

## **Women's Perceptions of Childbearing in the Algerian Family**

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### **Abstract:**

The general goal of our study is to discuss the conditions of women giving birth to girls and the nature of their presence in the collective consciousness. We aim to shed light on an ancient and modern social issue, which is the preference for male offspring over females and its relationship to cultural heritage and the stereotypical image of women's inferiority. This discussion takes into account the impact of societal changes and the current social and cultural situation. By refuting the perceptions of patriarchal culture, deeply rooted historically, socially, and culturally in customs, traditions, and religious interpretations, we aim to challenge the prevailing mindset. We also examine how the prevailing cultural norms have transformed women's existence, as this masculine culture becomes the guardian of a system that oppresses women, denying their innate and logical rights. Unconsciously influenced by the discourse that adorns itself with a sense of holiness, women have often remained silent, accepting the limitations imposed on them under the pretext of honor and protection. They have been treated as mere objects, and unfortunately, many women have internalized and perpetuated these ideas. In summary, our study aims to critically analyze the societal conditions surrounding the preference for male children, highlighting the negative impact on women's rights and the need for a transformative shift in cultural perceptions.

### **Introduction:**

Female fertility is considered one of the essential attributes in patriarchal societies that significantly enhance a woman's status. Her destiny within the family is closely tied to her biological role, which completes her femininity through direct childbirth immediately after marriage. "Reproduction is the primary realization of self, and a woman's glory lies in her children. To maintain her position as a wife, she must bear children for her husband, especially male children, to achieve her identity, highlight her existence, and establish her foothold.<sup>1</sup>" Therefore, the woman's status only emerges with the birth of her first child, especially if it is a male, making her more respected through her demographic contribution. The more male children she gives birth to, the more her position improves within her husband's family. The reverence for males is deeply ingrained in Algeria, both in the past and today. "The son is the subject of all expectations and desires. The mother eagerly awaits the son who will reinforce her constantly threatened and unstable position. The birth of a daughter, on the other hand, remains undesired as it is considered a burden and a disgrace to her family. From this perspective, the mother's status and respect in the family are renewed and enforced primarily by her

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<sup>1</sup> André (Michel), *Women, Sexism, and Society*, Press Universitaire de France, 1975, p. 89

prolific reproduction. Consequently, a wife who only gives birth to daughters is at risk of divorce or being replaced in marriage.

### **Problematic:**

As motherhood was considered the ultimate opportunity for a woman to experience immortality, she had to succeed in fulfilling this sacred social role through which she gains a prestigious position in a society that rejects women who fail to perform this duty. It is seen as the closest and easiest path to achieving feminine identity in the social sense, and the unique means of solidifying one's position as a wife and eventually attaining the status of a mature woman. Immediately after marriage, the wife eagerly awaits becoming a mother within a few months in order to gain fame and achieve victory. Her role becomes influential among women. Through childbirth, she becomes socially and culturally present, proclaiming, "I give birth, therefore I exist!"<sup>2</sup> A woman does not possess her worth as a human being merely by appearing in the world; rather, it is the presence of a fertilized embryo in her womb, destined to be born as a child, that makes her give birth as a mother. "Arab women give birth from their wombs as if they give birth to themselves."<sup>3</sup> "True motherhood in these patriarchal societies is masculine motherhood, not feminine."

The experiences and stories shared by people confirm without a doubt that deep within every man, there is a strong desire to have male offspring. This drives mothers to continue the cycle of pregnancy and childbirth throughout their fertile period in order to conceive a male child. The most anticipated news for family members is the gender of the newborn, whether it is male or female. If it is a male, it is received with overwhelming joy, and even if the family is poor, grand celebrations are held. However, the birth of a female child is met with a touch of sadness and grief, creating a general atmosphere of disappointment, especially if multiple female births occur in a social environment lacking male presence<sup>4</sup>. The birth of a girl represents nothing but sorrow, misery, and shattered hopes for many fathers in a society that sees true motherhood as being a mother to boys, not girls. The curse is placed upon the birth of a girl, even if she is healthy, while the birth of a boy opens the door to celebration and happiness, even if he is blind or disabled<sup>5</sup>. The value and status of a female are not determined by her abilities or talents, but rather by the number of male children she bears. Consequently, mothers of girls find themselves socially rejected, engulfed in a wave of self-doubt and anxiety that makes them feel inadequate and incomplete as women. They also face a certain type of treatment from their husbands and in-laws, as the family confines and reduces them to a state of despair, labeling them as pitiful, encompassing all the contradictory meanings associated with this term.

At times, this leads to mockery and pity towards women, while at other times it puts them at risk and makes them fearful of the future, exposed to divorce and sometimes even subject to dealing with a second wife<sup>6</sup>. Meanwhile, "the mother who gives birth to male children is honored by her husband

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<sup>2</sup> Ben Haddid (Fayza), "I Give Birth... Therefore I Exist," *Annals of the University of Algiers*, Issue 4, University Press, Algeria, 1989-1990, p. 79.

<sup>3</sup> Chbel (Malek), *The Arab-Muslim Imaginary*, PUF, Paris, 1993, p. 48.

<sup>4</sup> Camillerai (Carmel), *Youth, Family, and Development: Essay on Socio-Cultural Change in a Third World Country (Tunisia)*, National Center for Scientific Research, Paris, 1973, p. 21.

<sup>5</sup> Mouzaya (Laura), *The Shepherd's Daughter*, Paris, L'Armattan Editions, 1977, p. 141.

<sup>6</sup> Toulbi (Rdia), *Attitudes and Representations of Marriage among Algerian Young Women*, ENAL, Algiers, 1981, p. 51.

and family, receiving all the care and attention.<sup>7</sup>" The idolization of males is deeply ingrained in Algeria, both in the past and today. The son becomes the focus of all expectations and desires. The mother eagerly awaits the son who will reinforce her constantly threatened and unstable position. On the other hand, the birth of a female child always remains undesirable because, in reality, she represents shame and burden for her family. The education received by the mother rejects femininity and the female. There is a sense of inadequacy and weakness in relation to males, which diminishes the status of females and marginalizes them. They are excluded from participating in important matters and are considered mere accessories. This feeling grows with the woman and makes her afraid of giving birth to female children, so as not to suffer like herself and to prevent the repetition of this ordeal with another girl who would have no control over her fate.

The reasons for happiness and well-being in a society that still considers the birth of females as a calamity, catastrophe, and tragedy lie in the existence of problems associated with them. This results in an emotionally conflicting relationship between a mother and her daughter, manifested through struggles and a range of oscillating contradictions between love, hatred, fear, and terror<sup>8</sup>. From birth, women face a rejecting society that aggressively confronts them with sadness, exerting its violence against every conscious female, leaving her no room to doubt that she is also a victim. She is met with rejection from the moment she is born and continues to be marginalized, being treated as an outcast. In other words, as a newborn girl, she is unaware of the rejection and oppression she will face. Consequently, every female who reaches the age of awareness bears the consequences of this situation. The mockery of female births, expressed through various words, reflects a mixture of pity, fear, and a form of discontentment. Statements like "Poor thing, it is not supposed to be born female!" place these women in a lived experience where they feel guilty for being born as females. Even though women reject gender discrimination, their upbringing, mental structure, perspective, and societal pressure forcibly lead them to express a preference for males over females<sup>9</sup>.

The image of a woman begins to take shape from the earliest moments of her existence in the material world. There are preconceived negative perceptions and ideas deeply rooted in the social and value system, reflecting a clear and decisive notion: "She is an undesirable and unwelcome body."<sup>10</sup> From its very first moments, the female body suffers from gender discrimination and early comparison to the male body. Consequently, the social position that this newly born social entity will occupy has already been known, determined, and defined in advance. Exclusion and marginalization precede the actual presence of women in social realities. Reproductive practices represent a significant site for testing the mechanisms that support continuous domination and oppression of women. The discourse surrounding motherhood reveals the extent to which the oppression of the female body has reached, reinforcing the circle of paternal power. If what has been mentioned is related to the female newborn and her expected fate, the image becomes even darker concerning the status of the woman who gave birth to that female.

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<sup>7</sup> Diab (Fouzia), *Social Customs and Values: Field Research on Some Social Customs*, Dar Al-Nahda Al-Arabiyya for Printing, Publishing, and Distribution.

<sup>8</sup> Toualbi (Rdia), *op. cit.*, p. 52.

<sup>9</sup> Assouline (Florence), *Muslim Women: A Chance for Islam*, Flammarion Editions, Paris, 1992, pp. 11-14.

<sup>10</sup> Ibrahim Abdel Azim (Hassani), "The Exclusion of Arab Women Precedes Their Existence: A Reading of the Dialectic Relationship between Nature and Culture," dated 2013/3/16, available at [drhosni2512011@yahoo.com](mailto:drhosni2512011@yahoo.com).

Therefore, our study of the subject began with the following question: Is women's current situation indeed a cultural crisis resulting from her belonging to a social environment governed by paternal perceptions of women that further increase the pressure on her, primarily based on gender discrimination?

### Study Hypothesis

The hypothesis of the study is as follows:

The belonging of a woman who gives birth to females to a social environment governed by societal perceptions of women stemming from paternal culture and primarily based on gender discrimination is a factor that contributes to the consolidation of the subordinate view of women in society.

### Theoretical and Operational Definitions

The concept of "status" is a complex and multifaceted concept that is difficult to define, as it can refer to both the "position" or "role" that an individual occupies in a particular society, or it can encompass both. The term "status" signifies the position occupied by an individual within a specific group, or the position that the group occupies in a particular society<sup>11</sup>.

"Status" or "position" is the adoption of a specific position in a particular social structure, or it is the position held by a group or an individual in light of the distribution of roles in the structure, as well as the distribution of rights, obligations, and power<sup>12</sup>. The concept of "status" is considered one of the fundamental concepts that enable us to understand behavior in a specific social situation and to understand both structure and personality through "interpreting hierarchical organizational relationships between individuals, as well as clarifying the relationships and reciprocal actions between individuals at the same level."<sup>13</sup> It also takes on the meaning of the rank that members of a group assign to an individual based on certain characteristics and qualities, which members of the group perceive with either distinction and respect or rejection and contempt<sup>14</sup>. Some define "status" or "position" as the position that a person occupies in a specific social structure, which in turn includes a set of roles performed by the person and imposes specific responsibilities towards other positions<sup>15</sup>.

In this sense, we find that determining a specific social status or position is closely related to two fundamental terms: "status" and "role." These terms enable us to understand behavior within the context of the overall social structure, as they serve as tools that allow for a comprehensive view of society as a collection of groups, relationships, and systems. They help individuals anticipate the actions of others and shape their behavior accordingly, particularly when we recognize that both concepts are interdependent and interact in a non-binding exchange. This is because status can be associated with specific roles. As for the concept of "role," it typically refers to "a person's behavior or organized style of participation in social life, as well as the way needs and desires are fulfilled according to a set of values and criteria."<sup>16</sup>

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<sup>11</sup> Boudon (Raymond), *The Critical Dictionary of Sociology*, translated by Salim Haddad, University Establishment for Studies, Publishing, and Distribution, 1st edition, Beirut, 1986, p. 594.

<sup>12</sup> Mohammed Atef (Ghaith), *Dictionary of Sociology*, previous reference, p. 472.

<sup>13</sup> Boudon (Raymond), Bernard (Philippe) and others, *Critical Dictionary of Sociology*, Librairie Le Rousseau, France, 1990, p. 190.

<sup>14</sup> Attouni (Mohammed Omar), *Social Change*, Manshūrāt al-Ma'ārif, Alexandria, 1995, p. 147.

<sup>15</sup> Farah (Mohammed Said), *What is Sociology?*, Manshūrāt al-Ma'ārif, Alexandria, no date, p. 63.

<sup>16</sup> Same reference, p. 64.

In other words, the "role" is a set of socially determined attributes and expectations associated with a specific status, carrying social significance. It elucidates that individuals' activities are socially governed and follow specific behavioral patterns. For instance, a woman within her family occupies a specific social position, and she is expected to perform a set of behavioral patterns representing the required role.

In essence, the "role" can be defined as the behavioral aspect of status, i.e., what an individual must do to achieve this position.

On the other hand, the "position" indicates the social status held by an individual within the social structure, which, in turn, encompasses a range of roles and functions performed by the individual and imposes specific responsibilities towards other positions.

In other words, the social position comprises a set of rights and obligations, and the "role" is its dynamic manifestation<sup>17</sup>.

Thus, "social status" can be considered as the position or location occupied by an individual in the social structure, determined in light of societal evaluation.

### **Characteristics and Features of Social Status**

According to Ralph Linton, social status or position is defined as the specific position occupied by an individual at a particular time within a specific social system, or the position held by an individual in society based on their age, gender, birth, marital status, occupation, and education<sup>18</sup>.

Based on this definition, we can extract some key characteristics of social status, including:

1. Social positions vary: The social positions of individuals differ and vary based on cultural factors, social classes, geographic regions, and professions practiced. Social positions can be categorized into two types:

- Imposed and obligatory positions, such as age, gender, and family.
- Acquired positions, such as public employment.

2. Culture determines the meaning of social position: The culture determines the meaning of social position in terms of a set of rights and obligations. The precision of this determination varies based on the degree of connection between the position and the core culture of the society.

It's important to note that these characteristics highlight the diversity and cultural context of social status, emphasizing that social positions are not fixed and can change over time.

In summary, social status is among the topics that vary and differ across generations and systems, which may impact it in one way or another. Social status, in general, and specifically the social status of women who have given birth to females, is a subject of research and study. It varies from one society to another, depending on the roles defined by the culture of the society, derived mainly from social values and customs. These values and customs not only vary across generations and different societies but even within the boundaries of a single society. This variation depends on

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<sup>17</sup> Boudon (Raymond), and others, Op. cit., p. 19..

<sup>18</sup> Dabbaneh (Michel), Mahfouz (Nabil), Psychology of Childhood, Dar Al-Mustaqbal for Publishing and Distribution, Amman, Jordan, 1998, p. 61.

educational level, geographical region, and the nature of the social environment to which this group of women belongs.

By "social status," we mean the position, status, or rank that distinguishes an individual from other members of society. This position may be subject to admiration or criticism by members of the society, in addition to its influence on living conditions and relationships with others.

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**Belonging:** The concept of "belonging" is one of the most widely discussed topics in contemporary sociological and educational literature. It is among the terms that suffer from complexity and ambiguity. In general, the concept of "belonging" constitutes the root of identity and the core of social existence. It represents the stance that individuals take towards a group or ideology<sup>19</sup>. It encompasses the network of emotions and feelings that connect the individual to a specific community, ideology, or philosophy. It can take the form of a web of subjective experiences and a system of objective relationships that go beyond emotions to encompass a range of activities and interactions that the individual shares with their sense of belonging<sup>20</sup>. In a tribal context, for example, the individual embodies the spirit, meanings, customs, and traditions of the tribe. They become a miniature representation of the tribe, encompassing its values, emotions, and customs. This means they align with and express the tribe.

In another procedural context, belonging is the individual's sense of connection to a community and their inclination to embody its goals. It involves taking pride in the fact that the individual is part of the community within the framework of a comprehensive set of ideas, values, customs, and traditions that penetrate deep into the individual's being, shaping their life and transforming it into a non-tangible existence.

**Social Perceptions:** It is a concept that revolves around a specific subject based on a set of information, beliefs, opinions, and positions, constructed on a substantive and constructive basis. It plays a crucial role in understanding the purposes of social behaviors, practices, and situations. The function of these social perceptions is to contribute to the construction of social identity.

We have utilized the concept of "perceptions" in our study to refer to the society's view of women who have given birth and their status in Algerian families. Through research and investigation into their origins and roots throughout history, we aim to explore how the social status of this group of

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<sup>19</sup> Al-Mashat (Abdel-Monem), Education and Political Development, The Future of Arab Education, Volume 1, Issue 2, Cairo 1995, p. 117.

<sup>20</sup> Assad Watta (Ali), Stagnation and Renewal in the Arab Mentality: Critical Revelations, General Syrian Book Authority, 2007, p. 99.

women is influenced by societal perceptions, particularly regarding women's roles and cultural beliefs.

**Procedural Definition of the patriarchal Social Environment:** It refers to the traditional society that is driven by a fixation on the past, the history of fathers and ancestors, and the heritage of previous generations, aiming to preserve the patterns of life that people have adhered to from generation to generation. In such societies, women are perceived as physically and intellectually weak beings, and their role is confined to the submissive concept of marriage and the traditional concept of motherhood. Consequently, women's roles are limited to domestic responsibilities, erasing the line between their rights and autonomy as independent individuals and their subordination to male authority in rights and responsibilities, both inside and outside the home. Life in such societies revolves around the production and reproduction of the manifestations of life established by previous generations, preserving these manifestations with their inherent values, standards, customs, traditions, and behavioral patterns. Women are entrusted with the task of preparing and nurturing a new generation, perpetuating the tools of their own oppression by raising their children according to the male model, instilling in them the importance of masculinity at the expense of femininity, and transmitting to them their heritage regarding reality, society, and past values. Therefore, we do not witness any change in the mindset that governs the society today.

### **Importance of the Study:**

Given that the subject of our study addresses, in one way or another, the problematic view of society towards women, we deemed it necessary to undertake this research in an attempt to gain a deeper and more profound understanding of the background of this perception. Additionally, we sought to objectively investigate the actual situation experienced by this category of women who give birth to females, especially within the context of the new social changes that have dominated values and standards, as well as the changing role of women in society as they acquire several new roles and functions. The aim was to determine the extent to which these roles impact the status of women and how they reflect on society's perception of women in general.

### **Study objectives:**

The significance of this study stems from the influence of cultural heritage and the paternal view that continues to wield its sword to uphold the exclusionary image of women and their subordinate status. Moreover, the issue of female infanticide extends beyond the psychological level of women as mothers to encompass physical and social harms, rendering females the victims. However, in the Arab world, there is no accurate documentation of such damages, not because they do not exist, but due to secrecy and concealment. Hence, we rarely encounter these matters openly in scientific studies (even if they exist, they are very limited), but rather they are often limited to individual cases published through investigative and journalistic reports. On the other hand, our study aims to demonstrate how familial socialization is a means for society to subjugate its new members. As a result of the unfair socialization that grants men more privileges than women from childhood, women continue to live within oppressive mazes, subject to male domination and injustice since time immemorial.

### **Study procedures and the adopted methodology:**

As social research involves a systematic investigation of facts, phenomena, and social issues, relying on the principles of the scientific method, we followed a series of methodological steps to achieve objective results. "Because every research or practice is characterized as scientific in social sciences,

as well as in general sciences, it requires strict and specific procedures.<sup>21</sup> In our study, we adopted a descriptive-analytical approach to obtain accurate and realistic information that portrays the social reality of women who give birth to females within Algerian families. This approach involved identifying and defining the factors related to the study topic, uncovering the variables that govern the subject, and objectively determining their interconnections. Through this approach, we aimed to monitor the significant problems and pressures experienced by female mothers, analyze them, derive their significance, and explore their various dimensions within a patriarchal society, where marriage and motherhood serve as criteria for social success.

**Sample:** Due to the inability to apply probabilistic sampling to this type of targeted research community and identify its presence, we were compelled to use a purposive sample as a necessary alternative to any model of probability sampling. The study sample is a **non-probabilistic sample**, also known as a "wise sampling." It involves the researcher's qualitative selection of respondents based on the research objectives, rather than using random tables or lottery processes<sup>22</sup>. This method allows us to select cases that represent the research community, given the difficulty in determining the actual and precise total number of the research community. This is because it is characterized by instability, meaning it is subject to increase or decrease at any moment, as it relates to women who are mothers in general and specifically those who give birth to females, visiting private clinics specializing in women's health (non-governmental clinics). We conducted our field study by distributing research questionnaires to the participating mothers who visited these clinics for routine pregnancy check-ups. They answered the questions and returned the completed questionnaires to us before leaving the clinic. Our sample consisted of 200 women who were mothers with experience in motherhood and giving birth to females. We also considered mothers who had given birth to males or both males and females, in order to objectively investigate their situations since they had experienced the phenomenon. The sample included women from different geographical backgrounds across the country, with varying educational and professional levels.

**Techniques:** The methodology, as indicated by Madeleine Grawitz<sup>23</sup>, helps coordinate a range of research techniques to consistently achieve the research objective. Based on this, a set of tools was adopted for collecting and analyzing field data. The embodiment of this methodology was through the use of the questionnaire technique, which included a series of optional closed and open-ended questions. This allowed the participants to freely express their experiences and opinions while familiarizing themselves with the elements that could contribute to framing the problem. Therefore, we relied on the questionnaire as a fundamental tool for data collection, which in turn contained several open-ended and closed questions categorized into axes according to the primary variables of the research.

### Study Results:

**Identification of Sample Characteristics:** After completing the data collection and transcription process, it was necessary to present the key characteristics of the study sample by specifying the personal data of the research participants (mothers). This was done to provide a clear and

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<sup>21</sup> Gravitz (Madeleine), *Methods in Social Sciences*, Dalloz, Seventh Edition, Paris, 1986, p. 361.

<sup>22</sup> Ma'an Khalil (Omar), *Research Methods in Sociology*, Dar Al-Shorouq, Jordan, 1997, p. 208.

<sup>23</sup>Grawit( Madeleine), *ibid*, p.384



comprehensive picture of the characteristics that distinguish the individuals in the research sample. It is important to note that some of these characteristics represent the independent variables that we have linked to the dependent variables related to the hypotheses formulated in the research. These characteristics serve as the primary variables that we will rely on in the analysis process, which will be discussed in detail in subsequent chapters. Accordingly, the characteristics exhibited by the sample individuals are presented in the following tables:

Age:

**Table No. 01 shows the distribution of respondents by age groups**

K × S	Category C Center	Percent age %	Repetition (k)	Age groups
784	24.5	32.00%	64	20 - 29
1431.5	34.5	41.50%	83	30 - 39
1404.5	64.5	26.5%	53	40 - 49
3620	123.5	100%	200	Total

#### **The Average Age of the Researched Mothers:**

According to Table 01, the majority of the researched mothers fall within the age group of 40-49 years, comprising 41.50% of the sample. The next largest age group is 30-39 years, accounting for 32.00% of the sample. The age group of 20-29 years represents 26.50% of the sample.

**Marriage Age:**

**Table 02: Distribution of Respondents by Age of Marriage**

%	as	Age of marriage
25.5%	51	Under twenty
71.5%	143	Twenties
3%	6	Thirties
100%	200	Total

Based on the percentages presented in the table above, it becomes evident that the age range of the researched mothers falls between 20 and 49, with an average age of marriage at around 18 years. This indicates that marriage for women in the patriarchal society is the only relationship that ensures their protection and transition from one social status to another. It also grants them independence from their families. Cultural customs and traditions assign significant importance to marriage, as it is

considered the only socially acceptable destiny. Women do not have a choice between marriage and remaining single; they are obliged to get married. Failure to do so results in societal rejection and disrespect, and they are not regarded as normal women<sup>24</sup>. Unmarried women face problems, psychological pressures, and even social stigmatization, being labeled as spinsters. In this context, their guardians seek various means to arrange their marriage, and they are often approached by suitors. Therefore, marriage is a social and personal necessity for both young men and women. The social status of women is determined solely through marriage. A girl becomes a source of concern and anxiety for her family until she gets married, settles in her husband's house, establishes a family, and gives birth to children who enhance her position. Marriage is the only social system that defines a woman's status in the traditional family and society. The traditional family, through differential socialization of males and females, has always aimed to reinforce the principles of the patriarchal system. In the past, marriage was the only prospect for a girl and her family. In the extended traditional family, parents sought to marry off their sons and daughters at the appropriate age before they missed the opportunity, especially for women, whose age is closely linked to their fertility, a crucial factor for their marital and familial stability.

**Geographical origin:**

**Table No. 03 shows the geographical origin of the respondents**

%	as	Geographical origin
23%	46	Algiers
58%	116	Eastern Algeria
17.5%	35	West Algeria
1.5%	3	Southern Algeria
100%	200	Total

Based on these data, we can infer that the rural community serves as a reference for the majority of the population in the capital and other urban areas due to the rural exodus that swept Algerian cities after independence, driven by inevitable circumstances imposed by the economic conditions. This process, in turn, led to the ruralization of cities, transforming them into spaces for the reproduction and reemergence of rural values and relationships, laden with traditional familial and clan forces. Particularly, if individuals originate from rural geographic backgrounds governed by a traditional rural mentality expressed through a system of firmly held behaviors, there is concern about its erosion. “As the cultural backdrop that informs judgment and the foundation for perspectives on existence<sup>25</sup>”, their presence in urban environments dilutes the strictness of customs and traditions due to overcrowding, lack of concern for others, and the prevalence of statutory laws over customs and traditions. This occurs within the context of individualism and the absence of a spirit of integration among individuals without considering the care for others. However, their presence in urban society

<sup>24</sup> Du jardin ,op.cit. ,p34

<sup>25</sup> La Rousse, Grand Encyclopedia, 11 volumes, Paris, 1960, p. 196.

does not imply a change in mentality since “change is contingent upon a revolution in the framework of values, concepts, and mental perceptions embraced by members of society<sup>26</sup>”. Ideas and values are the slowest to respond to change, as evidenced by a significant percentage of families in society still rejecting new ideas and maintaining intellectual and moral mechanisms that have become part of their personal characteristics.

Although some members of society have indeed acquired some transformative ideas from their original world, especially regarding consumer and occupational lifestyles, some individuals still adhere to the principles and values of rural culture, particularly in matters related to women. Within a social framework, male thinking predominates, which works to diminish women in all aspects, including sexuality, the body, intellect, productivity, and social status, thereby expressing inadequacy, deficiency, and shame.

The process of urbanization, in this context, merely resulted in a population influx into major cities without addressing the essence of the issue regarding the transformation of concepts and other social relationships. This is due to the strong bonds that connect the displaced individuals with their original villages and their preservation of rural values and the rural perspective on social space. Consequently, primary characteristics remain intact, indicating the extent of control exerted by customs and traditions, in other words, the complete control of the traditional social system over mentalities and ideologies. This situation creates a confrontation between modernization-related ideas and values and traditional values. The mere relative difference between modernity and tradition is considered an initial sign of alienation and negativity<sup>27</sup>.

From this perspective, we can deduce that Algerian society is primarily a traditional patriarchal society, as tradition or traditional heritage remains alive with its spiritual and humanistic aspects.

**Education Level:**

**Table 4: Distribution of respondents according to their educational level**

%	as	Education level
35%	70	primary
25%	50	medium
25%	50	secondary
15%	30	academic
100%	200	Total

The table above illustrates that 70% of the total surveyed women have primary education, followed by 50% with intermediate education, and the same percentage for secondary education. Only 30% of them have attained university education, while the sample lacks individuals with a university level of education.

<sup>26</sup> Watta (Ali Assad), previous reference, p. 14.

<sup>27</sup> Bousefnouchet (Mustapha), Social System and Social Change in Algeria, Office of University Publications, Algiers, undated, p. 81.

These proportions indicate that the educational level of mothers ranges from intermediate to secondary education, with primary education representing the highest percentage. This is within a patriarchal environment that does not provide women with opportunities to pursue education and reach higher levels. This confirms the severed relationship with education, as per the prevailing belief, as stated by Professor Ghita Al-Khayyat: "Long-term education wastes the femininity of girls or hinders their marriage, with dire consequences on women's fertility. Moreover, there is fear of the impact of a girl's education on her obedience and humility towards her parents. Additionally, an educated woman becomes a competitor to her husband, which undermines his status as a man."<sup>28</sup> The society governed by paternalistic culture consistently tries to reinforce the idea that women do not need education and culture, considering their natural place to be within the household<sup>29</sup>.

Hence, girls' education is seen as a behavior that contradicts values and traditions. It is considered a flaw and a denial of dignity and authenticity that they do not need in the future. The social role that awaits a girl as a wife does not require the knowledge acquired in school but rather the experiences she receives from her mother, related to managing household affairs and raising children. Within this framework, she suffers from cultural discrimination inherent in the family structure, which favors the education of males over females as part of the preference given to males and the attention paid to them, considering them as the future of the family. "If a woman learns according to their perspective, her education leads to various harms. When she becomes capable of constructing a sentence, writing a letter to Zaid, or composing a poem for Omar, the intelligent ones among them are those who leave their wives swimming in the sea of ignorance."<sup>30</sup> The paternalistic mindset reflects its clear desire for dominance and control, emphasizing the necessity of limiting the independence of girls in terms of personality and exerting control over their own selves, including possessing and exploiting space. This is manifested in a hierarchical model that acknowledges the authority of male space over female space, which feeds on the notion of the female's inferiority and her inability to deviate from male authority and exercise power over herself<sup>31</sup>.

In this context, educating a girl means her exposure to the outside world, mingling with male students, and establishing relationships with them. Generally, it signifies her escape from parental supervision, where men prioritize their honor, believing that women pose their main vulnerability. Consequently, the majority of women in the study sample leave school at the primary or intermediate level, coinciding with the onset of adolescence, to prepare directly for marriage, considering it a measure of social success. Education in this context is perceived as a danger for girls because it promotes independence, strengthens their personality, and opens the doors to deviation and loss. "In this regard, the father entrusts honor and virginity to the educational institution,"<sup>32</sup> which is closely associated with temptation and seduction, accompanied by sin and transgression. It becomes a source of visual desire and an incentive for engaging in sexual activities, transitioning from the sacred space of purity

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<sup>28</sup> Nafaa (Nawara), The Status of Women in Algerian Society, *Journal of Social Studies*, Issue 1, 2013, p. 150.

<sup>29</sup> Al-A'waj (Zeinab), *Women and Society*, *Journal of Women's Notebooks*, Algeria, As-Sabah Publishing, 1991, p. 26.

<sup>30</sup> Ben Azouz (Maamar), *Women's Status*, *Kokab Ifriqia Newspaper*, Issue 187, December 2, 1910, Algeria.

<sup>31</sup> Kossa (Nour Eddine), *Symbolic Significance of the Presence of the Female Body in Male Discourse*, *Journal of Social Studies*, Dar Al-Khaliduniya for Publishing and Distribution, Algeria, Issue 5, 2010, p. 110.

<sup>32</sup> Al-Khammash (Sulwa), previous reference, p. 109.

to the tainted space of seduction<sup>33</sup>. Consequently, women within this paternalistic framework become oppressed beings who do not experience the fullness of their humanity or the independence of their will. They become shadows of others, echoing their voices, and serve as consumable tools for their needs and instincts. In such households, even if the male is a servant, the woman has no voice or opinion. Due to all of these reasons, space was not granted for girls to reach the highest levels of education, which we found to be the case in most instances within the study sample.

After marriage was the only priority for a girl to achieve status and gain social standing, education has provided her with numerous options, leading her to choose education and university studies. In the traditional view, a woman was reduced to her physical body, and her femininity determined her fate: "Femininity is the flaw." Even her intellectual capabilities were conditioned by the ethics of femininity. "Due to her nature, many tasks are suitable for her to perform within the confines of her home... If a woman goes out to work and competes with men, she loses her femininity and her distinctiveness. She is no longer a woman and cannot become a man."<sup>34</sup>

In summary, in the traditional perspective, a woman is restricted by her femininity, and her femininity determines her destiny. However, thanks to upbringing, education, and work, this social image within the traditional value system has begun to lose some of its significance. Compulsory education has created a new generation that is more cultured than their parents and has simultaneously deepened the gap within the family. It has also contributed to changing social relationships and roles. Therefore, the traditional value system conflicts with the modern value system in terms of jobs and roles. While the rights and duties of women were clear in traditional society, they are now subject to considerable chaos. This has led women to assume multiple and contradictory roles, in addition to their traditional roles as wives, homemakers, and mothers. They are now employees and lawyers. This weighs heavily on them and makes them undertake multiple and conflicting roles simultaneously.

The world of women today is different from yesterday's world, thanks to upbringing, education, and work. Their circumstances have changed, with an increase in the number of educated and working women. Arab women have started to participate to some extent in public life. The authority of customs and traditions, which used to restrict and define their roles and social status, has partially declined<sup>35</sup>.

They have entered new fields that were previously dominated by men, leading to a change in their social image and, to some extent, inherited values and trends. However, the defining characteristic of the contemporary Arab woman's situation is the gap between material and cultural change or between material existence and the social consciousness of Arab women. We aspire to technological and social modernization and to emulate Western consumer values. However, at the same time, we reject the modernization of value systems, especially those related to Arab women. This deepens the gap between traditional and contemporary value systems and hinders the compatibility and evolution of many customs.

Undoubtedly, this gap is societal and general, but its impact on women is greater than on men. It relatively differs from what Ogborn referred to as "cultural backwardness," meaning the imbalance between material and cultural civilizations due to scientific discoveries and technological inventions.

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<sup>33</sup> Al-Zahi (Nour Eddine), *Islamic Sanctity*, Dar Toubkal Publishing, Morocco, 1st edition, 2005, p. 29.

<sup>34</sup> Arabi (Abdul Qader), *Women between the Weight of Reality and Aspirations for Liberation*, previously mentioned reference, p. 37.

<sup>35</sup> Arabi (Abdul Qader), *Arab Women and the Paradoxes of the Old and the New*, "Al-Hawar Al-Mutamaddin" Electronic Magazine, Issue: 979, October 2010.

The issue here does not primarily stem from this imbalance but rather from the existing duality between changing material structures and relatively constant cultural structures.

Our culture and traditions have changed, but this change has not been a substantial transformation. Instead, it has been more akin to superficial and formal changes while remnants of family and extended family culture and traditions persist<sup>36</sup>. Thus, Arab women engage in a multi-faceted struggle. There is a conflict between inherited values and new values that enhance their status. There is also a conflict over roles within the family, as women strive to redistribute roles after their participation in the workforce, while men cling to their traditional gains<sup>37</sup>.

**Professional Status:**

**Table No. 05: Distribution of respondents by occupational status**

%	as	Professional Status
0	0	School
75.5%	151	Worker
24.5%	49	Stay at home
100%	200	Total

From the table, we observe that the largest percentage is represented by the category of working women, estimated at 75%. They are followed by the category of stay-at-home mothers, accounting for 24.5%. The percentage of educated mothers is nonexistent.

Based on this, we can only conclude that if a woman's work in such patriarchal societies is considered a disgrace and an insult to men, it should not be taken as a fundamental factor or a rule to be followed because it diminishes her dignity. It is not an honor for her or an indication of her liberation or progress; rather, it signifies her poverty and the poor estimation of her by men, whether they are brothers or husbands<sup>38</sup>. Even when she enters the workforce, she always tends towards professions that do not conflict with her role at home. As a result, the role of women is almost confined to specific traditional fields such as medicine, education, nursing, administrative work, and office work. They do not lean towards jobs that require management, authority, and leadership. The reason for this is that women do not have sufficient self-confidence to take on such responsibilities because they have not been prepared for them by either the family or society. The latter is primarily responsible for this situation that women in Algerian families suffer from due to male dominance and the traditional view

<sup>36</sup> Same reference.

<sup>37</sup> Arabi (Abdul Qader), *Women between the Weight of Reality and Aspirations for Liberation*, previous reference, p. 39.

<sup>38</sup> Bouchnafati (Bouziane), "In Civilization and Urban Culture in Morocco: A Study on the Construction of Shanty Towns," 1st edition, Publications of Academic and University Dialogue, Mohammedia, Algeria, 1988, p. 145.

of women, considering their role limited to child-rearing, giving birth, and household chores, without the need for education or work, as they are under the control of men.

### **Determinants of patriarchal culture in the Algerian family**

#### **Type of family to which the research sample belongs:**

**Table 06: Distribution of Respondents by Type of Housing**

%	as	Order
66%	132	Single Accommodation
34%	68	With the husband's family
100%	200	Total

The table represents the distribution of female respondents according to the type of residence they live in. It is evident from the recorded results that the highest percentage is represented by the category of respondents residing in separate housing, accounting for 66%. On the other hand, the percentage of women who reported living with their husband's family was estimated at 34%. These data indicate that modern families are now seeking to establish themselves away from large extended family households, as was the case with Algerian families in the past. Previously, husbands would live with their wives and children within the extended family, under the care of their parents and siblings. However, due to changes in social, economic, and even cultural conditions, which have impacted human lives, everyone now prefers to live in separate homes, away from the extended family.

This can be attributed to several reasons, most notably the desire for independence and the avoidance of third-party interference in managing marital affairs. Such interference can lead to conflicts between spouses, which in turn affect the stability between them and within the family itself. Modern families tend to lean towards individual housing, which is a reflection of the overcrowding experienced by large families. The limited space in family homes leads to conflicts and problems among family members. Even though the extended family is considered a school where collective solidarity and social cooperation flourish, given the crises and problems that exist in most households, couples prefer to live separately, away from the extended family, and establish a small nuclear family unit. This is especially true for wives who often feel frustrated by these interferences and disturbances from the husband's family, which often extend to matters such as child-rearing, caring for the husband, household chores, and more. These intrusions limit their freedom in managing their family affairs, which they consider to be their own private matters.

No party should intervene in these matters, regardless of their relationship. On the other hand, the high cost of living, marriage, and housing often leads many young people to accept the idea of living with their parents, while girls do not prefer this idea as it hinders their independence. Living away from parents reduces marital conflicts and ensures family stability, away from their interventions, which often carry biases towards one party or a desire to impose a lifestyle that newly married couples

may not accept. Often, wives are reluctant to live in their husband's parents' house at the beginning of their marital life, but they also do not prefer to continue living in their in-laws' house, regardless of the level of compatibility with them. They want to live in their own kingdom, where they have control over their own house. That is why most families strive to establish separate households, regardless of the additional costs involved.

Despite all the transformations that the Algerian society has witnessed, which have affected the forms of family organization, where the extended family is no longer as prevalent as it used to be, and nuclear families have taken its place, the prevailing social values and norms are still in place, despite economic and urban transformations. This is due to what is now referred to as the "family network" resulting from the clustering of these nuclear families around the parents<sup>39</sup>.

- **Number of family members of the mothers in the research sample:**

**Table 07: Number of family members of respondents**

%	as	Number of brothers and sisters of mothers surveyed
8%	16	Just one
34.5%	99	2 - 5
57.5%	85	6 - 9
100%	200	Total

The corresponding table represents the distribution of respondents based on the number of family members. From the results shown in the table, it can be observed that the highest percentage of responses was estimated at 57.5%, representing the respondents who have between 6 and 9 siblings. This is followed by a percentage of 34.5% for respondents who have between 2 and 5 siblings. Meanwhile, the lowest percentages recorded in the table represent the category of respondents who have only one brother or sister, with a proportion of only 8%.

Through statistical analysis of the aforementioned table, it becomes evident that the majority of Algerian families are large families that contain a significant number of children, due to the reverence given to the concept of procreation. Procreation is considered the primary role expected of women immediately after marriage and is one of the prominent pillars of feminine identity in all its biological, psychological, and social dimensions. When we refer to the primary role, we mean that it is the only role recognized for women by society. The traditional Algerian family places great importance on the procreative role, as having numerous children confers social status upon both the father and the mother, and contributes to their psychological and social stability. In other words, the process of procreation and the extension of lineage are decisive factors in the destiny of the relationship between men and women.

<sup>39</sup> Addi (L'Houari), *The Transformations of Algerian Society, Family and Social Bond in Contemporary Algeria*, La Découverte Editions, 1999, p. 24.



Due to the significant importance of marriage in self-realization, ensuring a better and elevated social status, and securing the future, it was incumbent upon the young woman to succeed in fulfilling her role in the process of procreation. By doing so, she could rid herself of the negative perception surrounding her from the traditional society. Thus, we understand that the position and esteem of a woman are strongly tied to her marital status, which yields the process of procreation. In these societies, a woman is considered a dependent being, defined not by herself but rather by her role as someone's wife. She is a mother, a wife, and in short, she is defined in relation to men. As such, within the confines of traditional circumstances, she cannot live as an independent entity. Neither does she radiate completeness nor is she accepted by society as an individual entity<sup>40</sup>.

Consequently, Algerian women in the past always sought, under societal pressure and amidst various psychological, social, and dimensional factors and variables, to desire more childbirth in order to prove themselves as women and mothers. This is especially because motherhood provides a sense of protection and reassurance about their future, as children become a means to exert pressure on the husband and burden him, preventing him from considering abandonment or divorce. Based on this, we deduce that "procreation is more than just biological reproduction; it is a process intertwined with cultural patterns."<sup>41</sup>

- **Number of children of respondents:**

**Table 08: Distribution of Respondents by Number of Children**

%	as	Number of children
9 %	18	There isn't any
80%	160	Just one
11%	22	2 - 4
100%	200	Total

The corresponding table represents the distribution of respondents according to the number of children. From the results shown in the table, it can be observed that the highest percentage of responses, estimated at 80%, represents the respondents who have only one child. This is followed by a percentage of 11%, representing respondents who have between 2 and 4 children. Meanwhile, the lowest percentages recorded in the table represent the category of respondents who have not been fortunate in having children, with a proportion of only 9%.

<sup>40</sup> Barkat (Halim), previous reference, p. 188.

<sup>41</sup> Abdelazim (Hassani Ibrahim), previous reference.

Through statistical analysis of the table, it becomes evident that Algerian families, after previously adhering to the idea of childbirth and aiming to have a minimum of three children in all households, have undergone a shift. This is due to changes in social dynamics and the role of women. Historically, the social status of women was significantly influenced by their ability to bear children and fulfill the primary role of pregnancy, childbirth, and child-rearing. This role was recognized as the predominant and only accepted role for women in society.

After all these changes, the contemporary woman today is acquiring a new status and importance due to the significant social transformations taking place. While children were previously seen as the sole primary means for ensuring a woman's respect and recognition within society, the prevailing notion now suggests that having a second, third, or more children has become a challenging matter for couples in the family. This is particularly true as the decision to have children in modern societies is subject to social and economic conditions. Consequently, families, or rather couples, have resorted to family planning that aligns with their living standards. This allows for better care and meeting the needs of children, without neglecting another important factor, which is the increasing entry of women into the job market. Women are now more engaged in their professional roles outside the home than within it, especially with the burden of dual roles that weigh heavily on them and cause increasing frustration. This situation makes it challenging for them to balance their roles in motherhood, childbirth, child-rearing, and their professional work. Childbearing becomes less important and more difficult in practical terms worldwide, as women's pursuit of education and involvement in the job market increases. All of these factors have led to the emergence of the stereotypical image of the ideal modern family, characterized by a mother and father with only two children. This image emphasizes the focus on quality of life, birth control, and family planning, where controlling births and managing demographic growth become indicators of progress, well-being, and social development.

### **Analysis of Study Results**

After initially addressing the identification of characteristics of the study sample (the participants' families), we will now attempt to analyze the field-acquired data both statistically and sociologically. This analysis aims to provide a scientific and objective perspective by investigating the perceptions formed by mothers regarding the birth of females. This will be achieved by examining the specific family background that shapes these perceptions concerning the topic of female childbirth. This analysis takes place within the context of challenging the dominant patriarchal culture's influence on the social construction of the family and the value system through the socialization of the mother. From this point, we will endeavor to answer the first hypothesis question through the analysis of statistical tables obtained from the field study, by linking the indicators that analyze and interpret the studied phenomenon, as illustrated in the following tables.

**Table 09: Distribution of female respondents according to their desire in the sex of their firstborn**

%	as	Sex of the firstborn
78.5%	157	male
21.5%	43	female

100%	200	Total
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The corresponding table represents the distribution of participants according to the desired gender of their firstborn. From the recorded results in the table, we observe that the highest percentage is among participants who prefer to give birth to male infants in their first pregnancy, accounting for 78.5%. On the other hand, we notice that the percentage of participants who prefer their firstborn to be female is estimated at 21.5%. Based on these statistics, we understand that the majority of women currently prefer their firstborn child to be male. This indicates that male-oriented culture is still deeply rooted in the mindset of Algerian society, despite the progress and development achieved by contemporary communities. The collective consciousness continues to dominate the thinking of modern women, considering that the issue of preferring the gender of the newborn is an ancient social issue that has been solidified and associated with the Algerian cultural heritage, depicting the ideal stereotypical image of women who give birth to males, while the inferior image is associated with those who give birth to females.

Reproduction has been a prominent pillar of femininity in all its biological, psychological, and social dimensions. Along with it, women's desire and eagerness for reproduction have been ingrained in various circumstances, societies, and eras. The underlying reasons behind this are multiple and intertwined, ranging from the desire to prove one's existence as an individual or as a female, to the sense of motherhood and fear of loneliness and the betrayal of time. Children represent protection, reassurance, and a means to exert pressure on the spouse and burden him, so he doesn't consider abandoning or divorcing the woman.

The presence of children in the family creates deep personal bonds between spouses that are stronger than the mother-child relationship. Therefore, for couples, having children is seen as a testament to their love rather than a substitute for it. Before the birth of a child, the relationship between spouses is strengthened, consolidated, and brought closer together<sup>42</sup>. Thus, procreation is one of the most influential factors in family stability, and in marital happiness, the birth of male children enhances a woman's status and increases her respect from her husband's family and society.

The cultural preference for male offspring is a cultural heritage that has been reproduced despite the changes in values and social dynamics within society. Women, despite their level of awareness, see the birth of male children as a means to fulfill themselves and prove their worth in fulfilling their reproductive role, especially in front of their husbands, families, and society as a whole. It is as if male offspring are a means to complete their social identity, particularly since males carry the family name, preserve its lineage and heritage. On the other hand, females are considered honorary guests in their own families until they go to their husband's family. Hence, we can only say that a woman's fertility is one of the essential qualities that elevate her status, as her fate within the traditional family is linked to the biological role that complements her femininity by directly giving birth after marriage. Her position within the family is further solidified and respected through her demographic contribution. The more male children she bears, the better her situation in her husband's family.

It is as if male offspring are a means to complete a woman's social identity, especially since males carry the family name, preserve its lineage and heritage. On the other hand, females are considered

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<sup>42</sup> Dominique- Lutz, op.cit. P18.

honorary guests in their own families until they go to their husband's family. From here, we can only say that a woman's fertility is one of the essential qualities that elevate her status, as her fate within the traditional family is linked to the biological role that complements her femininity by directly giving birth after marriage. Her position within the family is further solidified and respected through her demographic contribution. The more male children she bears, the better her situation in her husband's family. The preference for not giving birth to females is primarily attributed to traditional cultural values that still dominate the minds of many families. They view females as a burden on the family and in constant need of protection from her own family to maintain the family's honor and reputation even after her marriage<sup>43</sup>. This is one of the main reasons why mothers prefer to have more male children than females, especially the firstborn, as they are seen as protectors of the family and they compensate for the absence of the father. They are expected to become a source of power and control, representing strength for the mother, father, and the entire family.

**Table 10: Distribution of respondents according to the reason for their desire for the sex of their firstborn**

%	as	Reason	Sex
22.8%	36	Ensures its future	If male
29.7%	47	He takes responsibility and helps his parents	
47.5%	75	Enhances the status of women and increases their attachment to their husbands and family	
100%	158	Subtotal	
21.4%	9	Remembrance only benefits himself	If she is a female
50%	21	The girl is more tender and kind	
28.6%	12	To help her mother at home.	
100%	42	Subtotal	
100%	200	Total	

The previous table represents the distribution of respondents according to their reasons for desiring the gender of their offspring, with a higher percentage of women expressing a preference for male children compared to females. The majority of women who preferred males cited the main reason as enhancing their status in the eyes of their husbands and families, with a percentage of 47%. Additionally, we observed that 29.7% of the respondents who desired male children did so because they believed that a male child would assume responsibilities and assist their parents in the future.

<sup>43</sup> Hatem (Mona), Reasons for Resorting to Gender Testing, Journal of Social Sciences, Issue 03, 2010, pp. 89-90.

Lastly, 22.8% of the respondents stated that their preference for male children was based on securing their own future. On the other hand, the remaining group of women who preferred female children had varying factors and reasons, with the highest percentage, estimated at 50%, indicating that they believed females or daughters are more affectionate and empathetic towards them and their parents compared to male children. Furthermore, 28.6% of the respondents believed that daughters would be a support system and could be relied upon for household chores in the future. Lastly, the lowest percentage was among respondents who stated that there was no advantage to having male children because males would only benefit themselves, totaling 21.4%.

Based on these results and the statistical data as mentioned in the previous table, it can be inferred that the majority of women prefer male offspring over females. This indicates that male-oriented culture still persists in the perceptions of Algerian society, particularly among women, specifically mothers. For them, giving birth to a male child is seen as a means of self-realization and gaining the confidence of their husbands. When a woman gives birth to her first male child, she feels a sense of security and family stability. Additionally, she is accorded greater respect from her husband's family and society in general.

All of this is attributed to the fact that societal culture, whether traditional or modern, is governed by interpretations of religious, cultural, and even ritualistic beliefs that emphasize the importance of male offspring. The patriarchal system established this marital rule based on a subordinate view of the female sex. Therefore, it is natural and also a matter of tradition to find Algerian women compelled to give birth to males to the extent that their marital destiny, relationship, and especially their social status in the eyes of their husbands and in-laws are jeopardized. Their stability is often linked to the issue of giving birth to male children, particularly concerning the future of the family and ensuring its continuity, as it depends on the male who will assume responsibility in the future, being the protector and carrier of the family name. Thus, it guarantees the woman's future within the family's embrace, adhering to the customs, principles, and culture of society. This societal perception related to the preference for males over females will transform into a traditional social behavior that exerts invisible pressure and violence, becoming a concern in the lives of Algerian women.

From another perspective, when talking about a group of women who prefer to have female offspring, they consider them to be more nurturing and compassionate towards their parents compared to males. On the other hand, there is a group of women who see the birth of females as a means to assist them in household chores. Many women rely on their daughters for such tasks. Raising a girl in this manner aims to prepare her from a young age for domestic goals and provide her with religious education that includes moral development. She receives a set of rules that all fall within the same framework, which is preparing her for married life and establishing her own family in the future<sup>44</sup>. This can be seen as a reproduction of the social position experienced by the mother as an initial experience with her siblings in the family. Lastly, the remaining group of women sees males and the problems and risks associated with their upbringing as not benefiting them. Once they grow up, they will be preoccupied with establishing their own personal lives. Therefore, males, in the eyes of women, are merely a burden as they will not benefit from them in the future; they will only serve themselves. This also represents a reproduction of the social position experienced by the woman as an initial experience with her siblings in the family.

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<sup>44</sup> Samid (Jamal), *Menopause for Men and Women*, 1st edition, Hala Publishing and Distribution, Egypt, 2004, p. 33.

**Table 11: Shows the extent of the impact of parents' treatment of the mother in her childhood previously compared to her male brothers and its relationship to the desire of the mother woman today to have a certain sex (male - female)**

Total	Equal treatment	Normal Treatment	Inferior treatment	The mother's desire to have a child (male or female)
157 78.5 %	0%	39 67.2%	118 83.1%	Male
43 21.5 %	0%	19 32.8%	24 16.9%	Female
200 100 %	0%	58 100 %	142 100 %	Total

The accompanying table represents the mother's desire and preference for the gender of the newborn and its relationship to the way her parents treat her compared to her male siblings. From the overall trend of the table, it becomes clear that the highest percentage is recorded among respondents who wish to have male offspring, with a percentage of 78.5%. On the other hand, we notice that the percentage of respondents who wish to have female offspring is estimated at 21.5%. When introducing the independent variable represented by the way parents treat the woman when she was a child compared to her male siblings, we observe that 83.1% of respondents who wish to have male offspring experienced inferior treatment from their families compared to their male siblings. In contrast, 67.2% of respondents from the same group reported that their parents' treatment of them was normal compared to their male siblings. However, we note that 32.8% of respondents who wish to have female offspring reported that their treatment by parents was normal, compared to 16.9% from the same group who experienced inferior treatment from their parents compared to their male siblings.

Based on these data, we can infer that the preference for male offspring among the surveyed mothers is influenced by their past family experiences, as well as the impact of historical perceptions and representations of masculinity and femininity on their reproductive behavior and desire for the gender of the fetus. This indicates that many mothers grew up in families that favored male offspring, while others grew up in families that did not differentiate between males and females. This situation has a significant reflection and clear impact on their perceptions of female reproduction and their social status. The treatment of males within the Algerian family differs completely from the treatment of females. The upbringing experiences of these women in their families, where they witnessed the clear differences in treatment, decision-making authority, and privileges granted to males over females, have ingrained in their minds a contrasting view of girls compared to boys. Consequently, we observe in each analysis of these hypotheses that women always attempt to reproduce the position they grew up in, even without intending to do so. This falls within the realm of collective consciousness that influences individuals' behaviors, desires, and actions.

For this reason, we observe a high percentage of surveyed women who have experienced inferior or negative treatment from their families desiring to have male offspring. They are aware that the demeaning perception of females will continue to haunt them from birth until they settle in their husband's home. This is evidence of the clear gender discrimination, whether in preference or treatment. This situation and these existing perceptions can be attributed to the deep-rooted traditional culture in Algerian society, which is built on the basis that the male society is superior to the female society. Our conclusion at this point is that our perceptions of a particular matter stem from our concepts, beliefs, and values acquired during the process of socialization within a framework that judges things and different situations based on this reference. In fact, the association of discrimination between male and female has been prevalent since ancient times, starting with the narratives and myths explaining the story of Adam and Eve's expulsion from paradise. Despite the fact that the Quran equates them in sin and does not differentiate Adam from Eve, who constitutes the structure of his existence, the sin of Adam and his expulsion from paradise were considered a wisdom and a "construction of the world". However, the issue of preference still persists, especially in Algerian society, as in other Arab societies. The treatment within the Algerian family varies depending on gender, and the preference in treatment is more directed towards males than females.

The female receives a special type of treatment, not out of love for her, but rather out of fear for her values, morals, honor, and reputation. This is because family values focus more on raising girls based on a set of prevailing ethical and religious standards in traditional society. The girl is obligated to adhere to a set of behavioral patterns and behaviors that she must follow in order to become a gentle, shy, obedient person without any curiosity towards the outside world. From a young age, the Algerian girl grows up in an environment surrounded by a set of values and traditions that cannot be deviated from. She is constrained by the necessity of obedience, compliance, and conformity to the demands of her family members without objection, and she accepts and submits to the superiority of males over her. For these reasons, Algerian women always seek and aspire to have male offspring in order to avoid repeating the experiences they have lived through with their daughters, especially since male dominance still remains deeply ingrained in collective consciousness, despite the progress and advancement of women in all levels of social life.

Women play a fundamental role in building this society, so when we talk about changing the reality of the society and its cultural structure, we can only link that to the change in the reality of women. Arab women represent one of the challenges of this society, as confirmed by Hisham Cherabi when he says, "I am not exaggerating when I say that it is tragic for a female to be born in our society. No matter how much we try to hide or justify this reality, the truth is glaring in front of us, and it slaps us in the face every day. The Arab society cannot change as long as Arab women are in their current position because they are the ones who shape the Arab individual."<sup>45</sup>

**Table 12: Distribution of female respondents according to the reason for their treatment of their male children better than females**

%	As	Why males are treated better than females
30.8%	49	Takes responsibility for his family in the absence of the father

<sup>45</sup> Al-Jazarawi (Lina), previous reference, p. 206.

32.7%	52	He takes care of his parents and stays with them unlike the girl
21.4%	34	The difference in society's view of the sexes
15.1%	24	Religion differentiates them in inheritance
100%	159	Total

The table above represents the reasons that drive families to differentiate between genders in terms of treatment. It is evident from the table that the highest percentage recorded among the respondents who stated that males are treated better than females is attributed to the fact that these males will take care of their parents as they grow older and stay with them, unlike females who will establish their lives in the households of others through marriage, with a percentage of 32.7%. This is followed by the responses of respondents who believe that males are treated better than females because they will assume the responsibility of the family in the absence of the father, with a percentage of 30.8%. On the other hand, we observe that the percentage of respondents who believe that the difference in societal perception of genders is the reason for differential treatment between genders is estimated at 21.4%. The lowest percentage recorded in the table is 15.1%, which represents the respondents who see the issue of inheritance, which is governed by Islamic law and gives a larger share to males, as the reason for males being treated better than females.

The phenomenon of male discrimination over females can be attributed to several societal, cultural, and religious factors. As previously mentioned in our previous analyses, the preference for male offspring within a family is seen as an opportunity for marriage continuity and marital happiness. Additionally, a father's success and the strength and status of the family are often measured by the number of children they have. The same applies to mothers, who feel security, tranquility, and stability within the marital home. It can be said that having male children in a family protects many families from fragmentation and reduces the prevalence of divorce. Male offspring are seen as a guarantee for the family's continuity, preserving its name and legacy, and stepping in to fulfill the father's role in cases of disability or death. They also provide economic support to the family, either by assisting the father in his work, contributing to the family's economy, or taking care of the parents in times of illness and old age, among other reasons.

All these factors drive families to idolize and provide special care and preferential treatment to male children over females. Males are expected to take care of their parents as they age, get married, and assume the responsibility of caring for their own parents, unlike females who tend to establish their own families away from their parents. This leads parents to have higher expectations and aspirations for male children as they are seen as protectors in their old age. Therefore, regardless of the female's position within the family, the male child remains the preferred one, receiving better treatment. All of this has reinforced the male's status over the female within the family. After all, males are considered the providers, leaders, and caretakers, responsible for establishing and managing the family's affairs, even if they are financially poor.

The woman has been exempted from these roles and responsibilities, even if she is capable. Society, law, customs, traditions, religion, culture, and history have assigned these tasks and positions to men,



placing them in a higher status than women. The nature of women, considered weak and unable to compete with men in the workforce or other fields, has led to the restriction of their roles to serving the household and obeying their husbands. All of this has elevated the position and role of men over women. It has become evident that males hold superiority in most societies governed by a patriarchal culture. The prevailing religious beliefs in such households view women as inferior to men due to the Islamic religion granting men a larger share in inheritance compared to women. This implies that women receive half of what men inherit, based on this foundation. It is precisely this belief that considers women as less valuable than men, leading to differential treatment. However, it should be noted that this judgment has religious implications and other justifications, unrelated to determining a woman's worth based on the size of the inheritance she receives. The Islamic religion, in particular, does not differentiate between genders. It has emphasized in numerous verses and hadiths that all people are equal. It asserts that women hold an equal status to men in all aspects of social life, both in this world and in the Hereafter.

From this, we can only say that the misconceptions about women and traditional religious beliefs that exist in Arab societies and specifically in Algerian society are still active. As a result, women receive less respectful treatment compared to men. This gender-based discrimination is an expression of the dominance of the male inclination, which has persisted throughout history, generation after generation, in families governed by patriarchal culture. "The negative image of women that is prevalent among us is the one that was depicted by philosophers since the beginning of philosophy in ancient Greece. It found fertile ground among us to the extent that it assumed a religious dimension and became a sacred idea. This is evident in the works of Greek philosophical giants such as Socrates, Plato, and Aristotle, where their ideas became part of the philosophical heritage that spread to the Christian and Islamic worlds, finding great acceptance and religious support.<sup>46</sup>" This indeed confirms that "social representations are the continuous flow of the image of life... The products of our perceptions are not the result of some ideas that occupy individuals' attention, but rather remnants of our past lives. They are acquired habits, preconceived judgments, unconscious biases, and, in short, everything that shapes our moral happiness.<sup>47</sup>"

**Table 13: Shows the extent to which the opinion of decision-makers in the family affects the mother's desire to have the sex of the newborn**

Total	Grand ma	Men (Father and brothers)	Brot hers	Father	Parent s	Decision -making power within the family Wish Sex
157 78.5 %	1 50%	64 73.6%	16 100 %	29 67.4%	47 90.4%	Male

<sup>46</sup> Abdul Fattah (Imam), Plato and Women, previous reference, p. 82.

<sup>47</sup> Durkheim (Emile), Sociology and Philosophy, op cit, p. 113.

43 21.5 %	1 50%	23 26.4%	/	14 32.6%	5 9.6%	Female
200 100 %	2 100 %	83 100 %	16 100 %	43 100 %	55 100 %	Total

The table above represents the relationship between a mother's desire and preference for the gender of her offspring and the delegation of decision-making authority within her family. The general trend observed from the table shows that the highest percentage recorded among the surveyed women is 78.5% who expressed a desire to have male children, while the percentage of women wishing to have female children is noted as 21.5%. When introducing the independent variable, which is the decision-making authority, we observe that 100% of the women wishing to have male children delegate the decision-making authority within their families to their brothers, compared to 90% of the women from the same group who believe that decision-making authority lies with the parents, and 73.6% of the women who believe that decision-making authority lies with the men, whether it be their father or brothers. On the other hand, the lowest percentages are attributed to the women who believe that decision-making authority lies with their grandmothers, accounting for 50%. Conversely, we find that 50% of the women wishing to have female children perceive their grandmothers as the sole decision-makers, compared to 32.6% from the same group who attribute decision-making authority within their families to their fathers. Additionally, we note a percentage of 26.4% among the surveyed women who indicated that decision-making authority lies with their brothers. Finally, within the same group, we record a percentage of 9.6% representing the women who believe that decision-making authority within their families lies with the parents.

Through these percentages, we observe a direct relationship between a woman's preference for male offspring and the decision-making authority within the family. The more decision-making authority is delegated to male siblings, the stronger the woman's desire to have male children. This is evidence of male dominance and the important role that males play in the societal perception of Algerian culture. They hold a significant social position within the general social structure, in terms of role distribution, rights, duties, and authority<sup>48</sup>. Consequently, the desire to have male children is linked to the male's position and status, which helps us understand the social behavior of women in such situations. It prioritizes the decisions of male family members due to their influence and authority within the social relationships that bind the family together.

From this, we can infer that in such families governed by a patriarchal culture that disregards individual decisions, procreation becomes both a biological and intentional behavior that fulfills a collective demand for the extension of the family lineage. The desire to have a child is not solely the wish of one person but rather the desire of parents as individuals, as spouses, the desire of siblings, the desire of grandparents. In many cases, the pressure from the family environment is intense, with questions like "Why haven't you given birth yet?" or "Why haven't you married yet?" And it doesn't stop there; the woman may also be questioned about why she settles for a small number of children.

<sup>48</sup> Mohammed Atef (Ghaith), Dictionary of Sociology, previous reference, p. 472.

It is worth mentioning a specific example that illustrates this idea: If a woman has four children, many people would say to her, "Have a fifth child."

The social status of males grants them an important position within the family structure, empowering them with decision-making authority and a dominant role over the family, whether as fathers or brothers. Consequently, the social position of women is also determined by the culture of the society, which is primarily derived from values and social customs that may not vary significantly across generations within a particular community. This demonstrates that power dynamics prevailing in patriarchal societies may allow women to obtain a small share of power and privileges, but they remain subject to male concepts and methods. If this occurs, men perceive it as an exception or deviation from the prevailing norms<sup>49</sup>.

**Table 14: Distribution of female respondents according to their desire to have more males**

%	as	Have more males
87.5%	175	Yes
12.5%	25	No
100%	200	Total

The table below represents the distribution of respondents according to their desire to have more male children. Based on the recorded results in the table, we observe that the highest percentage is found among respondents who wish to have more male children, reaching 87.5%. Conversely, the percentage of respondents who do not desire to have more male children is estimated at -12.5%. From these results, we understand that the culture of desiring male offspring still dominates Algerian society in general and women in particular. Therefore, most women prefer to have more male children, believing that males are their support in life and the ones who grant them the social status they aspire to through society's perception of them and the view of their husband's family as well as their own family. In the prevailing societal perception, a woman who gives birth to females is seen with a diminished and inferior gaze, as traditional culture still influences the minds of many families, considering the female gender as a burden on the family and in need of constant protection from her own family to preserve the honor and reputation of the family even after her marriage<sup>50</sup>. As a result, she often suffers from humiliation or mistreatment from her husband and his family.

This situation makes a mother in a patriarchal culture perceive giving birth to a male child as a path to self-realization and a way to gain confidence for herself and her husband. By having a large number of male children, she becomes the center of attention and a source of strength in the eyes of others. The husband feels proud and asserts his identity and social status through the abundance of male offspring. The male child carries the family name and preserves its lineage and legacy, unlike the

<sup>49</sup> Hawso (Asmat), previous reference, p. 109.

<sup>50</sup> Hatem (Mona), Reasons for Resorting to Gender Testing, previous reference, p. 89.

daughter who is considered a guest of honor in her own family but quickly goes to her husband's family to reproduce the social image she experienced within her own family.

Due to the prevailing situation in families governed by a paternalistic culture in Algerian society, women constantly strive to give birth to more males in order to renew their status, position, and assert their respect within the family, particularly through the frequency of their childbirth. As a result, mothers who give birth to females are often threatened with divorce or forced marriages. On the other hand, wives who are blessed with male children experience a tangible improvement in their status within the family. However, the scope of their authority remains confined to the household, where they oversee domestic affairs and internal family production. Nevertheless, this has negative repercussions in many aspects. Among the negative effects of the culture of desiring male offspring, which impacts society in general and women in particular, it has a detrimental effect on women physically and psychologically. As a result of this culture, women develop a hatred for giving birth to females, and the consequences of this culture extend beyond the psychological level to physical and social harm, in which females become the victims.

**Table 14: Distribution of female respondents according to the reason for their desire to have more males**

%	As	The reason why a woman - mother - wants to have males
6.9%	12	Ensures safety and stability in the marital home
5.1%	9	Gains a place in the family and strengthens your relationship with the husband
6.9%	12	He takes care of his parents when he grows up
18.9%	33	Bears the last name
62.3%	109	All
100%	175	Total

The corresponding table represents the distribution of respondents according to their reasons for desiring to give birth to more male children. Based on the recorded results in the table, we observe that the majority of women who desire to have more male children attribute their primary reason to the fact that the more male children they have, the more socially significant the woman becomes within her family. Her relationship with her husband is strengthened, ensuring stability and security in married life, considering that males are the ones who will take care of their parents in old age, and their abundance will preserve the family name and lineage. This accounts for 62.3% of the respondents. The remaining percentages are distributed among the aforementioned reasons, with 18% of the respondents preferring to have more male children because, as mentioned earlier, males

preserve the family name, lineage, and heritage. Additionally, 6.9% of the respondents believe that having male children guarantees security and stability in married life, protecting them from divorce or abandonment. This belief is rooted in the prevailing beliefs, customs, and traditions within patriarchal families and the societal perception that determines the social status of women within their own families and their husbands' families. Naturally, this boosts their self-confidence, ensures their stability in the marital home, and secures their rights. The lowest percentage recorded in the table is 5.1% of the respondents who believe that giving birth to male children is the reason for them to acquire an important position within their family and strengthen their relationship with their husband. We can say, hence, that cultural motivations, in general, govern Algerian society and impose on families, particularly mothers, the desire to give birth to more male children because it represents an opportunity for the continuation of marriage and marital happiness. The success of fatherhood and the strength and status of the family are measured by the number of offspring. Similarly, mothers feel security, tranquility, and stability in the marital home. It can be argued that having male children in the family protects many families from disintegration and reduces the prevalence of divorce. Therefore, we can conclude that procreation is one of the most influential factors in family stability, and the happiness of marriage is enhanced by the birth of male children, which increases the woman's status and respect from the husband's family and society.

**Table 15: Distribution of female respondents according to their desire to have more females**

%	as	Having more females
15.5%	31	Yes
84.5%	169	No
100%	200	Total

The corresponding table represents the distribution of respondents according to their desire to have more female children. Based on the recorded results in the table, we observe that the highest percentage is among the respondents who do not desire to have more female children, accounting for 84.5% of the respondents. On the other hand, we notice that the percentage of respondents who desire to have more female children is 15.5%.

From these results and in comparison with the previous table regarding the desire of women to have more male children, we understand that the cultural preference for having male children over female children is still deeply rooted in the collective perception of Algerian society. Therefore, the majority of women do not prefer to have more female children, believing that a woman who gives birth to female children will be subjected to humiliation or mistreatment by her husband, his family, and society as a whole. Traditional cultural values continue to influence the minds of many families who view females as a burden on the family and in need of constant protection by their family to preserve the honor and reputation of the family even after marriage<sup>51</sup>. Therefore, there is a greater fear for

<sup>51</sup> Hatem (Mona), previous reference, p. 89.

females, and it is necessary to monitor and control their behavior because the reputation and honor of the family are linked to females.

Indeed, it confirms precisely that there are psychological and emotional connotations encompassed within the value of masculinity concerning femininity in Algerian culture. Until recently, femininity was associated with weakness in the Algerian environment. The concept of 'honor' has even been attributed to women, as their prevailing conditions required safeguarding, similar to how precious jewelry and valuable possessions are protected. Moreover, the concept of 'guardianship' gradually shifted towards females when they lack a guardian or sponsor, or when females possess the right to be taken care of by men<sup>52</sup>.

Often, women who give birth to females in Algerian families face social stigmas and pressures, which can lead to divorce. As we previously indicated in the previous table, males are considered a gain for the family and a source of social security. Similarly, mothers feel security, tranquility, and stability in the marital home. This proves that the birth of male children in the patriarchal system protects many families from disintegration and reduces the prevalence of divorce. As a result, the mother's status and respect within the family are enhanced by giving birth to more male children. Thus, a woman who only gives birth to females remains in a vulnerable position, facing the risk of divorce or being married off by force. On the other hand, a wife who gives birth to males experiences tangible improvements in her position within the family. However, the scope of her authority remains limited to the household, where she supervises domestic matters and the internal production of the family.

**Table 16: Shows the extent to which the opinion of decision-making authority within the family affects the mother's desire to have more males**

Total	Grand ma	men (Father and brothers)	Brothers	father	Parents	Decision authority within Family The desire to More males
175 87.5 %	1 50%	84 95.4%	16 100%	34 79.1%	40 76.9%	Yes
25 12.5 %	1 50%	3 4.6%	0%	9 20.9%	12 23.1%	No
200 100 %	2 100%	87 100%	16 100%	43 100%	52 100%	Total

<sup>52</sup> Ashrati (Suleiman), previous reference, p. 254.

This table represents the distribution of respondents based on their desire to have more male children and the decision-making authority within the family. From the overall trend of the table, we observe that the highest percentage is among the respondents who desire to have more male children, accounting for 87.5% of the respondents. Conversely, we notice that the percentage of respondents who do not desire to have more male children is 12.5%. When introducing the independent variable representing the decision-making authority within the family, we observe that 100% of the respondents who wish to have male children attribute the decision-making authority within their families to their brothers. Similarly, 95.4% of respondents from the same group believe that the decision-making authority within their families rests with men, whether it is their father or male siblings. Furthermore, 79.1% of respondents from the same group state that the decision-making authority within their families lies with their father, while 76.9% indicate that the parents are the decision-makers within the family. The lowest percentages are recorded among respondents who believe that their grandmother holds decision-making authority within the family, accounting for 50%.

On the other hand, a percentage of approximately 50% of the surveyed women who desire to have female children indicated that the grandmother alone holds decision-making authority, compared to 23.1% of the same group who attribute decision-making authority within their families to their parents. Additionally, we observe a percentage of 20.9% among the respondents who stated that decision-making authority within their families rests with the father. Finally, in the same vein, we record a percentage estimated at 4.6%, representing the respondents who perceive decision-making authority within their families to be held by the male figures, i.e., the father and brothers together.

The aforementioned data reveals that the prevailing pattern in the management of Algerian patriarchal families, in terms of decision-making authority, influences women's desire to have more male children. In patriarchal families where male dominance prevails, women are inclined to desire more male children due to the social status and position held by men within the family. This grants them control over the family and positions them as a source of power and decision-making at the head of the household. It is well-known that the Algerian family is an extended family structure where multiple generations coexist, governed by the paternal system. The father and grandfather hold spiritual leadership within the family community, overseeing the management of collective heritage to maintain the cohesion of the household community. In this system, the male element is accorded primary status, while women occupy a secondary and marginalized position socially<sup>53</sup>. Additionally, the Algerian family is characterized by a strict system in which the head of the family exercises absolute authority over all family members, who are obliged to submit to this authority<sup>54</sup>.

Regarding internal family relationships, fathers in the past used to fulfill their familial roles based on dominance and dictatorship. However, with the social and cultural mobility experienced by contemporary society, children have developed a set of ideas, opinions, and values that differ from those on which their fathers were raised. This has brought about a change in the model of the relationship between fathers and children, shifting from a relationship of submission and dominance to a relationship of dialogue. Consequently, the liberating or democratic model has emerged within the family, replacing the authoritarian approach that prevailed in traditional families.

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<sup>53</sup> Butfunushat (Mustafa), *The Algerian Family: Evolution and Characteristics*, previous reference, p. 37.

<sup>54</sup> Rassam (Amal), *Social Studies on Women in the Arab World*, previous reference, p. 262.

Despite these transformations that have affected the structural framework of the Algerian family, the patriarchal system still governs both the traditional and modern models. It represents a hybrid social formation resulting from the transition from a traditional system to a modern one without completing the process of transformation or transition definitively. Thus, it embodies values of submission, dominance, subordination, and authority. Most family relationships operate under paternal dominance, where the father exercises authority over the children, the husband over the wife, and the brother over the sister<sup>55</sup>. Accordingly, we can conclude that decision-making authority always belongs to the male figure, regardless of his position or status within the family, whether as a father, brother, or even a husband. Consequently, this factor always drives women to give birth to more male children, thus reproducing the image she herself experienced, consciously or unconsciously, and succumbing to the collective consciousness derived from traditional culture, which prioritizes males over females in all areas that govern the family's rules and decisions.

**Table 17: Shows the extent to which the mother woman is affected by her position within her family in the past, as well as the extent to which she is affected by the quality of her parents' treatment compared to her male siblings on her perceptions of the subject of childbearing**

Total	6 - 9	2 - 5	one brother	Number of brothers (males) Feeling of high status
149 74.5 %	32 86.5 %	112 73.2%	5 50%	In the case of most of the children are males
51 25.5 %	5 13.5 %	41 26.8%	5 50%	Equally
200 100 %	37 100 %	153 100 %	10 100 %	Total

This table represents the distribution of respondents based on the number of male siblings they have and their perception of having a higher status if they give birth to a majority of male children. From the overall trend of the table, it is evident that the highest percentage, reaching 74.5%, represents the respondents who feel a higher status if they give birth to mostly male children, compared to a percentage of 25.5% of respondents who feel a higher status when the number of male and female children is equal. When introducing the independent variable, represented by the number of siblings, we observe that 86.5% of respondents who feel a higher status if they give birth to mostly male children have a range of 6 to 9 male siblings, compared to 73.2% of respondents from the same group whose male siblings range from 2 to 5. Finally, we recorded a percentage estimated at -50% from the same group, representing the respondents who have only one male sibling. We also found that 50% of respondents who feel a higher status when the number of male and female children is equal and have one male sibling, compared to a percentage of 26.8% from the same group whose male siblings

<sup>55</sup> Hamdawi (Mohammed), *Women between Family and Society, Dualism and Moral Violence*, previous reference, 1998, p. 26.



range from 2 to 5. Finally, the percentage of respondents from the same group whose male siblings range from 6 to 9 was 13.5%.

Through these previous statistical analyses, it becomes evident to us that the sense of importance for a woman increases when she gives birth to a greater number of males compared to those who give birth to an equal number of males and females. This variable is greatly influenced by the number of her male siblings. The more male siblings a woman has, the more she feels a high and important status when she gives birth to many males. On the other hand, we find that a woman who gives birth to an equal number of males and females and does not have a large number of male siblings will not feel her high and important status. This is also evidence of the dominance of male culture on women's perceptions of reproduction.

This latter aspect, the mother, glorifies reproduction and especially the birth of males, which grants her an important status and earns her symbolic value. This status is associated primarily with the number of males she has given birth to, as they represent support for her and a means to ensure her stability. It becomes a tool of power in her hands, which she utilizes for her own benefit to control and exert pressure on her husband, her family, and particularly her husband's family. This is especially true if the values in the social structure are characterized by continuity resulting from individuals representing them since they guide and direct them towards achieving the things and goals they set in their lives. Therefore, we can say that this situation is nothing more than an expression of collective consciousness of society and the environment in which the girl grew up. She will seek to reproduce and transmit it through what is known as an educational culture based on pure masculine principles. It is the result of patterns of thinking, feeling, and behavior that are distinct from individuals themselves and forcibly imposed on them. It forms a different condition from the individual selves that constitute it. This is the social thought that "Durkheim" introduced, making the individual subordinate to the community. In other words, collective consciousness is an inevitable product of culture, which outlines patterns of thinking, feeling, and behavior. Accordingly, culture outlines the social phenomena that individuals practice automatically because it intervenes in their selves, becoming an important part of their psychological fabric as it is external to them, preceding their existence, just as the father precedes our existence, imposing its authority on us, and culture thus imposes its obligation and coercion, enhancing this with methods of dominance.

"Parental culture" inevitably works to strengthen the authority of collective consciousness, ensuring a state of compliance with it and preventing individuals from deviating from it. Here, masculinity and femininity are equal in submission, but relatively so. While females are subjected to male authority, males are subjected to the authority of higher-status males. This certainly varies from one society to another, according to the principle of relativity<sup>56</sup>.

**Table 18: Shows the extent to which the mother woman is affected by her position within her family in the past, as well as the extent to which she is affected by the quality of her parents' treatment of her compared to her siblings and daughters on her perceptions of the subject of childbearing**

Total	6 - 9	2 - 5	One sister	Number of sisters (females)
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<sup>56</sup> Al-Nouri (Aqeel), "Characteristics of Parental Culture," previous reference.

				Feeling of high status
149 74.5 %	23 71.9 %	121 74.7%	5 83.3%	Most of them are males
51 25.5 %	9 28.1 %	41 25.3%	1 16.7%	Equally
200 100 %	32 100 %	162 100 %	6 100 %	Total

This table represents the distribution of the studies according to the number of female siblings and their perception of high status when giving birth to multiple males. From the overall trend of the table, it is evident that the highest percentage, reaching 74.5%, represents the proportion of participants who feel a high status when they give birth to mostly male children compared to 25.5% of participants who feel a high status when they give birth to an equal number of males and females.

When introducing the independent variable, represented by the number of siblings, we observe that 83.3% of the participants who feel a high status when they give birth to mostly male children have a number of siblings ranging from 6 to 9 males, compared to 74.7% of participants from the same trend whose number of male siblings ranges from 2 to 5. Finally, we record a percentage of 71.9% for participants in the same trend who have only one sister, whereas 28.1% of participants who have only one sister feel a high status when they give birth to an equal number of males and females compared to 25.3% from the same trend whose number of siblings ranges from 2 to 5. Lastly, the percentage of participants from the same trend, whose number of siblings ranges from 6 to 9 sisters, is 16.7%.

The results of this table reinforce the validity of the findings in the previous table regarding the number of female siblings and their relationship to the sense of importance when giving birth to more males. Thus, the woman's sense of importance and status decreases as she possesses fewer male siblings. Conversely, as the number of female siblings increases, her sense of high status diminishes when compared to giving birth to a larger number of females compared to males.

As previously mentioned, these results complement, support, and confirm the previous table, which demonstrates how the mother encourages feminine feelings of submission and disappointment as a result of social upbringing. Social upbringing plays a significant role in transmitting patterns of behavior and thinking within a society from one generation to another through manipulation. Cultural norms are passed on at the moment of satisfying individual instincts and needs. Thus, social oppression is self-imposed due to our influence from the oppression of our ancestors towards our parents.

Under the current historical circumstances, overshadowed by the oppressive legacy of the past and the submissive present, a male-dominated culture prevailed with its selfishness, dominance, and utilitarian opportunism. Consequently, women have lost a great deal of their freedom and their treatment as fully entitled and valued human beings. Their consciousness has been blurred by their free human essence and rights, leaving them torn and suffering a painful human dilemma between seeking their individual identity and the male-oriented society's desire to dissolve it into the collective social identity and herd culture. In this culture, women are relegated to the role of guardians and

protectors of male economic, political, and sexual achievements, confirming the image of the mother and the subordination of women in general. It ensures their obedience to men<sup>57</sup>. Whenever a woman deviates from the established social patriarchal system, its hierarchical power structure, and the rules set by men, she deserves punishment. All women should fear what happens to some of them, so they adhere to the path imposed upon them<sup>58</sup>.

**Table 19: Table showing the type of treatment received by the mother in her family compared to her male brothers in the past and the extent of its impact on the way she receives her male child compared to the female**

<b>Total</b>	<b>Equal treatment</b>	<b>Normal Transaction</b>	<b>Inferior treatment</b>	<b>How parents are treated compared With males Reception of the male newborn</b>
168 90.3 %	0%	55 94.8%	113 88.3%	<b>Greater pleasure</b>
14 7.5 %	0%	3 5.2%	11 8.6%	<b>Less pleasure</b>
4 2.2 %	0%	0%	4 3.1%	<b>Same amount of pleasure</b>
200 100 %	0%	58 100 %	128 100 %	<b>Total</b>

The previous table represents the distribution of participants according to the way their parents treated them compared to their male siblings and the reception of a male newborn. From the overall trend of the table, it becomes clear that the highest percentage, which reached 90.3%, represents the participants who received the male newborn with great joy compared to the 7.5% of participants who received the male newborn with less joy. The lowest percentage is found among the participants who received the male newborn with the same joy if the newborn was female, with only 2.2%. When introducing the independent variable represented by the parents' treatment compared to males, it can be observed that 83.3% of participants who received the male newborn with great joy receive normal treatment compared to their male siblings. On the other hand, 88.3% of participants from the same group consider their treatment by their parents as inferior when compared to the treatment received by their male siblings. In contrast, 8.6% of participants who received the male newborn with less joy receive inferior treatment from their parents compared to their male siblings, in comparison to 5.2% of participants who receive normal treatment. Finally, the lowest percentage in the table is 3.1% of participants who receive the male newborn with the same joy if the newborn is female, and they receive inferior treatment compared to their male siblings.

Based on the statistical results of the table, the clear preference for male gender over females is apparent. It can be observed that the reception of a male newborn is accompanied by great joy and

<sup>57</sup> Fouad (Amani), *Women: An Inheritance of Oppression*, Dar Al-Masriya Al-Lubnaniya, Cairo, 2020, p. 12.

<sup>58</sup> Same reference, p. 23.

evident happiness for all family members, especially the wife who has achieved the desired goal directly after marriage. The reception of a male newborn is more joyful compared to a female, due to the prevailing male-oriented thinking that still dominates the collective consciousness of society. Similarly, women, despite their femininity, constantly strive to achieve a higher status by giving birth to multiple males. This is evident from the results obtained in the previous tables.

On one hand, this variable, represented by the reception of a male newborn with more joy and happiness than a female, is related to several factors and variables, including how the parents treat this woman compared to her male siblings. It can be observed that there is a negative relationship between the variables, indicating that the more inferior the parents' treatment of the female compared to her male siblings, the greater the joy she experiences in giving birth to a male compared to a female. The treatment of males within the Algerian family differs completely from the treatment of females. This situation has made the girl realize the imposed discrimination between her and her brothers, especially regarding the treatment, decision-making authority, and certain privileges granted to males over other females.

As previously indicated in our analysis of the previous tables, the issue of social upbringing differs in terms of raising males and females due to gender discrimination between the two.

### **Translation:**

The statistical results of the table clearly demonstrate the evident distinction that appears in favoring males over females. It is noticeable that the reception of a male newborn is accompanied by great joy and happiness among all family members, particularly the wife who has achieved the desired goal directly after marriage. The reception of a male newborn, being of male gender, is greeted with greater joy compared to females due to the prevailing male-oriented thinking that still dominates the collective consciousness of society, similar to women who, despite their femininity, constantly strive to attain a higher status by giving birth to multiple males. These findings are in line with the previous tables.

On the one hand, this variable, represented by the reception of a male newborn with greater joy and happiness than females, is associated with multiple factors and variables, including how the parents treat this woman compared to her male siblings. It can be observed that there is an inverse relationship between the variables, indicating that the more inferior the parents' treatment of females compared to their male siblings, the greater the joy experienced in giving birth to a male compared to a female. The treatment of males within Algerian families differs significantly from the treatment of females. This situation has made girls aware of the discrimination imposed upon them in comparison to their brothers, especially concerning treatment, decision-making authority, and certain privileges granted to males over other females. As previously mentioned in our analysis of the previous tables, the issue of social upbringing varies in terms of raising males and females due to the prevailing gender discrimination between the two.

It has become clear and evident regarding the female gender, that this situation and these lived experiences have become deeply ingrained in the mind of women through the difference in perception compared to males. For this reason, we notice that women attempt to reproduce the position they have lived, primarily resulting from social perceptions that control individuals' behaviors, desires, and actions. Hence, we observe a high percentage of respondents who, due to their parents' inferior or negative treatment, experience great joy when they give birth to more males than females. They are aware that the subordinate view of females will continue to haunt them from birth until they settle in

their husband's home. This is evidence of clear gender discrimination, both in preference and treatment. Biased perceptions in our minds lead us to divide the world into two completely opposing categories, disregarding individual differences within each gender and amplifying the disparities between the sexes. Based on the principle that men are the origin and women are the opposite, we create what is called an unreal gap between men and women. Our perceptions of a specific matter stem from our concepts, beliefs, and values that we have acquired during the socialization process within a framework that serves as the basis for judging things and situations. Our perceptions acquire different meanings and interpretations<sup>59</sup>.

**Table 20: Distribution showing the method of receiving and differentiating the mother with the male child without the female**

<b>Total</b>	<b>No</b>	<b>Yes</b>	<b>Preference for male over female Reception of the male newborn</b>
168 90.3 %	14 43.8%	154 100%	<b>Greater pleasure</b>
14 7.5 %	14 43.8%	0%	<b>Less pleasure</b>
4 2.2 %	4 12.5%	0%	<b>The same pleasure</b>
186 100 %	32 100 %	154 100 %	<b>Total</b>

The table above represents the distribution of respondents according to their preference for treatment between males and females and how they receive a male newborn. From the overall trend of the table, it is clear that the highest percentage, which is 90.3%, represents the proportion of respondents who receive a male newborn with great joy compared to 7.5% of respondents who receive a male newborn with less joy. The lowest percentage is found among respondents who receive a male newborn with the same joy if the newborn is female, with a very small percentage estimated at 2.2%. When entering the independent variable represented by the preference for treatment between males and females, we note that 100% of respondents prefer males over females, while we record a percentage of 43% from the same direction of respondents who prefer females. On the other hand, we find 43.8% of respondents who do not prefer males over females. Finally, the lowest percentage in the table is 12.5% of respondents who receive a male newborn with the same joy if the newborn is female, representing women who do not prefer males over females.

Through the respondents' answers and the high percentages found among women who prefer giving birth to males more than females, we find that this group is the one that receives male newborns with greater enthusiasm, joy, and happiness compared to female newborns. This supports the results of the

<sup>59</sup> Hawso (Asmat), previously mentioned reference, p. 97.

previous table analyses, which mainly indicate that males occupy an important, prestigious, and distinctive position in the eyes of society, including women themselves. Despite their feminine gender, women, as mothers, also prefer males over females. They are greatly pleased when giving birth to males compared to females. The way they receive a male newborn is filled with more joy and happiness compared to a female newborn.

The traditional Algerian family is characterized by a significant emphasis on the procreative role, which leans towards having a large number of offspring to ensure the continuity of the family, the preservation of its name, and its wealth. Having many children is also socially meaningful and confers social status on both the father and the mother. The act of procreation leads to their psychological and social stability. However, what is even more anticipated in this procreative role is the birth of male children, as they are considered the fundamental element for maintaining the patriarchal system that grants authority and esteemed status to males. Males are joyfully received as they are seen as the future bearers of the family name and the ones who will contribute to the growth of the household after marriage, as well as becoming the primary heirs of their possessions. Since birth, males receive special care and enjoy more freedom compared to females. They also have a greater enjoyment of power compared to the limited power that females possess.

This is evident in the differentiation in exercising power within sibling relationships, where parents prefer the eldest son and grant him rights and privileges that are not granted to others. As a result, he gains greater authority and can monitor and even punish his sister's behavior at times, without facing opposition. On the other hand, the birth of a female child is not received with the same enthusiasm dedicated to males because her future is always dependent on her family or husband's situation. Generally, the reception of a girl within the traditional Algerian family is considered a disappointment for everyone, particularly the mother, especially if the birth of females is recurring, as it may threaten her status. Conversely, if the newborn is male, it signifies the preference of the traditional family for male children over female ones. This indicates that the mental perceptions of the newborn's gender, biased in favor of males, lead us to reinforce individual differences between the sexes and exaggerate the gaps between them based on the assumption that preference always goes to males.

From the principle that man is the origin and woman is the other, we create what is called an unreal gap between man and woman. The woman, entrusted with the preparation and upbringing of a new generation, reproduces the tools of her oppression by raising her children according to the male pattern. She instills in them the importance of masculinity at the expense of femininity and transmits her inherited beliefs about reality, society, and past values to them. Therefore, we do not witness any change in the mindset that governs society today. The discrimination between genders has no relation to biological differences but is a product of social upbringing and a patriarchal structure that prioritizes masculinity over femininity. Individuals are social beings who are constructed and shaped socially<sup>60</sup>.

### **Interpretation of Hypothesis 1:**

After analyzing the tables related to the first hypothesis regarding women's perceptions of female childbirth in the context of paternal cultural dominance and conducting sociological readings of various indicators presented in those tables, focusing on the fact that the social status of women giving birth to females is nothing but a reflection of their image in society and the nature of the prevailing social and cultural system, especially if the system itself is a source of individual formation through

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<sup>60</sup> Al-Jazarawi (Lina), previous reference, p. 220.

social standards that regulate behaviors and personal relationships. The society provides individuals with a sense of security by constructing standards that determine right and wrong, thereby creating cultural frameworks that imprison individuals within them, defining the practices that align with the image they present of themselves in society. It highlights the extent to which culture, social environment, social interaction, and family upbringing, in particular, influence the formation of individuals' perceptions on various subjects, as well as the construction of their mentalities and personalities, considering that the content of these perceptions reflects the actual structure of the society they belong to. Especially when these perceptions are transmitted to us through education and its institutions. This means that we learn ready-made constructs about the world that surrounds us. As mentioned earlier, perceptions are socially constructed according to the social characteristics of the individual, to be shared among members of society. However, this sharing of perceptions is always local, i.e., it concerns specific individuals. Different social groups do not necessarily share the same values, which confirms that social perceptions carry the social belonging of the individuals who hold them. They guarantee their identities, distinctions, and differences in ideas and orientations. This confirms the existence of a set of interconnected factors that affect the formation of social perceptions and their variations from one individual to another and from one group to another.

Through researching the situation of the mother and attempting to understand the extent to which these perceptions influence her views on the subject and their impact on society's perception of women in general, with the aim of addressing the proposed study hypotheses related to the first hypothesis, which leads to the conclusion that the belongingness of a mother giving birth to females to a social environment governed by social perceptions about women derived from paternal culture is a factor that contributes to solidifying the subordinate view of women in society, we have arrived at a number of results that have helped to substantiate this hypothesis to some extent. It is evident that the social environment in which a woman has been raised and nurtured is indeed influenced by the social perceptions that govern it, primarily associated with paternal culture, which has contributed and continues to contribute to solidifying the subordinate view of women in society. Our confirmation of the validity of this hypothesis is further supported by a range of indicators that have been inferred from the analysis and interpretation of statistical tables, which have demonstrated that:

- Most women nowadays prefer their firstborn child to be male, and the preference for male offspring over female ones in male-dominated societies, as well as the elevation of male value and the devaluation of females, is a fundamental aspect of the male mindset. Additionally, this phenomenon is universal and shared across all cultures. Thus, females have become a disappointment for mothers and families, and the responsibility for giving birth to females is solely attributed to the mother. This is the stance of society and the family towards women who only give birth to females, categorizing them on the same level as infertile women, both considered bringers of evil, responsible for tarnishing the family name and honor. If the aforementioned is related to the female child and her expected destiny, the situation becomes even more bleak for the woman who gave birth to that female child. This actually proves that "the process of childbirth is not purely an organic matter, but rather a complex social and cultural process. The foundations upon which it is based belong to the realm of social and cultural production. In other words, the fertility of the female body grants women psychological and social value, and the absence of fertility diminishes a woman's status and contributes to her exclusion and deprivation of various social positions and authorities.<sup>61</sup>" This is evidence that the male-oriented culture is still deeply rooted in the mentality of Algerian society. Despite the progress and development that Arab societies have achieved, the collective mindset still

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<sup>61</sup> Al-Maadi (Zeinab), previously mentioned reference, p. 103.

dominates the thinking of contemporary women and their perceptions on the subject. Considering that the preference for the gender of the newborn is an age-old social issue deeply ingrained and associated with Algerian cultural heritage in particular, most women prefer their newborn to be male rather than female. This is an indication that paternal culture still influences the perspectives of individuals in Algerian society, especially among mothers, despite their belonging to the female gender. Regardless of the inevitability of procreation, which is considered the primary goal that women seek to achieve directly after marriage, as it is a decisive factor in determining a woman's status, it further confirms that the process of childbirth is a social necessity and a demand in societies governed by a paternal culture based on the subordinate view of the female gender.

- On the other hand, the way males are treated within Algerian families differs completely from how females are treated. The girl's experience in her family highlighted the clear and evident difference between her and her siblings, especially regarding the treatment, decision-making authority, and privileges granted to males over females. These entrenched notions in child-rearing have solidified in the mother's mind that males hold a higher position than females. These ideas and perceptions have hindered the woman - the mother - and led her to attempt to reproduce them anew in her behavior and reality. The method of interaction and discrimination between genders is only evidence of the persistence of anti-female stereotypes, a continuation of the ignorance prevalent in Algerian families governed by a patriarchal culture. Meanwhile, giving birth to males is primarily of interest to most mothers and all family members as a guarantee of family continuity and preservation of its name and heritage, protecting it economically, whether through assisting the father in his work, contributing to the family's economy, or caring for the parents in cases of illness and old age. These are all reasons that drive families to embrace a culture of favoring the birth of males. The culture of desiring male offspring still dominates Algerian society in general and women in particular. Most women prefer giving birth to more males, believing that males are their support in life and the ones who grant them the social status they aspire to, through the society's perception of them and the view of their husband's family and their own family as well. Meanwhile, women who give birth to females are viewed with a demeaning and diminished perspective. This indicates that traditional cultural values still control the minds of many families, perceiving females as a burden on the family and in constant need of protection by her own family to preserve the family's honor and reputation.

- As we have observed, there is a reciprocal relationship between a woman's desire for male offspring and decision-making authority within families. The more decision-making authority rests with the male siblings, the more the woman desires to give birth to males. This is evidence of the significant position and role that males play in the societal perception of Algerian culture, as they hold an important social status within the general social framework.

- Regarding the relationship between a woman's sense of high status when giving birth to many males and the number of her siblings, we have confirmed that a woman - the mother - feels a greater sense of importance when she gives birth to a larger number of males compared to those who give birth to an equal number of males and females. The more male siblings a woman has, the more she feels a high and important status when giving birth to many males. On the other hand, a woman who gives birth to an equal number of males and females and does not have a large number of male siblings will not feel her high and important status. This is also evidence of the dominance of male-oriented culture in the collective consciousness of Algerian society.

- Regarding the issue of the relationship between the reception of a male newborn compared to a female newborn and how the family treats them in comparison to their male siblings, we have noticed



the clear discrimination that exists in favor of male children. The reception of a male newborn is met with great joy and evident happiness by all family members, especially the woman - the mother - who has achieved the desired goal directly after marriage. The reception of a male newborn is accompanied by even greater joy compared to a female newborn. This is also attributed to the status of males and the subordinate position of the female gender in the social environment. In line with this, the woman - the mother - attempts to reproduce her previous position.

Based on all these indicators and relying on the research data and its results, we have confirmed the validity of the hypothesis formulated at the beginning of the study. It is evident that the belonging of a mother who gives birth to females to a social environment governed by paternal perceptions is indeed a factor that contributes to the consolidation and perpetuation of the demeaning view of women in society.

### **General Assumption:**

Based on the aforementioned, we can deduce that the issue of "the social status of women who give birth to females in Algerian families" is essentially a matter of women's position and role in society. It reflects the society's perceptions and cultural beliefs regarding women, their subordination, and their subordinate status. This is not a result of their own deficiencies or shortcomings, but rather a product of a historical cultural context that developed with the emergence of a patriarchal society. Culture is the determining factor in shaping the perspective on biological differences, rather than the other way around. These ideas, beliefs, and ideologies that have surrounded women have remained concealed in the corners of cultural memory, where they exert their dominance and power over individuals, influencing their behaviors and regulating their social and psychological processes for decades. Social roles in all human societies are culturally constructed and then imposed on individuals automatically. The society expects each individual, based on their gender, to conform to these roles and the associated values, behaviors, customs, and cultural practices. Often unconsciously, individuals internalize these roles and the rights, duties, and cultural norms that ensure their acceptance and social status, as these are transmitted through family socialization. Through socialization, society transmits a set of social and cultural standards to individuals and groups, binding them to adopt these standards to achieve solidarity with other members of society. Algerian society is a patriarchal society governed by the principles of submission, subordination, and gender discrimination between males and females, men and women, as a strategy to achieve family cohesion.

Furthermore, the belonging of women who give birth to females to a social environment governed by a patriarchal culture deeply rooted in history, based primarily on relationships of dominance and submission, with male domination over females, creates an environment that does not give women an equal status to men in terms of privileges granted to both genders. Patriarchy is a social structure and set of practices in which men subject, suppress, and exploit women. In this context, women are considered secondary, marginalized individuals who live under paternal oppression, characterized by immaturity, stagnation, and negativity. The system represents masculinity as the primary reference for femininity, resulting in women having a weak and limited status that can only be obtained through fulfilling their social role, primarily through marriage and motherhood. Otherwise, society does not accept or respect them because they have deviated from their real responsibilities in the community. This situation leads women who give birth to females, belonging to a social environment governed by a patriarchal culture, to experience mistreatment and marginalization because they have not fulfilled their obligations to the community they belong to. They face various psychological pressures and social problems, which we have found to be prevalent in the field.

## Conclusion:

Since the social status of any individual or group is merely a result of prevailing social perceptions in society, our search for the social status of women who give birth to females in the Algerian family led us to explore the representations of women and their social roles, which are dependent on the nature of the society, its culture, and its historical heritage. These representations themselves did not emerge out of thin air; rather, they are contingent upon socio-cultural frameworks and structures. They are a realistic outcome of the collective societal consciousness and, fundamentally, a final product of the family upbringing process, which includes diverse educational processes and different interactions between genders that largely reflect their future roles. "Males acquire a culture different from that of females," whereby the boy learns how to behave as a male, and the female learns how to be a female. This also works to reinforce the role of social customs and traditions that give a superior status to males and view females as "subordinate parts of socially oppressed men." This led us to delve into the nature of Algerian society and search for its sociological characteristics that distinguish it from other societies. Thus, we found it to be a traditional patriarchal society in all its practices and customs. As long as the traditional cultural framework, with its various contradictions, continues to govern individuals' behavior, marriage will remain a necessity for women to acquire feminine social status, which is manifested through childbirth and investing emotions in children as a means of power and self-realization. These are among the goals women seek to achieve, especially by giving birth to the largest possible number of males, as long as their familial and social status is linked to this process.

She exerts all her efforts and utilizes all means to achieve her goal. It is worth noting here that the process of childbirth is not solely a biological matter, but rather a complex social and cultural process. The rules upon which it is based belong to the realm of social and cultural production. In other words, female fertility grants women specific social positions and authorities, while the absence of fertility diminishes their status and contributes to their exclusion and deprivation of multiple social positions and authorities. Despite the introduction of new elements and their impact on mentalities, and despite a certain attraction towards modernity and contemporary discourse, the power of traditions still effectively influences individuals. Generally, individuals tend to maintain their old lifestyles, where they have acquired their beliefs, attitudes, and behavioral patterns that are difficult to change because they have become an integral part of their identity, which has been supported through the process of socialization. This indicates the extent of the control of customs and traditions, meaning the control of the entire traditional social system over mentalities and ideologies. Consequently, ideas and values related to modernization are generally the last to respond to change. The evidence for this is that a large percentage of families in society still reject new ideas and thus preserve the old cognitive and value mechanisms that have become part of their personal characteristics. Therefore, individuals in society still adhere to traditional values, especially those that depict the image of women and their traditional roles within the paternal social structure in a society that has not kept pace with various other changes. Otherwise, how do we explain the social situation of women who give birth to females and their daily suffering, primarily resulting from the rooted stereotypical image of women and their role in society? This actually proves that the crisis of women is a crisis of thought and culture resulting from the continuation of old intellectual perceptions of the essence of women throughout history. These social perceptions of women are primarily associated with the central framework of manifestations in collective memory, the history of the community, its culture, and its belief and ideological systems.

This nucleus strives to be stable, homogeneous, solid, resistant to changes, and less influenced by the environment and surroundings. On the other hand, the lateral structure enables integration with

historical experiences and developments. Consequently, it withstands contradictions and conflicts, characterized by flexibility, adaptability, and susceptibility to environmental and contextual influences. Social representations, as mechanisms connecting the abstract nature of our knowledge and beliefs to our daily lives, play a significant role in social change and historical evolution. Individuals' behaviors will not change unless their perceptions change first. Thus, we discover the dialectic of the individual and the collective, the internal and the external, the psychological and the social. Changing the external world of individuals is conditional upon changing their internal content (psychological and intellectual). The psychological aspect influences the social aspect and is influenced by it. Our reality, circumstances, and behaviors will not change, no matter how different they may be, unless our perceptions change. As Professor "Suleiman Mazhar" puts it, "Traditional social bonds continue to persist and dominate our local reality. They are reproduced in different molds due to the strength and weight of the traditional social structure, which compels us to adhere to it with the force of inevitability."<sup>62</sup>

In conclusion, we can say that our study is merely an attempt to approach the reality of this woman by breaking the silence that has prevailed on this subject. The results achieved within this framework are only relative and cannot be generalized to all members of society. Despite our field verification of the study's hypotheses, a topic like this requires further studies and research based on other variables in order to fully understand all aspects of the subject.

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