

Lifestyle and divorce in Tehran city

Jafar Hezarjaribi¹, Maryam Niyati²

¹Professor, Faculty Member, Department of Social Sciences, Allameh Tabataba'i University, Tehran, Iran, ²PhD student in Cultural Sociology, Department of Social Science, Allameh Tabataba'i University, Tehran. Iran

Abstract

Objective: The present study is aimed to evaluate the relationship between lifestyle and divorce in Tehran city. Based on the evidences and statistics by the civil estate organization, divorce has been developed considerably in recent decades.

Methodology: Based on the statistics, Tehran with the population of more than 13 million people is exposed to this phenomenon. The increase of this social damage has raised some concerns and the study in this regard is necessary. This study is qualitative in which phenomenological approach is used. The participants are selected among those divorcing or who newly got divorced via the family courts in Tehran city. The sampling is purposeful and structure-based with 20 participants.

Results: The main method of data collection is in-depth Colaizzi method for the researchers. The validity and reliability of study are based on four themes: Real value, application, continuity and reality-based. The results are in 410 initial codes, 17 sub-themes and 5 main themes including the lack of support, role confusion, weak belief, gradual attrition and lack of life style consistency. The study topic (life style and divorce) is in two levels of individual and social or in two levels of micro and macro. Individual level is family member, the method of relationship leading to divorce and this is achieved based on the interviews.

Conclusion: Social level and macro level refer to the context of society as divorce penetrates into the cultural-social context. This structure of society determines the type of attitude, behavior, preference and routine activities of people in routine life. Thus, the society structure is involved in forming the special type of life style. Life style should be changed as it is accepted by the society structure. The structure teaches people how to select life to achieve the expected result of structure. The results of study showed that life style was effective on divorce and this required consideration of people and authorities.

Key words: Lifestyle, Divorce, City, phenomenology

INTRODUCTION

Divorce indicates the dissolution of shared life and family and it is considered as an example of social issue and it is a difficult process for those involved in it. The studies have shown that divorce brings many problems for the family.¹ According to Robinson², divorce indicates the change of nuclear family and its movement to the post-nuclear family. This indicates the common cycle of marriage, divorce and re-marriage and this cycle is increasing every day. The following chart shows the divorce statistics in the past 10 decades in five great cities in Iran. As shown in the chart, the highest statistics

belongs to the metropolis of Tehran city. Lifestyle is the term not applied mostly in the traditional culture as it is consistent with a type of selection among a multiple choices of existing possibilities and it is not delivered from the past generation in practice and it is mostly accepted. Today's human being is involved mostly into war, machine and industry and he has overlooked the fact that in the life, the basic reality is not "industry and politics" and the human relations, collaboration between wife, husband, parents and children and responsibility to them are important. The entire life is mostly dependent upon the real love between the wife and husband and the love to child. The relationship in the family due to the change of attitude of couples to life and change of lifestyle based on the structure of society, instead of relationship with others, the relationship of people with objects and animals is used. Thus, wife and husband are turned into single parts and the self-sacrifice of love is turned into egotistic attitudes. The present study is aimed to evaluate the life style on divorce.

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Corresponding Author: Maryam Niyy, PhD student in Cultural Sociology, Department of Social Science, Allameh Tabataba'i University, Tehran, Iran. E-mail: maryamniyyati@chmail.ir

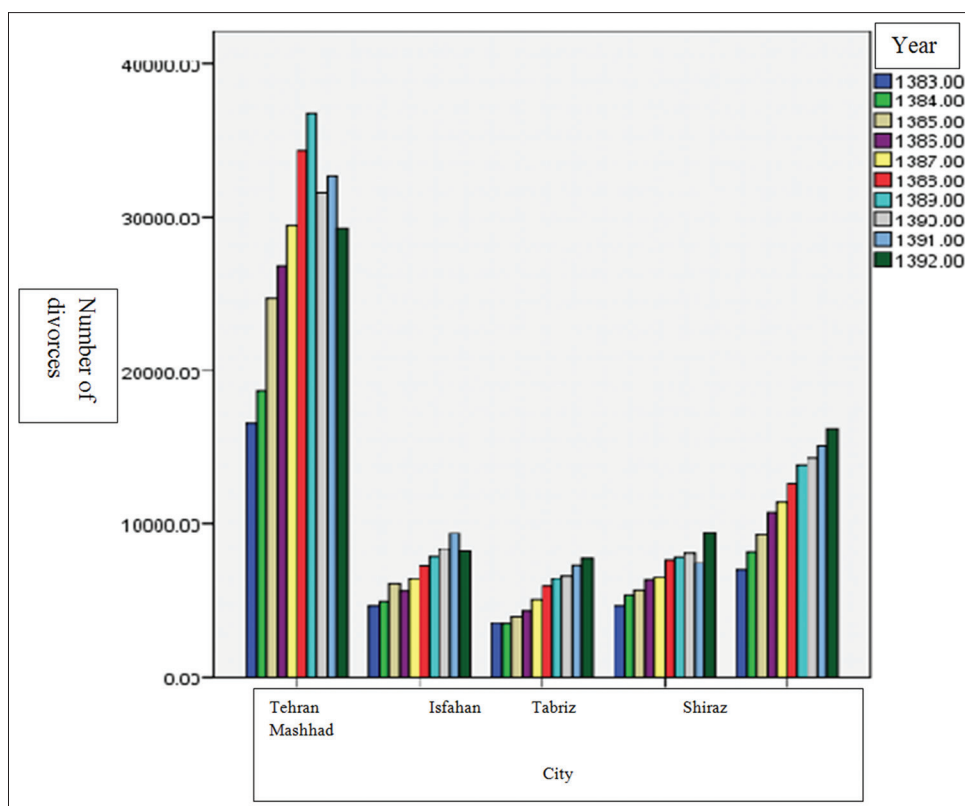


Chart 1: Bar chart of the number of frequencies of divorce in large cities of Iran in ten recent decades

CONCEPTUAL FRAMEWORK OF STUDY

Divorce is the legal end of marriage and separation of spouses and their mutual obligations in the marriage are eliminated by divorce. Divorce is occurred when the stability of marital relationship is eliminated and non-adjustment is occurred among the couples.³ Oxford Dictionary considers life style “different ways of one’s or group’s life”. Longman Dictionary defines it “the way or style for living”. The term life style as defined by Adler (1870-1937) is applied to evaluate one’s personality as formed in childhood and as manifested in this behavior and acts.

The relationship between family members and its dissolution on one hand reflect the social, cultural and economic conditions and on the other hand show the internal factors of family and its quality. Due to multi-dimensional feature of divorce, by phenomenological approach, we describe and explain the life style and divorce. Hosrel states that phenomenology is the study of human phenomenon without considering their causal reasons and their objective realities or pretending them. According to Adler, there are many different lifestyles based on the number of people on earth. Schutz believes that any person in the routine life is not a coherent one by the knowledge by which he thinks and acts, he is not continuous, he is ambiguous and contradictory.⁴ According to Schutz, from

the view of divorced ones (men or women) is at first blurry but after the shared life, the realities are revealed and clear image of life is achieved. Sometimes, the initial image is not consistent with the image after the life and it is also contradictory. If this contradiction is continued, it leads to the dissatisfaction in the family by the man or woman and these dissatisfactions lead to dissolution of family.

METHODOLOGY

As life style and its relationship with divorce have not been studied yet and the term life style has subjective and abstract concept and it is rooted in the routine life experiences of people in society to achieve the hidden realities. The present study is qualitative to find that “Is there any relationship between lifestyle and divorce? The researcher applies phenomenology; phenomenology is a systematic and subjective method describing life experience and perception of its meaning. A researcher using phenomenological method knows that in the experiences of life and phenomena, there are some instincts as perceived and they investigate the subjective phenomena as the basic reality is hidden in it. The participants in this study are selected among those getting divorced or those getting divorced from some days by purposeful method. The inclusion criterion is their voluntarily participation in

the study. The majority of participants in the interview are women and the samples are selected among the working women and housewives.

The participants could be excluded from study if they wanted. In the qualitative section of study, data collection and data analysis were performed at the same time. The main method by which the data were collected was deep and non-structured interview with open questions by which the participants could state their opinion about the life style and divorce and explain the issues well. The deep interviews are good methods due to their depth and flexibility in qualitative researches.

Before the start of interview, at first the participants were asked to record their voice and then some explanations were given about the purposes of study and they were assured that the information was confidential. The interview meetings were two or three sessions and at first, it was started with the general questions and then it entered into deep searching questions. The time considered for each interview and each session was 30-45 min and this time was changed based on the patience of participants. The theoretical saturation of information was achieved by 20 participants including 10 people from the judiciary complex in Vanak square (Tehran) and 10 other judiciary complexes in Shahid Mahalati of Tehran.

In the qualitative research, the immediate registration of data was the requirement of each research. Thus, the interviews were written word by word on the sheet after being heard and was analyzed. After data collection, the data were analyzed by Colaizzi method. The texts in the interviews were read carefully and the important terms were defined and the meaning and concept of each important term was defined as code. Later, the codes achieved from the initial analysis were written separately and the codes similar conceptually were in a class and a name was considered for each one. Then, different classes with common concepts were in a general classification and the result was mixed as a complete description of the studied issue and was considered in a theme or sub-theme. Later, the extracted themes were shown to be approved by the experts to show the depth of the meaning by the participants.

The validity and reliability of the present study are based on four themes: Real value, application, continuity and reality-based.

STUDY RESULTS

The age mean of the interviewees is ranging 20-45 years. Some of the participants had 1-2 children. Of the number

of participants, there were 5 working women and the rest was housewives. The data of analysis of interview of lifestyle and divorce consisted 4 initial codes including lack of support, role confusion, weak belief, gradual attrition and non-adjustment of life style of couples. These initial codes include some sub-themes as shown in Table 1.

ROLE CONFUSION

This theme indicates doing the house chores of a woman at first as a spouse and then as a mother. Some of the participants were working and their life condition was different from other of others. These people due to the lack of appropriate planning for their life have experienced confusion in family environment. Due to the role interference, they couldn't perform their duties well. The working people in the motherhood and spouse sections created problems in the family environment. This has led into some protects by the husband as some works as cooking, cleaning, washing the clothes and movement and decoration were done with delay. On the other hand, due to their working outside, children were given to "quasi-mother" as called by Alvin Tafler. In this stage, the role of mother was delegated to another one. This theme consists of some sub-themes including obligatory succession, supporter's challenges, blame and hate. An interviewee who was a teacher with a male child stated "My mother is newly retired and she was a teacher, she has been retired for two or three years, she brought me up, now she is obliged to bring up my child. I wanted to take him to kindergarten but she didn't allow. She said: It is a pity to let him alone, he will be sick continuously. Here, I am comfortable. She sacrificed to bring up my child. Due to the pressure imposed on woman at home and accepting various roles, she is obliged to tolerate the existing conditions.

Table 1: The themes and sub-themes of study

Sub-themes	Themes
Less emphasis of the supportive role of spouse	Lack of support
Less emphasis of the supportive role of children	
Less emphasis of the supportive role of the relatives	
Position-involved	Role confusion
Obligatory successor	
Hate	
Blame	Weak belief
Lack of conscience	
Ethics elimination	
Bitter experiences	Gradual attrition
Internal tension	
Hopeless	
Elimination	Lack of adjustment of couple's life style
Cultural, social, economic, belief, mental	

WEAK BELIEF

This theme indicates less emphasis on spiritual issues in the families. The family institute due to the change of values is problematic as the spirituality is sacrificed in families. The spirituality as hidden in the western life style and new beliefs and culture. Thus, family is deviated from its main path. This path leads to the dissolution of family. The sub-themes of this section are elimination of ethics and lack of conscience.

In one of the interviews, a person said: My husband was a clergyman and after the prayer, he had meetings with others. I was present many times in some session and many women asked him about their problems with their husband and asked him for his help. My husband only said: Get divorce.

THE THEME OF GRADUAL AND OBLIGATORY ATTRITION

This theme indicates the gradual loss of physical and mental power of couples (man of woman) over time as based on the lack of information about the health of their mental and physical aspects and they are created due to bad experiences due to the pressures of tension and argument during their life. The sub-themes of this theme include gradual break, internal tensions of family, bitter experience of couples, pressure of the effect of culture and elimination of each other. One of the participants stated the bitter experience of their life as: I was 17, I married to a man but we moved many times in one year due to the bad economic condition of my husband. I was saved money and didn't spend it and I wasted the best ages of my life. I lost my youth, I tolerated everything to have a simple life. I tolerated all hardships and lost all enjoyments. Now, every person believes that I am very old. As divorce was a taboo in my family, I didn't say anything to my family and I was scared of rumors of people.

DISCUSSION

The present qualitative study is performed to recognize to describe the relationship between life style and divorce in Tehran city. The results of study are classified into four main themes including the lack of support, role confusion, weak belief, gradual attrition and life style non-adjustment of couples. Based on the data, we can say many problems were effective on divorce as life style factor as an effective social phenomenon on divorce.

The condition to achieve perfection is passing a ladder. Indeed, the first step of this ladder is family formation

as we can live in comfort, empathy, coordination and eliminate the fatigue of work and activity and distresses. Marriage is being one as via cooperation, it can be more stable. Salvation and happiness of couples is hidden in this point not being deviated from the creation traditions and not be affected by temporary attractions of life and follow the main attractions as two threes with one root hugging each other stably and unify them by heart. According to Persian Literature, Majnun says:

ردنا می‌جور کی و دره نم‌تس یک ی‌لی و ی‌لی می‌ک نم
ندب کی

If such deep attractions are created among wife and husband, they are protected against divorce in the events of life and the unity is stable among them.

The statistics have shown that divorce in families is growing in the family and society due to critical conditions. Family is important in society, this dynamic environment is safe for its members but today, due to living in the Meta industrial world, this issue has been exposed to many problems and it has lost its resistance. It seems that the rhythm of life is disturbed. One of the factors leading to the disturbance of life rhythm is the new phenomenon of life style. The reason that the family has lost its resistance against divorce, is based on the fact that in the current society, the values are divided and it fights against the past collective mechanisms and re-evaluation of the rules is also required. Life style is a tool for self-expression in society. The selection of a life style as conscious or unconscious can determine the future of a person as in all his acts, conscious or unconscious, there is coordination and it is an effort to achieve individual life style.

The present family is exposed to a system of contradictory values and has selected with an interesting mass of new goods, educational goods, services, employment and recreation. In the past life styles, family consumed their ordinary goods but now, family consumes the life style.

Regarding the study subject (life style and divorce), some themes and sub-themes were extracted among the interviews. This section evaluates the issue generally. Regarding the lack of support, we should say any person is supported by his parents before marriage but after marriage, he is removed from their support and he is supported by the family. Iran society has been a patriarchic society. Man is the guardian of family and he should support the family. Also, the first and final decision maker was the man of family. The presence of man was highly emphasized in the family. Man determined the type of life style. Woman had no determining role in the family. In other words, women had no power and they were not

searching for variety. Thus, the control was dedicated to man. Due to the existing conditions and separation of production from consumption from the early industrialization period, man was not powerful anymore. The family was nuclear and it was smaller and it changed from agriculture to industry and services. The relationship of people was changed, their preferences and tastes were changed according to Gidens. Individualism was dominant and variety was developed. The view to life was not deep and they attempted to choose the life style to change it as necessary. In this new style, they are changing continuously. Woman or child has not the previous position, even for high variety, they are replaced easily with other people. They are not responsible to the family. They don't search for comfort in the family and they search their comfort outside the family. In the current life style, people have physical presence and their mentality is in another position. In the Meta industrial world in the book of Elvin Toffler, "Third wave" people are associated with objects and animal instead of having relationship with each other. Some objects as mass media as TV, satellite, mobile, etc. have great impact on the mind of people. Lotfi⁵ in a study "Representation of life style models in TV soap opera" found that soap operas on TV are less regarding the average income class and traditional communication centers and mostly in representation of economic goods consumption life styles. Another study was performed on using satellite and its impact on life style of students. The results of study showed that the effect of Persian programs on life style of people had high correlation and relationship the relationship between watching Persian satellite and purchasing equipment, beliefs and behavior, attitude and life style showed positive and significant.⁵

A study has been conducted in Ethiopia and showed that mother relatives like grandmother's help to keep their grandchildren (girls) and this study showed that grandmothers had positive effect on the nutrition of grandchildren.⁶

Also, there is a disturbance in house chore, the food is not prepared timely and they should use frozen food mostly. Washing the clothes and cleaning are not performed timely. Due to responsibilities and fatigue in doing spouse duties, she is unable in sexual issues and this leads to protest from men. Later, woman is blamed continuously and if there is no positive response by her, tensions are increased and hate is created gradually.

The results of comparative-descriptive study of Ahmadnia on 1065 women (710 working women and 355 non-working women" showed that 37% of non-working women and 40% of working women were suffering from physical diseases. The results of study showed that non-working

mothers had high health compared to that of working women.⁷

In the meta-industrial era, the conditions of families are as technology at home has eliminated ethical issues in the families, except one or two cases, all participants in the interview stated that their husband had extra-marital affair with another one by cellphone and this led into cheating. It should be said that what happened that the couples choosing each other by love, they are separated very soon. In the majority of interviews, the reason of divorce was cheating and this was done by the man. The important factor in the family stability is affection, emotion and love as without these elements, cheating in sexual, financial and economic fields is increased. One of the important factors leading to cheating, is Nafs Amare (Yusuf, verse 52-53), attachment to child (Anfal, verses 27-28), attachment to the property (Anfal, verse 52-53), social status (ALemran, verse 75). One of the adverse effects of cheating is its individual effect as depression as the cheating leads to emotional failure and she is depressed as she commits suicide. Other cases of cheating are the children who are not educated well due to the cheating of father or mother from belief and behavioral aspects and they are turned into problematic and abnormal children in the society.⁸ We can say it is true about one of the examples in one of the participants in the interview. In her interview, Shirin says: My husband cheated on me, not once, more than once. After talking to my mother in law, I found that my father in law and brother in law did the same. Even, once I asked my husband, how long you have affairs with this person? I expected to say one month or finally six month, but he said, nine years. This affair was normal in his family and it was a part of the life style of his family.

Recognition of life style and accurate selection of life style can cause that both parents and children use the experiences of the childhood, adolescence and the youth in future and use it in their future life. One of the factors effective on the mistakes of adults is selection of life style at the beginning of family formation and education of children. These people with unsuccessful life were developed with false life style from the beginning and they followed the same style in adulthood. As the selection of life style was not real, there is no searching to remove the problems.⁹

Based on the interviews, due to false behaviors of one of the couples (woman, man), some problems are made in the family and due to the continuity of these problems, family is directed to divorce. One of the problems is mental pressures on the two sides. The present study except once case stated that they performed their house chores. The ignorance of the mothers and spouses about their physical

and mental needs and unsuitable experiences and stress of tension in the family lead to the internal arguments and this reduces the energy of spouses and physical and mental problems. And they are encountered with attrition.

The family dissolution is investigated in two levels of micro and macro. At macro level, we can refer to the social, cultural, economic and political conditions and at micro level, we can refer to the internal factors of family, quality and its method. Divorce is a multi-dimensional phenomenon and various factors are effective on it. If we present a classification of all factors and reasons, we can consider all factors in social-cultural, economic, political, ethical and psychological aspects. All the mentioned factors are created by people in society as the reason of all of them is associated to life style.

Of socio-cultural factors, we can refer to the marriage motivation, difference of thought and awareness of couples, type of choosing wife, low recognition to the features of spouse before marriage, inadequate recognition of the families of couples to each other, positive view of one's family to divorce, weakness of awareness of the role of each other in life, different views about living place, cultural differences of couples, interference of relatives in life, difference of couples in life style and imposed marriage are the title of the researches in the studies of some people as Ghotbi et al.,¹¹, Tabatabayi¹¹, Bahrami¹³, Jalilian¹⁴ and Shekarkan.¹⁵

The effective economic factors on divorce are class difference, high life costs, low life standard, women employment, lack of true management of financial affairs of family and inflation as in the researches done by Esmaili¹⁶, Dadashzade¹⁷, Shirzad¹⁸, Kameli¹⁹.

Other effective factors on divorce are ethical and psychological factors. Some factors as lack of ethical agreement, misbehavior, extra-marital relationship of couples, leaving family, irresponsibility of men, addiction, lust, distrust of couples to each other, disrespect to each other, physical violence to the spouse, reduction of satisfaction of couples, weakness in performing the spouse roles, mental abnormalities in the marital life, end of love to each other, hate, instability of ethics and behavior and obsession are mentioned as performed by Khodayi and Zahirolidin²⁰, Yusefi et al.,²¹ and Rostami.²²

Regarding religious factors, Poortman&kalmijin believe that religious people regulating their behaviors based on religion get divorce less. Religious people get divorce under special conditions.

The results of present study not only showed that non-adjustment of couples but also attempted to emphasize on their weaknesses.

Islam raises some criteria to select spouse. Some criteria as the same spouse, ethical values, physical features, family qualification, economic and social features and by these criteria, introduced and identified healthy life style. Marriage provides the ground for comfort and the beginning of life is with affection and kindness. If affective attachment is reduced gradually, marital failure is occurred and this leads to indifference to the spouse.²³

CONCLUSION

The present study is aimed to describe and explain life style and marriage and the data with the themes including lack of support, role confusion, weak belief, gradual attrition and non-adjustment of life style of couples were extracted. The results of study explained a clear image of the effect of life style on divorce.

Less emphasis of the supportive role of spouse, children and relatives can lead to tension and argument in the family and this obliges the other one to leave the spouse or house and family. Also, some factors including weak beliefs are observed among all participants and according to the study of the families based on religious beliefs are less inclined to divorce. In the families in which religion has weak position and religious principles are not important to continue a healthy life style, they are encountered with some problems including irresponsibility to the family members, wrong relationship with other people, lack of conscience, etc. In case of continuance of tension and involvement in the family with mental and physical problems, argument is started and woman is much problematic and this leads to the blame from the relatives. Finally, hate of couples to each other and divorce is the last solution.

In the present study, all participants were mostly young women and they have started their shared life not long and stated that they had a hard life and these hardships led into their physical and mental attrition as they were under treatment.

What is lifestyle? Life style is a new term but simply, life style refers to all images before the marriage of couples as drawing for their life. Mostly these images are not real as before marriage, these images were blurry, aft the start of shared life, the image is clear. Here, if the couples are not careful, the problems are started and tension is caused.

The criteria introduced by Islam to select spouse, marriage and shared life and some studies have been performed regarding divorce and achieving results and presenting solutions and propositions and all attempt to reduce or control divorce or selection a healthy life style to continue family.

Speed of life, happiness to live are fearful for those with old tastes. We are living in an era in which we feel great power but we don't know how to use it where and how. The present human being dominates the world but he doesn't dominate himself. This era has many facilities but the direction of life cannot be determined by the past. The depth is changed, there is extension but there is no depth. There is life but there is no commitment to keep life. Based on the results of study, except one or two cases, the rest of participants in the study considered the reason of their separation as cheating by the spouse. The common image of "ethical corruption" is illegal sexual intercourse but such image leads to the underestimation of sin and evil nature of sexual intercourse in the society. Lie, hypocrisy, deceiving and different types of behaviors and intentions to be agreed on evil nature in human communities are considered as ethical corruption. The greatest threat in the present society is the lack of ethics. Ethical corruption at its wider range from individual to structure level can expose our society with serious risk and our routine life is problematic. Low family relationship, bureaucratic nature of interpersonal relationship at work place, selection of spouse based on materialistic benefits have caused that everything is based on personal benefits. The relationship between couples or even the children is not based on love and empathy and perception and it is based on profit. To achieve materialistic benefits, children participate in some of the desires of parents. The selection of spouse is not based on love and honest relationship and it is mostly based on hypocrisy, profit and economic and materialistic position, appearance and sexual lust. The relations based on honesty, friendship and love in the family are destroyed and hypocrisy, hate, lie and benefits are used. Family dissolution is discussed at structural level. The individual level is related to family members but macro level refers to the society structure. The structure of the society teaches each person to do everything to be alive. This structure gets its legitimacy via the agency of religion and ethics. Indeed, its lack of ethics means considering a non-moral issue as legitimate. When the political institutes as the agents of ethics and ethical values claim the establishment of Utopia, they use hypocrisy to achieve more benefits and profit. Indeed, ethical and human foundations are dissolving and in the separation between an individual and society, family is turned into dispersed cells to achieve their own benefits and inside these cells, people are separated and even they misuse the family members for their own benefits and all relationships are based on money. For a psychologist, it is not important that his patient is right or wrong, or which disorder exists and where is the problem as only more visits and sale of import drugs are important.

For a lawyer, it is not important which client is supported and the important point is receiving money from the

client although he is fraudulent. Under such condition, ethical corruption is penetrated not only in extra-marital relationship but also in social relations of people. Under such conditions, life style is present as one of the society layers in this structure. The structure of society determines the type of attitude, behavior and routine activities of people in routine life. Thus, the structure of society is effective on forming the life style of people as the ideological, economic and political grounds are dependent upon the legitimacy resources of political structure. Under such condition, the market renovates itself not as competitive or free but as violent via the misuse of people and natural resources. The owners of work and capital buy law by money, custom, values and norms. Thus, life styles should be changed as the satisfaction of capital owners is provided. Thus, by different methods, the structures teach each person to increase capital and profit for the capital owners. This structure teaches people to select life to achieve the favorite result. Based on the results of study, we can say life style is effective on divorce.

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