



An Analytical Comparative Approach to Identify Underlying Ideologies in Inflating Family Disintegration & Media in West & Pakistan: Implications for Policy Makers

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Keywords: Social atomization, Family disintegration, Liberal individualism, Cultural fusion, Media pervasion, Underlying hidden ideology, Detachment with religion	ABSTRACT <i>The research study presents the growing patterns of family life in Pakistan that imply the influential role of the underlying cultural ideals of liberalism and individualism and the moderating effect exerted by media. This is an analytical study that employs data to inquire how the disguised ideologies of the West have influenced domestic life there and imprinted the same pattern in Pakistan's society. This paper investigates whether the concepts of empowerment and independence contribute to isolation within familial relationships. Several factors that lead to disintegrated families, including atomistic and nuclear family trends and the role increasingly played by modern individualism, foreign media, and culture due to growing detachment from religion, are highlighted in this study. Family members' preference for individualistic space results in breaking the family bond - a phenomenon that America has witnessed and is affecting the domestic and social institutions of Pakistan.</i>
Article History: Received: January 20, 2024 Revised: May 03, 2024 Available Online: June 30, 2024  a Gold Open Access Journal	This work is licensed under a Creative Commons Attribution-NonCommercial 4.0 International License .  Copyright (c) 2024 Ayesha Ali, Published by Faculty of Social Sciences, the Islamia University of Bahawalpur, Pakistan.
How to cite this paper? Ali, A. (2024). An Analytical Comparative Approach to Identify Underlying Ideologies in Inflating Family Disintegration & Media in West & Pakistan: Implications for Policy Makers. <i>IUB Journal of Social Sciences</i> , 6(1), 178-196.	

1 Introduction

The article pertains to the inflating trend of individualistic living in family life in Pakistan due to religious and media perversion, and the hidden ideology. The significance of the study lies in the exploration of the concepts of cultural ideals of liberal individualism behind atomistic living to identify the effect of global trends upon the patterns of living in our country. The paper inquires the role of family members' independence, empowerment, and autonomy

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and how it leads to isolation in the family unit. The objectives were to be aware of the rationale to preserve Pakistan's domestic institutions. The problem relates to the disintegrating effects of isolating independence and individualistic living; a phenomenon that America has witnessed appears to infect family institutions and social life in Pakistan.

1.1 Theoretical Framework

A comparison of the widespread phenomenon of family disintegration in America due to individualistic philosophy with the slow spread of the same pattern in Pakistan and the role of media therein is employed in this paper.

1.2 Emergence of Social Sciences; Background

Before, presenting the literature and discussing the phenomenon, the emergence of schools of thought and philosophy that contributed to the establishment of the phenomenon needs to be detailed. The fourteenth and fifteenth century Europe witnessed a radical change regarding the conception of man and his place in the world. As opposed to the suppression of humans due to ignorance, inequality, and the Church in the dark and medieval ages, there were personal, moral, economic, cultural, political, and intellectual facets of awareness. 'The Renaissance' and 'Modern' eras rejuvenated knowledge perspectives thereby founding the modern natural sciences. Leonardo, Darwin, Lamarck, and Galileo significantly participated in designing a scientific outlook toward natural phenomena and intellectual uplift. Masses had suffered as a result of exacting life of simple living and high thinking – due to the priest's exploitative preaching and their luxurious life (Gordon, 2015). The abandonment of mundane life to achieve perennial bliss sounded pleasant but bore frustrating consequences in the long run. Then, was the time of the scientific and industrial revolution in the eighteenth century, when the emerging natural sciences were taken to be the best model of inquiry (Bishop, 2007). The scientific approach revolutionized the conception of reality and transformed modes of living and thinking by leaving behind the dependency upon nature and the clergy. The urge to live out freely and develop one's hidden potential by sabotaging such shackles of slavery had started to become the order of the day with more grave outcomes yet to be experienced.

The social sciences had developed under such influences of intellectual climate and the spirit of natural philosophy. Social scientists like Spencer, Marx, Durkheim, and Weber examined laws and individuals governing society through scientific tools. Spencer drew analogies between biology and sociology. Likewise, Weber and Durkheim presented *verstehen* and collective conscience by scientifically explaining social phenomena (Gordon, 2015). The ontology and epistemology of objectivist's approach to social sciences introduced instrumentality behind the social action that developed Western cultural ideals including utilitarian individualism, instrumental reasoning, and political and individual liberalism (Bishop, 2007). Thus, so far the independence and individualism developed as a reaction to the Dark Ages have permeated through the spirit of naturalistic inquiry of social sciences (inspired by natural science's independent investigation) into the practical aspects of life – due to such comparisons of individual with society, and biology with sociology.

Meanwhile, Physiocrats in France introduced the first systematic model of economics in the late eighteenth century which viewed the economy as a system of money. In addition, the *laissez-faire* (let alone) philosophy had also admonished any encroachment on the individual self (Gordon, 2015). The thought was further elaborated by Adam Smith as an 'invisible hand' and reflected in Leibnizian dogma of pre-established harmony had implications for individualistic living and autonomy.

Besides the ongoing developments in the orthodox ways of life, the religious and idealistic connotations and the Church regarded marriage and family as institutions to express faithfulness, commitment, lifelong union, and love. This philosophy also underwent jolts of the objectivists' currents and gave rise to radical variations. Although, the injunctions of

Catholicism and Protestantism still respect family life in their own way, however; it is essential to note the important political streak of that era; the emergence of ‘anarchism’. On one hand, William Godwin, its first spokesman, went to the extent that any interference with individual freedom is both unnecessary and unjust (Gordon, 2015). On the other side, the humanist and individualist movements started reacting against the Church’s exploitation. Thirdly, the revival of Augustinian theology stated that man couldn’t be saved by his own endeavors but only by the grace of God, thus, aimed to erode the legitimacy of the rigidity of the church that claimed to channel humans towards good and attain heaven. It was in this background, fourthly, the focus on the utilitarian conception of individual happiness and welfare, as emancipated from the dominance of the church, rose as an alternative to exploitative living.

Like the contributions of successive eras to the development of a new philosophy of life, different schools of thought emerged with their respective explanations of the phenomenon. According to the sociological perspective, the changes in personal and family relationships were a corollary of post-industrialization that led to individualization and de-traditionalization of social and domestic life (Gillies, 2003). The significant work by T. Parsons (1956) explained the change and adaptation of new patterns as contrary to the disintegration and demise of old ones. He explained the evolution of a contained and confined nuclear family as a reaction to the demands of modern industrial society. With modernization taking over, the economy started to be differentiated from the family and fixed life. Thus, a mobile, specialized, and accessible workforce came into being with the isolated nuclear families, economical and mobile, as they were more suited to the requirements of industrial society. Familial life was freed from the compulsions of wider kin and kin. Squeezed family structure was able to fulfill the function of economic production and consumption along with the diminishing, but vital, role of socializing offspring and stabilizing grown-ups within its confines. The functionalist investigation distinguished sex roles; the female bearing and rearing children bound within the family unit and the male catering to the needs of the household. The man was to mediate between the inner domestic unit and the external world. Such reduced familial organization was an ideal solution to the rising modern society, therefore; it was not possibly replaceable by extended collective units.

Moreover, socialist feminists and Marxists sternly disparage the family as a cause of women's oppression, subjugation, and exploitation. According to them, the poor woman toils for her family within the domestic boundaries in return for emotional, physical, and economic support. Furthermore, when she struggles for bread outside the house even then she has to handle all the domestic affairs thereby, ending up with less gain and pumping in twofold the effort a man puts in (Gillies, 2003). Such criticisms on the responsibilities of familial life the poor plight of women and the surging waves of liberalism and freedom played a vital part in defining new living structures as has been witnessed in American individualism and living styles.

2 Literature Review

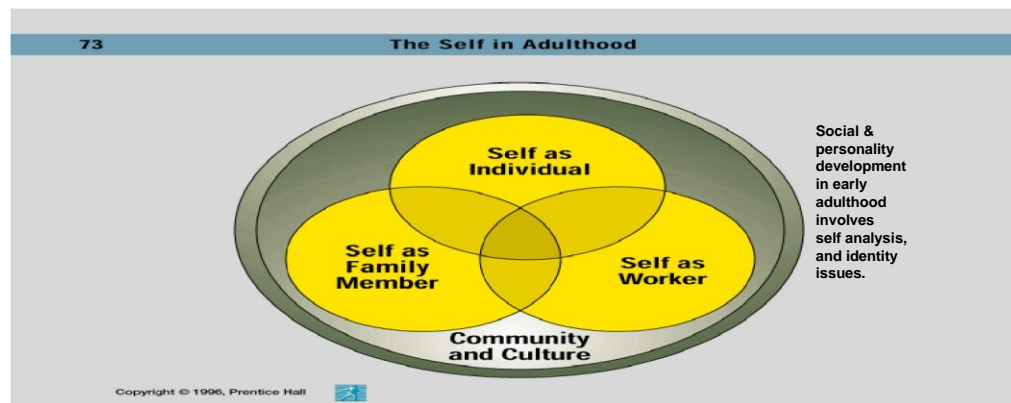
The institution of family is the fundamental unit of collective social life. And, marriage is the most widely accepted mode of familial life in majority of the societies and religions. Acharya and Bennett (1981) explain the gender-related power relations in the family circle, thus indicating the vitality of the domestic unit to understand gender roles in society. Dixon (1978) states that women’s influence and control at the interpersonal level in the collective life. Also, the researchers have found connections between economically independent women and their authority over the life decisions in the family circle. Thus, female influence determines the course of the crucial events in their lives. The desire to maintain independence and identity along with empowerment has provided newer options to adopt a self-oriented life.

As opposed to collectivism, the modern trend of individualism has taken root and can be defined as a moral standpoint, a political stance, an ideology, or a social outlook that highlights the social and moral worth of an individual. The individualists focus on the pursuit of their goals and desires and strive for self-reliance and independence. An individualist pleads that self-interests must have precedence over the social group. Thus, they oppose any external intervention in one's interests by society or any institution.

A related modern concept is segregated living as contrasted to a conventional joint living system. Social isolation indicates the lack of interaction with the members of the society. It is characterized by avoiding socializing with the individuals around. Social isolation includes low levels of social contact, aloofness, and loneliness. Seeman (1991) describes social isolation as disengaging oneself from social ties, institutional networks, and community participation.

Figure 1

Community and Culture



Source (Russell & Norvig, 1995)

In the West, living alone and other modes of responsibility-free life have taken root. In Islam, divorce is the appropriate way to be released from a relationship. The meaning of divorce or dissolution of the marriage contract is the termination of a marital bond and the breach of Nikah i.e. the matrimonial contact (Fatah-ul-Qadir, vol: 3, P: 21; Dural Mukhtar, P: 569; Hidayah, vv: 1, P: 200). In the communities over the world, divorce is regarded as the termination of the conjugal relation and union to cancel the duties that are legally avowed along with the responsibilities of marriage, thus, leading to the dissolution of the nuptial bond between the two parties (Macmillan Social Science Library, 2010).

In the West also, several factors have been found that operate to dysfunction the collective life. W. B Wilcox (editor of State of our Unions) in consonance with Elizabeth Marquardt (director at Center for Marriage and Families, Institute of American Values at New York's Center for Public Conversation) reported the plight of marriage in America. It was concluded that divorce has risen and marital quality has dropped in America due to economic and cultural causes. Wilcox lamented the soaring disengagement from the civic activity. According to him, married couples spend more time watching television, than texting and facebook. A researcher summarized this opinion by analyzing a General Social Survey - by stating that 11% of the highly educated, 25% of the middle educated, and 41% of the least educated Americans watched television more than 3 hours a day (Lee, 2010). Thus, declining marital quality and rising detachment from civic life thrive on the hidden ideals of liberalism and individualism of which the media becomes a medium of inducement. Bernama (2000) in his study identified some factors as the main causes of divorce among couples living in Asian countries i.e., failure by husbands and wives to discharge their responsibilities, low grounding in religion, and differences in culture, money, and careers of the spouse.

Reasons to discontinue a bonding relationship have varied in ages. During the seventeenth century, Puritans considered marriage as a civil contract liable to be dissolved under such circumstances as adultery, cruelty, and long absence (Macmillan Social Science Library, 2010). In the 1800's, divorce laws with additional grounds were enacted by almost all American states. This led to 55,000 marriages ending in divorce by the 1990's. In contemporary times, the divorce rates are inflating in the world with the USA having the highest ratio. It takes on alarming connotations. The count of marriages ending in divorce has risen from 42 to 64 out of every hundred. The present-day belief about matrimony in the USA is pictorial of the enveloping cultural ideals including the much-prized liberalism and individualism. In so doing, the troubles in marriage are reflected in its volatility in the shape of dissociation or divorce especially when marriage becomes instrumental leading to the collapse of cultural and moral dimensions of conjugal life (Bishop, 2007).

Family disintegration and cultural ideals have another moderating factor that strengthens the association of both. Schiller (2019) claims that "cultural domination" employed the term "cultural imperialism" to explain that third-world countries heavily watch media imbued with the Western world's pattern of living, behaving, and thinking. Such countries then adopt the foreign things that adulterate their native culture. Khan and Arif (2009) also illustrate media hegemony saying that the greater exposure to satellite and cable television entertainment programs leads to the greater effects of foreign culture on the youth and the cultural identity which ruins the youth's mind by exposing them to immoralities of the modern world. Hamelink (1994) argued that the process of cultural globalization refers to how the dominant cultures infiltrate or supersede the satellite cultures promoting the values of one society by imposing them upon others - the effects of which are devastating.

Thus, the development of individualism through the spirit of independent natural or sciences infused in everyday living. It adopted modes of divorce, separation independent living, and isolation. Media, as discussed above, has the power to promote foreign values – which are readily adopted by the masses. The immoral ideals prevail due to the disconnect with the cultural and religious imperatives. These cultural ideals, with the support of media, permeate the life patterns in the West and flow onwards to flood the world of which Pakistan is a part.

These philosophies of individualism and isolation are widespread in the USA where collective living has taken a back seat. Bishop (2007) highlights that increasingly; the psychology of marriage, family, and society itself has presupposed a liberal individualist conception and the foremost is utilitarian individualism. In this context, Bellah et al. (1985) state three important factors about the conception of marriage and divorce in the West; (1) Marriage is conceived to be an expression of love based on personal desires rather than obligation and commitment, (2) if the individual interests are not realized then the dissolution of marriage is the desirable alternative, (3) Commitment within marriage is taken in terms of maintaining personal autonomy and not as an obligation. Such concepts of marriage and family emphasize individualism and isolation taking precedence over the collective life and mutually beneficial bond. Marriage and family occupy a subordinate place and are maintained only when individual space and personal satisfaction reign supreme. However; in case of marital or familial interference, a conjugal tie is easily severed or compromised since individual independence is under threat.

In contrast, family life is a sacred norm in Islam and it disapproves its breakage. Divorce may bring negative effects that are borne by each family member. Divorce shatters homes leading to a painful situation for spouses, children, and families as well as for society. The ratio of divorce has been increasing in the last few years. In Muslim countries and Pakistan, the situation is grave which calls for the whole Muslim Ummah to make the situation better.

Alongside this utmost responsibility though, the deeper analysis of the context at the present reveals the recurrence of a similar pattern of the American mode of living in Pakistan.

This becomes evident then the media, television, cultural and religious pervasiveness - as well as the unbridled craving for individualism have led to the disintegration of the family and social collective living in the U.S. The same phenomenon seems to be applying itself in Pakistan where cultural invasion, uncontrolled media influences, and the high yearning for autonomy and independence are accompanied by higher divorce rates and atomistic living.

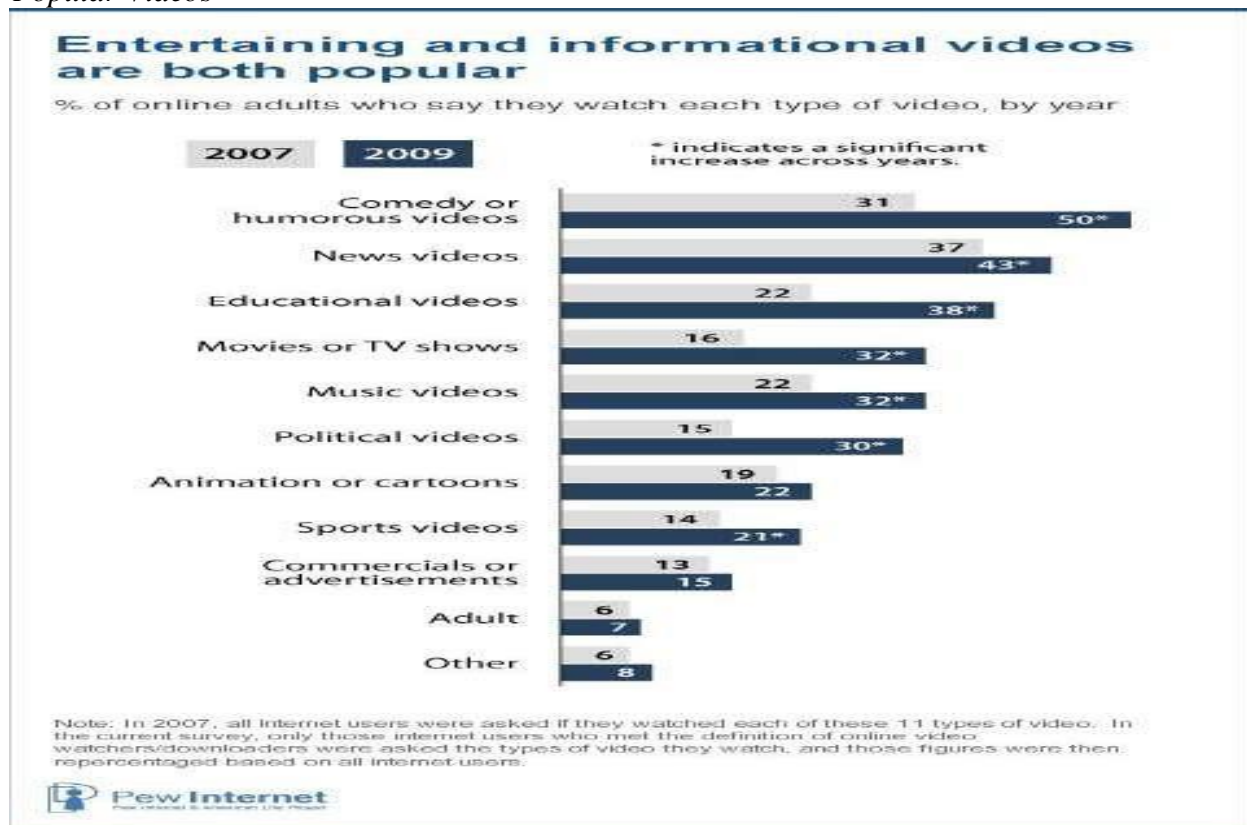
3 Methodology

The analytical approach utilizing data to evaluate the above-mentioned phenomenon is used here. Prominent studies, research figures, public documents, statistics, and graphs developed by renowned public and private, national, and international agencies along with available qualitative interviews and case studies are the major sources.

4 Analysis and Discussion

This phenomenon has long been observed in Western regions i.e. the prevailing media-induced cultural ideals such as individualistic tendencies resulting in rampant disintegration of collective living. First, the climbing percentages of media viewers in the U.S can be observed in the graphs below;

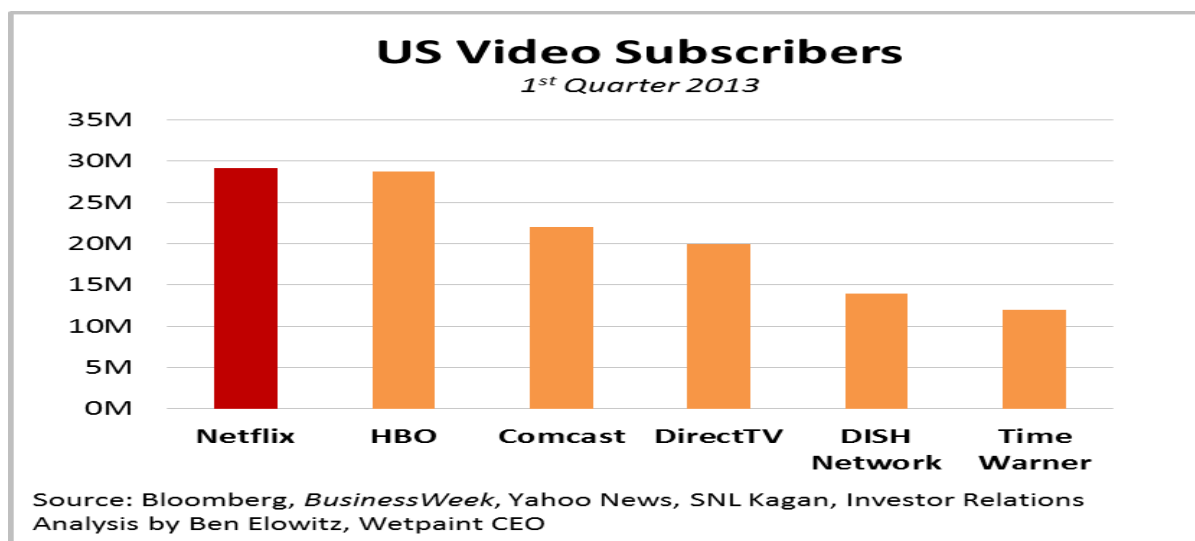
Figure 2
Popular Videos



Source (Rainie, 2007)

The number of video and television viewers is increasing in the U.S day by day as shown in the graphs below;

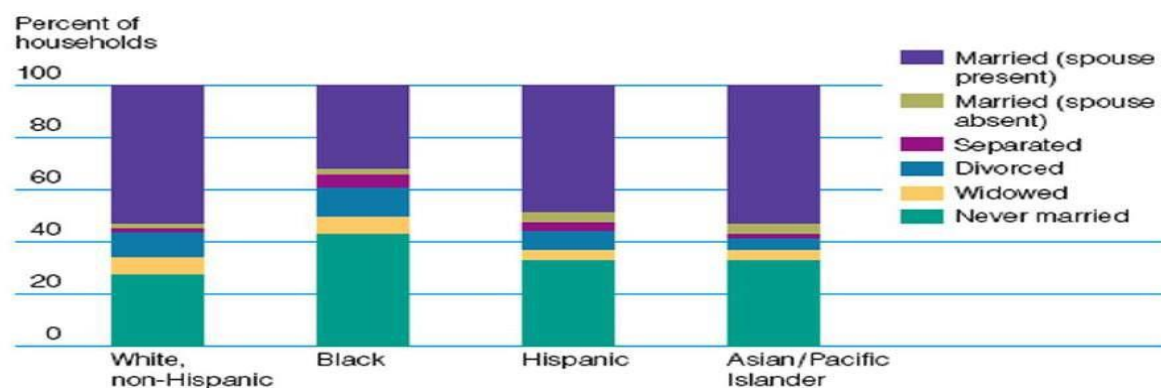
Figure 3
US Video Subscribers



The high television viewership envisages lasting impressions on minds due to the powerful impact of the media. These impacts have been investigated under the Cultivation theories - well known for their explanations of television and viewers. From this perspective, the other forms of media indicate influences upon various age groups, gender roles, political attitudes, and ethnic groups. The study of American college students considered habitual soap opera viewers overestimating the cases of real-life married people by associating them with affairs or divorces as compared to casual viewers Wimmer and Dominick (2009). Gerbner et al. (1994) mention the consequences of heavy exposure to media and television not only create but cultivate attitudes that conjure a version of constructed reality - attitudes consistent with the world of television in contrast to the everyday world. It is demonstrated further that television has turned into a central cultural arm in American society; a key family affiliate injecting stories most of the time.

Television monopolizes sources of information, consciousness, and ideologies for heavy viewers by preaching covertly the common worldview, roles, and values – and becomes a powerful medium to transmit the underlying cultural ideals to entrap the minds unnoticed. This value-laden excessive television viewership has a parallel increase in divorce rates and isolated living in America as reminiscent of Wilcox's view quoted by Lee (2010) discussed earlier.

Figure 4
Marital Status of the U.S. Population



Source (Libitha, 2012)

The United States experiences the highest number of divorce cases in the world. The affected members getting divorced without remarriage exceed sixteen million. Since 1960, the rate of divorce has more than doubled being the highest in 1980. The marriage rate has been found to be 8.4% per 1000 persons with a divorce rate of 4 % per 1000 cases (Macmillan Social Science Library, 2010). The significant ratios of single cases have prevailed in different races due to divorce, separation, and absence of spouse or marriage as shown;

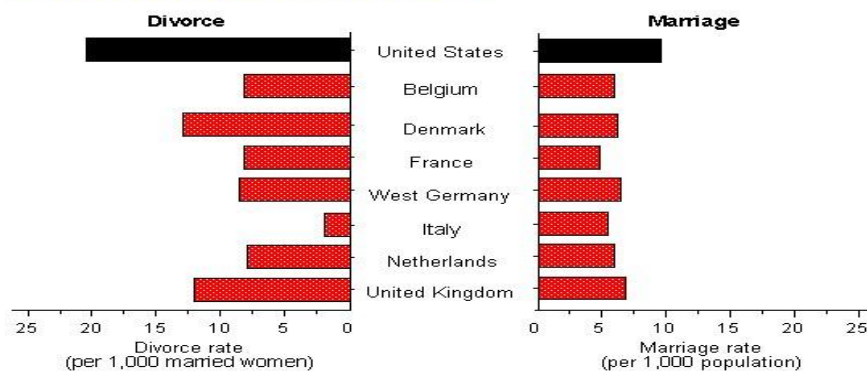
The high percentages of divorced cases in the U.S as compared to the rest of the world are shown below;

Figure 5

U.S. and World Compared Source

Indicator 5. Marriage and Divorce Rates

Marriage and divorce rates in 8 countries: 1988

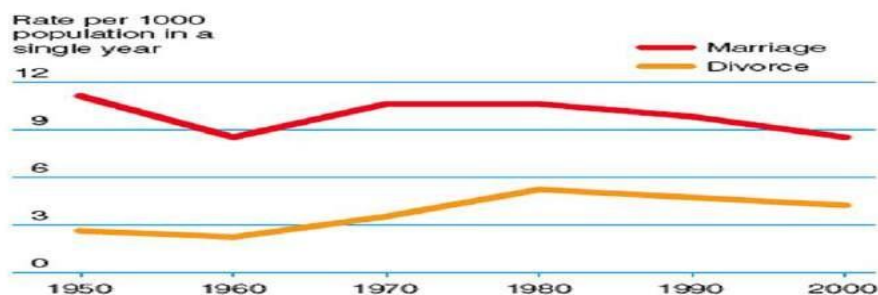


SOURCE: Statistical Office of the European Communities, *Demographic Statistics*, 1990, and various national sources. U.S. Department of Health and Human Services, National Center for Health Statistics, *Monthly Vital Statistics Report*, 1990.

Another vital feature is the decline in marriage with a corresponding increase in divorce.

Figure 6

Marriage & Divorce Rates

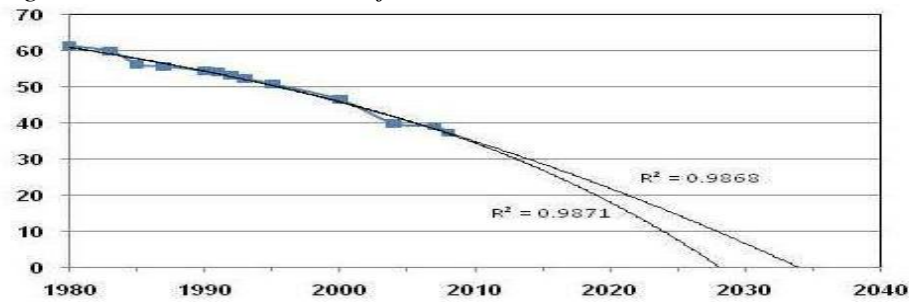


Source (Libitha, 2012)

The fall in marriage with the rise in divorce has serious repercussions as seen in future projections.

Figure 7

US Marriage Rate 1980-2008 and Projected



Source (Libitha, 2012)

According to reported facts, divorces occur in the United States approximately at the rate of 2/ minute making a total of 3117/ day and an aggregate of 94800/ month. Nevada has the highest rate of divorces. The average age for couples going through their first divorce is 30 years old. The average length of a marriage ending in divorce is 8 years (Fritsch et al., 2023). All the above-mentioned statistics ultimately result in the expanding life patterns of individualistic living. The situation extends to all geographical areas in the U.S;

Figure 8

Divorce Rates by States

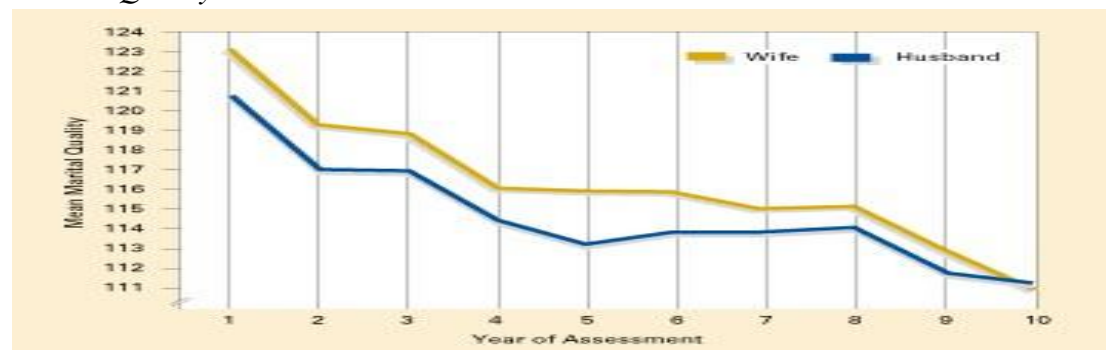


Source (Fritsch & Slavtchev, 2011)

The spouses perceive marital quality almost in an idealized manner at the start of their marriage. The idealization- thus bound to undergo reality - often declines with the passage of time.

Figure 9

Marital Quality

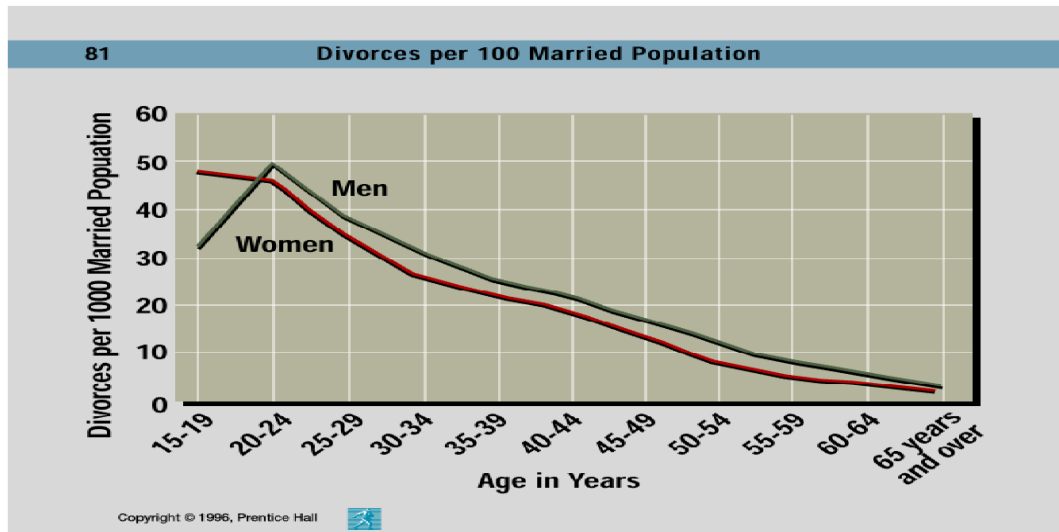


Source (Libitha, 2012)

The declining marital quality has accompanied family disintegration and marriage dissolution paving the way for isolation and segregated living. Divorce ratios are found higher in younger age groups;

Figure 10

Divorces per 100 Married Population



Source (Libitha, 2012)

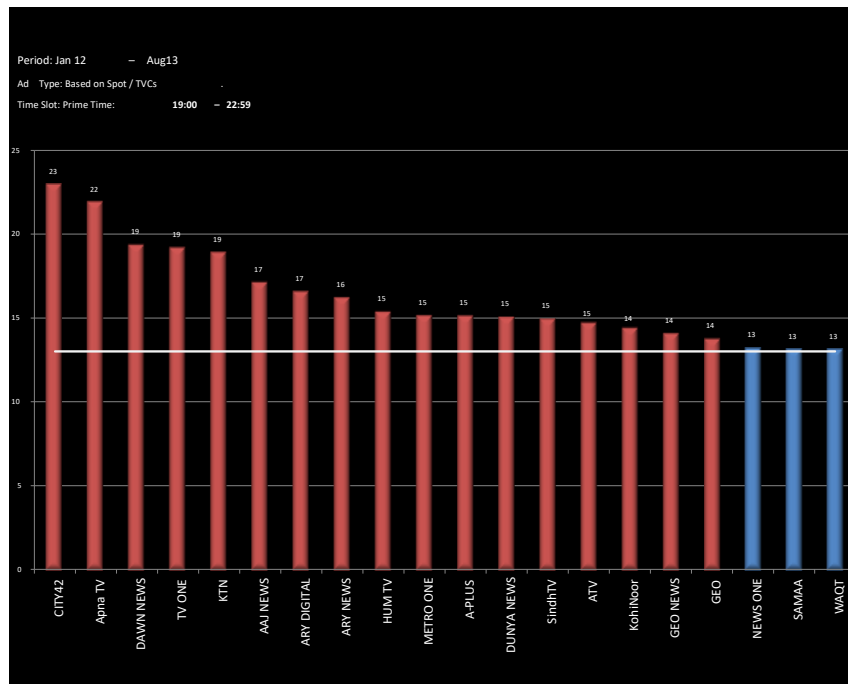
The U.S. Department of Education (1993) stated the divorce rate was found as 4 per 1000 in 1940, rising to 5 per 1000 in 1975, reaching 6 within 5 years, and leveling off since 1980. Moreover, within the first decade of marriage 50% of first marriages, 67% of second marriages, 74% of third marriages, 85% of those who cohabitate, and 60% of all marriages result in divorce.

The above discussion presents the two features of life in the U.S.- heavy percentages of media viewership (with the implied huge impact of media-laden ideals) and divorces (the growing family disintegration). These concerns over the effects of the expansion of media are reinforced due to the technology that surrounds life and activities. The public demand weighs heavily on cable operators to display their favorite channels at prime time as compared to the other channels. This engenders irresponsibility and disinterest in collective living and a preference for aloofness to indulge in television viewing. This phenomenon has been witnessed in America in the development of such nuclear families and isolated living which in an age of cultural globalization has implications for the family and social life of Pakistan. The familial tendencies towards empowerment and independence are on the surge and by analyzing dimensions of the role played by modern individualism, disconnect with religion and the influence of foreign media and culture have an impending danger of breaking families in a similar pattern.

Before analyzing the situation in Pakistan, the striking features of the present era must be noted. The viewership of cable channels, including Indian and foreign television programs, has been continually rising. According to the Media Bank Pakistan, the top viewed and rated genres are the news and drama i.e. 61% and 60% respectively, and then the religious programs at 35%. The percentages of the viewership are; 75% all over Pakistan, 82% in top 10 cities, 78% in the rest of urban cities, and 72% in rural areas (Bank, 2012). The two graphs below show the situation, and PEMRA's limit and prime time viewership.

Figure 11

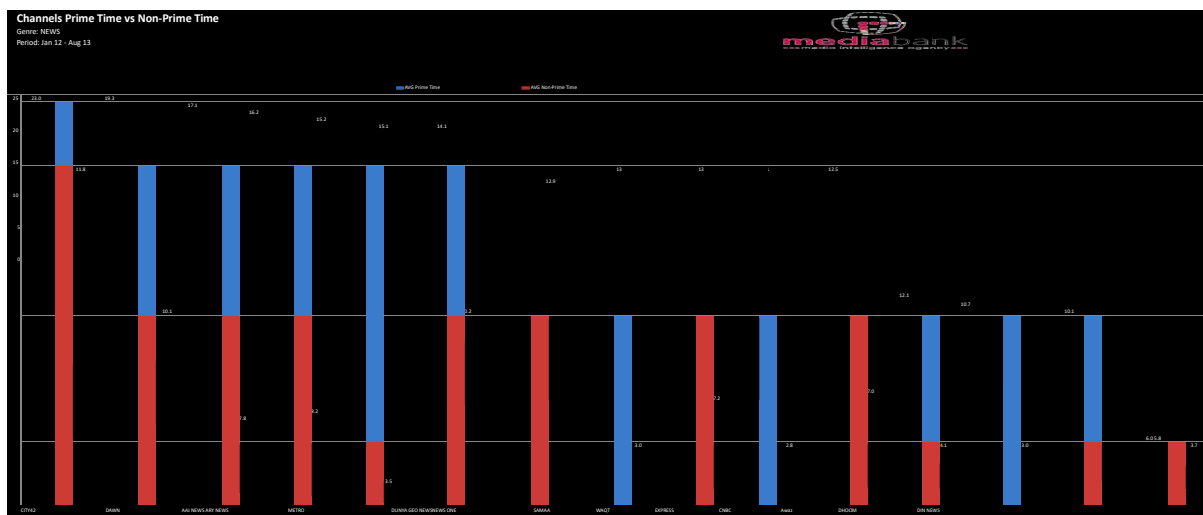
MAIN STREAM CHANNELS AVERAGE AIRTIME VS PEMRA LIMIT (Top 20)



Source (PAS and Media Bank, 2012-2013)

Figure 12

Channels Prime Time vs Non-Prime Time



Source (PAS and Media Bank, 2012-2013)

A higher percentage of viewership in Pakistan towards various channels is given below;

Figure 13
Most Popular Television Channels

Most Popular Television Channels Among Television Viewers (both Cable and Terrestrial)			Most Popular Television Channels Among Those With Cable/Satellite TV Subscriptions		
Channel	Viewership	Type	Channel	Viewership	Type
PTV Home	46%	Terrestrial General	Geo News	61%	Cable News
Geo News	35%	Cable News	Star Plus	54%	Cable Entertainment
Star Plus	31%	Cable Entertainment	QTV	30%	Cable Religious
ATV	28%	Terrestrial General	Masala	18%	Cable Food Channel
PTV News	20%	Cable News	Madni Channel	18%	Cable Religious
QTV	17%	Cable Religious	Express News	17%	Cable News
Masala	10%	Cable Food Channel	Geo TV	17%	Cable General
Madni Channel	10%	Cable Religious	PTV Home	16%	Terrestrial General
Express News	10%	Cable News	Geo Super	15%	Cable Sports
Geo TV	9%	Cable General	Ten Sports	14%	Cable Sports
Geo Super	8%	Cable Sports	Star One	14%	Cable Entertainment
Ten Sports	8%	Cable Sports	KTN	12%	Cable Entertainment
Star One	8%	Cable Entertainment	Sony	12%	Cable Entertainment
KTN	7%	Cable Entertainment	Entertainment	12%	Cable Entertainment
Sony	7%	Cable Entertainment	Kashish	11%	
Entertainment	7%	Cable Entertainment	KTN News	10%	Cable News
KTN News	6%	Cable News	ATV	10%	Terrestrial General
Star Movies	5%	Cable Entertainment			
Hum TV	5%	Cable Entertainment			
B4U Music	5%	Cable Entertainment			

Source: PIPO 2010. The respondents were given a list of TV channels and asked to identify the channels they had watched in the previous week for more than fifteen minutes. Hence, this list provides channel viewership, not channel ratings.

Source (Haq, 2014)

The high percentages of viewership and the reasons therein have been emphasized by television artists. Laghari highlighted the existence of social suppression in Pakistan with the relief found in watching Indian dramas - that plead modernism and idealism.

Pakistan's culture to a large extent dubbed foreign language-driven programs with foreign ideologies. This has implications for the suppression of Pakistan's relevant ideology due to the overwhelming foreign socio-cultural ideologies. Thus, the masses are influenced by the Western ideals covertly transmitted through media leading to the adoption of dogmatic individualism.

The view that channels have assumed the role of family members has become prevalent. Daily conversations include discussions of the dramas during public travel, working hours, and while dining together. Research has labeled this trend as one of the reasons for divorces in Pakistan which spread due to the ignorance of familial duties causing domestic crises and thus resulting in divorce (with implications to increasing family cases pending in family courts). The reduced social interaction was the next factor measured in that research as the due course spent with family, friends, and neighbors has been squeezed due to watching television excessively (Zahid et al., 2014). Moreover, electronic media has revolutionized social life with the populace commenting on different dramas neglecting meal time and social activities. Resultantly, the imitation of the role models disconnects family units with socio-religious norms and bonds. So, the role of media in propagating foreign values and transforming social living trends is obvious.

Malik (2003) states that excessive watching affects the activities and routines of heavy viewers stimulating a lack of communication. The research indicated that the powerful cultural traditions fully laden with disguised agendas, particularly forwarded by the Indian programs, have taken strong roots due to cable transmissions. Such transmissions spread the foreign way of life and cultural ideals leading to the family members rarely commuting. The modernized modes of language and attire influence the way of thinking and living (Zainab, 2004). Moreover, the influential role of the marriage rituals develops pressure on the family bonds (to conform to them). The immense pleasures extracted through the futile expensive customs emerged as a consequence of media - which often are found to be contrary to Islamic injunctions, but are instrumental in projecting foreign ideologies into the consciousness of people (Aslam, 2006). In this context, Khan and Arif (2009) indicate Hollywood's distinct

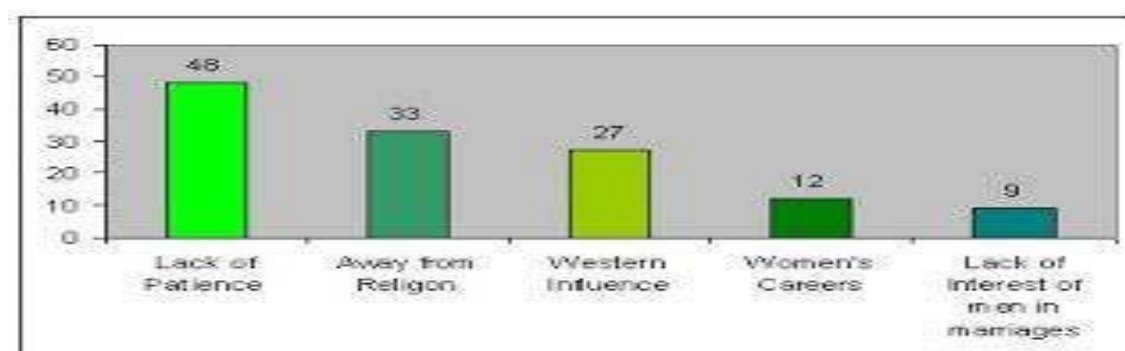
moral standards in comparison to Eastern collective values due to its advanced industry. Even the counter flow of Eastern cultural products has not been able to diminish the US-led Western media domination or Indian influence. The loss of cultural identity in Pakistan's media and the projection of Western glamour, romanticism, and taboo themes due to the broadcast of foreign film festivals and shows has led to a yearning to adopt ideals and life portrayed therein – which is individualism.

Besides, the foreign programs also display family politics and social status with the associated pressure of unnecessary events and festivals that demolish the harmony of native norms and culture. Then such values take over the unifying native ideology and seep into the cultural patterns of the society. Furthermore, by corrupting society through unrealistic materialism, the exceeding numbers of divorces are also exhibited as the convenient and preferable solution based on individual liberty (Revival Of Pakistani Dramaz, 2010). The claim of A. Odho to implement the code of conduct and licensing policies for the broadcasted content is reminiscent of this powerful medium affecting the lives of millions. The need to regulate the media in consonance with the social values of the Pakistan Electronic Media Regulatory Authority has been invoked. In this regard, the Herald conducted a poll to inquire about the viewership of local and foreign content to which the response was 88% in favor of foreign content (Herald, 2013, January 18). Therefore, the preference for foreign programs unconsciously trains the mind to accept their living patterns and the lack of media regulations furthers these trends. Such programs promote independent modern living and breaking the family bond seems to be an ordinary frequent option.

On the other side, a religious scholar highlighted the increase in the ratio of divorce in society (Geo News, 2015, at 09:10 p.m.). According to Tortora et al. (2010) and Gilani poll nearly half of all Pakistanis (48%) consider that the rate of divorce has increased whereas only 32% of the citizens deem no notable change in divorce rate. This raises grave questions; whether life partners or spouses lack information or training regarding marital obligations or they lose sufficient interest to deliver this essential and sensitive responsibility. The institution of marriage is undergoing upheaval in the East and the West. And, the social indicators point out the increase in the divorce rate at an alarming scale. The variables of the said poll explain the case of family disintegration proving relevant concerning the role being played by the disguised ideologies, low concern for combined living, Western free life and empowerment, non-religiosity, media, and cultural influences.

Figure 14

Divorce Ratio



Source (Gallup Pakistan, 2010)

The rules governing the family, marriage, and divorce have been legally conceded not only in Pakistan but also in other Muslim countries - as a norm enunciated by religious authorities and as a constitutional, religious, and moral phenomenon. A significant piece of legislation affected women in the form of the Family Laws Ordinance (1961). The trigger for the APWA's agitation, beginning in 1955, arose from the second marriage of the then Prime

Minister M.A. Bogra resulting, however, in placing regulations to some extent on divorce under the ordinance.

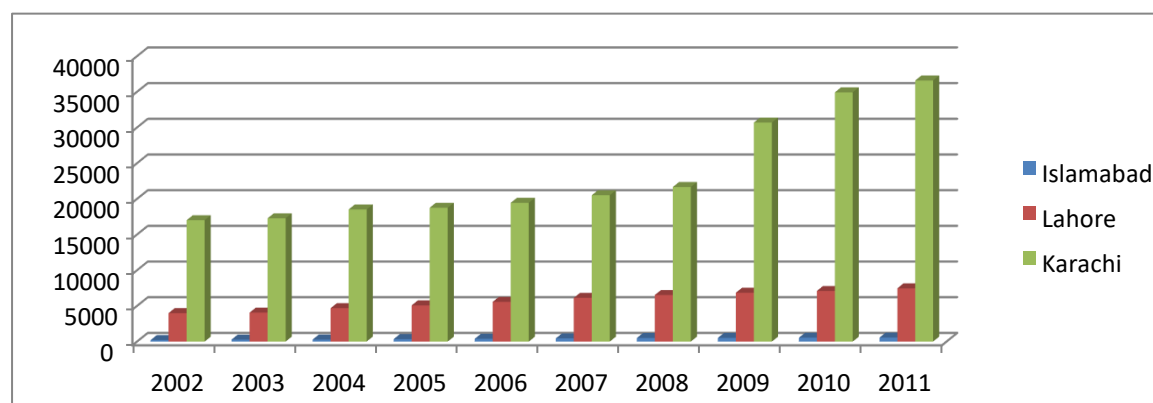
Nevertheless, the number of family cases - related to divorce, custody of children, and maintenance issues – has constantly risen in the courts. The contest against the argument pointed out other reasons for the higher rate of divorce cases including the enhanced awareness among people about their rights taken to the extreme. This casts serious doubts about the social change evolving in society, as a result of the extensive role of media and the propagation of individual freedom in socio-cultural life.

The amount in divorce rate has stretched itself to all the strata of Pakistan's society as women now increasingly resort to it to escape the discord in marriages. Though, the option has once remained taboo in a culturally woven society. Women have started to opt out of the shackles of conjugal bounds as more empowerment, employment and awareness of their rights have taken ground (Reuters, 2013). The rightful use of individualism and liberty can be exercised to save life from turbulence. However, the deviated use of freedom and liberty causes danger to family, men, and women as compromise and sacrifice – the cultural doctrines – helped to safeguard the family circle in the past. With individual taking precedence with no regard for empathy for others can lead to the total dissolution of collective living. The excess of divorcing in the 20th century has been widespread in the West but a relatively recent phenomenon rapidly growing in Pakistan.

There are alarming rates of divorce in various cities of Pakistan; with Islamabad witnessing 557 divorces only in 2011. According to statistics, 100 divorces get registered in family courts per day in Lahore. The separation cases exceed the figure of 2, 59000 in the provincial metropolis over the last decade. Same is the plight in Karachi; with 75, 000 cases from 2005 to 2008, and 1, 24141 cases from 2008 to 2011. Experts refer to such social changes as the main *raison d'être* for the growing preference for individualistic identity. These cultural ideals underlie the guise of infidelity, distrust, self-interests, and resistance to joint family systems which ultimately lead to divorce. In this context, the role played by non-government organizations and the electronic media involves ignoring the societal fabric by raising slogans of freedom but otherwise exploiting individuals as products to be bought and sold, and even disregarding the future of children in the way to attain individual life. Moreover, the refusal of the essence of life – *the compromise*, due to an egotistical attitude makes the situation worse. The individualism-bore intolerance and unwillingness to compromise play a vital in crumbling the family unity (Rao, 2011). In the graph below, based on the data taken from Dawn, it is visible that the divorce rate in the three big cities of Pakistan is rising;

Figure 15

Registered Divorces in Various Cities of Pakistan

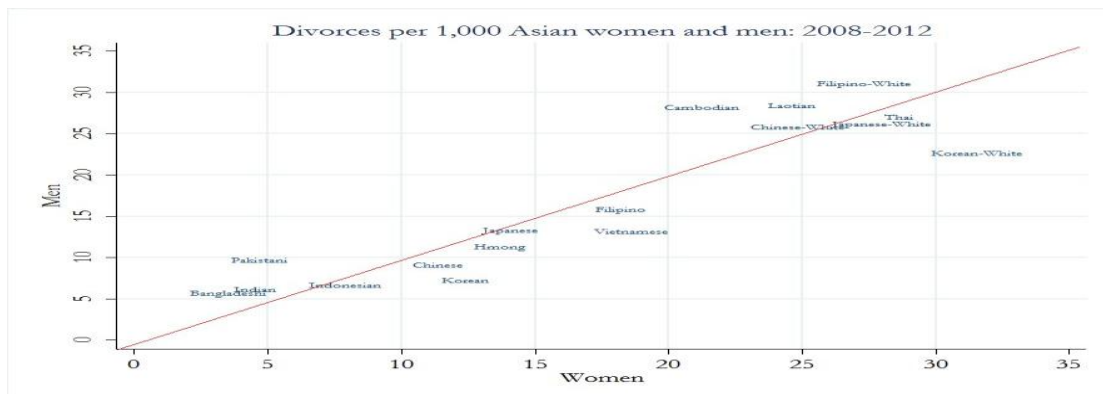


Source (Libitha, 2012)

Likewise, the status in other Muslim nations is deplorable. It is to be noted that Makkah (Saudi Arabia) with the highest number of divorces (396,093) is closely followed by Riyadh (327,427). Then the Eastern province has almost 228,093 such cases and Asir has 130,812. According to reported facts, almost 33 women face divorce daily with a percentage of approximately 20% (artarabia). The comparative figures of men and women in Asia are statistically provocative;

Figure 16

Divorces per 1000 Asian women & men

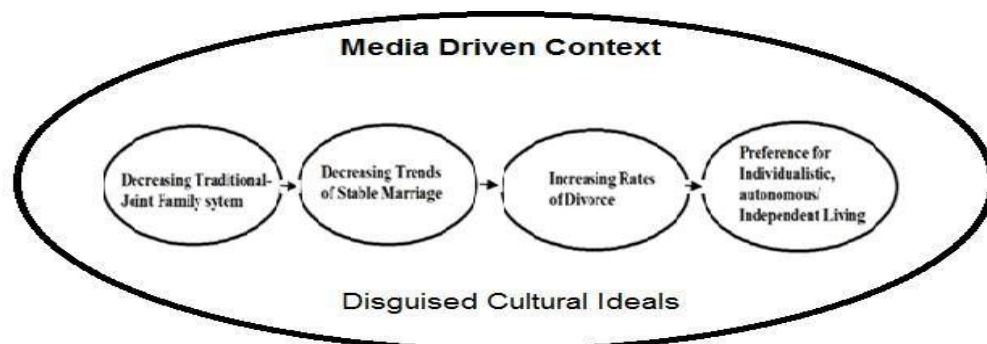


Source (Libitha, 2012)

Based on the above discussion, the four-step process indicating characteristics of individualistic living can be extracted as shown below;

Figure 17

Cultural Ideals Affecting Family Process



Thus far, a pattern can be established that media-induced widespread cultural ideals have an impact on family life as experienced in the West with similar implications for Pakistan. Also, family disintegration and divorce have critical consequences for the family, especially for women in Pakistan. Their readjustment in society is likely to be a serious problem affecting not only their personalities but also the related ones - and sometimes the whole of society. In this regard, proper socialization is the most preferable possibility to integrate families that, in a shattered family scenario, undergo upheaval. Such a disturbed family life may produce maladjusted personalities with grim social problems (Quddus, 1995).

In the case of divorce, numerous blessings evaporate due to which not only the women but the whole society suffers. The social evils affect women highly such as murder and other crimes due to their insecure environment. The collapse of family life leads to psychological problems and the majority of women either find shelter in destitute women's homes or become targets of social isolation and venom of public criticism due to the discord between husband

and wife (Ahmad bin Hanbal, 2012). According to Hoge (2002) divorced families suffer more chronic clinical depression. The family disruption ensues in poor socio-economic status and maximizes the risks for acute depression. Gallagher states a well-known observation of divorcees and widows prone to high danger of medical illnesses through several studies. As such they undergo more physical and mental health maladies with the divorced and separated individuals having the worst plight of health status.

However, the situation has to be improved through awareness, public training, and sagacious principles based on nature and natural life because the family institution is the basic unit of survival, stability, and sanity. The family in addition performs socially beneficial functions such as the upbringing and socialization of its members along with several humanitarian services like care and caress in case of sickness or disability. On the economic front, the family caters to victuals, attire, abode, and physical protection of its members. Finally, socially examining, the family serves to advance stability and strength within society as a whole (Encyclopedia Britannica, 5/673).

In this regard, God disapproves of divorce in Islam just as much as the acts of disrespecting the wife and torturing the family. Islam is a source of providing laudable family laws that prohibit all from watching immoral acts, maintain the sanctity of marriage institution, peace, and tranquility, and counter imposes certain checks to save the shelter of civilization. This religion of peace does not appreciate the dissolution of marital bonds because termination of the marital contract triggers the process of ruining the lives of children as well as the spouses. For instance, a child of a broken family has to choose between his mother and father, thus he or she is deprived of parental love and affection. Such families lack a healthy and balanced pattern of life.

The Holy Prophet (P.B.U.P) addressed the issue of the preservation of marital institutions in His last pilgrimage by commanding to treat women with grace and dignity. Islamic socio-cultural life prohibits all from maltreating them provided they uphold the legal boundaries. The spouse has been forbidden to express aversion towards the consort (Muslim, Hadith No:1218). The rights of the wives (regarding the husbands) equal the obligations towards their husbands with men having precedence only in responsibilities (2:228). The offspring and spouse are proclaimed to be a source of satisfaction and joy (25:74). The Almighty proclaims the avoidance of evil and enjoins dispensing justice, kindness, and goodness towards kith and kin and all relations by outlawing shameful, evil, indecent, rebellious, and oppressive (Quran 16:90). Thus, there are implicit injunctions for guiding the media programs and cultural ideals along with the preservation of familial relations and values. On account of financial or physical weaknesses, the delicacy of women, and their vulnerability, men have been appointed guardians over women. This excludes the possibility of women's individualism being in ruins in any case. It is a matter of preserving and not challenging the sanctity of family and women. So, obligations, security, and respect have been held supreme in family matters (Quran, 4:35). Therefore, the man's primacy over woman due to security and financial reasons rules out any justification of his social superiority, prominence or leadership and does not diminish women freedom in any way: Women can pursue life the way they want as far as that is allowed by Islam as can be seen in worthy Khadija's entrepreneurial life. The family, here, represents the model relationship between men and women, or between parents and children, or in society.

In this regard, pressure groups and civil society should play a regular supervisory role in regulating media influences. This measure can exercise efficient control over the adverse impacts of foreign cultures and the isolating tendencies of individualism and feminism. Regarding this, B. Shah, in an article published in the New York Times, stated that the inspiration of Pakistani women for great achievements in feminist history has not attained

paradoxically the high social position and Pakistan would not have been ranked amongst the worst countries for women to reside in. This calls for a more aware feminism that elegantly marries strands of feminism, secular and Islamic principles to provide a more safer place to family to live in. Also, the non-government organizations have been perceived to toe foreign agendas; counter-productive for the collective life. They have to be channeled towards promoting awareness, harmony, and welfare services by the local values, customs, and bounds. This would discourage tussle between the genders and enhance balanced development for all strata of society. Hamelink (1994) highlights the under-representation and disregard for women's rights in Pakistan but rejects the claim of their total absence. Feminism stimulates subtle living without the need to revoke respect for male or Islamic patterns. Therefore, any school of thought ought not to signify superiority, religiosity, or morality of any gender but simply strive to make lives better and beneficial for all.

For this, formal and proper socialization is required to effectively integrate families. On the other hand; if family life is broken, this function is paralyzed disrupting family life which may produce maladjusted personalities with grave social problems. This study at the end aims to develop and recommend some remedies to minimize the individualistic tendencies and the alarmingly increasing divorce rate since marriage reflects an important decision pertaining to secure each other's life and demands maturity to forbear the responsibilities of life. Tolerance and compromise and not the blind preference for foreign culture and media programs, are the paths to success in marital and collective life. Despite, the preaching of independence by individualistic schools of thought and social sciences, the reality is all have inherent biases and weaknesses not to be cherished. Thus, the solution had to be located by social sciences i.e. they plead the training in communication skills in order to perpetuate marital bliss and minimize prospects of its dissolution (Gottman, 2017). The potent cure for marital problems is kindness embraces all in relationships and initiative is the key (Ash Shahawi, 2004). The parents must educate their children in religion, native culture, maintenance of family bonds, and compromise with others. Tolerance leads to a happy social and family life.

There must be necessary policies, training programs, and preaching institutions for the persons entering into a marital contract, directing both partners to know their liabilities and responsibilities of married life, and instructing them on the way to manage marital strife carefully. Then, there must be policies to preserve the joint family system by making people realize the limits of domestic authority and remain sensitive to this personal institution. Another solution is to keep the weaknesses of spouses a secret. ("Alarming Divorce Rate, must be addressed urgently"). Privacy in personal matters ought to be maintained since the acumen of husband and wife strives to resolve their problems in the best possible way. The simple domestic problems aggravate by rushing towards the external help and courthouse without the affected realizing that judicial stakeholders resolve the problems less and often magnify them due to intrusion, ignorance of the client's personal affairs, apathy, and vested financial interests. A marital conflict is rarely saved from the evil of divorce when presented before the law court. Such issues can conveniently be resolved with both the husband and the wife following the prescriptions of religious and balanced moral consciences.

The painful process of divorce indicates the existence of crucial requirements missing in the families which head towards social atomization and isolation. Among them are poor communication, non-commitment to marriage and religion, media-led dramatic change in cultural ideals and priorities, failing expectations and self-obsession, and the lack of conflict-resolving skills. The most important factor that contributes to the high divorce rate in Pakistan is a preference for independence; the individualistic tendencies in spouses, non-compromising attitude, impatience, and intolerance in the families in the face of culturally embedded programs of media. Moreover, disconnect with religion paves the way to strengthen the influence of disguised ideologies of Western culture and Indian media. Such ideologies are

associated with social atomization and abstraction from integrated living. Spouses acquire profound information and hidden cultural ideals through media and contribute their due share in every sector of society.

5 Conclusion

Thus, to conclude the discussion it can be said that there is a severe need to direct the alarmingly increasing trends of unbridled individualism, non-channelized social atomism, and vicious hunger for isolation and autonomy in Pakistan's families under the influence of foreign culture, media and the disconnect with religion; Islam, which is the comprehensive solution to healthy living style. Keeping in view the growth in the occupancy level in destitute women and old age homes in Pakistan, family life and collective living must be promoted. It also has the benefit of family members multiplying happiness and sharing to reduce the intensity of painful moments. Otherwise, this would lead to a situation like the U.S. where the family and social life have seriously suffered and people end up in destitute cells waiting for appointments to meet their family members. Nevertheless, efficient and effective policies and regulations can facilitate the preservation of a collective system of life, values, culture, and media.

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