

**LIVING AFTER DIVORCE IN RWANDA.
PSYCHO-SOCIAL CHALLENGES
FACED BY SPOUSES AND CHILDREN**

A thesis dissertation submitted in partial fulfillment
of the requirements of Master's in Peace Studies and
Conflict Transformation

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Kigali, September 2013

DECLARATION OF ACADEMIC HONESTY

I hereby declare that this research report is entirely my own work and that it has never been submitted as an exercise for a Degree at any other University.

Signature.....

Place.....

Date.....

DEDICATION

This thesis is heartily dedicated to my dear husband Dr. Denis Ndanguza and my three lovely sons: Ganza Ndanguza Cedric, Bigwi Ndanguza Crispin and Barute Ndanguza Armand. For their incomparable love, care, encouragement and support of different kind I was able to write this thesis. It is also dedicated to my late parents, brothers and sisters. The shared moments, good advice, and extensive support have been ever present in this important time of my life.

ACKNOWLEDGEMENTS

Completion of this thesis was possible with the support of several people. I would like to express my sincere gratitude to all of them.

My greatest consideration is directed to my supervisor Prof. Francois Masabo. His valuable guidance, relevant corrections, consistent encouragement and fruitful pieces of advice I received through the research work, contributed greatly to the completion of this research.

Many thanks are also due to the entire staff of the Centre for Conflict Management (CCM) for fostering my intellectual growth and all academic advice during our time together.

I express my gratitude to my sister Umugwaneza Jeanne d'Arc Pellissier with whose immeasurable financial support I was able to afford Masters Program, and reach stage of producing this work. I am also grateful to Nuwagaba Elias for wonderful services during the writing of this thesis.

Sincere and profound thanks go to all respondents for having kindly accepted to be involved in my research. I remember people who helped me to identify each and every respondent of this study, their cooperation and input enabled me to complete this work.

Finally, and above all I cannot begin to express my unfailing gratitude and love to my husband, Dr. Denis Ndanguza who has supported me through this process and has constantly encouraged me when the tasks seemed arduous and insurmountable.

ABSTRACT

This research consisted on analyzing the psycho-social challenges faced by spouses and children in Rwanda after divorce. It aimed to compare, enumerate, analyze and to propose relevant solutions to overcome those psycho-social challenges. The research was conducted in four districts of Rwanda, two being in urban and two others in rural.

Tools for data collection, questionnaires and interview were used. Women equal to 98% pointed out that society and relatives are the most psycho-social challenge among others. To overcome psycho-social challenges, results have shown that the high percentage equal to 48% of women find reconciliation with the ex husband as the best solutions. The most challenge faced by men was loneliness and distress equal to 25% each, and wished to remarry in order to be stable, whereas many children answered distress at 50% as the most psycho-social challenge they face and 90% of them wished their parents to reconcile. Children finally are the most to suffer from psycho-social challenges followed by women.

As our task was limited on psycho-social challenges after divorce, researchers in the same domain were finally implored to conduct a comparative study to the life of couple in high quarrels before and the one after separation with objective to see the worst life between the two periods. This research would help couples to think deeply on either tolerating the marital life or separating legally.

LIST OF ABBREVIATION AND ACRONYMS

- CCLI: Code civil livre premier
- HIV: Human Immunodeficiency Virus
- IRBC: Immigration and Refugee Board of Canada
- MINECOFIN: Ministry of Economy Commerce and Finance
- NISR: National Institute of Statistics in Rwanda
- ONS: Office for National statistic
- OGRR: Official gazette of the Republic of Rwanda
- UK: United Kingdom

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CHAPT I: GENERAL INTRODUCTION

Challenges are a matter which we are living and dealing with in our daily life. People are struggling to minimize the outcomes of them by different means developed by scholars or by establishing their own rules. Our topic of interest will be related on psycho-social challenges faced by divorcees and their children. The analysis will be both qualitative and quantitative. Hence, indicators will be needed in the development of this research project. This chapter is subdivided into five sections namely: Background of the topic, statement of the problem, research question, objectives, hypotheses and conceptual and theoretical framework.

I.1. Background of the topic

In life husband and wife have a duty to raise a family. Nothing can give them dignity and honor towards society in which they live, than staying perpetually in marriage during their life time. It should be only death that separates their marriage. Nevertheless, nowadays we are witnessing frequent failures of young families day by day. This affirmation is supported by the report from NISR (National Institute of Statistics in Rwanda) by saying that, the big number of divorced women ranges between 35-39 years of age, whereas the one of divorced men appears between 40-44 years.

After the 1994 Rwandan genocide, there are so many divorced and widows women (IRBC, 2007). To this point, Newbury declares that, *“in 1996, women constituted 85.5 percent of those separated or divorced, and 89 percent of widows/widowers”*. NISR adds that the proportion of divorced women has increased rising from 1% in 2005 to 5 % in 2010

Article 170 of the civil code of Rwanda; asserts that, marriage is a voluntary union of husband and wife. Marriage is a solemn judicial act by which husband and wife come into union protected by the law whose rupture is accepted only by conditions (Art.170 CCLI).

In spite of the life enjoyed in marriage, some causes may lead to its dissolution, such as, death or divorce (article 236 CCLI). Among marriages, some end up suddenly, while others survive for

long periods. Whatever the marriage, after its failure, both the spouses and children would face some of psycho-social challenges.

The way by which spouses decide to make separation in their life of marriage is an important factor to consider because it has an effect with the continuation of their life, and the education of their children. Despite the protection of marriage by the state and religion, divorce remains a serious problem in Rwandan society. The problem refers not only to the high rate of divorced couples, but also to the challenges faced by the household after divorce. Rwandan society does not welcome divorcees in the new life; but these later experience hard moments of psycho-social challenges.

The divorcees then condemn themselves and sometimes the life after divorce would become worse than before. This is the reason that we decided to analyze deeply the psycho-social challenges faced by spouses and their children after divorce, and indeed, we should briefly examine how to overcome the discovered psycho-social challenges.

Nobody can doubt that the stability of marriage not only consolidates the stability of household but also the one of the whole society and national community. It is known that all couples fear separation or try to avoid it, but it may reach a stage where divorce is the only sustainable solution of misunderstanding.

People believe according to religions they belong to, where some followers are convinced to live forever with their partner. It is upon this background that the cause of spouses' separation in marriage should only be death. Some couples however, who are living in an unhappiness environment find divorce as a better solution.

I.2. Statement of the problem

Divorce which is the dissolution of spouses' marriage after the judiciary decision is not a recent phenomenon. Misunderstanding between spouses, have always existed, of course under different aspects. In the past, it was not frequent because marriage was perceived as a holy union, it was considered as the result of divinity will. Some authors assert that, marriage has lost its value

slowly by slowly in our societies. In fact, Nietzsche 2009 does not doubt to confirm that “marriage has introduced a very great of hypocrisy and lying into the world”.

In the past, there were some non convention rules in case of misunderstanding where the man had to send back his wife to her family without anything as property. Nowadays, marriage is protected by the law of the official civil state and is the only one to allow divorce with properties sharing.

After the separation of couples, there are some psycho-social challenges they face which could differ according to individual. Despite difficult life experienced by the broken household, divorce is increasing in our country. This confirmation can be clarified by the data from different census of divorcees in Rwanda done in four years. The results put out the percentages of divorce successively: 2002, 2004, 2006 and 2008 at the rate of 12%, 13.5%, 15.5% and 16.7% (MINECOFIN 2004/2005/2008).

What are the psycho-social challenges that affect spouses and children in Rwanda after divorce?

I.3. Research Questions

The phenomenon of divorce is increasing according to the percentages shown above. The researcher wanted to understand the frequency of divorce in Rwanda in recent years and hence visited Nyamirambo lower instance Court where she found 102 divorcees during the two year period ranging from 2011 to 2012.

As said above, divorce is a serious problem in the Rwandan society and causes challenges to the country’s development. The analysis of the topic, “Living after divorce in Rwanda: Psycho-social challenges faced by spouses and children” prompted us to come with the following research questions:

- ✓ Do psycho-social challenges faced by spouses / children differ in studied areas of Rwanda after divorce?
- ✓ What are the most psycho-social challenges faced by spouses and children after

divorce?

- ✓ Are children affected by the psycho-social challenges as the same manner as their parents after the divorce?
- ✓ Is it possible to overcome psycho-social challenges faced by spouses and children after divorce?
- ✓ Does the society help divorcees to overcome psycho-social challenges?

I.4. Objectives

1.4.1. General objective

The general objective of this research is to analyze the psycho-social challenges of divorce faced by spouses and children in Rwanda.

1.4.2. Specific objectives

- To compare psycho-social challenges of divorce in studied areas of Rwanda
- To enumerate different psycho-social challenges faced by spouses/children in Rwanda
- To analyze psycho-social challenges of divorce to the spouses/ children in Rwanda
- To propose an alternative solution to overcome psycho-social challenges after divorce
- To check if the society helps the divorcees to overcome psycho-social challenges after divorce

I.5. Hypothesis

Bearing in mind that the hypothesis is a tentative answer to the problem, the hypotheses are stated as:

- ❖ The psycho-social challenges faced by divorcees/children are the same in the whole country.
- ❖ Challenges after divorce for children and parents are of a psycho-social nature in Rwanda, such as: Loneliness, contempt, prostitution, worry and confusion, financial crisis, stress, alcoholism, lack of desire to marriage, drugs abuse, uncertain future and drop out studies.
- ❖ Children are the first to be affected by psycho-social challenges after the divorce of their parents, followed by wives.
- ❖ Joining group activities would help divorcees and their children to overcome psycho-social challenges after divorce.
- ❖ The society is frustrating divorcees in their everyday life.

I.6. Conceptual and Theoretical Framework

The following concepts are important to know before explaining in detail theories from scholars and academicians related to our topic. The signification of the five words and concepts bellow, will help us to understand clearly what we are dealing with and hence facilitate the understanding of the literature review.

I. 6.1. Divorce

Divorce has been studied by many scholars and different definitions have been provided. All

definitions are converging on a legal separation of spouses after a long time of misunderstanding. It may arise when one of spouses claims for it, or sometimes both of them decide to separate legally for different reasons which make conjugal life intolerable to the couple. In the event that one feels unsatisfied, he/she goes to court of law to ask for redress and hence divorce granted. After a period where each has given his/her points of view, as to why divorce should happen or not, the judge makes the last final verdict to that case.

Among scholars who studied divorce, (Carbonnier, 1998) defines it as dissolution of marriage between spouses which cause conjugal separation in fact and law. He argues that this is different from separation of their body which ends up their conjugal link. In the same way Mey, asserts that *“A divorce is a legal action between married people to terminate their marriage relationship. It can be referred to as dissolution of marriage and is basically, the legal action that ends the marriage before the death of either spouse”* (Meyer, 2005).

The above definition of divorce insists on the end of conjugal link. This separation of couples is done in fact and low at the moment divorce is pronounced. Hence, the legal separation of couple shows that, each of spouses is free from that time and deals with his/her own future life independently to the other partner.

I. 6.2. Spouses

Spouses mean, two people making a link in marriage, and whose gender is neuter for both sexes. A spouse is considered as incomparable to other people since he/she share life with the other partner.

Spouses share similar work and family responsibilities. Such role sharing is supposed to increase the quality of emotion work in marriage by providing husbands and wives with common experiences and interests around which they can build conversations, empathetic regard, mutual understanding and the like (dictionary of the social sciences 1964).

Before getting marriage, most of spouses have a wish to produce children the future fruits of their love, and hence expend the family.

1. 6. 3. Children

People define children differently, we normally understand children as young people under the age of eighteen who are still dependant on their parents. Some consider every person as a child since she/he belongs to parents; others understand a child as a small baby who needs care from adults. Bellow, a child is defined biologically as a boy or a girl before puberty.

The child belongs to childhood period, among others known as the passage of human being. The childhood is then a period of life between birth and adolescence. During this healthy and dynamic period where the child is developing in all domains at the same time, the psychologists distinguish three important stages of childhood .The first stage is from 0 to 2/3years, the second stage is from 2/3 years to 6/7 years and the third stage ends at the age of puberty (about 14 years) (dictionary of the social sciences 1964, Buchanan et al. 1996).

During the childhood period, Antony asserts that, children are influenced in their formation of relationships with peers and in the development of successful interactions with friends. In a similar vein, adolescents are influenced by models of adult caregivers as they begin developing long-term relationships with significant others (Antony, 2000 p9).

After the given definition, we conclude that, Rwandan law considers every boy or girl under eighteen as a child. Children and their parents are socially and psychologically linked in the way that, they all belong to one house and the happiness of one of them affects all and the stress or sadness faced by individual affects the whole house component.

I.6.4. Psycho-social

The compound noun psycho-social is made by two words: psychology and sociology. These two words seem to be the same but they differ from their definitions and etymology. Psychology does not pretend to exhaust the study of social cultural behaviour it includes the study of animal behaviour and in the case of both animal and human behaviour (dictionary of the social sciences

1964). The scholar Colman defines psychology as “the science of the nature, functions, and phenomena of behaviour and mental experience” (Colman, 2004).

Sociology on the other hand deals with society and its culture. Otherwise, it is the systematic study of social behaviour and human groups. Sociology focuses primarily on the influence of social relationships upon people’s attitudes and behaviour and on how societies are established and change (Scheffer et al. 1998, Henriques, 2004).

To this idea, Livesey 2005 has got new idea on sociology. It is the study of human social life, groups and society. Sociology is according to him, the study of individuals in groups and social formations (Livesey 2005). People in society are linked by culture which differentiates them from other societies. To highlight this, Doda gives a simple definition of society and asserts that it is “a study of society and culture” (Doda, 2005). Sociology is finally defined as a science which investigates the origin development and functioning of all classes of social structures (dictionary of the social sciences 1964).

In everyday life, people struggle against challenges, obstacle they face psychologically, sociologically or in other domains, which are barriers to the people’s interaction.

I.6.5. Challenge

Challenge is a situation of being faced with; it is something difficult and problematic and tests someone’s ability or determination. Problems are many and block our roads to progress. For this reason, people have to struggle against challenges by all possible means with goals to advance and reach the real life (dictionary of the social sciences 1964).

Challenge is defined as something that by its nature or character serves as a call to battle. It is a call to someone to participate in a competitive situation or fight to decide who is superior in terms of ability or strength (Livesey, 2005).

After defining the key words relevant during this research, the following part is the literature review, concerning with exploring what authors wrote about our topic of interest.

CHAPTER II: LITERATURE REVIEW

II.1. General consideration on divorce

The dissolution of marriage dated from many years ago depending on countries and was dynamic according to periods and in different ways in the world. The high rate of divorce in the World is faced by young couples, and the United States is the first country to experience divorce, followed by European countries.

American Coontz, confirms that in the following words. “*Our divorce rate is the highest in the world*”. And adds, “*Today, 40 percent of all marriages will end in divorce before a couple's 40th anniversary*”(Coontz, 1999). He is supported by Corcoran who asserts that, in America, Over 50% of marriages end in divorce and 67% of all second marriages end in divorce (Corcoran, 1997).

The report from Office for National Statistics in UK confirms that, *34% of marriages are expected to end in divorce by the 20th wedding anniversary. The number of divorces in 2011 was highest among men and women aged 40 to 44. As stated by the report, the average marriage is expected to last for 32 years (ONS)*. The information of the report from National Bureau of Economic Research is that, “*between 1950 and 1990, the divorce rate doubled from 11 to 23 divorces per 1,000 married women between the ages of 18 and 64*”.

Indeed, in Europe and America, individual freedom is given higher stress, than in, say, Asian or African ones, where familial and social opinions cause higher stress. In other words, divorce increases in developed countries where people are aware of equal rights among spouses (Coontz, 1999).

In many African countries on the other hand, the culture minimizes the wives in front of their husbands; the man is considered as superior, chief of the house and to what he decides, wife and children accept blindly. This kind of behavior makes couples to resist until the death of one of spouse, even if the wife is beaten or harassed by her partner.

Many Authors have written about legalization of divorce. In this context Kalafut takes us

through the history of divorce from different countries and the following countries are cited among others. **Brazil:** In 1978 this country made divorce legal, **Canada:** legalized divorce in 1960 and on 13/9/2004, a lesbian couple claim for the first time divorce. After 9 years of debate. **China:** legalized divorce in 1980. **France** in 1792 then later in 1816 made illegal divorce. **German States:** In the Personal Status Act 1875 **German** states allowed divorce if the couple was previously entitled to a religious "perpetual separation order". **Ireland:** On February 27, 1997 the country of Ireland joined the rest of Europe in making divorce legal when it passed an amendment ending the country's constitutional divorce ban (Kalafut, 2008).

It is important to have the brief information to the background of divorce in Rwanda, before handling the core part of this Research. We are interested in the kind of short traditional separation of spouses "kwahukana", which happens even nowadays but according to our observation it is not as frequent as in the past. Our focus is also on the definitive illegal separation, the kind of traditional repudiation "gusenda", and then, the new Law which legalized divorce that we experience nowadays.

A woman who cannot bear any more domestic violence of battering, abandonment, harassment, verbal and physical abuse and adultery, departs from her husband and returns to her parents or relatives as a sign of protest against the mistreatment perpetrated against her. The short separation makes the spouses to rethink. In most cases the husband goes to his in-laws for reconciliation with his wife.

Quoting from Hove, *"the husband may carry with him beer, clothes or a goat as gifts. The in-Laws consequently, give counseling to the couple before returning to their home. If misunderstanding come to the extreme and can't be tolerated by either party, one of the spouses may decide to abandon marital home, leading to permanent separation"* (Hove 1940, p159).

Divorce repudiation "gusenda", concerns one of spouses but seems abandoned nowadays. The Rwandan Law doesn't tolerate any spouses' separation decided by the family or spouses themselves. This kind of divorce takes origin in the traditional culture. The husband put the end to the marriage by resending his wife to her family of origin.

Causes of wife's repudiation which were abandoned with the enactment of divorce law in Rwanda were adultery, uncleanness, and misuse of property. The other serious cause of

repudiation was bad omen caused by wife who provoked the permanent illness to the husband or death of cattle. The latter was mere superstition. If a wife was barren but the couple still loved each other, the couple would remain in their stable marriage but the husband be allowed to marry another wife (Bourgeois, 1953).

The legal divorce was adopted in Rwanda in September 3/1981 and was renewed in 1989. The Civil Code in Rwanda clearly allows divorce when there is conviction for an offence that brings considerable disgrace, adultery, excess, physical violence or serious injury, harassment, refusal to help with the main household chores, abandoning the marital home for more than 12 months and de facto separation of three or more years (Art237, CCLI).

Among Rwandan policy after 1994 genocide, the promotion of woman in different domains was emphasized and furthermore, the equality of both sexes was highlighted. From that moment, gender based violence including any act that result in bodily, psychological, sexual and economic harm to somebody just because they are female or male, and results in deprivation of freedom and negative consequences, is punishable by Rwandan law (Art 2 OGRR, 2008).

In case one of spouses fails to accomplish the responsibility and falls into the intolerable fault among the mentioned above, the solution is to resist or claim for divorce.

II.1.1. Forms of divorce

Rwandan civil code recognizes two forms of divorce: divorce for a determined cause and divorce by mutual consent (art 257, CCLI).

Divorce by a determined cause is explained in the article as a sanction given to one spouse, resulting to the lack of accomplishment of spouse's duties during conjugal life. In this case, the judge verifies the declared fault and pronounces divorce after consulting the appropriate law (art 257, CCLI).

Divorce by mutual consent occurs, when couples find it impossible to continue their conjugal life. After their mutual agreement, they can begin the process of divorce. The judge allows them

divorce after verifying if spouses fulfill the conditions established by the law (art 257, CCLI).

II. 2. Obligations of spouses after divorce

The constitution of the Republic of Rwanda which was introduced in 2003 declared that husband and wife have the same right on divorce. It means that, each of them has a right to an equal share of the property if marriage was under the community of property. Those married under limited community of property share what belongs to the household. Those married under the separation of property are entitled to their own property (art 207, CCLI).

II.2.1.The arrangements for children

After divorce, children are given to the parent who obtained the divorce court order, unless the court decides by its own decision or on request of one of the spouses or social services and to the benefit of the children. According to the law, when they are under seven year old, they are given to their mothers except when the mothers cannot support them or there are other conditions involved that make the mother ineligible for custody (Art 283, CCLI).

After discussing the legal interpretations of divorce as per Rwandan laws, an effort is made to introduce psycho-social challenges faced by spouses and children after divorce.

III.3. Psycho-social challenges faced by spouses and children after divorce

Divorce is obtained after the wish or sanction of either spouse or both of them due to misunderstanding that characterized the period of their link. It may be the answer of the issue for some, but the period after divorce appears for many spouses and children, a very difficult life as it is indicated by many authors mentioned in following parts of this chapter.

II.3.1. Psycho-social challenges faced by spouses after divorce

The challenges that will be considered in this part are of psycho-social nature as it has been indicated from the beginning. The period of after divorce is compared by some of authors to dangerously disasters that happen in the World. For others it is compared to one of the most stressors in human life.

According to Averbach, *“Divorce is traumatic for the couple, the breakup of their marriage is a massive confusion aggravated by severe stress, heartbreak and pain. Divorce is so cataclysmic that it has been compared to an earthquake or a volcano. It destroys your world, leaving you disoriented about the present and uncertain about the future”* (Averbach, 2012).

The life after divorce is not easy to handle in fact that responsibility were shared by two spouses, and the thoughts to consolidate household came from both of them. It takes a long time to accept this change or some time the divorcees suffer permanently. Johnson comments that, *“The marital separation triggers panic, intense fears of being abandoned and the inability to survive on their own”* (Johnston et al. 2009, Corcoran 1997)). Nauert adds that, for some, divorce is a bump in the road. For others, it is a tragedy that can take years to overcome *if ever* (Nauert, 2011).

Many readings show that although the psycho-social challenges are faced by both spouses after divorce, the initiator of divorce in Rwanda and elsewhere does not endure as the same as the other partner due to the time taken by this latter to think deeply whether divorce is the best alternative. The other partner conversely trouble for enormous of challenges difficult to overcome.

Likewise Corcoran confirms that, when a party has not initiated the divorce, they may feel shock, betrayal, loss of control, victimization, decreased self esteem, insecurity, anger, and wishes to reconcile (Corcoran, 1997). For this reason, it takes a long time to adjust divorce than the person who initiated it. Johnston adds that, the unexpected psycho-social challenges make the divorcee feel abandoned and violent. This can be either ex-husband or ex-wife. According to him, this victim partner is shocked and frightened by the unbecoming of the other partner, feeling the

other has gone crazy (Johnston et al., 2009).

Apart from the psychological issues faced by spouses after divorce, the new life for them becomes difficult since they are not welcome by the society. People around criticize divorcees and these latter feel marginalized and hated by everybody. The way society treats divorcees, aggravates the situation of people in question, the result of permanent bitter life.

Linda et al. argue that, the decision to divorce can bring about major changes in the social lives of individuals. Compared with married individuals, divorced individuals are less involved in social activities and report more social isolation (Drs. Linda et al, 2008).

Poverty is one of psycho-social challenge that relatives benefit to challenge divorcees mostly women. To this point, Corcoran explains that, 90% of divorced mothers have custody of their children and 60% of people under poverty guidelines are divorced women and children. However, he adds that women are more likely than men to rely on social support systems and help from others (Corcoran, 1997).

Even if extended families will stand behind and support their own family members after divorce, this support often comes with a price, obligations and interference, that provoke stress and fuel disputes.

In that case, Johnston et al., say that mothers with depressive symptoms are more likely to display negative emotions, negligent behavior, hostile behavior, less educational consistency, less positive parental behavior, less care for children's health, less emotional availability and engage in higher risk parenting behavior (Johnston et al., 2009).

Johnston et al. put out another list of negative behaviour that appear to the family environment of highly conflicted separated spouses such as, fear, anger, bitterness, and blame. In some cases, these negative views will have a basis in the facts of a spouse's violent, neglectful, substance-abusing, or criminal behavior. According to him, parents, who are moderately humiliated by the divorce, and those who have experienced traumatic separations, tend to develop more or less fixed beliefs that the other parent is bad, dangerous, and irresponsible, and they, by contrast, are the good, safe, and responsible caretaker (Johnston et al., 2000).

Due to internal and external lack of peace, the solution for some spouses is to choose another partner. Nevertheless, if the divorcee decides to remarry, it is hard for many children to accept that a new spouse is joining their family. Children often feel as if the new spouse is replacing their other parent and they resist this change. Children fear that they are betraying their other parent if they accept the new spouse.

For other divorcees, the attachment to the ex-partner remains a big challenge issue. Divorcees then find refuge drugs, alcohol and prostitution. At the end of the day, the consequences are unwanted children, contamination of HIV/AIDS or abusing their life seriously.

Children are innocent but are victims of their parents' conflicts. They suffer not only from the fact that they don't live with their two parents but also, from the new behaviour of their parents which affects them as we are invited to read below.

IV.3.2. Psycho-social Challenges faced by children after divorce

The role of both parents is needed for welfare of the children. Psycho-social challenges faced by children after divorce are many, resulting in the conflict experienced during their parents' link, and furthermore after their separation. Those conflicts between parents can be seriously harmful to children, particularly if they are directly exposed to the conflict.

Different authors give testimony that, the experience of parental separation, results in a decline in individual and family well-being in children. Most children present decreased developmental outcome in the two years following marital dissolution (Figueiredo 2009, Buchanan et al 1966).

It is evident that children of divorced parents adopt strange behavior and character due to the failure of their parents and mostly, the loss of one of them. They find their parents irresponsible and feel abandoned and hated. Edward put out some feelings and behavior in children associated with divorce, such as; loneliness, denial, sadness, depression, embarrassment, anger, guilt, bargaining, regression and difficulty ((Eduard, 2001).

Although chronic marital conflict is destructive for all children, some authors in the following paragraphs confirm that it may be especially harmful to young boys. On average, boys are more vulnerable to the effects of family conflict and cannot cope with it as effectively as girls. For others, children suffer equally; it is the manner to manifest their feeling which differentiates them. Boys are more externally symptomatic than girls; they act out their anger, frustration and hurt.

Eduard confirms that, in most families, girls are more protected from family conflict than boys are, both before the divorce and afterward. Specifically, researchers have found that parents fight more and that their fights continue longer in the presence of sons than daughters (Edward, 2001).

According to Corcoran, boys may get into trouble in school; fight more with peers and parents. Girls tend to internalize their distress. They may become depressed, develop headaches or stomachaches, and have changes in their eating and sleeping patterns (Corcoran, 1997).

Researchers have found that in the years following a divorce, the most poorly adjusted children are the ones who are exposed to continuing parental conflict. Children suffer when they witness parental hostilities, when parents criticize or undermine the other parent to the children, and when parents involve children in parental internal conflict by enlisting them to take sides.

To this point, Johnston et al., argue that, some parents make their children suffer more, by continuing to witness ongoing verbal abuse (spiteful comments, put-downs, threats, and name-calling) and intermittent physical violence (pushing, shoving, hitting and even battering) (Johnston et al, 2009).

When angry ex-spouses act in these irresponsible ways, children face different consequences like to develop long-standing problems such as making poor grades, being unable to get along with friends, being defiant toward teachers and other authority figures, and disobeying parents.

It has been argued that each parent is more effective when dealing with a same-sex child. The loss of a same-sex parent after divorce is more damaging for children than the loss of an opposite-sex parent, because children need an adult same-sex role model. Several small-sample studies of elementary school-aged children support this view.

Among their conclusions, Buchanan comments that, they find that children living with a same sex parent have greater social competence, more appropriate sex-role development, higher self-esteem, lower levels of behavioral problems, better understanding of the divorce, and greater satisfaction with visitation and living arrangements than do children living with an opposite-sex parent (Buchanan et al 1996).

Traumatic scenes of family are now known to impact not only children with advanced age, but also very young children, even infants and toddlers. From that moment, children store the event they experienced which would impact them even in their future life. Johnston et al. support this idea.

They report that, *“for babies and toddlers, frightening scenes of family conflict and violence may never be available for cognitive recall, but can continue to manifest themselves in scary dreams and in diffusely anxious feelings”* (Johnston et al 2009).

According to Corcoran, children’s psychological reactions to their parents’ divorce vary in degree depending on three factors:

1. The quality of their relationship with each of their parents before the separation,
2. The intensity and duration of the parental conflict,
3. The parents’ ability to focus on the needs of children in their divorce.

After going through psycho-social challenges experienced by both parents and children after divorce, we have an idea on effect of divorce in the World. As different authors comment, it is difficult to deal with effects of divorce. Life after divorce is compared to some natural catastrophes which confuse the divorcees’ future life. And these latter adopt a strange behavior.

Children of chronic custody disputes also, live in a chaos that is both internal and external. As a result, the child’s experience is confused, disoriented, nonviable, ignored, misinterpreted, frightened, and overwhelmed by the chaos of the parental disputes and by the conflicting realities

portrayed through the passions and fears of their parents.

The theories from literature review, will be referred to and compared to the results of our research from spouses and children, the study will emphasize on the kind of psycho-social challenges faced by spouses and children, Helped by the established research questions, The theory of literature review will help us to compare psycho-social challenges put out by authors, to the one discovered in our research of interest.

After different authors' ideas on psycho-social challenges faced by divorcees and children, it is very important to have a look at how they can overcome these challenges in order to adapt themselves in the new and difficult World. The following relevant part will also be needed to ascertain if the proposed solutions from different authors are as the same as those suggested by our respondents.

V. 4. Strategies to overcome psycho-social challenges after divorce

Divorce is the final decision taken by spouses after a long time of conflict; it means that couples are prepared to the event although it is not enjoyable according to authors in above paragraphs. The more victims of the issue hence, are children who are surprised by their parents' decision the cause of missing the presence of one parent. For this reason, different authors insist not only on how spouses can struggle against psycho-social challenges after divorce but also on how they can help their children to deal with life after divorce.

Raggio et al., advise divorcees how they can deal with loneliness, one of psycho-social challenges spouses face in the following, *“many people deal with loneliness by joining support groups. These groups can be very helpful, not only in helping you understand your feelings but also in helping counteract a natural tendency to feel that you are all alone. But if group members tend to blame the other party or encourage self-pity, do yourself a favor and find another group”* (Raggio et al. 1993).

Furthermore, involvement in a variety of activities that one finds enjoyable may be a sign of

positive adaptation. Having enjoyable activities to absorb one's time and attention under stressful circumstances may buffer the stressors and promote positive adjustment more generally. Individuals will then tend to adjust better to divorce if they do not depend on others, but have more personal resources.

The adaptation of parents to divorce would then be a good mean to help their children, but divorcees have duty to do so even if they are still facing psycho-social challenges.

Ford argues that, in order to successfully co-parent after divorce or separation, you will interact with your ex on a weekly, perhaps even on daily basis. If you do have children, put your own issues aside and look at the bigger picture. Don't torture your children by putting them in the position of watching you and your ex, continue to argue even after the divorce is final (Ford et al. 2004).

To complete Fords' thoughts, Buchanan et al., establish ten rules to respect after divorce for the welfare of children and spouses: 1. Put the children first. It means that you must have enough respect for your children to put their needs before yours. 2. Ask for help when you need it. 3. No badmouthing. 4. Biological parents make the rules; bonus parents uphold them. 5. Don't be unkind. 6. Don't hold grudges. 7. Use empathy when problem solving. 8. Be honest and simple. 9. Respect each other's turf. 10. Cooperate whenever possible (Buchanan et al, 1996).

If one of divorcees wishes to choose a new partner, children do not accept a new partner simply because not enough time has passed since their parents' breakup. They may dislike anyone you take on as a new partner because they just aren't ready to move on.

If this is the case, Buchanan et al., quote that, "*the only answer is to slow down and remember that your timing may not be your kids' timing*". That may mean that you don't move forward with your relationship until your children are ready" (Buchanan et al., 1996).

Furthermore, parents with young children who remarry could establish a stepfamily that is similar to the traditional nuclear family, and the stepparent can become one of the primary parents. Young children can readily develop a close attachment to a responsive stepparent. As a

result, a stepparent can take on a traditional parent role with those young children.

Eduard comments that, stepparents can often take care of and discipline stepchildren as if they were a close aunt or uncle in only a few months. If young children do not have a close relationship with their other natural parent, they may choose to call these stepparents Mom or Dad and fully accept them as parents (Eduard 2001).

To summarize this point we conclude that you as a divorcee can learn that you are able to cope with life's problems, you may also find that you are capable of becoming a better parent. The promise that accompanies the pain of divorce is that you can learn to listen better to your children and really hear them, become more accessible and emotionally present when you are with them, and earn their respect and help them feel secure by taking charge and disciplining them effectively.

As you struggle to manage your life in a period of self-doubt and confusion, your children are coping with their own distress evoked by all of the changes that are occurring. They look to you for love and reassurance, which you can provide by taking their concerns seriously and helping them to solve the problems that trouble them.

After exploring what different authors write on divorce and mostly on psycho-social challenges faced by spouses and their children after divorce, and the strategies to overcome the said challenges, the following part is the research design, including five parts. Each point specifies clearly how our research will be conducted from the beginning to the end.

CHAPTER III: RESEARCH DESIGN

The theories included in this chapter, elicit the type of research that has been done and the way it has been done. More specifically, this part of the work describes five parts namely: goal, strategies, population of the study, scope of the study and data collection tools and procedure.

III. 1. Goal

The research has focused on the analysis of psycho-social challenges faced by spouses and children. The result of findings will be a contribution to knowledge about the phenomena of divorce and its effect to Rwandan society.

This study will also be a helpful contribution to the interested future researchers in the same domain. Actors in psycho-social domain will be served by the work to help divorcees and their children to overcome psycho-social challenges and prepare their future.

III.2. Strategies

This study aims to analyze psycho-social challenges faced by divorcees and their children in Rwanda. Sample study was considered as four districts of Rwanda, two being in urban and two others in rural. It has been good to test existing literature in relation to this study and provide casual relationship between variables as “testable hypothesis”. This thus, involves a deep exploration of qualitative methodology.

The data collection was guided by the specific research questions, instead of hypothesis, to be empirically tested. Random sampling technique has been used by giving an equal chance to all rural and urban districts to be selected. Hence, two urban and two rural districts have been selected as a case study and then generalize results for the whole population of Rwanda. Within the sample districts, three targeted groups were divorcees (men and women) and children. Each

selected target group in the sample was given a questionnaire or has been interviewed. However, the study does not aim to produce a final truth; the purpose is to generate knowledge that opens up and furnishes opportunity for a deeper understanding of the case study.

III.3. Population of the study

During this research, as said above the studied groups were men, women and children in the four districts. For the selection of targeted group, non probability sampling technique was used. This is a method where some elements of the population have no chance of selection. This method was nonrandom due to the fact that, the focus of divorcees was depending on gender, level of studies and age. It means that, among many targeted group, the researcher chose respondents who fulfilled the said three criteria. Five children in each district on the other hand, were chosen taking into consideration their age and gender.

Among respondents, thirty people in urban and thirty others in rural. and the total number being 60 were selected. The distribution of respondents was as follows: 10 men and 10 women in urban, 10 women and 10 men in rural some of them either responded to questionnaire or were interviewed. In the other hand, all children including five of them in each district with total number of 20 were interviewed.

This kind of non probability sampling resulting to the total number of 60 people provided the researcher the ability to generalize the whole population of Rwanda. Divorcees with high level of studies were preferred in interview due to their capacity of analyzing and responding the given question. We would like them to express themselves by providing to us new thinking and new opinions which may contribute to our research.

III.4. Scope of the study

Divorce, being a social problem in Rwandan society, has prompted us to narrow this research to only psycho-social challenges of divorce in four districts namely Nyarugenge, Kicukiro, Ngoma and Huye. They are located in Kigali city, Eastern and Southern provinces of Rwanda. Those districts were chosen taking into account their location either in urban or rural area.

The choice was random. The researcher wrote on small papers names of three districts found in urban that is Nyarugenge Gasabo and Kicukiro. After mixing them, she picked two of them containing Kicukiro and Nyarugenge. It was the same for the rural districts. Among the twenty seven remaining districts, after the same random sampling procedure, Huye and Ngoma were selected. The target in each district was men, women and children. We also used the non probability sampling technique to chose divorcees and children from both sex, because all of them face psycho-social challenges, but in different ways.

III.5. Data collection procedure and tools

The tools which were used to collect data in order to analyze and interpret were closed and open-ended questionnaires, and oral interviews. The tools were designed and considered based to elicit answers from respondents.

The data collection process started on twelve July 2013 and was carried out in four mentioned districts located in Kigali city, Eastern and Southern provinces of the country. Urban areas, were the researcher lives were first to be considered. It was not an easy task to find respondents, but helped by different people including the known divorcees, neighbours and heads of villages, the researcher was able to gather and select respondents according to the interest of the research. Before giving questionnaire to divorcees or children, the first five minutes were to present herself, to say the purpose of this research and to assure confidential of the given answers.

The research took two weeks in urban areas and hence, it was conducted in rural areas. Each selected district was first to be visited, in order to localize respondents. The localization of them

was either to possess their telephone numbers or to know where they lived or worked. The following day was to approach and ask them to fill in questionnaire or respond to interview with the same process as in urban areas and the last day was to meet the remained respondents.

Children were not easily accessible, sometimes their parents did not want them to be interviewed, saying that their children may remember what happened and be more affected. The children of advanced age who have telephones were easily accessible, since they were contacted without asking for permission to their parents. For this reason the researcher had to go in each selected rural district three times. Despite all those challenges, the data collection process was completed after one month from 12th July to 16th August.

After collecting data, the next step was to write them down and organize them. Data were organized by grouping the responses together and analyzing each of them. Thus, the first thing was to look at all the data obtained. As some responses yield quantifiable data, it was necessary to present them into tables. This was done in chapter four which is devoted to the presentation and discussion of the findings.

CHAPTER IV: ANALYSIS AND INTERPRETATION OF RESULTS

This chapter is the analysis of results after collection of data in four districts of Rwanda. The first part of analysis concerns spouses, where each of eight tables includes results from both male and female with the total number of 40 respondents. Sometimes the total of respondents will be above 40, due to respondents who answered more than one among the proposed answers.

The data included in Tables will be presented in figures and sometimes, they will be accompanied by the researcher comments as analysis. These comments would normally be about data seen in Tables. However, the analysis will go far from the Tables due to responses from interview where respondents were free to open up and the role of researcher is to summarize and analyzing responses.

Twenty children were also considered in the interview. They were given five questions to answer. The analysis of children's findings will not need tables to be discussed; although the percentage will be needed to indicate the high rate of respondents to each answer of the given question.

IV.1. Demographic presentation of respondents

The first table bellow as we can see shows the identification of spouses according to gender and age. Age range considered was from 21 to more than 51, in accordance with their education background i.e. from illiterate to PhD. Among the eight tables, Males are presented first on the left and females come after on each table.

Table 1. Demographic presentation of respondents (spouses)

Age/ Gender	Male				Female				Total
	Education background				Education background				
	None	primary	Secondary	University	None	Primary	Secondary	Universit y	
21-30	0	1	3	0	3	0	3	0	10
31-40	1	2	3	2	2	1	2	4	17
41-50	0	0	3	3	0	0	3	0	9
51 and more	1	0	0	1	0	0	0	2	4
Total	2	3	9	6	5	1	8	6	40

As it is seen in Table 1, age, gender and education background are shown. As it is indicated, the research has covered all ages, from 21, the age allowed by Rwandan law to get marriage, to more than 51 years old. The table shows that, a great number of divorcees appears between 31 and 40. This is compared to the report from National Institute of Statistics in Rwanda found on page 1, of General Introduction saying that, the big number of divorced women ranges between 35-39 years of age, whereas the one of divorced men appears between 40-44 years. The second great number of divorcees in the Table 1 is between 21 and 30 and we can observe that the number decreases as age advances.

Concerning the education background, we can see that all levels of education were considered, from illiterate to PhD. To be specific, one PhD respondent and one Masters Degree holder are among the respondents that completed university education. In the same table we can observe that for both sexes, the great number of divorcees completed O level.

IV.2. To ascertain if Divorcees face some of psycho-social challenges after divorce

All forty divorcees were supposed to respond to this question, before continuing with next question. The results are found in Table 2.

Table 2. To ascertain if Divorcees face some of psycho-social challenges after divorce

Gender/ Answer	Male	Female	Total	percentage
Yes	20	20	40	100%
No	0	0	0	0%
Total	20	20	40	40

Table 2 shows that, all respondents including male and female (100%) face psycho-social challenges after divorce. Some of psycho-social challenges divorcees face are presented in Table3. As it has been discovered during our research, the proposed psycho-social challenges in Table3 are not alone; there are a great number of other psycho-social challenges divorcees have to deal with as we are invited to look at them through different answers given below.

IV.3. Psycho-social challenges faced by divorcees

Four psycho-social challenges included in Table 3 were proposed by the researcher as they are found in hypothesis. The hypothesis confirmed many of them, but all are not presented in the table. That is why on the column of “others” was also supposed, to allow respondents to enumerate other psycho-social challenges they had to deal with after divorce. Some respondents selected more than one answer, it is why in Table 3 the total of Male is 40, whereas the one of female is 92. The whole respondents were supposed to be 40 in case of 92.

Table 3. The kind of psycho-social challenges divorcees face

Gender/Answer	Male	Female	Total	Percentage
Loneliness	10	10	20	22%
Financial crisis	6	13	19	20%
Distress	10	10	20	22%
Contempt	6	10	16	17%
Others	8	9	17	19%
Total	40	52	92	100%

IV.3.1. Loneliness

It is seen that in Table 3, loneliness comes among the highest psychosocial challenge spouses face after divorce, it accounted for 22%. The respondents confirmed that the fact of being married and at the end of the day one is separated to his/her partner, even if one lives with the children, it still makes life bitter and divorcees find the future uncertain. It is seen that in Table 3 the number of males who suffer from loneliness equals to the one of females.

Loneliness is not easy to tolerate according to the comments from some respondents. One man with bachelor's degree told me that after separating from his wife, it was difficult for him to remain in the house he shared with her wife, because he felt he was alone. He then decided to go to Nyanza every evening after the work at Kigali. He did this in three months, thinking that changing the place of accommodation will make him forget the absence of his wife.

IV.3.2. Financial crisis

A financial crisis is the second psycho-social challenge to affect divorcees. The table indicates that among male and female equal to 20% of respondents, females presents a high rate of percentage compared to men, to mean that, females are more affected by this psycho-social challenge after divorce. As per discussion in the literature review, art. 283 of CCLI clarifies that,

children less than seven years old, are given to their mothers except when the mothers cannot support them or there are other conditions involved that make the mother ineligible for custody.

Although children above seven years are supposed to live with their father, 15% of respondents confirmed that their children had refused to remain with divorcee father and joined their mothers, whereas their fathers gain a good salary. For this reason, women experience more poverty than men while they have to educate and support them alone. To this point, I can say that even if men did not support children, they still testified that they felt lonely and abandoned.

IV.3.3. Distress

The table shows equal respondents of distress vis-a-vis loneliness and all stood at 22%. The respondents confirmed that after separating with their partner, it was the beginning of unhappiness as opposed to joy earlier enjoyed by members of the household. As we can see, all spouses experience loneliness equally. As respondents said, before getting marriage, their wish was to consolidate their household and destroying it was a serious incident for them.

Respondents commented that they suffered moral integrity and lost dignity towards society and relatives. Parents also admitted that they suffered from living a separate life with that of their children with whom they were supposed to love and share everything. For this reason some parents condemn themselves and think that their children take them as irresponsible.

IV.3.4. Contempt

Contempt is another psycho-social challenge faced by divorcees. It is seen in Table 3 that 17% of respondents face this psycho-social challenge. Contempt means disrespect for themselves. As it was confirmed by different divorcees, mostly women (11%), after separating with their partner, they felt it was not necessary to appear smart dressed. According to some of them, they can remain in one cloth the whole week.

When they shared the same bed with their husband, the bed room was impeccable, what is not the case after divorce. Woman divorcees said that many of time, they sleep in bed which is not well spread, arguing that nobody would admire them. As they confirmed, woman divorcees believe to be hated not only by their partner, but also by everybody and even God.

Men respondent equal to 6% face contempt as psycho-social challenge. Those men assert that man is important when he is respected by his wife. After permanent legal separation, a man is alone and nobody care for him. They said that it is not easy to feel comfortable, smart or happy.

IV.3.5. Other psycho-social challenges faced by divorcees

Apart from the four psycho-social challenges mentioned above, there are other psycho-social challenges divorcees have to deal with as it is declared by them. Those challenges differ according to gender as per Rwandan society.

IV.3.5.1. Lack of value and condemnation

Among twenty men respondents in different districts, 25% of them confirmed loss of integrity when they are with others, they said that people criticize them saying that they were unable to manage their family. This dishonour causes permanent shame and the result is lack of confidence which led them taking drugs and alcohol.

Rwandan wives divorcees equaling 75%, assert that they lost dignity from the time they separated from their husband and returned to their family of origin. Even if some women have the ability to earn living by themselves, they are not respected by the society. As women divorcees said, they are neither considered girls nor wives. For this reason, they confirm they have nowhere to belong to. This special case of women will be reviewed under Table4 at point IV.4.6

IV.3.5.2. Prostitution

Two men among respondents told the researcher that after their separation with their wife, the first year was characterized by the intense hatred of all women, but after a while they had intense desire to them. One of them revealed that although he feared God, it was impossible for him to stop enjoying sex. He then decided to love his cousin- unmarried mother, but in secrecy.

The woman in question, who lived in a rural area, was full of pride and told the story to everybody, of falling in love with the divorced man. The man felt shamed, and stopped love affair forthwith. He looked for a fiancée who occupied him and today he plans to remarry at the end of this year. The second man told me that the two years after divorce were characterized by the same hatred of women as the former man, but he at same time revealed having sex with every easy -going woman.

IV.3.5.3. Anger

When the researcher wanted to know about the psycho-social challenges faced by women after divorce, 15% of women told her that, when they were hated by their husband, and found themselves in society full of challenges, their happy was replaced by distress and anger. One wife a secondary school teacher told the researcher that she used to beat up learners and call every girl student a prostitute, she believed it was adultery that was one of the main causes of separation with her husband. As result, their two sons were also hunted and hated by learners.

Women divorcees said that, their children were also victims of their anger as they were insulted by their mother permanently. Women divorcees said that they sometimes condemn their children for nothing and told them bad stories about their father. This makes the mother having remorse but find it difficult to stop. When children understand their mother criticize the other parent and compare them to him, they suffer and feel traumatized. On page 16 of the literature review, Eduard advises parents not to be angry and act in irresponsible ways, because this impact on children like making poor grades, being unable to get along with friends, being defiant toward

teachers and other authority figures, and disobeying parents (Edward, 2001 p 89).

IV.4. The manner society treats Divorcees

This question enables us to know that society and even their relatives are among the challenges faced by divorcees and mostly by women, as the analysis in Table 4 illustrates. By society, we mean all people who interact with divorcees. Those people may be neighbours, colleagues at work and membership to group activities.

Table 4. The manner society treats Divorcees

Gender/answer	Male	Female	Total	Percentage
Contempt	5	11	16	40%
Traumatize	2	7	9	23%
Helpful	4	1	5	12%
Don't care attitude	5	3	8	20%
Others	0	2	2	5%
Total	16	24	40	100%

IV.4.1. Contempt

The table shows us that many respondents equaling 40% suffer from the society's disrespect. As we can see, 27% of women as compared to 13% of men said that they suffer from that psycho-social challenge. According to both women and men who were interviewed, confirmed to suffer from the scornful acts of the society.

IV.4.2. Traumatize

As it is seen in Table 4, 5% of men and 18% of women were traumatized by the society after divorce. The kind of traumatism they face, as they said, for men was lack of dignity in the family of origin among other people. Their thoughts are rejected and found irrelevant by other men. These two men are said to irresponsible and husband without value.

The family begs men divorcees to reconcile with their wives, whereas the divorcees men find it impossible since they took time to think deeply before they took the decision to separate legally. The men find their children also not helpful when they decide to remarry. As they said, their children are always waiting for their parents to reconcile, and do not tolerate the new partner.

As it is indicated in the table, seven women are traumatized by the society, and relatives. All those women told the researcher that the last and worst choice of divorce were not a jock for them, it was the lack of other alternative. When they are condemned by the society and relatives who were supposed to offer them a special support, they find life irrelevant.

IV. 4. 3. Helpful

It is seen that 10% of men among all respondents confirmed to be helped by the society after divorce. The kind of help according to the explanation, is to support them morally by encouraging them. All those men confided in the researcher that even the relatives of their ex-wife help them and condemn their daughter. Before taking the decision to divorce, they had time to tell their in-laws all mistakes done by their wives. After being disgusted of their daughter's repeated mistakes, they encouraged those men to take their decision and promised them support.

One woman divorcee testified that at the initial stage of their marriage life was incomparable. She was loved and cherished by her husband. As time went on, having been blessed with four children, her husband changed completely, and was indifferent. When the wife became tired of that behavior, she decided to go temporarily get leave at her family of origin (kwahukana), thinking that her husband would come for mutual reconciliation.

Unfortunately, the husband did not react and after three years he went to claim for divorce reasoning that her wife had abandoned home. The wife divorcee revealed that it was the eighth year she was living alone. The society and relatives offered to help her, because they knew her to be exemplary.

IV. 4. 4. Don't care attitude

It is seen in Table4 that, 13% of men and 7% of women answered that society do not care about divorce done. They asserted that they suffer from their own psycho-social challenges they face, but the society does not care about their state of affairs. In others, the major answer was condemnation and it is being discussed bellow. In reference to the tables above which highlighted other/ condemnation, it is here under discussed in detail.

IV. 4. 5. Condemnation

As Table4 shows 5% women pointing out society's condemnation, it is also evident in almost all the aforementioned tables. Condemnation of women divorcees will be discussed together with the results of the seventh question of the interview which was specific for only women.

Rwandan wives divorcees equaling 98%, assert that they lost dignity from the time they separated from their husband and returned to their family of origin. Even if some women have the ability to earn a living by themselves, they are not respected by the society. As women divorcees said, they are neither considered girls nor wives. For this reason, they confirmed they had nowhere to belong to.

Their suffering becomes worst when divorcees need support from their relatives. They have to accept all obligations dictated upon by their family, otherwise their help is stopped if they do not comply. According to them, they are condemned by society and relatives, the people who would have supported them to overcome their psycho-social challenges and help them to be integrated into the society. They therefore hate themselves to their end. As they said, they find life

irrelevant and useless. As a consequence, they are not able to plan for the future.

As we know in Rwandan culture, society criticizes women who do not persisted to the harassments of their husband during their marriage. The society wants wives to tolerate everything and remain in marriage until death. This can be explained by Rwandan advice before getting marriage like “umugabo navuga ujye ujundika amazi”. “umugore w’umupfu yifuza gushaka nk’uko nyina yashatse”, “ukurusha umugore akurusha urugo”. As they said, women divorcees are named womanish, irresponsible, anti-culture and other many nicknames.

The women divorcees are disturbed by all kind of people. 25% of women among others declared that drunkard or dirty men dare to approach them and make sexual advances, thinking that they are in need of opposite sex after being alone, and would accept their proposers without any problem. Other 30% women confirmed that due to financial crisis, men entice them into agreeing to have sex with them in order to get assistance.

Another kind of psycho-social challenge faced by women divorcees is lack of physical support. 15% of women concluded that when they are enabled to accomplish any task and ask help from men, the latter fear to be seen by society or their wife, cooperating with the woman divorcee. For all these reasons, women divorcees feel abandoned and harassed by Rwandan society.

IV.5. To ascertain if divorcees have children

All divorcees were supposed to answer the question, as whether they had children this was done with the view that those with children and those without may suffer differently.

Table 5. To ascertain if divorcees have children

Gender/answer	Male	Female	Total	Percentage
Yes	19	19	38	95%
No	1	1	2	5%
Total	20	20	40	100%

IV. 6. The reaction of children after the divorce of their parents

In Table 5, we can see that, 95% of respondents have children, and only 5% of them one male (masters holder) and one female (PhD holder) had no children at the time of divorce. To those who have children, the researcher wanted to know their reactions to the parents' divorce and hence asked the questions found in table 6 bellow.

Table 6. The reaction of children after the divorce of their parents

Gender/answer	Male	Female	Total	Percentage
Aggressive	8	6	14	23%
Distress	8	10	18	30%
School dropout and failures	10	5	15	25%
Others	6	7	13	22%
Total	32	28	60	100%

IV. 6.1. Aggressive

Table 6 proposes the three psycho-social challenges children from divorcees may face. It is seen in the said table that, 23% of respondents became aggressive after their parents' divorce. The aggression of children according to the parents differs due to gender and age. Different parents of children studying in primary schools told the researcher that, they were often called by teachers to explain the behavior of their children who beat up others and were bad tempered towards their teachers.

The parents explained that these behaviour for male children. Boys fight not only at school but also with their brothers or neighbours. Divorcees said that, that behaviour is due to the education of only one parent. Parents thought that this is the reason, because when they see the parent they do not live with, they change completely from anger to happiness and always claim the presence of the other parent. Girl children on the contrary do not exteriorize their aggressors; it is visible by other signs like permanent headache, stomachache and shyness.

IV.6.2. Distress

The second important psycho-social challenge indicated by the great number of parents divorcees (30%), is distress seen in the second row of Table 6. The distress is shown by permanent questions they ask their parents.

Those questions are: why don't you reconcile with Mum/ Daddy? Can you call him/her? Can we go to visit the other parent? Why did you separate?

The parents narrated that children misunderstood them when they criticized their ex-spouse. Children always sympathized with the criticized parent. Four parents among others told the researcher that their children did not have distress because they were still very young.

IV.6.3. Fail and dropout school

Table 6 indicates 25% of divorcees who suffer from living with children who were incapable to perform well in their studies. Parents who said that their children dropped out of schools were not many. They said that their children study but score very bad results. Few of them however have children strong in their studies some of them being at universities and able to manage their life in different domains.

One parents told the researcher that, after a long period of suffering, their daughter of eighteen years dropped out her studies and became a prostitute, got pregnant and gave birth. He added that at the moment of distributing questionnaire, they did not know where she lived. Another man divorcee narrated that, a year ago, he chose another partner and his three children who lived with their grandmother asked many questions about the new relationship of their father with another woman.

When the Grandmother tried to explain them that their father had to choose another wife to help him, the first son got shock. When they tried to talk to him, the boy didn't react. When they bring him to the hospital, the Doctor said that the illness is psychological. After the Doctor knew

what happened to his parents, he concluded that divorce of their parent was the cause of that illness.

IV.6.4. Others

Table 6 shows other psycho-social challenges faced by children after their parents' divorce as prostitution, drug taking and anti-social behavior. These account for 22%. According to the parents' comments, prostitution and drug taking are done by teenager children from 13 to 19 years of age. Although the researcher explained the purpose of the research very well, parents still found it hard to tell her about drugs taken by their children reasoning their children would be arrested and charged in the court of law.

About anti-social behaviour, two parents told the researcher that their children became shy as the sign of divorce's psycho-social challenge and do not have confidence in whatever they do. Another woman divorcee did say that her daughter detests all men and she feared her daughter would never get married. This behavior, the mother explained, was coming from what happened during their conflict leading to divorce. "After divorce my ex husband didn't help me and my children financially", she said.

One man divorcee reported that his two children became street children after their parents' divorce. Two others however did say that their children were struggling for self reliance to sustain their future.

IV.7. The most to be affected by psycho-social challenges between divorcees and children

After the divorce of spouses, they have to deal with the new life which is not easy to them and their children. The researcher wanted to establish which party, that is, spouses or children was more affected by psycho-social challenges or if both were affected in the same way.

Table 7. The most to be affected by psycho-social challenges between divorcees and children

Gender/answer	Male	Female	Total	Percentage
Husband	3	1	4	10%
Wife	5	7	12	30%
Children	11	8	19	48%
All	1	4	5	12%
Total	20	20	40	100%

IV.7.1. Husband, Wife and children

Table 7 illustrates that 48% of respondents interviewed indicated that children suffer most, followed by 30% who confirmed that women face psycho-social challenges more than others. The rest of respondents (12%) confirmed that both parents and children face psycho-social challenges at the same level after divorce. On the other hand, the lowest of the respondents which was 10% attributed most psycho-social challenges to men divorcees.

IV.8. The solutions divorcees find relevant to overcome their psycho-social challenges

The last question asked to spouses was to know the solution they find relevant to overcome psycho-social challenges.

Table 8. The solutions divorcees find relevant to overcome their psycho-social challenges

Gender/answer	Male	Female	Total	Percentage
Find another partner	12	0	12	25%
Financial support	4	3	7	15%
Counseling	4	5	9	19%
Membership to group activity	2	4	6	13%
Others	2	11	13	28%
Total	24	23	47	100%

IV.8.1. Find another partner and others

Table 8 shows that the second highest number of respondents opted to find another partner or remarry. 25% of all respondents were men, whereas none of the women respondents that is 0% opted not to marry again.

According to the men's behavior the researcher observed at the moment of responding to this question, very few of them regret the definitive separation with their wives.

Even if they did not initiate divorce, they said that they could not reconcile with the ex-wife. The only problem they had was their children.

This question had a relationship with the one explaining the role of society towards women. These latter said that after divorcing with their husband, they were considered as womanish, unable to protect their family.

According to them, nobody could go beyond this condemnation and choose them as partners. For this reason, 48% of women found it to reconcile with their husband as the best solution if no death is another alternative, while the life in which they live did not have value. What was amazing to this solution, some of these wives were initiators of divorce. The 5% found in other alternatives, prefer to work for their children, and said that they were helped by prayers. The table shows that 4% of men find other solutions to overcome psycho-social challenges. The solution proposed by them was also working for their children and pray to God because, according to them, woman are the same.

IV.8.2. Financial support

It is seen in Table 8 that, 8% percent of men and 6% of women find financial support as one of the solutions which could help them to overcome psycho-social challenges, These respondents were illiterates or those with low level of education who had no salary or other activities which finance them in divorce life. Some of these divorcees suffered from depending on their relatives

who helped them under conditions.

IV.8.3. Counseling

As shown in Table 8, 8% of men, and 11% of women, find that specialists in counseling would be one of the best solutions to overcome psycho-social challenges. The divorcees assert that, they face a great number of psycho-social challenges, and did not find sincere friends to talk to whatever makes them suffer. The divorcees found counselors to be their confidants since they had been trained to this career.

IV. 8.4. Membership to group activity

Table8 presents 4% of men and 8% of women who found membership to group activity a relevant solution to overcome psycho-social challenges.

Raggio et al. on p 18 of the literature review, advise divorcees to join support groups in order to deal with loneliness, because these groups can be helpful not only to understand their feeling, but also to feel they are not alone. The divorcees, who had where to belong to, were somehow proud and had hope of the future (Raggio et al. 1993).

IV. 9. Findings from Children

The interview of children was composed of five questions, where different age and gender were considered. Results were not presented in form of tables; the analysis was discussed and summarized into paragraphs according to the given questions.

The procedure of children findings was the same as for the spouses, where five children in each of studied four districts of Rwanda were considered summing twenty children. All children were from divorcees parents and had to respond five questions. Question one concerned to know the age of respondents where ages of respondents were from 8 to 22 years old.

The number of respondents is divided into three groups. Respondents ranged from 8 to 14 years were 35%. The second range of children was between 15 and 19 years old with 58% and the final percentage equaling 7% were between 20 and 22 years old. As we can see, the total number of children respondents, equals to 100%. It is seen that the high percentage of children respondents is between 8 to 19 years old with 93%. The researcher has targeted the right group of respondents since the Rwandan law stipulates that a child is the one who is below 18 years old.

When the researcher wanted to know about psycho-social challenges experienced by children after divorce, respondents pointed out different psycho-social challenges, where distress came at the high rate of percentage equal to 50% of all respondents. Children narrated that they had intense distress to see their parents living separately. Children added that it was unfortunate to understand other children at school, telling stories about both parents, while children from parents divorcee live with only one and unhappy parent.

The next high percentage of respondent revealed loneliness at 35% to be the second psycho-social challenge they face. As they said, the fact of missing one parent made them feel lonely. The loneliness was highlighted mostly by children who lived with parent of different sex.

The problem related to their studies was another psycho-social challenge which disturbed them after their parents' divorce. Some of children interviewed, dropped out their studies and others studied but failed seriously. The main reason of their leaving or failing in their studies was due to poverty confirmed at 10% of all respondents.

Due to poverty, children asserted that they were unable to buy school tools, and dropping out their studies or failing were consequences of that poverty. Other 5% of psycho-social challenges faced by children after divorce were lack of child's rights as well as parents' advice, prostitution revealed by one unmarried mother, lack of dignity, instability, illness as the result of bad life and shame among other children living with their both parents. One among respondent children said that he had permanent grudge against the wrong parent.

The question to know the most to be affected by psycho-social challenges, among children and

divorcees, 55% of children responded that children are the most to be affected and explained the reason of this choice. As those children explained, their parents separated after a period of conflict and find divorce the relevant solution. Those children confirmed to find themselves victims since they missed love from their two parents.

35% of children said that wives were the most to be affected by psycho-social challenges after divorce because according to respondents, most of the time, the divorcee mother is the one to remain with children after the legal separation with her husband and father's relatives hate her. Children confirmed that husband do not suffer because they remarry quickly. Whereas children corresponding to 10%, confirmed that parents and children are affected by psycho-social challenges at the same level.

The question relating to how the society treats children after their parents' divorce, respondents put out variety of responses, where the great number of them 62% asserted that society doesn't mind. Other children responded that the society treats them as children from impolite parents, and criticizes their parents loudly. Example given by one child is that he often understands people saying "*look at these children! They are children of those divorced parents*". Other children said that they felt ashamed, when people asked them the reason they lived with only one parents.

One child among respondents said that the society sometimes criticizes her parents and wants explanation from her about her parents' conflict before divorce. Other respondents confirmed to suffer when other children talk about their parents' story whereas they lived with their one parent. Another said that, he does not like when their teacher asks about her mother if she lives with her father. Another one suffered to understand criticizing his mother saying that she is a womanish.

The last question for children was to know the alternative solutions that could help children to overcome psycho-social challenges after the divorce of their parents. To this question, a great number of respondents equal to 90% wished the reconciliation of their parents. In the following words, "*I will ask my father or mother to reconcile and live with all of us*". The rests of respondents equal to 10% found to struggle for self reliance and self confident as the best solution to overcome psycho-social challenges. One of respondents finds the respect to the parent

he lived with as the best solution. One other said that to help her mother financially was her best solution.

CHAPTER V: GENERAL CONCLUSION AND RECOMMENDATIONS

V.1. General conclusion

Living after divorce in Rwanda is not a joke! It is a life full of distress, and it is not enjoyed by respondents we worked with in studied areas of Rwanda. Before conducting research, we took time to go through other writers' thoughts, not only in Rwanda, but also everywhere in the World. Readings focused on our topic of interest and after our research's results we found that Rwandan household suffers in the same manner as others in the World after divorce life.

Nevertheless, Rwandan women divorcees have their special psycho-social challenges due to Rwandan culture. Society and relatives condemn women after divorce; it is why woman divorcees revealed remorse when they answered some of questions. The remorse was explained by the wish of reconciliation with their ex-husband, if not, they testimony that they would relax after their death. The amazing is that many of them are initiators of divorce.

Before conducting this research, our feelings were that divorce would be a good solution to people who are suffering in their marital life. We cannot doubt that many other people have the same feelings. After research, the results revealed that it is not the case, the life after divorce is full of challenges, worries and confusion as it was revealed by different respondents.

Husband, woman and children face varieties of psycho-social challenges. To be specific, children suffer most, and 90% of them propose reconciliation of their parents as the best solution to overcome their psycho-social challenges. Women are the second to suffer and 48% of them said that to reconcile with the ex-husband is a relevant solution for them. 25% of men find to remarry the best solution to overcome psycho-social challenges.

To end with, we confirm that all hypotheses have been accepted as true. To this confirmation however, we can add that there are so many other challenges experienced by divorcees we did not take into consideration. We can advise every married person, to prevent divorce or if there is no choice, to be responsible for his/her life after divorce which is full of challenges.

After going through and conclude this research, some recommendations are made and these concern the Authorities in Ministry of Gender and Promotion of women, the society and relatives as well as spouses.

V.2. Recommendations

Each conducted research is fruitful to other researchers and community if it contains recommendations and proposes solutions to readers and to whom they will be addressed to.

To the Ministry of gender and promotion of woman

- Rwandan marriage should be protected by engaging specialists in psycho-social domain. These latter should explain to people in high dispute leading to divorce that the life after divorce should be the worst. The divorcees in the other hand should be trained in giving testimony to the people still in marriage.
- Tasks for Cancellers of divorcees and children should be planned at sector level, to help divorcees in their everyday challenges.
- The Ministry in question should also plan budget to help divorcees to find easily activities which could occupy them, they would not then have time to feel lonely, but they would find financial support. Occupation of children in different activities and sports should be planned to help them to enjoy and forget the bad tamper of the parent they live with.
- The special law to protect women after divorce should be established, to help women feel free among society and relatives. For this reason, men and woman should be considered equally before and after divorce.

To the spouses

- Parents should plan how to help their children after they separate, they should not criticize their ex-partner in the presence of their children. The cooperation of spouses

should be priority despite the experience of their hatred.

- Before remarriage, parents should take time to prepare their children to be at the same level of understanding, and make sure that none would replace their own parents.
- When the remarriage happens, the new partner should help the divorcee to manage children by loving them and tolerating their caprices, knowing that the children have the parent they love more than him/her.

To the society and relatives

Society and relatives should recognize that men should be as guilty as women, for that reason, they do not have any reason to condemn one of them but it would be better to help all divorcees to overcome psycho-social challenges after divorce.

To the future researchers

For the researchers who are interested in the same field, they may go far by conducting a comparative study. This may be between the conjugal life where the household is characterized by high disputes and the life after divorce, to discover really the worst life spouses can avoid.

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ANNEXES

ANNEX I: Subject information sheet

National University of Rwanda

Faculty of Center for Conflict Management

Department of Peace Studies and

Conflict Transformation

Dear respondents,

I am Anastasie Uwababyeyi, conducting a research on psycho-social challenges faced by spouses and children after divorce, for the completion of my Masters studies. The tools of data collection will be interview and questionnaire. The objective of this interview/questionnaire is purely for academic research and will only be used for that purpose.

I would be grateful if you could help me to interview you, and write down the responses to the questions accompanying this letter.

Please be assured that your responses will be kept confidential and strictly be used for my research. Hence, your anonymity is guaranteed.

Yours faithfully

Anastasie UWABABYEYI

Students in Peace Studies and Conflict Transformation

Annex II: Interview with Spouses

Interview guiding questions

1. Identity
 - a. Gender: male or female
 - b. Age: 21-30; 31-40; 41-50, 51 and more
 - c. Education background: none, primary, secondary, university
2. Which psycho-social challenges have affected you after divorce?
3. How does society treat you as a divorcee? Does it help you to overcome challenges? Or it makes you suffer more?
4. Do you have children? Yes, No
5. What kind of psycho-social challenges affect your children after divorce?
6. How do psycho-social challenges that affect you differ from those that affect your children?
7. According to the Rwandan culture and the treatment of woman in Rwandan society, what specificity of psycho-social challenges do you face compared to those of men?
8. In your own view, what solution can you find relevant to overcome psycho-social challenges?

Mu Kinyarwanda

1. Umwirondoro

- b. Imyaka: 21-30, 31-40, 41-50, 51 cyangwa irenzeho.
 - c. Igitsina: gore, gabo
 - d. Amashuri wize: Sinigeze niga, abanza, ayisumbuye, kaminuza
2. Ni ibihe bibazo wahuye nabyo byaba ibyo wiyumvamo cyangwa uterwa n'umuryango nyarwanda nyuma yo gutandukana burundu n'uwo mwashakanye?
 3. Umuryango nyarwanda ugufata ute nk'umuntu watandukanye n'uwo mwashakanye? Ugufasha kuva mu bibazo urimo cg ukubabaza kurushaho?
 4. Ufite abana? Yego, oya.
 5. Ni ibihe bibazo abana banyu bahura nabyo bitewe n'ugutandukana burundu kwanyu?
 6. Ni gute ibibazo muhura nabyo nyuma yo gutandukana burundu bitandandukana n'iby'abana banyu?
 7. Dukurikije umuco nyarwanda n'uko umugore afatwa mu muryango nyarwanda, ni ibihe bibazo byihariye muhura nabyo nyuma yo gutandukana n'uwo mwashakanye?
 8. Ni ikihe gisbizo wakwibonera ubwawe cyagufasha kuva muri ibi bibazo watewe no gutana burundu n'uwo mwashakanye?

Annex III. Close ended questionnaire for spouses

1. Identity

a. Age: 21-30 31-40 41-50 51 and more

b. Gender: Female Male

c. Education background: none primary secondary
university

2. Are you affected by some of psycho-social challenges after divorce? Yes no

3. If yes, which are they?

Loneliness Financial crisis stress contempt

Others.....
.....
.....

4. How does society treat you as a divorcee?

Contempt Traumatize Helpful Don't care attitude

5. Do you have children? Yes no

6. If yes, how did they react to your divorce?

Aggressive Anti social Grief Living School

Others.....
.....

7. If you compare the degree of psycho-social challenges, who is most affected between you (spouses) and your children?

Husband wife children all

8. In your own view, what solution can you find relevant to overcome your psycho-social

challenges?

Find another partner financial support counseling

Membership to group activities

Others

.....
.....

Mu Kinyarwanda

1. Umwirondoro

a. Imyaka: 21-30 31-40- -50 51 n'irenzeho

b. Igitsina: gore gabo

c. Amashuri wize: sinize abanza ayisumbuye
kaminuza.

2. Hari ibibazo uhura nabyo byaba ibyo wiyumvamo cg uterwa n'umuryango nyarwanda? Yego oya

3. Niba bihari ni ibihe?

Ubwigunge Ubukene agahinda kwisuzugura
Ibindi.....

4. Umuryango nyarwanda ugufata ute nk'umuntu watandukanye n'uwo mwashakanye? Ugufasha kuva mu bibazo urimo cg ukubabaza kurushaho?

Uransuzugura Urampahamura uramfasha ntacyo
biwubwiye

Ibindi.....

5. Waba ufite abana? Yego oya

6. N' iyihe mpinduka yababayeho bitewe n'ugutandukana burundu kwanyu?

barangwa n'umujinya bahorana agahinda banga kwiga

Ibindi.....

.....

7. Hagati yanyu ababyeyi, n'abana banyu ninde ubona wazahajwe n'ubutane bwa burundu mwakoze?

Umugabo umugore abana bose

8. Ni ikihe gisbizo wakwibonera ubwawe cyagufasha kuva muri ibi bibazo watewe no gutana burundu n'uwo mwashakanye?

Kongera gushaka kubona umfasha kuganira n'abajyanama
kugira aho mbarizwa mumuryango nyarwanda

Ibindi.....

.....

Annex IV.

Interview with children.

1. How old are you?
2. What are psycho-social challenges have you experienced after the divorce of your parents?
3. According to you, between children and parents who are more affected by psycho-social challenges after divorce? Why?
4. How does the society treat you as a child from divorcees?
5. What alternative solution could help you to overcome psycho-social challenges after the divorce of your parents?

Mu Kinyarwanda

1. Ufite imyaka ingahe?
2. Ni ibihe bibazo waba ufite watewe n'itandukana burundu by'ababyeyi bawe?
3. Hagati yanyu abana n'ababyeyi banyu ubona ari nde wazahajwe n'ibibazo byatewe no gutana burundu kw'ababyeyi banyu? Kubera iki?
4. Umuryango Nyarwanda waba ugufata ute nk'umwana w'ababyeyi batandukanye burundu?
5. Ni ikihe gisubizo wakwibonera cyagufasha kwikura mubibazo watewe no gutandukana kw'ababyeyi bawe?