 28-year-old, divorced after nine
months).

No Real Responses

The majority of the women in their discussions with husbands tried
to shift them towards the direction of solving the problems, but it was
no use. There is no real response from their husbands.

'I expressed with him my feelings about his family. They were
involved in our life too much. At the beginning, he paid attention to
what I said. He was okay, with me, but after a very short period, he
returned back to what he had been life before, listening to his mother' orders' (a 21-year-old, divorced after one year).

'I expressed with him my disturbed feeling about his doubts,
animosity, and about not hearing nice words from him. He never said I
love you. He thought this word “love” could make him be at a low-level
or his personality have less value, but I was feeling that he loved me
even if he didn’t say “I love you.” I was telling him that dignity and
respect are important things between a wife and her husband. So why are
you shouting in my face when you want to say anything to me, and when
you want to say anything to me don’t say it in front of your mother and
sisters because this makes me feel that I am at a lower level than them. I was sleeping by myself since the second week of our marriage. I feared to sleep alone. He was spending the whole night playing a lute (Arabic Guitar). He was listening to what I would say for a certain period, but then he returned back to the way he was before’ (a 28-year-old, divorced after nine months).

‘When I expressed his negatives, he was laughing and made fun of my education and life interests. He said, “You want headaches. Life is food, drink, and sleep. Everything is available for us” I didn’t like his opinion. I felt that he loved me too much for what reason I don’t know. Maybe because of what I look like! He didn’t have an interest in the education. If he was educated there would have been a dialog between him and me. When I was saying you have negative things, I can’t find an interpretation to them, he laughed. I had many questions as a wife that I couldn’t find answers for. If this happened at the beginning of our marriage, how is it going to be after that? Honestly, I didn’t even depend on him for anything’ (a 27-year-old, divorced after six years).

‘I expressed what bothered me a lot, but he was always saying, “If you want to live with me do not ask me where I have been.”... He was saying: “I feel I crave my cousin, and I am in love with her. I have to get married to her. I hoped that I would not marry you and I marry her instead.” I said, “okay marry her so what?” He said, “She will not accept me unless I divorce you and I cannot divorce you because I would have to pay you a huge amount of money, and you have my children.” I
said, "Okay, I give you the freedom to marry under the conditions which are to be fair with me and her, and to have a conversation with your children for at least a half an hour, like what your cousin did with his children." He did not even answer me’ (a 30-year-old, divorced after 20 years).

'I told him often that I am upset with being far away from him ...first I was happy to stay with his family, but then I didn't feel comfortable. I told him several times that I want to be near him in the city that he was working in, but he refused because all his friends were with him and all of them were married guys and they left their wives...so why will I be with him since his friends didn’t have their wives with them. His response made me nervous... I felt like he doesn’t care about having children at the time that I need a child so much..' (a 27-year-old, divorced after four years).

'I told him that our life with his family is so hard...they are involved in everything...We cannot breathe without them hearing us. But he said this is my family and I cannot do anything to them’ (a 27-year-old, divorced after one year).

Unexpressed Feelings

The women who did not have a real discussion with their husbands about what was bothering them gave reasons that related to their husbands. For example, they said he was a very angry man and did not have dialog, or was a husband who did not talk with his wife, or an almost silent person who did not encourage women to talk him, or a
husband who did not have a physical relationship with his wife, which made her feel paid. In these cases, the women’s culture influences their attitude of solving the problem.

‘He did not talk with me too much...and I am not the type of person who would force him to talk if he did not want that’ (a 27-year-old, divorced after one year).

‘When I came back from the U.S, he didn’t sleep with me, and I was wondering because he was a hot man in sex, so why didn’t he sleep with me? I didn’t ask him why don’t you sleep with me because it was hard for me to ask him that, because these things come from a man, not from a woman. A man has to initiate the physical relationships not a woman’ (a 26-year-old, divorced after four years).

Not Telling the Truth

Unexpressed anger could lead a woman to a quick decision, which did not give her husband time to know why this decision has been made. It is when a woman knows the truth about her husband. The truth that he is getting married to another woman and spending his time with her, while he is saying to the woman that he is with his family.

‘Yes, I told him that when he got the U.A.E. passport, and asked me to leave my four children from my previous marriage. I told him that I accepted him on one condition, which was to let me raise my children, and he accepted that. So why now when he became a U.A.E. citizen does he want me to give my children to their father!! He told me okay but their father is alive. I told him no you are not going to do that to me,
so go outside, just leave my home. He was going outside for many days then coming back again. When he was disappearing, I asked him where he had been. He always was saying, “I went to Saudi Arabia to see my family... One of them was sick.” He told me that every time he disappeared, till one woman with her husband came to me and said: “come with us in the car, we are going to show you something.” I went with them and they stopped me in front of someone’s house. They told me this is your husband’s house. He got married. Oh my God, he got married 10 times and divorced them and I didn’t even know about them. On the next day, I went to the same house that the women and her husband told me about, and I knocked on the door. One woman opened the door I told her give this to your husband. She asked, “Who are you?” I said it doesn’t matter just give him this paper and I left. The paper said that I knew everything and I wanted him to leave me. Just divorce me’ (a 45-year-old, divorced after four years).

It is also the decision that could be made when a husband did not have a job and was not telling the truth about his searching for a job.

‘His family and I talked to him a lot about how he has to have a job. At the beginning when we talked to him he said okay I will do it. But he didn’t do anything. Then he started to say it’s my choice to do it or not. He lied too much. He used to say that he went to search for a job, but, in fact, he never did that. He went to the military training for two months then he quit’ (a 35-year-old, divorced after 12 years).
No Avail

Many women reach the point where they cannot talk with their husbands because the same behavior is repeated all the time.

'I expressed my feelings...I told him that he travels a lot...I told him that I want to travel with him, but he refused because he is traveling with his friends. So there was no place for me between men. When I complained, he said okay dear I will not do it again, but then he did it a lot. He was talking with women and sometimes when I entered my room, I found him talking with other women. I caught him and the fighting started at that time. He promised me to not do that again several times, but he did. I reached the point where it is okay with me for him to talk with other women' (a 24-year-old, divorced after five years).

'I told him that I am unhappy in this house, but he did not care about what I felt...I remember once when he told me to prepare myself to go to the mall, and when I did, he came back and said I changed my mind. I said oh your mother did not give you permission. Then he started beating me...I reached the point where it is okay to not tell him anything. It is his personality and hard to change...'a 23-year-old, divorced after six years).

The Discharge

Children could pay the price for their parents' mistakes. For example, the mother and the father-in-law punish their son's wife because they thought that her parents hurt them when they were living in...
the same house.

'He was saying that you have to serve my family, especially my mother. I want you to be a housekeeper...working in the home every minute. At the same time he was saying you didn't put make up on or care about your beauty. I told him, how could you want me to do that if I spent the whole day in the kitchen cooking three meals daily?!...He was always talking in front of his family about my mistakes. He was saying in front of his brothers that I would divorce you and send you back to your family...When I told him why are you doing that to me? He said because your parents hurt my parents a lot when my parents were living in your parent's house...you know? I hadn't been born yet...I think they envy my parents, because people respect my parents more than his parents, and my parents have a lot of people who come to visit them, but my husbands' parents don't have many people who love them and visit them...I think all that his parents did to me is because they envy my parents...It's like discharging me for what they feel against my parents...Yet I know that he liked my warm-heartedness and my caring for him because he missed his mother's warm-heartedness, but that did nothing. He was saying to me that I was a kid before I got married, but now I am rational...I was shocked when he said that...It was a crisis for me..." (a 23-year-old, divorced after one year).

Trying to Reconcile

This is the stage of trying to reform the relationship between the two partners. It is the stage of asking others for advice. These
attempts to reform the relationship and overcome the problem that couples face could appear from time to time. It is not a stage that is independent of other stages. It is the stage that could be going on all the time until the decision of divorce is made.

According to the women, trying means leaving the house of the husband and returning back to their family's houses. The attempt to reconcile appeared when they accepted the offer to go back to their husbands when they came to persuade their wives to go back with them. Women gave their husbands many chances to fulfill their demands and reform the relationship between them.

**Self-Attempts to Reform**

Women tried to stay with their husbands and reform their relationship again and again in many ways.

One of these attempts was sitting and discussing the problems in order to find ways to build the relationship again. They tried to change the husband to be more in keeping with the women's sense of self and place in the world (Vaughan, 1986).

'I tried a lot to fix my husband's mistakes by telling him his problems frankly, but it wasn't useful at all.' (a 28-year-old, divorced after nine months).

'I tried several times to persuade him to let my children from my previous husband live with me because this was my condition in the marriage contract, but he refused.' (a 45-year-old, divorced after four years).
'I tried to persuade him to rent an apartment where he was working (Dubai City) so we could stay with each other more often in order to become pregnant as the doctor had suggested, but he refused to do that. He always was saying many women like your condition; their husbands are working in another city, so why do you want to be different?..He didn’t understand me and he always was saying, you are a young woman, so we have time to have children’ (a 27-year-old, divorced after four years).

The other attempt was giving the husband the chance to reform himself and prove to his wife that he can change. It is the wife’s hope that her husband could change. If not, so she would give herself the chance to be like what he wanted from her to be. However, "in this point trying means to be someone they are not. Such changes, artificially imposed, are difficult to maintain" (Vaughan, 1986, p.160).

'I told my mother about what was going on between my husband and me. She told me you have to be patient and try again and again. I love my mother and I respect her opinions. I said to myself..okay let’s give him another chance because maybe I misjudged before the marriage. Maybe the first judgment influenced me (because he is my cousin) so let’s try again by another way. I became stupid like him. I didn’t care about anything around me. I tried to live just to eat, drink, and sleep as he does. I felt that this is not me..I tried this for a week..but I felt that this is not me..I am not like that..This is not my personality to live just for eating, drinking, and sleeping.He always looked at me like I was belittling him. I couldn’t think as he does.. He cursed my family and especially my father, and who is my father? He is his uncle. He did
that many times. He told me several times that my family are belittling him. My husband was jealous, because all my brothers are successful men in their lives. All of them are officers. He kept repeating this point a lot. I didn't put this in my mind because he is just a person without goals, so it's normal that he will belittle others" (a 27-year-old, divorced after six years).

'I tried a lot, I was patient a lot... Each year I said to myself he will change, but he didn't. Maybe for my patience my God will reward my daughters in the future' (a 35-year-old, divorced after 12 years).

'I tried as much as I could. I went back home more than 100 times and returned back to him just for my children. He was not the person that I knew in the honeymoon. He was completely changed, and I am sure it's from the evil potion that his mother did.' (a 23-year-old, divorced after six years).

'I spent six months with them. I hated my life. In the time that I spent with them he was saying that he will get married again. His mother was always saying that she will let him marry again to one who will serve his son and his family. He just cared about himself and his family without any care for his woman and her feelings" (a 23-year-old, divorced after one year).

Forgiving a husband was another attempt to keep the marriage alive. Women pressure themselves in order to keep the relationship alive, even if sometimes it cost a woman 15 years of her life.

'After a period of our marriage, we had a housemaid from the Philippines. He got married to her after I left Saudi Arabia for 10
days. When I knew that he got married to his housekeeper (she was Christian, but when she got married to him she became Muslim) I could not sit in the Saudi Arabia. I returned back to the U.A.E. to make sure that he really did marry the housemaid. and the answer that I found was yes he did. When I asked him why did you do that. He said, “What’s the different between you and her? Just because she is a housekeeper I cannot marry her? I want to make her work with us” I was mad because he got married for the third time and because she is just a housemaid and he got married to her behind my back. He really fell in my eyes when he did that. After a period, the housekeeper traveled to her country to see her family. Her family asked the embassy to let her husband divorce her after she aborted her child. He divorced her.. But the time was over he really fell in my eyes even though I forgive him’ (a 27-year-old, divorced after 15 years).

Persuading a husband to alter his decision that could destroy the marriage was another attempt at reconciliation. It is the attempt to persuade him not to get married again which could cost the married life of the couples.

‘I tried to alter him from his decision to get married again, but there was no way. He insisted that he is a rich man who can open many houses, so why does not he get married again?’ (a 45-year-old, divorced after nine years).

It was not just forgiving a husband, but also following the ignoring policy about the disturbed sources. Moreover, a divorced woman was also trying to simulate the husband toward the direction of solving
the conflict situation.

‘I tried a lot ..But finally I found that I did not care about him talking with others on the phone.He asked me why I did not blame him like before.I said, “Because you won’t ever change, so do whatever you want.” I felt he did that because he wanted me to get jealous, so I did the same..I knew that he did not like that, so I did not cover my face when I went to the mall or any public place.So I did not put a veil on my face to let him feel jealous..I remember once when he told me that he will travel with his friends to Syria but in fact he was lying..he went to Turkey. When he came back I faced him with that fact that one of his friends told me that he went to Turkey. I asked him to give me his passport to see who was the liar.. He refused to give me his passport, then when he saw that I was very angry and I could ask for divorce, he gave me the passport..His friend was right..He went to Turkey..Then he said I am so sorry and I forgave him under one condition..The condition was to not lie again..He traveled a lot after that, and he used to tell me the truth after what happened between me and him when he went to Turkey’ (a 24-year-old, divorced after five years).

Refusing any physical relationship with the husband was another way to encourage him to give a wife what she asked for.

‘I tried as much as I can to encourage him to go to find a job..I didn’t have any physical relationship with him in order to force him to go to find a job, but he did not..sometimes he was beating me just to have a physical relationship. For me, humans are not like animals.. I could not live just for physical relationship..I could not accept this
thing because I am a human..I tried by different ways. My ambitious were not more than supporting me as his wife and his daughters’ (a 35-year-old, divorced after 12 years).

‘When I decided to stop having children, I refused the physical relationship. He told me that he would marry again. I said okay go to marry again, and he did. After two months of his marriage, the problems were increased. I asked for divorce many times, but he refused’ (a 45-year-old, divorced after 17 years).

Trying to change the situation with a new arrangement was another attempt to keep the relationship alive. The arrangement was not only with the husband, but also with his family. “Many women are engaged in repeated cycles of trying” (Vaughan, 1987, p.166).

‘I was sitting with him while he played in loud (Arabic Guitar). Sitting near him I told him I missed him a lot, and asked if he missed me too? He said, “No I didn’t” He really hurt me. I was telling him: “I love you” in order to hear this word from him, but he didn’t say it. Maybe he didn’t say I love you because he was sitting with men, and you know this community could tell him “she is making fun of you.”

Sexually, I didn’t want more than a hug. It was hard to ask him for a hug but you know what I did? I tried to put my world in his world. I tried to make him discover my world by asking him during the physical relationship to hug me and he did.’ (a 28-year-old, divorced after nine months).

‘I tried a lot to be a friend with his sister, but she was an old girl who did not marry so she tried to control everything around her..He
was too hard. We were fighting with each other all the time. I abdicated many things I had in my life with my family just to let him be happy but I could not. His mother and sister were too hard. Moreover, when his mother told him to leave me and that she would find him another woman and really she did. He really was the end in my life' (a 27-year-old, divorced after one year).

**Needing an Outside Helper**

The majority of women did not ask for help from outside, but the women who did ask for help chose two persons.

A friend was one person that many women asked for advice, but not all of them took the advice. They listened to the advice and did what the situation demanded. Some women analyzed, it was not blindly following the advice.

'\textit{My friends gave me much advice, but I did not take because what's applicable for them was not applicable for me. So the wisdom says I have to not do what others tell me}' (a 28-year-old, divorced after nine months).

'I asked for help from my friends. They told me: "You should have a strong personality. And I have to not do as my husband wants either. Sometimes I did what they told me and sometimes not because their advice failed. The reason for that was that his personality was very hard. He did not have the desire to communicate. Sometimes he raised his hand on me."' (a 3-year-old, divorced after 15 years).

'I tried to persuade him to live closer to me because I felt that
we were far away from each other. I talked to my friends about my problem but none of them gave me any opinion, all of them said you have to think for yourself. (a 27-year-old, divorced after four years).

A mother also is one of the helpers that many women asked for advice. She is the closest person to her daughter and she had the experience that could help.

'I was telling my mother what was going on between me and my mother-in-law, she always said to try to be patient, you are younger than her so you have to tolerate her and respect her and one day she will change. I followed what my mother told me, but I found my mother-in-law just kept hurting me and setting her son against me' (a 21-year-old, divorced after one year).

'I told my mother what was going on between my husband and me. She told me you have to be patient and try again and again. I love my mother and I respect her opinions. I said to myself...okay let's give him another chance because maybe I may misjudged him before the marriage.' (a 27-year-old, divorced after six years).

Mother-in-Law's Involvement

A mother-in-law was an effective person from the husband's side who was involved in the relationship between her son and his wife. Many women shared the same problem of mother-in-law, namely, her involvement and encouraging an alternative choice for their sons. The alternative choice was always to find another better wife for their sons.

'My mother-in-law was involved in our life, she told my husband that
she will try to find another girl that really respects her and serve her son in the way that his mother wants...' (a 21-year-old, divorced after one year).

Children's Involvement

Children could play an important role in making their parents try again and again to solve their problems. They could prevent any hard decisions from taking place, they could delay this hard decision, or also they could encourage a hard decision when it reaches the point that they would be hurt.

'I tried several times to persuade him to let my children (from the previous marriage) live with me because this was a condition in the marriage contract, but he refused. My children from him didn't accept that he wanted their brothers and sisters to live with their father... They also didn't accept that he got married to another one. They told him, 'You were cheating on our mother, so leave us' (a 45-year-old, divorced after 11 years).

'...I tried as much as I could. I went back home more than 100 times and returned back to him just for my children..' (a 23-year-old, divorced after six years).

Women's Suffering

'I delivered the first child by surgery. he didn't even visit me in the hospital. However, when I left the hospital he was okay with me for a short period... After he got married to his cousin, he went back to the
way he was. I asked him to let me visit my mother in Saudi Arabia but he refused. He beat me a lot. He took me to the police office just because I told him to give your children money. Tell me how I can feed my children if he didn’t give me money?... I have a sick child who is now 18 years old. He is suffering from his back. He can’t walk... he needs Pampers... tell me how I can bring him money for Pampers if he didn’t give me money...
(Crying too much)... I asked my neighbors to help me... and what was he doing! He just drank, gambled, and went after girls.' (a 3-year-old, divorced after 20 years).

Physical Separation

Physical separation could appear from time to time. Many women have separated from their husband physically many times. The separation could take three forms: leaving the husband’s house or his family’s house, if they were living with them, leaving the bed room and staying in another room within the same house, or forcing a husband to leave the house. This last form is usually what happened when the couples were living in an independent house, and especially when they have more than two children.

All the women have physically separated from their husbands. For the majority of women, the separation was the final decision.

It is the stage where women reach the point where they have taken all potential attempts to save the marriage by themselves. Problems still continue and there is no or real response from the other. In most cases, the problems were the same as the disillusionment stage but they
The majority of women have taken the decision to separate after five years of the marriage, and most often in the first year of marriage, which indicates that they did not give themselves enough time to rethink again and again about their decision.

'I think we did not give ourselves the time to rethink many times about our own situation. Maybe because the game was played not by my husband and me, it was played by our families, and there was no chance for us to get involved' (a 21-year-old, divorced after one year).

It is the stage that could appear because of an event that explodes the situation with anger. It could be a result of this explosion, but the event was the one that caused the final step.

'A neighbor came to my husband’s house. She was a gossiping neighbor and harmful influence in the entire neighborhood. My mother-in-law told her about the conflict between her and me. The neighbor told my mother-in-law that your son’s wife (me) doesn’t want your son... she wants his friend. His friend was my brother’s friend. My mother-in-law found this story to be a chance to get rid of me...She told my husband about these rumors and what the neighbor said...My husband came to me repeating what the neighbor had said...I was shocked...I told him okay at this point everything between you and me is over. You have to divorce me since we got to this point... and then I returned back to my family’s house’ (a 21-year-old, divorced after one year).

'Once I called him to come home and take me to my father’s house...I wanted to see my father who was sick...He refused and hung up
the phone. I called him several times on his pager, but he didn’t call me back. When he came back home, we were looking at each other for six hours without saying a word...you know? Many times we were sitting in our room a whole day without saying a word...And at the night, I told him I wanted to see my father and I would stay with him for a couple of days, but he said no...I told him okay tell me why you refused. He said nothing...We went to sleep that night at 6 AM, and at 8 AM he went to work. When he left I collected my belongings including my clothes, perfume, everything...And I prepared the breakfast for his family...then I went to his mother and I fought with her and I told her everything inside me about her and about her son...I told her everything that came to my mind at that time. I told her it’s over; the life with you has become boring. Then I talked to my brother...I told him to come pick me up from my husband’s family. My brother hesitated a lot but my oldest sister told him your sister is old enough to make a decision like that, so do what she told you to do. My brother came to pick me up, then I called my husband at his work place...I told him I am in my family’s house. He told me, that’s it? It’s over? I said yes it’s over’ (a 28-year-old, divorced after nine months).

Reasons for Separation

Being beaten is one of the problems that many women have faced. For some of them it was the main reason for leaving the husband’s house.

‘He used to beat me several times on my face. The last time I could not be patient any more. This was after we sat with our cousin. I
laughed loudly, and when I entered my room to sleep, he told me that I was laughing very loudly with my cousin. I told him he is our cousin and I did not laugh too much. He said no you were and then he started slapping me on my face..then I left the home' (a 27-year-old, divorced after six years).

'Once, he beat me a lot. He and his wife wanted to take me to the sanitarium. I told him we have children and I did not ask you for anything except to sit with your children for at least 30 minutes. I talked with him softly, but he refused..then I said okay now you have to divorce me, and then he left the house’ (a 30-year-old, divorced after 20 years).

'I asked him for a divorce because he wanted another woman and he was beating me. Then I left for my family’s house’ (a 40-year-old, divorced after 2 years).

Not only beatings, but also family involvement was one of the biggest reasons for leaving the husband.

'One day I was sleeping and I was very tired from pregnancy. My husband did not talk with me for a week. He was mad about something at his work. It was a holiday and we were sleeping. His mother knocked on the door... I woke up to open the door for her. She said, wake up and prepare three different dishes for breakfast. I said I am too tired... She said you would do it... I said okay I would do just two dishes. Then she started to scream and talk loudly. My husband woke up. He asked his mother what’s going on?... She said look what your wife did to me. Without any discussion he said go to your family now. I said okay ask your father
first if I did anything wrong. His father said to me, you are wrong. Oh my God what I should do if his father is under his wife's control.. All of them were under her control. Then my husband pushed me in to the room and I was pregnant. He locked the door of the room from the outside. He jailed me there from 7 AM to sunset without food or drink. I was crying all this time. There was no phone to call my family in the room. I was pregnant. He opened the door after sunset and I went running to my family's house. It was so close to my husband's family's home. I entered the house then I fainted. I spent 10 days at the hospital because of their treatment. And from that time I did not return back to him. I stayed with my family' (a 23-year-old, divorced after one year).

"I left the house after we had a fight with his mother and sister. I left the house after two weeks of our marriage" (a 27-year-old, divorced after one year).

The husband thinking about getting married again or having been married already were other reasons for leaving him.

"I asked him for a divorce when he was insisting on getting married again. I was very mad because I told him before the marriage that my condition to marry you is that you won't get married again. But he did not follow what I said before the marriage, so I decided to leave him' (a 45-year-old, divorced after nine years).

"I decided to separate from my husband because he was always outside and he got married again' (a 45-year-old, divorced after four years).

"My husband fell in love with someone working in the same
department. She changed him and set him against me, so there was no place for me with him" (a 26-year-old, divorced after four years).

**In Self Defense**

It is the stage where people finally know that something is really wrong. A lot of advice from friends and relatives has been heard. The family and friends could be reforming the relationship, or they could be encouraging the separation and regretting it later.

It is the stage where many women have prepared themselves to face the family and friends with the decision that they have made. They have the evidence to justify their decision, and they are talking with confidence. They insist on the differences between them and their husbands to justify their decision to the people around them.

'We considered each other as brothers and sisters, not as spouses. We were living our childhood together in the same house. We couldn't deal with each other as a spouse. So, we decided to separate as a first step to telling our families about our decision' (an 18-year-old, divorced after four years).

The majority of women at this stage have prepared themselves for the worst thing that could happen. However, there are others who took this weapon as a solution for exerting pressure on their husbands.

'There was a situation that happened, and then I came back to my family's house...I can't tell you the situation...When I returned to my family's house... I didn't mean at that time to stay with my family forever...It was just a warning for my husband...But it was clear that he
was waiting for this chance. He asked his family and they told him we can’t force you to do anything... It’s your life and your decision... When my family asked me what was going on between you and your husband... I said nothing happened, everything will be fine... I waited a year for him to come and bring me to his family’s house, but he didn’t (a 21-year-old, divorced after four years).

'I refused to sleep with him in order to not have more children... we have eight children who want to be supported. I didn’t want a divorce itself, but I just didn’t want more children with hard treatment from his side. He couldn’t live without a physical relationship and he warned me that he would get married again. I told him you can do it, and when he did I couldn’t tolerate that, so I asked for a divorce..' (a 45-year-old, divorced after 11 years).

Not only could a woman demand the physical separation, but the man too. When he felt that he wanted a tranquil time to think again about the problematic situation between him and his wife, he asked his wife to go to her family’s house. Both partners experience separation as a period of emotional and social disorder (Vaughan, 1986).

'He asked me to go to my family’s house... I said okay... and he did not even call me. My mother was asking me about what was going on between him and me. I told her we just wanted a rest. I found the situation between us became more complicated, so it was over from my side’ (a 32-year-old, divorced after seven months).

'I stayed in my family’s house because he wanted that. I did not understand the motivation of asking for this, but I did what he asked
me. I knew after that he wanted to get married to a woman working with him in the same place. She changed him completely. She set him against me. She told him your wife or me. I think he asked me to go to my family’s house to think about it. So I asked for a divorce, to make the situation easier for him’ (a 26-year-old, divorced after four years).

Mediation

In this stage, the situation between spouses reaches the point of each one standing on his or her own opinion. Each one says the right is with her/him and the other has to change. Each one is waiting for the other to give id. When spouses fail to solve the problematic situation between them, and one of them uses physical separation as a weapon to pressure the other or as a last decision before divorce, the stage when outside people become involved in their affairs in order to reform them takes place.

It is the stage when mediators negotiate with couples to emphasize the agreement points, reduce disagreement points, display the positives of each one in front of the other, or to get to the main problematic points and try to start a plan to solve them in regard to each one’s demands.

Couples are the main people who set their demands, but also their families could set demands to make sure that the problematic situation will not come again in the future. This is especially true for the wife’s family, who wants to protect their daughter as the weakest part
of the marriage, since she is a woman.

Mediators

The majority of women had mediators who played a role in trying to solve the problems and bringing the two partners together. The mediator could be one person or could be more than one.

The study of “Divorce in the Emirates Society, the Reasons and Social Impacts,” (1998) showed that 43.5% of divorced people tried to solve their problems by themselves. There were 40% who asked help from the wife’s family, 24% who asked help from the husband’s family, and 19% who asked help from their family’s friends (Rahsed, Kubaisi, & Tahboob, 1998).

An elderly man and the husband’s family were the people who became involved in the reform stage for the majority of the women. An elderly man is a respected man from each couple’s family, the husband’s family and the wife’s family. It could be the grandfather of each family, or it could be another man from any side, husband or wife. He is the a man who is familiar with families for his wisdom and fairness, so each group listens to him and takes his advice, even though the partners do not always follow his plan if they find it conflicts with their desires.

‘An elderly man from my family became involved to end the problems between my husband’s family and me. He is a respected man in my family. Unfortunately, he did not do anything because my husband’s family were not understanding people.’ (a 21-year-old, divorced after one
'There was an old and respected man who came to my father trying to persuade him to let me go back to my husband. My father said 'Okay, but under several conditions, such as will you support your wife and her children, sit with your wife and do not take her children to your family, and leave her alone at home the whole day, eat with your wife rather than with your family and let her alone, and do not beat her under any circumstances.' The elderly man promised that my husband would do what I want. Then I came back to my husband's house for six months...I am following the conditions until he mistreated me. So I went again to my family's house' (a 23-year-old, divorced after six years).

'My grandfather forced me to go back to my husband (my cousin), but I refused. My father also forced me, but I reached the point where I cannot be with such a man like that. Listening to his mother and sister. He did not have a strong personality. He could not have his own salary in his hand, so how could he be a man' (a 2-year-old, divorced after one year).

The mediator could be the husband's family, who negotiates with their son in order to bring him and his wife together.

'His family tried many times to alter his mind to get married again. They were surprised and nervous about his decision. His father was much more surprised than anyone else' (a 26-years-old, divorced after four years).

'His family said to him it's your life and your decision. But then they talked to him, but he didn't listen. Moreover, when people asked
him why don’t you go and take your wife from her family’s house to your family’s house. He said she didn’t get pregnant...This shocked me because when I was crying in front of him and asking him to let us stay with each other in the city where he worked because the doctor said you have to spend more time with each other if you want to be pregnant, he refused. Moreover he was telling me that you are still young, so why do you want a baby now and now after all of that, he said I didn’t get pregnant. He put all the fault on me...He didn’t even feel about me... (Very Angry)...’ (a 27-year-old, divorced after four years).

‘...His family was shocked when I asked for a divorce...They love me very much. They kicked him out of the house when they knew that I was tired because he did not get a job. They did that to force him to go find a job, but he did not” (a 35-year-old, divorced after 12 years).

The mediator could be the wife’s family that tried to negotiate with the wife to bring her and her husband together.

‘My family tried to reform what was going on between my husband and me. They tried to influence me to overlook his mistakes and to be patient with the marriage again, but I could not do that...’ (a 45-year-old, divorced after nine years).

‘My brothers had a family meeting with me, with my husband, and with his parents. My brothers confronted my husband and his family with everything they did to me...’ (a 23-year-old, divorced after one year).

A family could force the daughter to go back to her husband, especially in the case where her husband was her cousin too. So the father of the family could be involved as a mediator who finally, even
though his daughter resisted, force her to accept his decision. A father could do that because in his mind it would be shameful if his daughter didn’t go back to her husband who entered his uncle’s house. It would be shameful in the group’s eyes specifically and in the people’s eyes, in general. However, women could go back to her husband, but for all practical purposes they have lost everything, such as life, meaning, and self-validation that have not been reconstituted in the relationship and they continue to derive their identity from alternative resources (Vaughan, 1986).

‘My husband came to take me again to his family’s house after three weeks. I did not want to go back again, but my father (his uncle) forced me to go back to my husband. I was tired psychologically, but I went back to my husband” (a 27-year-old, divorced after six years).

The mediator could be from both families trying to bring their children together.

‘Our families were shocked. When I told my sister that we decided to separate, she told me do not do that. This is the last thing you should think about. But we did not listen to anyone. It was a final decision. Our families also got mad at us. They were surprised, and they tried to change our minds to bring us together. But it was to no avail. Finally they accepted because they are religious people who know what it means when we cannot stay together.’ (an 18-year-old, divorced after four years).
Reasons for Failure

The majority of women did not accept the plan of mediators for many reasons, which led the women to ask for the final stage, which is the divorce. In most cases, women tried in order to prove to their families and other people that they have done everything they could to work things out (Vaughan, 1986).

One of these reasons was that the mediator failed to persuade the husbands and their families to establish a separate house for the couples, since all the problems came from the husband’s family’s involvement.

‘. ..My father was involved to end the problems. He offered a solution to his brother (my husband’s father). The solution was to let me and my husband live in my father’s home to see from where the problems came, or to see who initiated the problems, me or my husband, but my husband’s father refused. He said, No, I won’t let my son live with you, I am afraid that you won’t feed him. Oh my God do you believe that we won’t feed his son?..It’s shameful to hear that from my husband’s father. My husband’s father offered another plan. He said, why don’t we build a separate section in our big house for my son and his wife? But I refused because the main reason of our conflict was my husband’s mother, so there was nothing that was going to be changed if we stayed in the same house. My father then said okay we don’t want our children to live in our houses, so why don’t we build a separate house for them? My husband’s father refused. So, I insisted on my decision, but without any good result’ (a 21-year-old, divorced after one year).
‘I didn’t tell my family everything. I just told them the surface matters that my husband and his family did to me. But after the fifth month of our marriage, I couldn’t keep everything inside me. I returned back to my family’s house after he jailed me from 7 AM to sunset in my room without food and drink and I was pregnant. My husband and his family came to my family to take me back to their house. My brothers refused until I met with them and we had a discussion about what they did. My brothers faced my husband and his family about everything they did to me. They didn’t even deny what they did. So my father offered a house to me and my husband to live in until we had a separate home. His family refused. His mother said, You will come back to our house without a question. So I said it’s over. And my family agreed that my family’s husband didn’t deserve me to live with them” (a 23-year-old, divorced after one year).

Another reason for the failure of the mediator’s plan was the husband’s treatment of the wife after the wife came back to him after the reforming stage.

‘My husband came to take me again to his family’s house after three weeks. I did not want to go back again, but my father (his uncle) forced me to go back to my husband. I was tired psychologically, but I went back to my husband. When we arrived at the house, he told me, I brought you back not because of you, I brought you back because of your father. He was not supposed to say that, and he did not have to say it by this way... belittling. I told him, Okay, divorce me if you do not want me. This was the first night I went back with him. He said, if you go
outside the house you are divorced. So I went out of the house and I was divorced then. He denied that he said if you go outside you are divorced, but he did' (a 27-year-old, divorced after six years).

A husband insisting on his plan to get married again was another reason why the mediator failed to reform the marriage. The mediator in this case encourages women to accept the husbands’ wish and be patient, if not for the marriage itself, then for their children. In this case, women refused to accept his plan to get married again.

‘My family tried to reform what was going on between my husband and me. They tried to influence me to overlook his mistakes and to be patient with him again, but I could not do that. I considered his new marriage again as belittling’ (a 45-year-old, divorced after nine years).

‘His family tried many times to alter his plan to get married again. They were surprised and nervous about his decision. His father was much more surprised than anyone else’ (a 26-year-old, divorced after four years).

Not Having a Mediator

On the other hand, some women did not have a real mediator, because their families agreed with the decision that they had made. Most of them found their families and friends felt regret, and understood that they had made the best decision when they asked for a divorce.

‘There were not any serious attempts to reform what happened between him and me. My family when they found I am too tired, they said
okay you have to ask for divorce' (a 28-year-old, divorced after nine months).

'"My mother told me get your divorce from him, but my father was refusing. He said your husband would be okay; so do not ask for a divorce. I wish I had done what my mother told me and I had not listened to my father’s advice. My mother-in-law loves me too much. She told her son if you hurt your wife I would not forgive you in this life and in the other life (the life after the death). But his behaviors with me were going to take me to the sanitarium” (a 30-year-old, divorced after 20 years).

'There was no attempt to reform what was happened between my husband and me. It is the opposite completely. My family blamed me for marrying him. They told me, we told you that he did not have a U.A.E. passport and he had divorced many women in Saudi Arabia. I told them, do not worry, I did not lose anything, I will let him divorce me’ (a 45-year-old, divorced after four years).

'There was no real attempt to reform. Our families said you have the freedom to decide your life. From my side, I did not make any real attempt to be with him because he is not an understanding man..’ (a 45-year-old, divorced after 17 years).

'There was no attempt to reform. His family was very happy because they wanted him to get married to his cousin and I am a very nervous woman’ (a 35-year-old, divorced after 13 years).

'My family and friends agreed with me totally..his parents were blaming me because he is a man and he was traveling a lot before he got
married to me. So there is no difference for them. They got used to it. But I did not care for his parents. I could not tolerate all these problems. I did not sleep with him. He traveled a lot. He had many relationships with other women. I could not tolerate it any more.’ (a 24-year-old, divorced after five years).

‘I talked to my father. He told me you have to be patient because he will be your child’s father. So you have to be patient at least for your child. But I could not tolerate it. My mother was completely with me’ (a 23-year-old, divorced after one year).

‘My mother tried to know what was going on between me and him. I told her that there is nothing really clear. But I felt that he was thinking about his previous wife because he went to her family’s house a lot. My mother told me then just leave him. I said I will wait for him to call me but he did not. Then I asked for a divorce’ (a 32-year-old, divorced after seven months).

This stage is the stage not just for attempts at reform by mediators; it is the stage of counseling by the husband’s parents, relatives, and friends. When all of the attempts fail, the next stage begins. It is the stage of asking for a divorce.

Divorce

Divorce is the last stage in the divorce process. It is the stage where one or both partners in the couple reach the point where they cannot be with the other anymore. It is the stage where all the reforming attempts are to no avail. It comes after the stage of
separation where each one tries to review the relationship, present demands, or end the relationship.

Types of Divorce

According to Paul Bohanan in “Divorce and After,” divorce consists of at least six things that are happening all at once. They may come in a different order and with varying intensities, but there are at least six different experiences of separation (“Divorce process,” 1999, paragraph 25).

Emotional Divorce: It begins when the spouses withhold emotion from their relationship. It generally begins before separation and continues for some time afterward.

Legal Divorce: It occurs when the final decree is handed down by the judge.

Economic Divorce: It occurs when the individuals set up separate housekeeping and separate their belongings.

Coparental Divorce: It is the separating of mothering and fathering roles that are made necessary when separate residences are established.

Community Divorce: It involves the loosening of bonds with some old friends and acquaintances, and the beginning of new ones.

Psychic Divorce: It deals with individual autonomy. Couples who have lived together for years must separate their identities when they divorce.
Why Divorce?

Regarding the sample of the study, women who asked for divorce had reached the point of ending the relationship anyway. The majority of them did not face problems in getting divorce from their husbands. The study of “Divorce in the Emirates Society, the Reasons and Social Impacts,” (1998) emphasized this result in which 67% of divorced people did not face problems in getting their divorce (Rashed, Kubaisi, & Tahboob, 1998).

‘Because he was a very stingy man, he didn’t care about his children. He was a very hard man, and you couldn’t make a conversation with him. His mother in Yemen raised to be rude and tough ... And this was his personality type, not just with his wives, but also with his children. Because of that, I asked him to divorce me. Moreover, when he traveled to Yemen and got married there, I noticed that he could divorce me because I didn’t go with him to Yemen when he asked me. So I asked him to divorce me, and he easily did. He tried to get me to return, but I refused’ (a 37-year-old, divorced after 15 years).

‘Before he got married, I insisted that he divorce me and he did’ (a 45-year-old, divorced after nine years).

‘When he told me that he did not want me, and for that he was beating me, and he wanted another woman, I told him to divorce me and he did it easily’ (a 40-year-old, divorced after two years).

‘When he asked me to go to my family, and there was another woman in his life, I told him it’s over. At this point we had to separate, so I asked for a divorce and he did it. He called me at my family’s
house and said I was divorced” (a 26-year-old, divorced after four years).

‘I asked for a divorce because he did not even care for me or my desire to have a baby.. I thought if there were children, a divorce could not happen. But I think the main problem is that he did not care about my feelings. He did not even try to feel as I felt.. I asked for a divorce because I gave up. And he left me for a year in my family’s house without asking about me..’ (a 27-year-old, divorced after four years).

‘I insisted on the divorce when I went back to my family’s house and he did not even call me. I found that it was not worth it’ (a 35-year-old, divorced after 13 years).

‘Once my friend gave me gold nickels as a gift when I got my second daughter... I put them on the table and in the morning I did not find them. There was no one entering my room. I asked him where are my nickels? He said I do not know.. I said you sold it? He did not say anything. I said, ‘see I do not care about the value of this nickel.. it could not be more than $150, but the thing that I care about is my life with you. My daughters when they see other people’s children, they feel jealous.. You asked your family to give you five or ten dollars and you are a father for children.. Shame on you. So either you go to find a job or divorce me?’ He said okay I will divorce you. go to your family’s house’ (a 35-year-old, divorced after 12 years).

‘My last days with him I could not tolerate his controlling treatment. After I delivered my child, my mother asked for a divorce because I was tired. After I finished my postpartum period, he gave me
my divorce’ (a 23-year-old, divorced after one year).

‘I asked him to divorce me after he did not call me. I called him and said now divorce me. He said okay and he divorced me’ (a 32-year-old, divorced after seven months).

Getting the Divorce

Many women face a lot of problems in getting their divorce. Some of them finally got their divorce in court.

‘After I returned to my family’s house, I called my husband a lot to send me my health cards and passport. He refused. I asked my brother to go to court to make him give me my passport and cards. I put his work address in court to let him receive the punishment in his work in order to expose him in front of his friends. I told the judge that he refused to let me see my sick father. He fabricated everything in front of the judge. He did not say the truth. He said that I am going outside without his permission and I am riding taxis without his acceptance. The judge sided with him against me, but I did not go back to his house. I asked him again to give me my passport and health cards and he refused again. I talked to his sister’s husband. I told him if he did not give me my belongings and a divorce, I would take him to court again and again. So in order to avoid the problems, my husband gave me what I wanted with my divorce’ (a 28-year-old, divorced after nine months).

‘Once I told him to give me Dh 50 (about $14) He refused. I took it from his clothes and then he turned my hand until I felt that he would break it. Then I gave the money back to him. Then he beat me and he
threw me on the bed and slapped me a lot in front of my children. They were crying because of what he did to their mother. He took my children and closed the door from the outside. I jumped from the window and I went to my neighbor’s house to call the police. Then the police came and took him to the police office. He said he didn’t beat me. But the investigator saw his physical abuse on my face. He said we have to transfer you to the hospital to check if he beat you ... They found that he beat me. I didn’t give up my right to jail him. His brother called me a lot in order to drop the charges, but I said he had to go to jail and I won’t give up until he gives me my divorce. His brother said he would persuade him. His brother called me in the next morning and told me okay he will divorce you in the court, so he did.” (a 23-year-old, divorced after six years).

‘After he got married and swore that he wouldn’t divorce me ... I went to court with my father and I told the judge I want my divorce because of my husband and his family’s treatment. After a long period of coming and going to court ... I got my divorce. I left all my gold and belongings in his family’s house. When my grandmother went to get my belongings from there, his mother told my grandmother to go outside from her home. It was like a slap in my face, really it was like that. Moreover, I abdicate of any charge just to get my divorce from my husband’ (a 27-year-old, divorced after one year).

The difficulties that women faced to get their divorce, such as going to court were not important. They could be solved within their families by a new arrangement.

‘My husband’s father said, you will not get your divorce till you
pay Dh. 100,000 (about $27,250). I refused to pay him. Then he told me you have to abdicate your rights after the divorce such as my gold and 'Mu'ker'. After I thought carefully about the conditions, I decided to abdicate. Then I got my divorce' (a 21-year-old, divorced after one year).

'He felt belittled because he did not complete his education and I completed my education. All my brothers were educated. When he told me that he took me to his house not for me but for my father. Everything between us was broken. I left his house and after six years after leaving he gave me my divorce. My divorce remained undecided. My family wished that I would come back. They thought it was a matter of time and I will go back to my husband, but I refused completely to go back to him. Our marriage was alive in the documents, but in reality we were divorced. Although he got married during those six years and had a baby, he said you are my cousin and I still want you. I was completely refusing to go back to him. Then he gave me my divorce' (a 27-year-old, divorced after six years).

Children's Role

Children played a role in delaying the divorce, but did not prevent it when it reached the point where a divorced woman couldn't stay with her husband anymore.

'I insisted on a divorce and he gave me one. Maybe our children played a role in delaying the divorce, but not in preventing it' (a 45-year-old, divorced after 17 years).
'My children were the main factor that made me think and think about getting my divorce from my husband. I wish I had done it earlier, but my children would have paid the cost. Finally I did it when there was not any other choice’ (a 23-year-old, divorced after six years).

Pertaining to their Decision to Divorce

The question was did you feel that you made the right decision when you asked for a divorce. This stage is the time for evaluating the decision, now that the madness, suffering, and pressure are at an end, especially since at least one year or more has passed since their divorce.

The majority of women have said that they made the right decision when they asked for divorce where the life with their husbands couldn’t be tolerated anymore. The study of “Divorce in the Emirates Society, the Reasons and Social Impacts” (1998) shows that the majority of women felt happy about their divorce (39%), 29% said they are rueful and sad, 17% said they don’t care, and 13% said they don’t know (Rahsed, Kubaisi, & Tahboob, 1998).

‘There was nothing that made us hesitate about the divorce decision. It’s the opposite..I said to myself that I abdicated a lot and I was supposed to not abdicate at all..I have to stay on my level and not to go down to their level, especially since I felt that he was feeling that my level was higher than his level economically’ (a 28-year-old, divorced after nine months)

‘Divorce was something that had to be done..to end his beatings
that could take me to sanitarium with my husband and his pregnant wife’ (a 30-year-old, divorced after 20 years).

'Divorce was something that had to be done, especially since I can’t avoid people’s talking about me. They were saying, see this woman, her husband left her and went to get married again I felt that this talk was very hard, but I can’t carry it on my shoulder. I felt that this talk was making me angry’ (a 45-year-old, divorced after nine years).

'I thought about how I helped him to be a citizen and when the money was in his hand, he went to get married and be far away from me. And who am I? I am the one who made him a citizen. So we have to be separate’ (a 45-year-old, divorced after 11 years).

'His father and brothers tried to persuade him to not get married again, but he did not listed. He asked me to stay with my family, and I did not understand why he did that. And when I knew about his desire to get married again, I said it’s over and I asked him to give me my divorce. Everything was going very fast after I came back from the treatment in the U.S.’ (a 26-year-old, divorced after four years).

'There was nothing that made me hesitate about the divorce decision. His family supported him and he wanted his cousin, so why should I keep staying with him! My dignity is everything in this life. If I finally eat the leaves of trees, cheese, and bread, it will be enough for me. I can kill the man if I feel he will come before my dignity’ (a 35-year-old, divorced after 13 years).

'We made our decision because we could not feel like spouses’ (an 18-year-old, divorced after four years).
'I put a lot of pressure on myself...I was pushing my feelings down. When he was upset, I went to talk with him to be happy. I abdicated from all my rights just to let him happy. He doesn't deserve anything' (a 23-year-old, divorced after one year).

'I was not supposed to come back to him and did not listen to an old man who came to my father with a guarantee that my husband will respect me. The thing that made me hesitate about the divorce was my children, but when I reached the point of getting crazy, I said it's over' (a 23-year-old, divorced after four years).

'Divorce was the only solution for a man that I didn't choose and that I was forced to get married to. He was really not a comprehensible man and I couldn't depend my life on such a person like that. All people knew that his mother and sister were not the people that anyone can trust his/her daughter with' (a 23-year-old, divorced after one year).

A Sudden Decision

Divorce could be a sudden decision that a woman could make. It would be a decision that could be made under the pressure of the problems, so it could be made without an awareness of its effects later in the woman's life.

'When I asked for a divorce, I did not think about the effects of the divorce in our society. What I was thinking of was just the divorce. How I can get rid of my husband and his family. I tolerated his mother many times, but then it was over. I could not tolerate her any more' (a 21-year-old, divorced after one year).
‘Divorce was a quick decision. I did not think of its effects or results because I felt that he did not want me’ (a 40-year-old, divorced after two years).

‘Because I was very flustered, I did not think about the divorce’s effects’ (a 45-year-old, divorced after 17 years).

It is not only the unawareness of the effects of the divorce; it is also the ignorance of what society could say that could cost the happiness of a woman.

‘When I left the house aiming to get a divorce, I did not think about the effects of the divorce. I did not think about what the people in our society would say about me. Society does not know when I feel comfortable with my husband or when I feel unhappy. All that society knows is that I am marrying my cousin, nothing more. People around me could be proud of me when I married my cousin, but they will not help me if I got sick from this marriage. A person can consider society’s opinion, but when s/he reaches the point of giving up any resolution of the problems, s/he do not care about what society will say’ (a 27-year-old, divorced after six years).

‘I did as many things as I could to stay with him. I did not even ask him when he wanted to travel. I tried to let him feel that I was not mad about his traveling anymore, but I found that this man does not have feelings. He did not care about me. Everything was normal to him... It was okay with him that I was mad or upset about what he was doing. My children did not play a certain role in preventing the divorce because I found that I am the one who will live with him all my life not my
children’ (a 24-year-old, divorced after five years).

Women’s Responses to Divorce

The investigator asked women about their feelings at the moment that they heard about the divorce from their husbands, either directly or indirectly.

Positive Feelings

Half of the women answered positively that they got what they wanted and the suffering ended.

‘I felt that I got rid of him’ (a 21-year-old, divorced after one year).

‘When he said you are divorced. I felt very happy.. I felt it was a sadness that I had to get over. I slept for two days after the divorce’ (a 28-year-old, divorced after nine months).

‘I was very happy when he said you are divorced..I felt like a drowned person who was just thrown a life preserver..At least I got rid of my family’s pressure because he is my cousin.. I did not feel sorry or regret that I asked for a divorce. It’s the opposite.. Thanks God it’s a situation that is over now..I did not feel comfortable with him to feel I am sorry about him’ (a 27-year-old, divorced after six years).

‘I was happy..I am a citizen.. I am a daughter of this country..and may God save my president’s life.. if I get benefits from him, maybe I will be sad..but I am not getting anything from him’ (a 45 -year-old, divorced after four years).
'I was happy...and I didn’t ever regret it' (a 23-year-old, divorced after one year).

'I was very happy...and I colored hands and I said to my family I will make a party' (a 23-year-old, divorced after one year).

'I didn’t expect that he would do it...it was impossible to get my divorce from him. I was really happy' (a 23-year-old, divorced after six years)

'I felt that I won, because my husband and his family made it a challenge. They swore they would let me stay in limbo. But I stood up for my rights in the court after I showed all the people who they were' (a 27-year-old, divorced after one year).

Negative Feelings

Half of women answered negatively. When they heard that their husbands gave them what they have asked, it hurt them a lot.

'I was psychologically tired... I had a psychological treatment for two years... I abdicated all my rights, I even abdicated my 'Mu'ker'... If I abdicated my rights in this life, I will not abdicate from my rights to get him in the other life (life after death)' (a 30-year-old, divorced after 20 years).

'I was sad a lot. But there was no understanding from the beginning of our marriage and because I admired him just for his looks was the reason for the marriage' (a 37-year-old, divorced after 15 years).

'I was surprised and shocked... I thought about how I am sick and his children's mother and when I wasn’t there, he knew another woman. And I
was shocked at how he gave me the divorce so easily like that. I tried to let him calm down when I was talking with him by phone. He said okay you are divorced.’ (a 26-year-old, divorced after four years).

‘I got mad, but I prepared myself for this thing’ (a 27-year-old, divorced after four years).

‘I got tired. very tired because I asked for a divorce under stressful conditions’ (a 45 year old, divorced after 17 years).

‘I was really shocked when he did it so easily like that’ (a 32-year-old, divorced after seven months).

Reasons of Divorce from Women’s Perceptive

Divorce rates in the U.A.E. are at an all-time high. Sociologists cite changing lifestyles, education, working wives, the rising cost of living, increased expectations and the failure of couples to work at their marriage as the reasons why one-in-three marriages break down (Gulf News, 2000, paragraph 1).

The reasons of divorce in the U.A.E. are many, but they all can be attributed to the set of priorities embraced by the two parties. Some of them are social and cultural reasons, others are economic, and others are personal. What this study shows is that the social and cultural reasons are the most important in the divorce cases that have been interviewed.
**Social Reasons**

Getting married by the way that the family has chosen is one of the biggest reasons in the majority of the cases. Getting married to an undesired cousin is one of the reasons that led to divorce. Or, in other words, an arranged marriage by the family that contradicts both the man and woman’s desires, was one reason of divorce that stated by women. The local study showed that 72% of women had their husbands chosen by their families (Rahsed, Kubaisi, & Tahboob, 1998).

Marrying a cousin is one of the expected forms of marriage in the traditional families, which reflects the children’s notion of their future partners, which allows no options for them to select their mates.

‘... The traditions and customs that make the family arrange marriages for their children in the early stage...’ (a 21-year-old, divorced after a year).

‘The reasons are 100% cultural and social reasons. A boy cousin has to marry his girl cousin’ (a 27-year-old, divorced after six months).

‘The reasons are social, related to the families. My family said I have to get married to my cousin just because he is my cousin’ (an 18-year-old, divorced after four years).

‘The reasons were social. Cousins have to marry their cousins. The tribal system in our society makes the relatives’ marriage the top priority, even if the relatives don’t match each other...It’s the price that we have to pay’ (a 27-year-old, divorced after one year).

A family could force their children not only to marry their
cousins, but also to marry a stranger who was not a relative but whom
the family thought would be a good match. This would often lead to an
unhappy marriage because it is not a choice that depends on the couples’
desires. It is the choice that depends on both families’ desires.

‘His family forced him to get married to me and he wanted someone
else. So why do I have to stay with him? (a 40-year-old, divorced after
two years).

Family involvement was another big problem in many cases. The
economic development gave birth to the nuclear family and pushed the
extended family behind. The father’s authority was reduced as more
women became educated and went out to work. Each partner wants to have
freedom and choices regarding the family affairs inside and outside the
house without any involvement from both sides’ families. Many local
studies support family involvement as a factor of an unhappy marriage
which leads to divorce. In the study of “Divorced Women in the United
Arab Emirates,” (1981) 21.4% of women said family involvement was a
factor in their divorce (MLSA, 1981). Another study, “A Diagnosed Study
for Divorce Phenomenon in the United Arab Emirates” (1987), showed that
family involvement and the submission to these traditions is one of the
Society, the Reasons and Impacts” (1998) also shows that family
involvement one of the biggest factors of divorce. This was one of the
factors that divorced women gave as a major cause of divorce (Rahsed,
Kubaisi, & Tahboob, 1998). From the data of this study, family
involvement was a main factor of divorce.
'His family involved in everything between us. My husband didn’t have a strong personality in front of his family’ (a 21-year-old, divorced after one year).

'His family was involvement was the main reason of divorce. His mother is separated from his father and I think this influenced him...' (a 35-year-old, divorced after 13 years).

'He was too young when he got married (21 years old). His mother had domination in the house. His personality was too weak. We were living in an extended family which was too hard for me because of the involvement of his family. I think if I lived with my husband in a separate house maybe he would change. At least then he will lean on me' (a 23-year-old, divorced after one year).

'Family involvement, his family problems, his personality was weak, his mother control led everything in the house’ (a 23-year-old, divorced after six years).

'...Family involvement, especially his mother and an older sister who controlled everything...They even controlled when we had to go outside and where...Nothing was left without their control...We were lucky, they didn’t control when we had to sleep’ (a 27-year-old, divorced after one year).

Polygamous marriage was a reason of divorce in many cases. Divorced women considered their husband having another wife as putting them in a critical situation in front of society’s eyes, especially if there was no reason to get married again from their side.

'The polygamous marriage, which put me in a critical situation in
front of society. I was asking myself, what is wrong with me that made my husband get a second married again?" (a 40-year-old, divorced after two years).

'He wanted to marry his cousin. He always said, 'If I get married to my cousin, it will be better for me' he took my gold and everything I had to give to his cousin as a gift for his marriage to her' (a 40-year-old, divorced after 20 years).

'He stayed the whole night with his cousin. It was fine with his family that he did that. They encouraged him to get married to his cousin, and they prepared a lot of occasions to let them meet together. He had young relationships, and he stayed outside until midnight, I couldn’t tolerate the news that he was getting married from his cousin' (a 35-year-old, divorced after 13 years).

When one of the spouses did not take care of the family in the way that the other partner sought, it could lead to a broken marriage. The growing tendency among couples to spend their free time away from their partners resulted in poor communication between husbands and wives and distanced them from each other and their children (Gulf News).

'...He didn’t even stay with his children or have a conversation, and this was all that I wanted from him...' (a 30-year-old, divorced after 20 years).

'The reason for my divorce was men these days who don’t care about anything around them' (a 26-year-old, divorced after four years).

'He was inadequate with his children. He was shouting all the time. He didn’t have the soul of dialog...' (a 45-year-old, divorced after
Economic Reasons

Divorce reasons could be economic. A study conducted by the Ministry of Labor and Social Affairs in Dubai in 1998 attributed the high divorce rate to the vast economic and social changes of the past 20 years. These changes created financial demands and moral issues that led to constant quarrels between couples (Gulf News, 2000, paragraph 4).

Economic factors in this study included the husband having a lower economic condition than his wife’s family or he was very rich.

After the oil boom and the economic development, the family gradually adapted a consumerist outlook. Tension prevailed when luxuries could not be afforded. This eventually led to many broken marriages.

‘There were differences in the economic level between him and me. I have housemaids and drivers in my family’s house, but in my husband’s house there was nothing. If his economic level was okay, I could get used to living in my family’s house, maybe I could have tolerated him more. At the beginning, I didn’t know about his economic life. Moreover, disrespect, inflexibility, and envy between spouses are reasons for divorce. Sometimes I feel he bears malice against me because my family’s economic level was higher than his level’ (a 28-year-old, divorced after nine months).

Sometimes the basic needs of the family could not be matched because of the unemployed husband. It could be because he is completing his studies and has no time to work, which makes him depend on his
family for financial support, or because his family coddled him until he reached the point where he depended on them completely. He depended on them even after he got married and had children.

'The reasons are economic. He didn't have a job. He depended on his family. I couldn't buy anything for my young daughter when we went to the grocery store because we didn't have money. His family coddled him too much when he was young. Even he didn't pray. His family now is trying to change him, but to no avail because he is old now. His family coddled all his brothers, but they have a strong personality, so that didn't affect their serious lives. My husband was affected by this family treatment. Sometimes he went to them and told them my wife told me to ask you for money. I never told him to go to them to get money' (a 35-year-old, divorced after 12 years).

However, the economic factors of divorce could be related to the wealth of the husbands. When a husband is rich, he can get married to more than one wife without any reason. He can change his wife as he is changing his car or clothes. This put the wife in a critical situation in front of society, and this is especially true when there is no reason for marrying again. Many women cannot accept this, and they feel themselves in a situation where they have to ask for a divorce.

'A very wealthy mad. Every day a car and he wanted every day a bride, especially since he is an old man over fifty. Also the polygamous marriage which puts the first wife in a critical situation in front of the society' (a 45-year-old, divorced after 2 years).

Also, wealth could lead to divorce when one partner pay too much
attention to the material needs rather than the emotional needs of the other partner. When a husband supports his wife from the financial side and ignores her emotional needs, it could lead to a broken marriage.

'The reasons are economic. My husband was very rich, so he could travel a lot. He traveled to many places within a year and had relationships with many local and foreign girls.' (a 24-year-old, divorce after five years).

The economic transition to higher conditions of living could lead to a broken marriage, especially if the husband married a woman to achieve the goal of money. He could ignore his wife's conditions before the marriage or maybe her demands.

'Having my children from my previous marriage with me was my condition to get married to him. He accepted this condition when he didn't have citizenship. He asked me to give my children to their father, but I refused. This was the reason for my divorce. Being a citizen and having money run in his hand let him get married again and again. Originally the problem was from my side. If I didn't help him to be a citizen, money would not run in his hand. If I kept him without the Emirates' citizenship, he would not do that to me. It is my fault, not his fault' (a 45-year-old, divorced after 11 years).

Personal Reasons

The reasons could be personal related to a poor level of understanding between married people about the needs of each other.
Emotional, sexual, and other needs tended to be ignored by one party or
by both of them when they became husband and wife.

‘He didn’t satisfy me sexually’ (a 28-year-old, divorced after
nine months)

‘..He was very cold in the time I was very hot and nervous. But
honestly the main reason for asking for a divorce was sex. He was weak
sexually and I was the opposite. There wasn’t satisfaction from his
side’ (a 24 year old, divorced after five years).

The understanding between both parties is the basis for building
their marriage. Many divorced women were facing the problem that their
husbands did not understand them.

‘No understanding, and in taking into account the surface
appearances such as what he looks like in the choice of getting married’
(a 40-year-old, divorced after two years).

‘No understanding between both of us. His nature is not like mine.
He is a very mad person. He wanted to control and govern everything. He
stayed outside a lot’ (a 23-year-old, divorced after one year).

Violence between both parties was a reason for divorce. It leads
to broken marriages, especially when the children are present.

‘..He was beating and hurting me without reason’ (a 40-year-old,
divorced after two years).

‘..When he heard anything against us from the outside, he came to
beat us without even discussion about how true what he heard was’ (a 45-
year-old, divorced after 17 years)

‘..He was beating me in front of my children. They kept screaming
when they saw their father beating me. My youngest daughter had a stomach pain, and when I took her to the hospital, they said it was a psychosocial problem. This was because she kept screaming all the time when her father beat me..' (a 23-year-old, divorced after six years).

Obstacles after Divorce

Arabic society still looks down on divorce as a negative phenomenon that adversely affects social relationships. Although attitudes are slowly changing, the prevalent view continues to persist that women have done something wrong and it is they who have to bear the consequences.

According to Barbara Cyr (n.d.) in "Divorce and Its Effects on Children," the stage of divorce is the most painful.

Most people experience three stages of adjustment after a divorce: the initial stage of the marital disruption. All things are changing, and people are unsure of the future. This can last a few months or up to a year or two. The second stage is the transitional period, which occurs after the break-up "settles down." In this stage, parents try out the new lifestyle and reorganize their lives. Many changes for parents and children take place during this stage. The last stage is the stage where parents and children feel a renewed sense of stability. Parents have formed new relationships and stable patterns of visitation and custody. The children feel more secure because they are living in a stable environment.

Barriers

The interviews have shown that the majority of divorced women did not face barriers after the divorce. The reason is either because people agreed that divorce was the solution to end the divorced woman’s
problems with her husband or because the divorced woman’s family felt regret that they forced their daughter to get married to a relative who was not qualified.

‘My mother is taking care of me more than before. I think my family feels that it’s their fault when I got married to my cousin and thank God there are no barriers facing me’ (a 21-year-old, divorced after one year).

‘I didn’t face any barriers. The situation is the same for me before and after the divorce’ (a 37-year-old, divorced after 15 years).

‘I didn’t face any barriers... thanks God everything is fine with my children. Thanks God’ (a 45-year-old, divorced after nine years).

‘I did not face barriers. In fact, all people were on my side’ (a 45-year-old, divorced after 11 years).

‘I did not face barriers... It’s the opposite, I was happy. Moreover, I did not even feel the word divorce... Sometimes I laugh when I open magazines and read interviews about divorced women... I believe that disrespect is something hard, especially for one who lives in a family that raised him or her on respect. It’s hard for anyone to change his/her environment’ (a 28-year-old, divorced after nine months).

Divorce influences the chances of a divorced woman to get married to people.

‘I cannot say that I faced barriers, but I hurt a lot. There were many great chances to get married to great people, but because he was my relative I had to get married to him. Now when someone comes to ask my father for marriage, they are shocked that I am a divorced woman. He
goes without coming again' (a 27-year-old, divorced after one year).

The study "Divorce in the Emirates' Society, the Reasons and Social Impacts," (1998) showed that 49.5% of divorced people have said there are positive impacts of divorce related to the end of the fighting, the relaxation, and solving the family's problems. In contrast, there were 20.8% of divorced people who said divorce didn't have positive impacts (Rahsed, Kubaisi, & Tahboob, 1998).

Divorced women faced social and financial barriers after they got divorced. According to "Divorce in the Emirates' Society, the Reasons and Social Impacts," (1998) 54% of divorced people have said that divorce has negative impacts. For example, there are feelings of loneliness, not enough financial sources, difficulties of raising children, discomfort with social surroundings, discomfort with family, being far from children, and discomfort with the previous partner (Rahsed, Kubaisi, & Tahboob, 1998).

The social barriers are related to the scorn placed on the woman from society's eyes. Society could stigmatize divorced women, even if the one who initiated the divorce was the man, and even if they knew that the man was the problematic person in the marriage. The woman is blamed either because society thinks that she did the wrong thing that led her husband to divorce her or that she has to handle the problematic situation because she has to tolerate any wrong thing that could appear from her mad.

'Yes I faced barriers..the eyes are around me..If I am late, people will ask, from where does this woman come, and where does she go..I faced
problems with my family because they are involved in my privacy more than my sisters. Although my family regrets forcing me to marry my cousin, there are a lot of unfair things from my family’s side’ (a 27-year-old, divorced after six years).

‘Yes I faced barriers. Each time I go outside the house, people are watching me and talking about me. Even if I talk on the telephone they talk about me’ (a 30-year-old, divorced after 20 years).

‘Yes I faced barriers; people are talking about me about everything. Always if any woman gets at divorce people will talk about her’ (a 24-year-old, divorced after five years).

‘Yes I faced barriers, going outside is something people will talk about. People are always talking’ (a 26-year-old, divorced after four years).

Some divorced women faced social barriers to the extent where they don’t care what others say.

‘I am facing barriers from society, but I do not care’ (a 45-year-old, divorced after 17 years).

‘Yes I faced barriers, but I don’t care. What’s the point of view of society.. You know? I am like an empty woman who doesn’t have friends’ (a 35-year-old, divorced after 13 years).

The divorced women also faced financial problems. An unemployed woman who had children to be supported affected her psychological well being. It is also that the children wanted their father and they missed him in their lives.

‘Yes I faced barriers.. I feel like my daughters don’t have a
father. He doesn't even ask about them or support them. I felt that they
didn't have a man who could protect them. Sometimes my brother's children
beat my daughters, and when I come to solve the fighting between them,
my brother said, 'your daughter didn't have a good father who can raise
them well'. How can they beat my children? What can I do if their father
is like that?.. My oldest daughter has low grades in school. When her
teacher took her to the social worker to see what's the problem, they
found that she drew a man in her desk. When they asked her who is this
man? She said, 'this is my dad' (crying too much)' (a 35-year-old,
divorced after 12 years).

Life of Women After Divorce

The question that was asked was how is your life going on now
after the divorce? The majority of the divorced women answered
positively. Their lives are going fine and they feel more comfortable
since they ended the unhappy marriage. They also evaluated their
mistakes in their previous marriage far away from the pressure and
surrounding problems, and ending with experience and lessons about their
view of the world and their demands for a potential husband in the
future.

'I was divorced six years ago. Now I feel that my husband's
family doesn't deserve to waste my future with them. To be honest,
there wasn't enough time for me and for my husband to talk or have a
dialog. Many people after divorce asked for marriage. But I was afraid to
commit. But now.. I am continuing my study at the university.. and I know
now what I want from this life. My divorce was an experience for me. I learned a lot. In the past, I was looking at people as if all of them are kind. Everything is white. Today, I recognized who is my friend and who is a liar. I think without the stage of my marriage and divorce I wouldn’t have been able to learn that. Now I am advising my friends and warning them. We have to teach our children what’s right and what’s wrong from our experience’ (a 21-year-old, divorced after one year).

‘Now I feel I am comfortable. I have gained weight. It’s right that I hesitate about getting married again. anyway. If I decide to get married again, it has to be a man who will not let me live with his family’ (a 28-year-old, divorced after nine months).

‘Everything is okay, and I am raising my children, and I’m able to do that because I am working in one of the royal family homes’ (a 45-year-old, divorced after four years).

‘I am doing fine. I am studying and working. My life in the studying and working side are great. but still I am thinking about that man who will one day be my husband’ (a 27-year-old, divorced after one year).

Divorce and People Associates

Divorce was not only an experience for divorced women, but also for their families. For example, fathers now are asking their daughters about their opinion about potential husbands. However, potential husbands have to match the fathers’ conditions such as the economic and social levels.
'I feel comfortable. My father has regrets now. And my father now gives my sisters the right to choose their husbands after I got my divorce, but the husband has to be at my family's level economically and socially' (a 27-year-old, divorced after six years).

Children

The divorced women's lives could be better than before, but children still are a critical issue that divorced women are worried about.

'My conditions are now better than before. My economic situation is better. My psychological situation is better. I feel comfortable. But at the same time I have problems between my children because their father is not with them. I told him to come to see his children. I said this is something between you and your God, to see your children.' (a 37-year-old, divorced after 15 years).

'My life is going fine so far. I am living in my family's house, but I am worried about my daughters because they don't have a father (cry)' (a 26-year-old, divorced after four years).

The Situation Could Be Handled

Looking back and evaluating the previous situation could appear from time to time with a woman, especially when she thought that she could handle the situation but she did not.

'My life is okay. Everything is going good so far. Now I'm in my fourth decade. I said to myself what would happen if I accepted the
marriage of my husband to another woman and what would happen if I let him play as he wanted. Everyday car and bride. If I did that at least I could tolerate him, but what to do? It’s already happened” (a 45-year-old, divorced after nine months).

Finding the Missing Characteristics

Search for characteristics the previous husband lacked could cause the woman to search for them in the new husband, even though that may not persuade her family.

‘At the beginning of my divorce, I refused strongly to get married again, and now I am engaged to a married man with children. My brothers are set against my decision. But I insist. The most important thing is to get married to a man who has a strong personality and can face and meet people. My ex-husband didn’t meet people because he had a very weak personality. Even when I was sick he didn’t take me to the hospital. His father did that. I didn’t even take my belongings when I left home. Now he is paying $150 a month to his son. You know? After I delivered the son, my family called his family for two weeks to give the baby a name. But they didn’t even answer us. We named the baby. And after the month they withdrew all the official paper and changed the baby’s name” (a 23-year-old, divorced after one year).

Barriers of This Stage

Divorced women who negatively evaluate their lives after divorce are facing barriers from society related to their freedom to live
without people talking about them.

'My life now is worse than when I was married. Before I could go to
any place I wanted. There was no fear in my heart from people's talk. All
people are saying, 'where this woman went and where she will go'. When I
have a husband it's different. People today don't understand. Now I decide
to raise my children'' (a 30-year-old, divorced after 20 years).

'My life now is worse than before many times. My daughters are
missing their father too much. People also haven't stopped talking
about me even though they knew that I got my divorce after 12 years of
tolerating a man without a job. Even they knew that but still they are
talking about me'' (a 35-year-old, divorced after 12 years).
CHAPTER VIII

GENERAL FINDINGS

This chapter presents the general findings from the entire set of interviews with divorced women in Al Ain, starting from marriage and ending with the reasons for divorce, with special emphasis of the different concepts of marriage from the divorced women’s perspectives.

The Concept of Marriage

Looking at the concepts of marriage from the women’s perspectives showed the religious and cultural influences on them. They defined marriage as a bond, linkage, bringing together, and getting along. They also defined it as abstinence (outside of marriage) for men and women, and understanding and participation between two persons. The most significant part in the majority of the women’s definitions was the importance of children, which reflected the cultural influences. They looked at children as the most significant part of the marriage. One of the main purposes of marriage is to have children. Arabic culture, and especially the culture of the Gulf societies encourages having children for social reasons such as a family glory in having a large number of children. In addition, economic reasons, such as future support for a family, and socio-economic reasons, such as a future guarantee of support
for their parents when they get old.

However, there were differences in the attitudes and perspectives toward defining marriage regarding the relationship. It was about following the husband in everything he said. Those who were not formally educated and those who were not financially independent from their husbands often show this attitude. It is an old attitude that few of the divorced women have retained, because social change has influenced women's positions and roles in the family specifically and in the society in general, especially after they have had the opportunity to become educated and have an independent job.

Some women defined marriage from their previous experience as painful, which showed the influence of previous failures on their attitude towards marriage as a whole.

In all the concepts of marriage, it is obvious how the culture influences' people's expectations about marriage, and how failure to obtain these expectations could influence the marriage later. Indeed, one woman expected to have children in the first year of her marriage and when she could not get a pregnant within the first year of the marriage, she started forcing her husband to see a doctor. His refusal to do so was the starting point for problems between them. Then she was shocked that there were no physical problems, so she insisted on moving to her husband's city where he was working the whole week. When he refused, the problems increased until she made the final decision of physical separation. This did not alter her
husband from his decision, and so the divorce was the solution.

Another woman expected that she would live with a highly romantic husband and she expected a married life that would let her live with housemaids and drivers who would be under her control. When she found that what she expected was just a dream, she could not stay more than seven months with her husband, and in the ninth month she got her divorce. Thus in general, expectations control people’s behavior and life.

Choosing a Husband

According to Abu Baker Eager in his research entitled "A Mate Selection in the Gulf Societies," there have been four stages of choosing a mate through the history of the Gulf societies. In the first stage, a family had complete authority to choose the other mate, so the family arranged the marriage. The couples did not have a say in choosing each other or even expressing the characteristics that they wanted in the other partner. The second stage was when men traveled abroad to complete their education. They made the comparison between the modern women in the countries where they studied and the traditional women whom they were supposed to get married to in their home countries. During this stage, there were many men who selected their mates directly because there were chances to meet other women directly in the country of the study. The third stage started in the seventies and has continued until now. The mediator is presented with a different look. A sister and an educated woman
relative are the mediators of the marriage instead of a mother and
an old woman relative. The fourth stage is the stage where meeting
another mate became much easier than before, when men and women
could meet in different places such as work, malls, and in public.
Although there are new chances for men and women to meet, the
family still has the right to refuse any proposal of any man that
the family does not see as qualified for their daughter, even if the
daughter wants to marry him. Most often, families do not agree with
this kind of acquaintanceship between men and women, especially in
conservative families that encourage getting married within the
family or at least under family supervision.

According to this study, Bager’s clarification of the historical
process of mate selection was an attempt at clarification, but
not a realistic description. There are many women from families
that experienced all the different types of mate selection that
Bager has talked about. There were many women from the families
that still are living in the first stage in terms of mate selection
process -- families that arranged the marriage for their children
and whose children do not have the authority to choose the other
mate or even to express the desired characteristics of the other
partner. The family has the complete authority to choose the other
mate and children have to abide by the decisions. This study found
that all the cases that were related to this type of mate selection
were marrying their close relatives, especially their cousins.

There were many women who also belonged to families that
resorted to the third type of mate selection. The mediator in the women's marriage was usually the sister of the husband who knew what kind of woman her brother wanted.

Relatives and neighbors often recommended spouses for marriage. Men and women relatives had the chance to see each other, at least in some conservative families, when they were young, so they knew each other. This meant they had ability to decide about the marriage based on previous knowledge about the mate, and based on other relatives' information about the mate. Usually neighbors know the families of each other, so they make the decision of searching for a marriage partner. Men and women neighbors usually can see each other, especially if they grew up at the same time in the same neighborhood, which allows them when they become older to make the decision of choosing each other.

Still, mate selection is restricted between a traditional stage where the family arranged the marriage and the stage where a mediator (the man's sister or a close relative) searched for the other mate for him. In the traditional stage, where the family arranges the marriage, the mate does not have the authority to choose, because his mate already has been selected. This traditional way was common with the marriage from inside the family, especially a marriage of cousins. But in the third stage of marriage where the sister or close relative similar in age were the mediators, the mate had the choice to accept or refuse to marry the other mate. It also included choosing the mate from relatives' and neighbors' sugges-
tions. In many cases, the men and women knew each other from childhood, and also each other's families, or they got the information about their mate from close friends and families.

The majority of women had the opportunity to accept or refuse their husbands. Those who did not accept their husbands gave reasons of incompatibility between them and their husband because of the differences in the educational level of each other, but their families forced them to get married because they were cousins. The age of the woman who did not want to get married at a young age was another one of the reasons. In addition, there was an Indian woman whose family forced her to marry a wealthy mad.

The majority of the women did not talk with their husbands before the marriage because they were from families that did not allow a woman to talk with a man before marriage.

Mate selection in many families showed that changes in the social and cultural aspects of family type are often slower to take hold than changes in the material aspects (Ogburn, 1995). Indeed, the changes that happened in the society in the last three decades have influenced the material aspects more than the social and cultural aspects, including traditions, customs, norms, and values.

Honeymoon Stage

During this period, three types of relationships were emerged: happy, neutral, and unhappy. The majority of women had a happy relationship during the honeymoon stage; those were the women who
had accepted the marriage from the very first time of the proposal. The neutral relationship is a relationship without clear-cut feelings in that it was not happy, but at the same time not a bad relationship. Often these were the women who got married to a man proposed by their neighbors and relatives, and who accepted their proposal because they believed that their husbands loved them. The unhappy relationship was typical in the case of women who were forced to marry persons they refused to commit with and those who expected to get more than they got from their husbands.

The duration of the honeymoon was different from case to case, but in general it was between one week to two months.

The most common problem was the husband’s family’s involvement with those who got married to their cousins. This is because the husband’s family considered their son’s wife as part of the family and they also wanted to exercise authority over her. They did this without an awareness of the woman as an independent entity or person.

Problems also appeared in the honeymoon stage when the couple had an unsatisfactory physical relationship with each other.

The hope of change was another problem that showed up during this stage; when the change did not really happened. The hopes were that the husband would have a job after the marriage and that the husband would change his undesired characteristics from the wives’ perspectives.
Disillusionment is the stage when each partner finds out the differences between each other. The social background influences each partner in their judgment of the other to a long extent. Moreover, it is the stage of making a comparison between the expectations before the marriage, during the engagement stage and the relationship after the marriage. Also, it is the stage when the standards for choosing the partners are reviewed and the validity of factors such as looks, wealth, age, etc. are questioned.

The problems that appeared in this stage were personal, social, financial, and psychological.

Personal problems are those problems that are related to the problems between the couples. It includes the characteristics and the way of living of each partner. The personal problems that women had with their spouses were incompatibility between them and their husbands, spouse abuse and violence, breaking the conditions of the marriage contract, suspicions about their wives from the husbands, the husband staying outside until after midnight, and the husband leaving the house for a period of time.

The biggest problem that many women had was family involvement, which took different forms: the mother-in-law setting her son against his wife, fighting between the husband’s family and wife, encouraging the husband to marry again as a way for the mother-in-law to force her son to follow her orders, and eavesdropping on the wife’s phone conversations. Polygyny was another social problem.
that many women faced, which put them in embarrassing situation with their families and close friends, especially when there are no clear and convincing reasons for the husband to marry again from the her perspective. Getting married to cousins was another social problem that many women faced. This marriage led many divorced women to feel incompatibility with their husbands and led others to consider the husbands as a brother rather than a spouse.

Financial problems are the problems that are related to unsupportive med. These are either husbands without a job or husbands without understanding of the changes in financial needs of their wife and children, which caused conflicts between husband and wife regarding this problem. For example, a woman encouraged her ex-husband to search for a job, but he always refused to do so, which caused conflicts between them. Another woman found her ex-husband not supporting their children as he should support them from the women's perspective, which caused conflicts between them regarding this problem.

Psychological problems are related to the psychological issues, such as husbands not caring about their wives' desire to have children, dissatisfaction with the physical relationship (which causes instability in the marriage relationship), and husbands beating their wives, which caused psychological disturbance and anxiety, and one that could result in medical treatment as well.

Expressing concerns is the stage where each person discussed with the other partner the disturbing things about him/her. This
stage is like other stages. It is not an independent stage. It is the stage that could extend throughout all the marriage life. The majority of women expressed general dissatisfaction with their husbands and tried to find ways to change or modify the sources of the problems. The women who did not express their disgruntled feelings gave other reasons regarding to their relationship with their husbands. Examples included an angry man who did not have communication skills made his wife avoid any conflict situation with him; a silent man who did not encourage his wife to express her feelings, a physically unsatisfying man or a man who was unavailable to her and the inability to express her feelings to him because she felt shy about making it explicated to him.

Most of the women who expressed their feelings towards marriage found that there were no adequate responses to their expression of concern from their husband. Some husbands adjusted for a certain time, but then they returned to what they were before. Others did not have a good response. In both cases the majority of the women asked for advice from their friends and their mothers.

The women made several attempts to change the relationship with their husbands during their marriage. They made practical attempts to change the relationship by themselves. Practical attempts meant staying with a husband and dealing with the situation in different ways. Those attempts included discussing the problems with a husband in order to find ways to solve the problems or to rebuild the relationship, changing themselves to match the husband's
personality, forgiving a husband and giving him another chance, dealing positively and directly with the source of problems that resulted in an emotional disturbances (such as a mother-in-law and sisters-in-law), discontinuing the physical relationship with a husband, and redirecting the husband’s thinking towards the direction of solving the problem.

When their attempts failed to achieve their goals of reconciliation, the women decided to separate physically from their husbands. The separation took three forms: leaving the husband’s house or his family’s house, in the case of an extended family living situation, leaving the bedroom and staying in another room within the same house, and forcing a husband to leave the house. This last option usually was enforced when the divorced women were living with their husbands and children in an independent house.

The majority of women made the decision to separate from their husbands in the first five years of their marriage, often in the first year of the marriage.

Women reached the point of physical separation in many cases. The examples included the following types of situations, if the husband beat them, the absence of strong support from husband the vis-à-vis the family, and the husband thinking about getting married again or actually getting married again without her consent or that of the children.

The majority of these women had prepared themselves to face their close friends and family as well as the risks brought about by
the decisions that they had made. They often had the evidence to justify their decision and they were talking confidentially about it with their friends and members of their family of orientation.

Mediation is tried during the stage when the decision to separate had been made and consequently, there were many attempts to reform the relationship between the couples. These attempts were from an outside mediator who could be one person or more.

The majority of these women had mediators who played a role in trying to bring the couples together. The mediators who were involved in reforming the relationship between the couples included an old respected man, the husband’s family, the wife’s family, or families from both sides. The majority of women did not accept the plans of the mediators. The main reasons for the failure of mediation effects were that the mediators failed to persuade the other side regarding building an independent house for the couples, preventing the husband from getting married again, and changing the husband’s treatment of the wife, especially after his wife agreed to come back again after he accepted the mediator’s plan. Many women made several attempts at changing the situation through the same mediators several times.

In the case of a general agreement among their close friends and families, especially from their families, mediators were often not used.

In this stage, the couples consulted their husband’s parents, relatives, and friends. If these attempts were successful, divorced
women would return to their husbands with the new deal. But if it reached the disillusionment stage, where the divorced women found that nothing had really changed and the whole process would be repeated again, then a divorce was sought.

Divorce is the stage where all attempts had failed to obtain the goal of bringing the couples together.

The majority of the divorced women did not face problems in getting their divorce. The divorced women who faced problems in getting their divorces either got their divorce through the court or by resolving the problems with a new arrangement through the help of their families.

About half of the divorced women felt positively when they first heard that they got their divorce, and half of them felt negatively when they first heard about the divorce. The majority of divorced women said that they made the right decision by getting their divorce. Among the reasons for divorce were that they could not tolerate any more problems from the husband’s family of orientation, and protecting their dignity when another woman was going to share her husband with her.

Many divorced women said that the decision of divorce was a sudden decision. It was made under the pressure of the problems they were facing and that they were unaware of the effects of the divorce decision in their later lives.

The majority of divorced women said that they felt comfortable with their lives after the divorce. The majority of women said that
they did not face major barriers after the divorce. The reason was either because people accepted the divorce as a final solution for the unhappy relationship or the divorced women’s family felt guilty because they forced their daughters to marry an unsuitable person.

The divorced women who did face barriers, faced two kinds of barriers: social and financial. The social barriers were related to the scorn heaped upon women from surrounding people. The financial barriers were related to unemployed women who had children that had to be supported. Many divorced women received a monthly governmental support, but in general this support was not enough for those who had children who were supposed to have been supported by their father. However, because the husband did not support them and the wife did not force him in court to do that, the women faced financial problems.

There are among different reasons for divorce. They consist of social and cultural, economic, and personal. The social and cultural reasons are related to the family’s involvement in the couples’ lives, which was one of reasons for the main factor getting a divorce in many cases, and polygynous marriage, which put the women in a critical situation personally as well as socially. The economic reasons for divorce are related to the different set of economic expectations of couples from different socio-economic levels. It is either because the husband did not have a job or because he was not aware of the growing financial needs of his children. These factors caused conflicts with his wife and this was especially true in the
case of husbands from a lower socio-economic status. The economic reasons that were related to the wealth of the man encouraged him to get married again or to travel around the world, which caused many conflicts with his wife. The personal reasons are related to the expectations among married people about the needs of each other. For example, ignoring emotional and sexual needs by one party or by both, made the relationship superficial between couples. It was also related to a husband not understanding his wife’s mentality, emotions, and behaviors.

Summary

In this chapter, the investigator summarized the findings of the study. This included a presentation of the concepts of marriage from women’s perspectives, choosing a husband, honeymoon, and the process of divorce.
CHAPTER IX

CONCLUSION

The major purpose of this study was to document the experiences of a group of the U.A.E. divorced women in the city of Al Ain. More specifically, the investigator was interested in the processes of divorce experience, starting from when the divorce was an idea to when it ends as actuality.

The interviews were conducted with twenty divorced women from the city of Al Ain in the U.A.E. The data were analyzed for similarities of responses between cases. Specific attention was paid to the similarities as well differences in the cases.

Research Questions

The primary question was, "What is the process of divorce like for these U.A.E. divorced women?"

In general, the categories or stages that I derived from the data which many divorced women were going through include: disillusionment, expressing concern, trying reconciliation, physical separation, mediation, and divorce. All these stages are integrated; however, each woman experienced them at different levels. A woman could go through all these stages many times going back and forth between them or they could experience the stages for a very brief time.
Disillusionment is the stage when women compared the differences in their social background and their husbands' social background. Also they compared their husbands' treatment of them in the engagement stage and after the marriage. Furthermore, it is the stage when many women evaluated the validity of the standards on which they had based their decision of marriage. Moreover, it is the stage when many personal, social, financial, and psychological problems showed up between divorced women and their husbands. All these problems were related to uncomfortable feelings the women were experiencing about their husbands.

Expressing concern is a stage when women openly and clearly discussed their emotional feelings and concerns with their husbands. The majority of them found no real supportive responses from their husbands. Some of the women reported that their husband offered verbal support but did not act on it.

Trying to reconcile is a stage when women made several attempts to deal with the dissatisfactory feelings by themselves, with little advice from their friends and mothers. The majority of these women made practical attempts in order to overcome the disturbed feelings. These attempts were made for example, by further discussing with the husband to find practical solutions, changing in an effort to suit the husband's personality in order to avoid the conflicts, forgiving the husband and giving him another chance, dealing positively with the sources of the disturbed feelings such as the husband's family, not permitting physical relationships in order to
pressure the husband, and encouraging the husband to find practical solutions to resolve the disturbed feelings. When these attempts failed, physical separation would be the last solution open to them.

Physical separation was the stage women reached when there was no change even after all the attempts that they had made. In some cases, physical separation was a serious attempt to pressure the husband to face the situation. Physical separation took three different forms: leaving the husband’s bedroom to another room within the house, if the couple were living in an independent house; leaving the husband’s house if the couple were living in the husband’s family house, or forcing the husband to leave the house if the women had children and was living in an independent house.

The majority of women made the decision to separate by the first five years of their marriage, and often in the first year of the marriage. The majority of women had prepared themselves to face their families and friends regarding the separation decision. Also they had prepared themselves for the risky result, which may include the divorce and all its ramifications.

Mediation is the stage when the dissolving relationship become public. All people around the couple knew about the problems between them. Several attempts were made by outsiders to encourage the majority of the women to reform the relationship with their husbands. These mediators were an elderly man respected by both sides, members of the husband’s family, members of the wife’s family, or both families. In the majority of cases, the mediators had failed to bring
couples together. In this stage, counseling from the women’s par-
ents, relatives, and friends often takes place in an attempt to re-
form the relationship and to remind women about the later effects of
divorce. Some women did not have mediators because the members of
their families, and friends agreed with their decision.

When all mediation attempts had failed, divorce was the only
option for these women. This final stage was reached when all the
self-attempts and others attempts have failed to bring couples to-
gether. It is the stage that appeared when the barriers to stay with
the partner were stronger than the attraction to stay in the rela-
tionship (Levinger, 1979). The majority of women did not face pro-
blems in getting their divorce. Those who did, used the both fam-
ilies to negotiate the demands of getting their divorce or used the
court to dissolve the marriage.

The second research question was, "When do women in the
U.A.E. reach the point where they cannot be with their husbands
anymore?"

According to many women, when husbands use violence with their
wives, when a husband was not man enough to face his family for her
while his family remained over-involved in their personal life, when
husbands decided to pursue other relationships, which puts the women
in a critical situation in front of people around her, and when hus-
bands inflicted emotional abuse, which can demoralize the woman and
erode her sense of dignity.

The third research question was, "Why do the a close intimate
relationship like marriage breakup?"

According to this study, the intimate relationship broke up when there was no a primary agreement about the relationship. In some cases women did not want to marry their current husbands, but the pressure from their families forced them in a relationship with which they were not comfortable. In other cases, there were high expectations about the marriage and when women found out that they got less than what they had expected, they ended their marriages. The majority of the women in this study did not talk with their husbands before the marriage and many of them had not even see their husbands. Lack of knowledge about each other led to disappointments after the marriage. Even those who had talked with and seen their husbands, often did not focus on the main characteristics of the men until after marriage. They were focusing on the surface characteristics such as looks, wealth, and age and they were ignoring the deep characteristics such as the mentality and morals. Also they did not usually discuss the real life situations after the marriage such as a place of residence, the likes and dislikes of their partners, and plans for the future by their partners.

It was not just the way of choosing the husband that led to break the intimate relationship. Also, serious problems from the women’s perspectives could lead to an end of the intimate relationship. These problems from the women’s perspectives included physical beating, involving the husband’s family in the couple’s personal life, having relationships outside the marriage, getting married to
a second wife (Polygyny), incompatibility between partners, and a woman’s physical dissatisfaction with her husband.

The fourth research question was, "What are the connections between particular social, economic, and cultural environments in the U.A.E. and the women who live within them?"

According to the study of the Ministry of Labor and Social Affairs in 1981 "Divorced Women in the United Arab Emirates, Statistical and Social Study," husbands most often initiated the divorce process (59.6%), followed by wives (34.9%), then mutual agreement (2.7%), and outside factors (2.8%) (MLSA, 1981).

Only 17 years later, Rashed and colleagues (1998) in the study "Divorce in the Emirates Society, the Reasons and Social Impacts," showed that wives initiated the divorce process at the a slightly higher rate than husbands, wives (42.5%), husbands (38.5%), and mutual agreement (11.2%) (Rashed, Al Kubaisi, & Tahboob, 1998).

These numbers show that the changes in the country have also influenced the relationship between men and women in the family. There is a gap of 17 years between these studies and during that time the initiating of the divorce process has shifted from male initiation to a more egalitarian situation. This also shows the change in the positions and roles of women inside the family. These changes are attributed to the development of women’s education in the society and the increased independence women have obtained following their participation in the work force. It is not attributed to women exclusively, but also to the men who have been involved in
the changing social and economic structure of the society. Men have found themselves involved in the changes surrounding them and they are a part of those changes that have affected in the entire society.

However, regarding the ways of choosing the mate, the study "Divorce in the Emirates Society, the Reasons and Social Impacts" showed that in 72% of cases a woman’s marriage partner was chosen by their families, 7.9% by their friends, 6.1% by their neighbors, 5.5% by a woman matchmaker. The total reflects that 91% of choices in a marriage are made in the traditional ways of the past (Rashed, Al Kubaisi, & Tahboob, 1998).

Thus, still the social and cultural environments play a main role in mate selected. The traditional methods of mate selection had to many other problems in the life of women and their husbands. The main factor of divorce for many women was family involvement, which made the life of many couples unstable. Family involvement led the husband to be on the side of his family of origin even if it would cost him the stability of his family of procreation (The Executive Board of Council of Labor and Social Affairs Ministers of GCC states [EBCLSAM], 1989).

Social and cultural environments influence women’s perspectives on marriage. Many participants described a marriage as a bond, abstinence (from other relationships), sharing, and procreation children. Children were the main element in marriage for the majority of these women, which shows the influence of the Arabic
culture in general and Gulf culture more specifically. These cul­
tures stress child bearing as a main element in the marriage.

Also, because of the cultural practices, the majority of women
did not know their husbands before their marriage and moreover in
some cases they did not even see their husbands prior to the mar­
riage. Everything the brides knew about their future husbands they
had heard from their families or neighbors who knew them. This is
because the women were from families which did not allow a woman to
talk or see a man before the marriage. This also reinforces the
changes that have happened in the last three decades and they did
influence people’s lives in the material aspects, but it did not
have a significant influence in the social and cultural aspects,
especially those aspects that are related to the family and marriage.

Culture influences the reasons of marriage as well as the
reasons for divorce. Polygynous marriage when the husband has mul­
tiple wives, and family involvement are the most significant examples
of the cultural influences in the U.A.E.

Mediation is the stage where attempts to bring couples to­
gether are made by the mediators. In most cases these mediators try
to solve the problems from within the families instead of allowing
outsiders to solve the problem. Because the U.A.E. families are
still living in a culture that values family privacy, the problem
between couples has to stay between them or at least within the same
circle of both families. Counseling institutions are rare. Families
are more likely to solve their problems on their own.
There is a lack of communication regarding the physical aspects of marriage relationships including sexual relationship between couples. Many women are not likely to discuss their feelings of dissatisfaction regarding the physical relationship with their husbands, because they believe that expressing dissatisfaction may negatively affect the way their husbands view them.

Similarities and Differences Between the Findings of this Study and the Study Uncoupling

The current study was based on themes found in Uncoupling by Diane Vaughan (1986). Similarities and differences with Vaughan’s are discussed in the following paragraphs. The human experience of divorce is universal despite the differences that become apparent when the social and cultural borders have been set. The similarities in both studies are as follows.

One similarity is that there is one unhappy person who initiated the process of uncoupling in all cases. This study focused on cases in which the initiator was the woman. The duration of unhappiness for individuals was different from case to case. For some of them it began within the first week of marriage and for some others in subsequent months, and for some others after the fourth child. Women in the study stated that they displayed discontent to their husbands to move them in the direction of resolving their problems. The majority of the women believed they were clear in displaying their discontentment.

Similar to the finding in Uncoupling the majority of these
women reported that they had a supportive person in their life during this time. Vaughn (1986) refers to this person as the transitional person. She states, "a transitional person, is someone who comforts, supports, and, perhaps in addition, instructs the initiator through the end of the relationship and into a life apart from the partner" (p. 44). For the women in this study the mother or a friend usually played the role of the transitional person.

The majority of these women in this study found relief by expressing and covering up their discontent similar to the women studied in the Uncoupling study, and they began dealing with the situation. However, they did not get adequate responses from their partners. Other women experienced a satisfying response, but it was temporary and eventually returned again to negation. The likely reasons given by Vaughan are stated below "There are many obstacles such as, trying for both people, at this point means trying to be someone they are not. Such changes, artificially imposed, are difficult to maintain. Moreover, both people come to sense that the period of trying is a result of the confrontation, and that what is going on is not the relationship, but something else" (Vaughan, 1986, p.159)

Research participants in this study reported that following the failure of their partners to respond, they first separated psychologically, and eventually physically. As in the Uncoupling study separation was the final decision for the majority of the women, after waiting for the other partner to reach the point of transition.
At this time in the process, people were aware of serious discontent in the marriage, so their problems became public. In this case, "as separation makes the change in the relationship more and more public, the barriers to getting back together grow" (Vaughan, 1986). The majority of women did not return to their partners after the initial separation.

Unlike Vaughan’s observations, following the separation, the partners of these women reached the point of transition, but not before their families attempted to pressure them to stay. There were organized attempts to get the couples back together from the families and friends such as an elderly respected man, the initiator’s family, the partner’s family, and/or the families of both parties. According to the Uncoupling study, people often request help from counselors or social workers to repair the marriage but the participants in this study reported that families play a big role in getting couples back together. Data in this study support Vaughan’s observations that when these attempts failed, they felt that divorce was the only solution and the final stage for unhappy marital relationships.

Another difference with Vaughan’s research is rooted in the societies in which the research was conducted. The societies themselves shape the process of uncoupling. For example, mate selection. In Uncoupling, both people have chosen to live together and build their life together within a social context that allows couples to know each other and then make a choice. There is a high level of freedom. In this study, there are cases where one party refused or
resented marrying the other. So the process of separation begins from a situation where one of the partners feels unhappy with the relationship, and then moves through all other stages of uncoupling. Even when women in the sample accepted their mate, the majority of them did not talk to nor see that mate prior to the marriage ceremony, which meant a relationship between the couples ensued only after the marriage.

There is a third fundamental social and cultural difference between both societies. Most women in the sample did not live in a separate house with their mate. They were living with the husbands’ family, which created problems of family involvement. This contributed to factors that ultimately led to the separation. The findings of this study are that the family of orientation plays a fundamental role in shaping many couples’ lives, and it creates many types of problems the women experience in their marriage. Problems in the U.A.E. are different than problems of the couples represented in *Uncoupling*.

A fourth fundamental difference between the two societies is also related to family involvement. The current study has examined the process of divorce, where the decision to divorce is not an individual decision that could be made by one or even both partners. The decision is more likely to be a group decision in which both families of the couple were involved, especially in the case of those who were married to their cousins and relatives, which is quite common in the U.A.E.
While there are many similarities between the Uncoupling study and this study, there remain important differences. These four fundamental differences illustrate how the process of uncoupling is shaped by the social, cultural, and economic context that individuals live in.

**Limitation of the Study**

This study is not an attempt to generalize the experiences of divorced women who live in the city of Al Ain, even though the experiences of the research participants may share a lot of similarities not only with the general U.A.E. society, but also with a global society. It is a study that examines only one perspective (women’s), which means that the other perspective (men’s) is absent. However, this study is intended to focus on the women’s perspective and on their experiences of divorce. Therefore, participants’ perspectives have been described and analyzed without the investigator’s evaluation of their personal stories regarding what was right or wrong.

**Suggestions for Future Research**

There are a number of suggestions that can be made for further research. It is strongly suggested that studies of divorce in the U.A.E. include not only the factors of divorce, but also the process of divorce. Studying the process can reveal pertinent information regarding factors. However, one cannot obtain data on the process
of divorce by researching factors associated with divorce.

Expanded studies about the process of divorce in the U.A.E. are strongly suggested not only in the city of Al Ain, which is generally considered a conservative society compared with other cities, but also in other cities in the U.A.E. Comparison studies between cities regarding the process of divorce are also highly recommended. Study the process of divorce from men’s perspectives also is suggested in order to understand this important issue from both partners’ perspectives. Divorce studies also should take qualitative methods into account as much as quantitative methods.

Divorce is more than numbers, factors, and experience that could be taken from a survey. It is the experience for which collaborative methods might be used to gain better understanding, control, and prediction of divorce.

Summary

The conclusion of the study included the research questions in the study and an analysis of the similarities and differences between this study and findings states in the study of Uncoupling were also discussed, as were limitations of this study and potential future research in this field.
Appendix A

Letter of Permission From the Human Subjects Institutional Review Board to Conduct Research
Date: January 12, 2001

To: Timothy Diamond, Principal Investigator
   Wadha Al Nuaimi, Student Investigator for thesis

From: Michael S. Pritchard, Interim Chair

Re: HSIRB Project Number 00-11-25

This letter will serve as confirmation that your research project entitled "Divorce in the United Arab Emirates from Women's Perspective" has been approved under the full category of review by the Human Subjects Institutional Review Board. The conditions and duration of this approval are specified in the Policies of Western Michigan University. You may now begin to implement the research as described in the application.

Please note that you may only conduct this research exactly in the form it was approved. You must seek specific board approval for any changes in this project. You must also seek reapproval if the project extends beyond the termination date noted below. In addition if there are any unanticipated adverse reactions or unanticipated events associated with the conduct of this research, you should immediately suspend the project and contact the Chair of the HSIRB for consultation.

The Board wishes you success in the pursuit of your research goals.

Approval Termination: December 20, 2001
Appendix B

Informed Consent Form
Western Michigan University, Department of Sociology

Divorce in the United Arab Emirates from Women’s Perspectives.

Principle Investigator: Dr. Timothy Diamond
Student Investigator: Wadha Al Nuaimi

I have been invited to participate in a research project entitled: “Divorce in the United Arab Emirates from Women’s Perspectives” to examine the process and causes of divorce in the United Arab Emirates from women’s perspectives, being conducted by principle investigator Dr. Timothy Diamond and student investigator Wadha Al Nuaimi from Western Michigan University, Department of Sociology. This research is being conducted as part of the thesis requirements for student investigator Wadha Al Nuaimi.

In particular the purpose of this study is to describe what the process of divorce in the United Arab Emirates (UAE). This study will look at the process starting from when it was an idea and when it ends with the divorce. It will explore how women in the United Arab Emirates reach the point where they can’t stay with their husbands anymore. Firstly, it will address why the intimate relationships break up. Furthermore, it will examine what the connections are between particular social, economic, and cultural environments in the United Arab Emirates and the divorced women who live within them by knowing from the interview: the divorced women and their husband’s monthly salary and income, the wedding celebration satisfaction to divorced women and their families, their living conditions such as where they lived, and the social, economic, and cultural reasons of the divorce from the divorced women’s perspectives. Lastly, it will discuss how the last thirty years’ changes in the United Arab Emirates influence people’s lives. Participating in this study means that I will be asked several open-ended questions about my experience of the divorce. The purpose of the interview is to know my story and experience of the divorce. Participation in this research requires approximately two to three hours or as I wish.

The potential risks can be occurred under these reasons: First, if any one looks at the data that contains of my name and my personal information. But the student investigator (Wadha Al Nuaimi) will not use my name or personal information such as (my phone number and address) in her notes or computer. She will keep a code in her notes while I am talking to her and in her computer and then she will keep the master list where my name is linked to code in a separate location. She will keep this list on her person while she travel, and she I will lock it on the WMU campus when she return to WMU. Moreover, she will not mention in the her final report my experience under my name, she will use pseudonym when she will write about my personal experience such as (Noura, Divorced after 4 years) and Noura will not be my real name or she will say “one woman told me..). Second risk is if any one listens to the tape recorder (if I accept to record the interview). So she will keep all tapes on her personal person and she will document all the data that she need on her computer at the same day of its recording, then she will destroy the tape recorder by herself at the same day. Third, participating in this study may create bad feelings about divorce, but I student investigator (Wadha Al Nuaimi) finds it’s okay with her if I want to stop answering any question or even withdraw from the study anytime I want. If I faced any emotional problem, she will ask me if I want to see a female psychological specialist. If I say yes, she will call the specialist immediately. If I feel that this research may not be suitable for me then simply I will return this form to the student investigator Wadha Al Nuaimi.
In case I face any kind of emotional disturbance or nervous breakdown, student investigator (Wadha Al Nuaimi) will follow the following steps:

1. She will stop the interview immediately.

2. If it didn’t work she will tell me to follow her in the following relaxation procedures:
   Breathing technique, which is breathing in from the nose by counting to 4 and then holding air by counting to 2. After that release air by counting to 8.

3. If it did not work, she will seek the help from a female psychological specialist after I give her the permission.

As in all research, there may be unforeseen risks to the participant. If an accidental injury occurs, appropriate emergency measures will be taken; however, no compensation or additional treatment will be made available to the subjects expect as otherwise stated in this consent form.

There will be no immediate benefits to any participant except that I will be able to express my feelings and talk about my situation. It is my goal to better understanding divorce issue in the United Arab Emirates and help policy makers to solve the problems that could lead to the divorce by knowing the problems that we as divorced women faced such as financial, social, and cultural problems, so policy makers can make consulted trainings to the students in high schools and colleges about what are the best ways to deal with marital problems and how each partner should deal with the other. Moreover, policy makers can provide consultancy programs that protect families from separation or breaking down.

Student Investigator Wadha Al Nuaimi will be taking notes about what I will say during the interview. These notes will be used in writing her final research paper on this topic. If I agree to record the interview in a tape in order to use the information in writing her final research report I will check the Yes box in the end of this form, if not I will check No box. All the information that she will get from me will be documented in the Microsoft Word document with highly protected by password. She also needs to know my name, phone number, and email in case she needs to contact me again. She will keep this personal information in her list that will be kept in her person while she travel, and locked on the WMU campus when she will be there. If I agree to give this personal information I will check Yes box, if not, I will check No box in the end of this form. If I agree to let her contact me again, then I will check the way that I prefer she to contact me by, including the day, and the time. If not, I will check No box. If I would like, when she is done with the interview, she will show me what was written before she documents the information. This way I can check to see if she needs to make any corrections about the information she has written down. If I didn’t provide her by my name, number, or the way that I prefer to send me what was written before she documents the information, then she will understand that it’s okay with me to not see what was written.

I have the right to delete anything from the interview that I do not want to include in the research. Anything I share with student investigator Wadha Al Nuaimi confidentially will stay that way. She will only document what I want documented. She will assign me a pseudonym when she writes about my life. She will be doing this as a way to protect my privacy and to make the process more confidential.

I will check the boxes that appropriate with me:
I agree to record the interview in a tape recorder:

[ ] Yes
[ ] No

I give student investigator Wadha Al Nuaimi my name, phone number(s), and email in case she needs to contact me again:

[ ] Yes
[ ] No

[ ] Yes, I will choose the way that I want her to contact me by:
[ ] Phone
[ ] Email

[ ] Others, please mention ...........................................

I will write down the day(s) and the time that I want her to contact me:

Day(s) ............................................................ Time..........................

In case I don't want her to write my name, phone number(s), and email, I want her to send me what was written before she documents the information by this way:

I have the right to withdraw my consent, and or to discontinue participation at any time. My participation in this study is not required to do anything, so I am free to withdraw at any time I want and it's fine with the student investigator (Wadha Al Nuaimi) if I choose not to participate at all.

Any participant may also contact the Chair, Human Subjects Institutional Review Board (001-616-387-8293), the Vice President for Research (001-616-387-8298), the principle investigator Dr. Timothy Diamond (001-616-387-5282), or student investigator Wadha Al Nuaimi (001-3-7684237) and my email: (wadhan@yahoo.com) if questions or problems arise during the course of the study.

This consent document has been approved for use for one year by the Human Subjects Institutional Review Board (HSIRB) as indicated by the stamped date and signature of the board chair in the upper right corner. Subjects should not sign this document if the corner does not show a stamped date and signature.

Participant's signature __________________________ Date __________________________

Initial ______
جامعة وسترن ميتشنجن  
قسم علم الاجتماع  
الطلاق في مجتمع打ちارات من منظر المرأة  
بإشراف الدكتور: توماس دايموت  
عمل الباحثة: بينج منج  

أن تم حاصل المحترف في دراسة سرور (الطلاق في مجتمع الآراء من منظر المرأة)  

وذلك دراسة صناعتية وراثية التي تمتد على مجتمع الآراء تحت إشراف الدكتور توماس دايموت  
عمل الباحثة: بينج منج  

شكلاً خاصًّا عن هذه الدراسة هو الإفادة على عملية الطلاق في مجتمع الآراء: سوف تكون الباحثة (بينج منج)  

بدور هذه العملية الفعالة عن كيفية الطلاق الطارئ في مجتمع الآراء. يتعين في دائرة مجتمع الآراء  

لو أنese لا تستطيع في الإجابة عن الأسئلة. لا يمكن أن تكون دوراً مهماً في مجتمع الآراء. ويعتبر هذا  

الحالة تمثل فيها الطلاق الطارئ في مجتمع الآراء:  

وما في السياق في الدول التي تمثل فيها دوراً مهماً في مجتمع الآراء. ويعتبر هذا الجيل في القرن الهادي  

والتي تتعلق فيه بطبقات المجتمعات السائدة في مجتمع الآراء:  

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والأماكن التي تتعلق فيه بطبقات المجتمعات السائدة في مجتمع الآراء.  

وبينج منج تناقش مسألة هذه الدراسة في مجتمع الآراء. لا يمكن أن تكون دوراً مهماً في مجتمع الآراء  

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Approved for use for one year from this date:

DEC 20 2000

HSIRB Chair

[Text is in Arabic]
Appendix C

Interview Instrument
Interview Script

Master Thesis Project

Participant’s Code Number _____________________________Date________________

First: Primary Information:

1. Age
   a. 18-25
   b. 26-33
   c. 34-41
   d. 42 and more.

2. Educational level:
   a. No formal education
   b. Elementary level-middle level
   c. Secondary level-undergraduate degree
   d. Graduate degree.

3. Are You Working?
   Yes  No

4. If yes, where are you working?

5. Your monthly salary:
   a. Dhs 4,300 and below
   b. Dhs 4,301-7,300
   c. Dhs 7,301-10,300
   d. Dhs 10,301-13,300
   e. Dhs 13,301 and more

6. Your monthly income:
   a. Dhs 9,200 and below
   b. Dhs 9,201-23,200
   c. Dhs 23,201-30,200
   d. Dhs 23,201-30,200
   e. Dhs 30,201 and more

7. Was your husband working?
   Yes  No

8. What was he working?

9. What was his monthly salary?
   a. Dhs 4,300 and below
   b. Dhs 4,301-7,300
   c. Dhs 7,301-10,300
   d. Dhs 10,301-13,300
   e. Dhs 13,301 and more

10. What was his monthly income?
    a. Dhs 9,200 and below
    b. Dhs 9,201-23,200
    c. Dhs 23,201-30,200
    d. Dhs 23,201-30,200
    e. Dhs 30,201 and more

11. Do you have children from your ex-husband?
    Yes  No
12. If yes, how many children do you have?
   a. One
   b. 2-4
   c. 5-7
   d. 8 and more

13. For how long did you live with your ex-husband?
   a. Less than one year
   b. 1-4 years and 11 months
   c. 5-9 years and 11 months
   d. 10-14 years and 11 months
   e. 15-19 years and 11 months
   f. 20 years and more.

14. Did you get married before you married to your ex-husband?
   Yes   No

15. If yes, do you have children from previous marriage before you married your ex-husband?
   Yes   No

Second: Marital Information:

1. If you want to define marriage, what would you like to say?

2. How old were you when you got married?
   a. 18 and below
   b. 19 - 21
   c. 22 - 24
   d. 25 and more

3. How did you know about your ex-husband?
   a. Yourself
   b. Your family
   c. Your friend
   d. Others please mention..........

4. If you did not choose him, did you have a right to say: "No I do not want him"?
   Yes   No

5. Did you have a chance to talk with him before the wedding celebration?
   Yes   No

6. Did you like your ex-husband during the marriage?
   Yes   No

7. How was your wedding celebration? Did you face any problem in this day?
   Yes I faced
   No, I did not
   Comments.................................................................

8. After the wedding how did you find your ex-husband in your first days together?
9. Did you live with his family, your family, or in your ex-husband home?
   a. I lived with his family
   b. I lived with my family
   c. I lived with my ex-husband’s family

10. If you lived with your ex-husband’s family/your family, please mention why did you live with them?

11. If you were living with his family or with your family, how did you both feel? Did you feel comfortable living on his family or your family?
   Yes I feel comfortable
   No I did not feel comfortable
   Comments.................................................................

12. What were the things that you liked about your ex-husband during the marriage?

13. What were the things that you disliked about your ex-husband during the marriage?

14. Did you tell him about the things that you liked about him?
   Yes  No

15. What was his response?

16. Did you tell him about the things that you disliked about him?
   Yes  No

17. What was his response?

18. What were the things that you think he liked about you?

19. Did he tell you about them?
   Yes  No

20. What was your response?

21. What were the things that you think he disliked about you?

22. Did he tell you about them?
   Yes  No

23. What was your response?

24. What were the things that made you uncomfortable with him?
25. What about him, did he know about the things made you uncomfortable?  
   Yes  No  

26. If no, why did not you tell him?  

27. If yes, what was his response to these uncomfortable things?  

28. Were you satisfied with his response?  
   Yes  No  

29. After his response if he knew about uncomfortable things, how was your life with him going?  

30. Did any one else besides your ex-husband knows about the uncomfortable things that you felt?  
   Yes  No  

31. What was your relationship to that person?  
   a. Relative  c. Other  
   b. Friend  

32. What was (this one's response)?  

33. After that what's going on? Like what happened? What were your response and your ex-husband response? What did you both feel about that?  

34. When did you reach the point where you cannot stay with your ex-husband?  

35. What was his response to this?  

36. Did your family and his family know that?  
   Yes  No  

37. What were their responses?  

38. What happened after that?  

Third: Divorce Information  

1. In which point did you ask for divorce?  

2. Do you think you both use all possibilities to keep your marriage alive?  

3. When was last attempt to keep your marriage alive? What happened after that?
4. (If you have children) did your children play certain roles in keeping your marriage alive?
   Yes  No

   If yes, please explain..........................................................................................

5. What are the most important things that made you rethink again and again about getting your divorce?

6. How was your feeling when your ex-husband told you: you are divorced?

7. Now after you got your divorce, do you think that there were some social, economic, and cultural reasons that caused your divorce?
   If yes, what were they? Please cite.

8. What did you do after you get your divorce?

9. Did you face any problem with your family, friends, and society?
   Yes  No
   If yes, Please explain..........................................................................................

10. How is your life going on now?

11. Do you want to say anything in the end of this interview?
    Yes  No
    If yes, please say
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