

Socio-historical Observation of Some Aspects of System and Value Changes within the Family and Society in Algeria

رصد سوسيوتاريخي لبعض مظاهر التغير النسقي والقيمي داخل الأسرة والمجتمع في

الجزائر

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Abstract: This study aims to identify the transformations experienced by family and society in Algeria over recent decades, paralleling other societies amid globalization in its various forms—precisely, the period from 1990 to the present. Employing a theoretical methodology that draws on literature reviews and researchers' writings in this domain, we determine the manifestations of these transformations in particular social systems, particularly the system of cultural values. These values have undergone considerable changes at the levels of individuals, families, and society. This transformation is evident in changes to family structure and functions and youth's orientations, future aspirations, attitudes, and behaviors.

Keywords: Algerian society, family, social change, social structure, modernity, values.

ملخص: تهدف هذه الورقة البحثية إلى رصد مختلف معالم التحول التي عرفها كل من الأسرة والمجتمع في الجزائر في العقود الأخيرة على غرار باقي المجتمعات في ظل العولمة بمختلف أشكالها ، ونخص بالذكر الفترة الزمنية من 1990 إلى اليوم معتمدين في ذلك على منهجية نظرية من خلال الدراسات السابقة حول الموضوع ، وكتابات الباحثين في المجال ، بحيث يقع على عاتقنا تحديد مظاهر هذا التحول في بعض أنساق المجتمع لاسيما نسق القيم الثقافية ، الذي عرف تحولا عميقا سواء على مستوى الأفراد أو الأسرة والمجتمع بصفة عامة ويتجلى ذلك من خلال تغير بنية ووظائف الأسرة ، واتجاهات الشباب وتطلعاتهم المستقبلية ومواقفهم وسلوكياتهم.

كلمات مفتاحية: المجتمع الجزائري، الأسرة، التغير الاجتماعي، البنية الاجتماعية، الحداثة، القيم.

1.

Introduction

A researcher exploring the dynamics and structure of societies and attempting to comprehend prevalent social phenomena should consider their historical context and the linear development of core variables. Several dimensions and specific socio-historical circumstances, evolving with changing conditions and emerging events, shape the structure of societies. This process is followed by a stage that describes and analyses the mechanisms of change across different societal systems, linking them to influential factors to understand and observe transformations in value and systemic dimensions.

Rapid social change is undoubtedly not confined to Western societies, which have made considerable strides in fragmenting their traditional socio-cultural structures. Even societies traditionally distinguished as structurally conventional have started to shed this description, as signs of transformation appear, leading to new patterns in structure and actors' behaviors. This transition is evident in the rise of individualistic behavior, the diminishing role of the extended family, and the influence of reference groups, among others.

This raises the following problem statement: What are the manifestations of systemic and value changes in Algerian society and family? What role does global modernity play in dissolving specific traditional structures and emerging new values?

2. Study Objectives

This study mainly aims to highlight the transformations of Algerian society and the family value system over the past three decades by tracing its historical context. It also seeks to :

- Analyze the systemic transformations, particularly the socio-cultural transitions in Algerian society and family, based on results from literature reviews, statistics, and theoretical writings.
- Emphasize the role of cultural globalization in the changes observed within the value system of Algerian society and family.

3. Areas of Change in Algerian Society

Like other societies, worldwide, Algerian society has witnessed numerous waves of change in its socio-cultural structure. The premise here is that Algerian society has experienced significant transformations in its structure and values due to various factors, including colonization, post-independence state policies, the economic and social crisis (1980–1990), economic restructuring, demographic factors, education, and the spread and openness of media, among others (Sidi

Mohamed, 2013). These characteristics have contributed to social, economic, and value-based transformations across the structure of society as a whole. The main areas of transformation can be highlighted as follows:

3.1. Demographic Change

Addressing demographic change in societies falls within the framework of the demographic transition theory. It can be defined as a period that varies in length depending on the circumstances, during which a transformation occurs in demographic data. The types of transitions are diverse and are determined by the total duration of the transition period, which should not be less than 40 years—equivalent to one and a half generations—and can reach up to 150 years in some cases, comparable to five generations. This affects the population size and composition between the end of the traditional system and its size at the beginning of the modern system. This change is measured by employing an index known as the "transition multiplier» (2018 بوهراوة وعمر اوي).

In the last two decades, Algerian society has witnessed demographic transformations impacting population size, composition, and distribution. This transformation can be observed through different statistics from various sources, with the primary sources of demographic data as censuses, surveys, and vital records. According to the National Statistics Office (ONS), the population of Algeria reached approximately 40.8 million on July 1, 2016, with a natural growth rate of 2.17% due to an increase in the number of live births and a decrease in mortality rates. It is expected to reach 42.2 million by January 2018 (الديوان الوطني (2017 للإحصائيات). This increase in Algeria's population is linked to improvements in healthcare. Notably, the population of Algeria after independence was around 12 million, 18 million in 1982, approximately 25 million in 1990, and 30 million in 2000. By 2010, it was estimated at 35 million.

However, there have not been considerable transformations in the population composition concerning age and gender variables. In 2016, the percentage of the population under 15 years old was estimated at 29.3%, demonstrating a slight increase from 2015. The rate of the working-age population was estimated at 61.8%, a decrease compared to 2015. Meanwhile, the percentage of the population over 60 years old rose to 8.9% compared to 2015 (الديوان الوطني للإحصائيات (2017). Regarding gender, there have not been significant changes in the ratio of males to females. The number of males has slightly exceeded that of females since official censuses and demographic data began, except immediately after independence. Structural changes in the population pyramid have been ongoing for 30 years, distinguished by a widening base. The population aged 0-4 and 5-9 years in 2016

was the largest, while there has been a decline in the size of the age groups 10-14, 15-19, and 20-24 years.

In general, demographic transformations in Algerian society can be observed through the following aspects:

- **Population Growth:** The population has increased due to higher birth rates and declining mortality rates, which are linked to improvements in healthcare, security stability, and reproductive behavior within the community.
- **Urban Population Density:** Urban population density increases in cities due to migration from rural areas due to security or economic conditions.
- **Population Pyramid:** The population pyramid demonstrates a continued widening of its base, with slight changes in demographic composition concerning age and gender.

As a result, the demographic transformation has affected the population structure, particularly age and distribution in terms of population density in rural and urban areas. Furthermore, there is a consistent annual increase in the total population size. On the other hand, some details and specifics of demographic transformation can be observed, such as fertility rates, birth rates, marriage and divorce rates, dependency ratios, population activity, and internal and external migration rates. These variables are significant for identifying demographic changes by comparing data over the years. Demographic transformation remains one of the rapid changes occurring in Algerian society, closely associated with social, political, and economic dimensions.

3.2. Educational Change

The education system is regarded as an institution for socialization that aligns with the aspirations of political authority and developmental and economic goals while respecting society's identity and cultural elements. The education and higher education systems in Algeria have experienced several transformations since independence, especially in terms of the number of students and pupils, teaching methods, educational programs, and the dynamics of reforms undertaken by the state—particularly the education sector reforms in July 2002 in response to the rapid changes Algeria witnessed over the previous 15 years in political, economic, and social spheres (Toualbi, 2005). In addition to the structural reforms in the preceding decades, these reforms mainly impacted pedagogical aspects of educational content, which are in line with the challenges of globalization as perceived by the Ministry of National Education.

The socio-economic transformations have prompted the state to reform its educational system locally and globally, leading to a move towards "educational rationalization" (Toualbi, 2005) as a new challenge. This included the establishment of smart schools and efforts to enhance the quality of the educational process. However, these reforms raised issues and sparked epistemological and ideological debates among elites and those interested in education.

On the other hand, the education sector in Algeria has experienced a considerable increase in male and female students. In 2011, the number of pupils across various educational phases reached nearly eight million, from about two million in 1970 to six million in 1990. In 2000, it exceeded seven million. The enrollment rate of females also rose compared to previous decades, reaching approximately 94.31% in 2008, up from just 41% in 1970 and 77% in 1990 (الديوان الوطني للإحصائيات 2017). This increase is attributed to demographic changes in Algerian society, enhanced schooling conditions, rural-to-urban migration, and enforcing compulsory education. Furthermore, there has been a remarkable rise in the percentage of female students, contrasting with earlier periods when female education faced cultural challenges, especially in rural areas. The socio-cultural changes in society and the transition in values concerning the education of females have removed the reservations about their education and schooling. Based on the above, the transformation in the education sector in Algeria can be summarized as follows:

- Continuous Increase in Student Numbers: There has been a steady increase in the number of students across various educational phases (primary, middle, and secondary), accompanied by an increase in basic facilities (schools, middle schools, and high schools) and a rise in the number of teachers at different levels.
- Changes in Educational Content: Educational and pedagogical programs have been changed to align with global and local developments despite the media and ideological debates surrounding these "reforms."
- Emergence of Social Issues: Social problems have arisen within the education sector, such as strikes, which generate professional, social, and pedagogical demands from teachers. Issues associated with student dropout rates, academic performance, and instances of violence in schools arise.

In the higher education sector, Algerian universities have recently adopted a new educational system known as the "LMD" system (License, Master,

Doctorate) to implement higher education reforms and explore new horizons that ensure quality in university teaching. This stage has witnessed noticeable changes in higher education, especially in quantity (number of students), with the number of university students exceeding 1,600,000, supported by approximately 60,000 faculty members (وزارة التعليم العالي، 2016). Notably, the Algerian university officially adopted the LMD system in 2004, which introduces a new structure for education that focuses on acquiring and deepening knowledge across three main educational phases—License, Master, and Doctorate—while aligning with professional social contexts and expanding training opportunities through the integration of exploratory educational units and general culture courses (بادي 2010).

The adoption of this new system was a response to global and local changes in light of the challenges of economic development and enhancing the outcomes of the higher education sector. The transition from the classical education system has gradually started. As previously mentioned, the LMD system (License, Master, Doctorate) was officially adopted by Algerian universities in the 2004-2005 academic year. More than ten years have passed since its introduction into the university system, and it has become nearly universal across all universities in the country, including technical and literary streams.

The higher education sector has experienced a significant increase in universities and university centers. According to the Ministry of Higher Education and Scientific Research statistics, the number of universities reached 50 in 2015, with 13 university centers, 10 higher teacher education schools, 20 national higher schools in various specializations, and 12 preparatory schools (وزارة التعليم العالي 2016). Notably, the higher education sector in Algeria has witnessed profound transformations, which can be summarized as follows:

- The abandonment of the classical teaching system and the shift to the LMD system, despite the challenges and obstacles accompanying its application concerning the quality of its outputs, its adaptability to the labor market, the level of graduates, and issues associated with scientific research.
- An increase in the number of university students corresponds to a higher success rate in the baccalaureate exams, and an increase in the number of higher education institutions, along with a considerable budget allocation for the higher education sector.
- There are some issues associated with the pedagogical aspect of university

education and the quality of training in light of the emphasis on quality. Higher education, like other open systems, includes inputs, activities, outputs, and feedback. Therefore, effectively managing the raw material represented by the student and producing it in a knowledge framework that ensures graduates satisfy the needs of the economy and society with the desired quality requires implementing crucial standards and reviewing plans and programs based on feedback.

- It may not be possible to evaluate the success of the LMD system based solely on the results of the ten-year plan (2004-2014), as this is a short period; therefore, implementing this system may require another decade to address its shortcomings.

3.3. Political Transformation

The political landscape in Algeria has witnessed significant transformations in recent years in response to various events and developments. Some are linked to the aspirations and developmental programs of the state, while others are affected by external international factors. The "National Charter" served as a starting point toward future horizons and is a historical document developed by different segments of the Algerian population based on the principles of the revolution (السويدي، 1990). This charter can be regarded as the first pillar in the history of the Algerian national state in its political and social dimensions.

Algeria witnessed a one-party system from 1962 until October 1988, which marked the beginning of political openness and the acknowledgment of party pluralism. The 1989 constitution was a response to the requirements of the popular movement rejecting the political and economic conditions prevailing in the country, establishing a new mode of political and economic practice, and defining the nature of the relationship between society and the state (Brahimi, 1995).

The events of October 1988, along with the ensuing political shift, represented a break from the one-party system and laid the groundwork for the appearance of party pluralism. They established new concepts that would significantly affect Algerian society and its structures (Brahimi, 1995). Notably, the background of the October 1988 events is primarily socio-economic, reflecting the condition of a broad social class subjected to several forms of oppression and marginalization. This class sought to express its grievances concerning its economic and social situation, prompting the authorities to recognize the necessity of change and the search for political reform (party pluralism and the opening of the space for the right to form associations), as well as initiating economic reforms, which we will

address later. Furthermore, the stage of political openness and the emergence of new parties led to new events and transformations that escalated to the point of armed violence following the annulment of the electoral process that was won by the "Islamic Salvation Front" (FIS).

The armed violence period only ended after the enactment of the Civil Concord Law with the arrival of President Abdelaziz Bouteflika to power in 1999. After that, Algeria witnessed further transformations in the political scene based on the previous backgrounds and events, encompassing several presidential, parliamentary, and local elections. New parties and social movements emerged, which affected societal values and the attitudes of individuals, particularly the youth, as follows:

- The political transformations were reflected in the behaviors and perceptions of individuals, especially the youth, through practice and symbolism, such as expression, criticism, political participation, attitudes towards elections, and relationships with the authorities.
- These transformations were accompanied by events connected to the requirements of social movements, especially in the social and economic spheres, sometimes escalating to protests, violence, and vandalism (e.g., the oil and sugar events in 2011).
- Despite the openness and freedom of expression and political participation, the issue of the relationship between the state and society remains pertinent, particularly concerning the trust and actual involvement of youth in political action and their stance toward it.
- There is a contradiction in political visions and values between the generation that led the revolution and post-independence and the current generation, which includes most of the youth.

Generally, a negative perception of politics and political action has taken root in the social imagination of the youth, mainly due to multiple accumulations and factors, such as narrow political horizons, limited youth participation, and the ambiguity and lack of transparency resulting from certain practices by politicians. As a result, youth have shifted from relative political apathy to indifference towards politics, or treating it as a subject for ridicule and disdain in many instances.

4. The Impact of Transformations on the Value System in Algerian Families and Society

The primary purpose of emphasizing the manifestations of transformation in

Algerian society is to recognize the importance of these transformations and their relationship to the issue of values among individuals in the community. Nowadays, values are formed and reformed grounded in a series of political, social, and economic changes due to the opening of worlds and societies to one another and the cross-pollination of ideas and cultures alongside rapid technological development. Furthermore, the role of the networked society, as addressed by Darren Barney (بارني 2015), plays a significant role in reshaping values and moving away from the impact of social structures and institutions. This is evident in Algerian society with the appearance of social media platforms and the internet, attracting youth.

Furthermore, it is observed that the values in the present urban society in Algeria are neither entirely rural nor thoroughly urban. This is due to the migration of many rural residents to urban areas during the liberation war and in recent decades. The effect of value transformation is also reflected in families and their structures, especially in the extended family model, which instills accepted values for males and females (ولد خليفة 2016).

4.1. Structural Change in Algerian Families

Algerian society's social and economic transformations in recent decades have changed the family structure—from extended families to nuclear families. The extended family has started to decline due to changing material and cultural conditions that are no longer compatible with its nature but rather align with the nuclear family system. Therefore, the number of nuclear families has doubled, with statistics demonstrating that 60 percent of Algerian families are nuclear, compared to only 46 percent in the late 1960s (بوشلوش 2018).

The effect of social and economic transformations has not only impacted the structure of the family but has also influenced the values and functions of its members. Numerous Algerian studies (سلطانية 2017) agree that the functional changes of the Algerian family can be addressed through various key elements, including:

- Changes in the marriage system and its social recognition.
- Changes regarding the continuation of the human species and reproduction.
- Changes in socialization and the preparation of individuals to assume their social roles.
- Changes associated with ensuring psychological stability.
- Changes in the economic function of the family.

Modern Algerian families have transformed in structure—especially in roles

and status within the family—and function, such as socialization and value formation. New factors that were not features of the traditional family model have emerged, including educational attainment, personal experiences, and income among both spouses (Benali, 2009). These changes affect the distribution of roles and the status of each partner, influence power dynamics within the family, and even extend to broader social relationships.

4.2. Change in the Value System of Families and Society in Algeria

The issue of values in Algerian society is challenging to fully grasp due to the complex factors that shape and reshape them and varying perceptions of the concept of values. This is particularly true given Algerian society's cultural, religious, and historical particularities set it apart from other communities. While Western sociologists agree that culture and community serve as criteria for assessing values, Muslim scholars assert that standards are derived from the Quran and Sunnah (محمود 2011). Religion plays a crucial role in determining values in Algerian society. Some may interpret religious values as part of a traditional system that emerges to conflict with modern values. This raises significant questions about how traditional and contemporary values coexist and the effectiveness of the value system overall. Bernard Lewis emphasizes that societies may encounter issues with the efficiency of values when they shift from field-based values, which guide individuals' social and political behavior, to values that are not actively practiced. This occurs when individuals theoretically adopt values without affecting practical behavior (محمود 2011).

Undoubtedly, social change, in general, has led to a disruption in the value system within Arab societies, where material and economic values have come to dominate the concept of values. This transition is distinguished by a pursuit of quick gains at the expense of productive work, consumption over saving and investment, standardization over creativity, irrationality over rationality, and a preference for personal interests over national interests (عبد المنعم والبيومي 2003). This reflects the general state of societal values.

Regarding the family, familial values have also changed, giving rise to new values such as the postponement of youth marriage, material criteria in the choice of a spouse, the inability to plan for the future, and feelings of frustration, among others. Young people cannot satisfy their legitimate basic needs (عبد المنعم والبيومي 2003).

Algerian society's transformations in recent decades will undoubtedly impact its value system, family, youth, and work values. Among the manifestations of the

effects of these transformations on the value system in society, we find:

The changes experienced in Algerian society over the past three decades have impacted many of the standards and values among its members. The transition in how individuals view women's education and work towards a more positive outlook, alongside the gradual decline of traditional values concerning women's work and education, represents one of the fruits of this transformation. Women have fulfilled considerable gains due to this change, with their education levels rising across various domains. This advancement helps them enter the job market in several areas, such as medicine, administration, education, and law.

The increased enrollment of girls in education, significantly higher education, and their entry into the labor market provide clear evidence of a transformation in the social value system and changing societal perceptions regarding girls' education and work outside the home. (بوشلوش 2018).

The French occupation is regarded as the most significant shock to the value system in Algerian society, as widespread resistance efforts planted the seeds of change and resistance. Colonialism worked to dismantle traditional value systems, leading to the liberation revolution that brought about the most profound changes in societal values. Social relations were no longer dictated by age and women were liberated from a subordinate view, participating alongside men in the heroic tasks of the revolution.

Various pieces of legislation have recently bolstered women's status, including the protection of women from domestic abuse and their relative liberation from guardianship (Oued Khlifa, 2016). As a result, society's perception of women has changed gradually in terms of their status, work, and presence outside the home, among other factors.

On the other hand, the transformations in Algerian society have led to the emergence of new values among the youth. We do not discuss young people's issues or aspirations but observe the evolving features of their values—such as work ethics, religious beliefs, and individualism. They represent a new generation shaped by local and global social systems, primarily through the tension between traditional and modern values and generational conflict. Youth across time and place have always been agents of change within societies, uniquely capable of reshaping cultures, customs, and traditions. This adaptability is mainly due to their openness to growth and transformation, as they are often unbound by the hesitation to embrace social or economic transitions. For them, change may even feel like a natural extension of their character and growth, sparking a desire for transformation and resistance against the old (الشيباني 1984).

From a demographic perspective, youth represent the majority of Algerian society, meaning that most members are contemporary with the values of modernity, regardless of their social upbringing. Young people have started to pressure traditional social structures, especially the family. They receive socialization outside the family system, leading to the development of perceptions and behaviors that differ from those of their parents and grandparents. This has resulted in a conflict between the two generations, primarily based on the youth's rebellion against paternal authority in many behaviors, particularly with the media's openness and the increasing spread of social networks. Some individualistic values among Algerian youth are manifested through the following:

- Certain traditional values are rejected and replaced with modern values, resulting in a clash of values between the generations of parents and children.
- The family's role in choosing a wife for their son is declining, as most young people prefer to make their own choices.
- Increased interest in fashion and clothing styles and following celebrities and famous personalities have influenced them.
- Independence in choosing academic disciplines and jobs among many young people.
- A tendency towards financial independence and living arrangements after marriage.
- A quest to achieve psychological and personal needs associated with individual freedom.
- The emergence of new work values that align with youth's perceptions of their social reality and future.

4.3. Changes in the Value System of Work among Members of Society

The work value system is one of the most significant manifestations of the impact of social and economic transformations on values in Algerian society. The perception of work and its value has changed among youth and many members of society. Young people no longer view work solely from an economic utility perspective; it is no longer just about the financial return that meets various needs such as food, drink, and clothing or the wealth needed to buy a home or start a family in the future.

Furthermore, the attitude toward manual and vocational work has shifted. Manual work is no longer considered inferior, as it is regarded as honorable work

that aligns with societal values and provides a motivating financial return for the worker (بوشلوش 2018). Therefore, many young people prefer to pursue vocational or technical training in search of better income opportunities.

New social and economic conditions have significantly changed young people's perceptions and attitudes toward work. Rising unemployment rates, increasing living costs, stagnant job markets, and limited employment opportunities have led many young people to develop negative perceptions of work and view their professional futures pessimistically. This, in turn, has naturally resulted in school dropouts and declining education levels among young males, mainly due to their belief in the ineffectiveness of education in securing job opportunities.

On the other hand, young people hold negative views toward certain demanding professions, particularly manual labor jobs such as construction and agriculture. This attitude discourages many from working in these sectors that are facing considerable labor shortages. This is mainly due to cultural factors, as many young people prefer comfortable jobs that offer them social prestige. Consequently, this creates a real problem for the development of productive sectors in the national economy—industries that do not attract youth participation—while at the same time, there is an oversaturation in domains such as management and services, which attract a broad segment of job seekers.

Conclusion

Like other societies, Algerian society experiences a significant transformation in structures, concepts, and moral and cultural values. This transition has impacted individuals, families, and other social systems due to the presence of actors in the artistic and intellectual fields and the opening up to the outside world amid conflicting ideological approaches and elite references.

Furthermore, with ongoing developments at all levels and individuals' exposure to various cultural sources, social and cultural upbringing has come to rely on different references rather than the traditional reference framework introduced by socializing institutions (family, school, religion). The media and social networks play a crucial role in reshaping individuals' social values, encompassing the value of work. Globalization has diminished the role of traditional socializing institutions, leading individuals to adopt new values that may not align with the uniqueness of society, which is based on freedom and individualism.

Religion plays a significant role in shaping the identity of the Algerian individual, affecting their awareness, thoughts, habits, behaviors, and perceptions of various aspects of life. The role of religion as a psychological organizing factor is not only manifested in guiding principles that motivate the self to form the basis

of behavior but can also serve as a constraint and regulator in certain adverse circumstances. Therefore, it exerts a general impact on the individual's psychological side and the development of their conscious self, ensuring that behavior is regulated and rational, simultaneously serving the interests of the individual and society across its different systems.

While we consider religion relatively stable system in the Algerian society's identity, it faces other challenges brought about by modernity and globalization. These challenges prompt some individuals to question how religious values can adapt to the requirements of new social realities, leading some members of society to oscillate in their behaviors between what religious values impose and their aspirations.

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