

# THE DIVORCE PHENOMENON IN ECONOMIC PERSPECTIVE AND ASYMMETRIC APPROACHES

## İktisadi Açından Boşanma Olgusu ve Bakışsız Yaklaşımlar

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### Abstract

The subject and purpose of this study is to examine the "divorce" phenomenon, which is a serious socioeconomic problematic, with three asymmetrical approaches in the background of theoretic causes-results relationship (determinism). Divorce, which means the official end of a marriage, consists of a series of stages with material and spiritual content. There are many reasons for divorce (financial incompatibility, physical/psychological violence, adultery-infidelity, unemployment, dissatisfaction, financial crises, etc.) and many results (family break-up, impoverishment, inefficiency at work, migration, committing crime, immorality, etc.). The reasons and results in question can replace each other or be transitive between them depending on the situation and time. The phenomenon of divorce, as the first asymmetric approach, has a multi-faceted "SWOT"

### Öz

Bu çalışmanın konusu ve amacı, ciddi bir sosyo-ekonomik sorunsal olan "boşanma" olgusunu kuramsal neden-sonuç ilişkisi (determinizm) arka-planında üç bakışsız (asimetrik) yaklaşımla incelemektir. Evliliğin resmen bitmesi demek olan boşanma, maddi ve manevi içerikli bir dizi evreden oluşur. Boşanmanın birçok nedeni (parasal geçimsizlik, fiziksel / psikolojik şiddet, aldatma / zina, işsizlik, tatminsizlik, mali krizler, vs.) ve birçok sonucu (ailenin dağılması, yoksullaşma, işte verimsizlik, göç, suç işleme, ahlaksızlık, vs.) vardır. Söz konusu nedenler ve sonuçlar, duruma ve zamana göre birbirini ikame edebilir ya da aralarında geçişken olabilirler. Boşanma olgusu, ilk bakışsız yaklaşım olarak çok yönlü bir "GZFT" (güçlü - zayıf - fırsat - tehdit) boyutuna sahiptir. Toplumsal cinsiyet eşitsizliği ve adaletsizliğinin yaygın ve etkili olduğu ülkelerde / toplumlarda boşanan çiftlerden

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(strengths – weaknesses – opportunities – threats) dimension. In countries / societies where gender inequality and injustice are widespread and effective, women are relatively more oppressed among divorced couples. In order to improve human rights in favor of women in the male-dominated order, the second asymmetric approach, “feminist economics / economy”, has become popular. This approach can be considered as a paradigmatic change in the value set due to the need for gender equality and justice, which is also valid in the divorce problem. In addition, the third asymmetric approach, “game theory”, can be used to prevent spouses from getting divorced or to reduce the number (rate) of divorces.

görece kadınlar daha fazla ezilmektedir. Eril egemen düzende insan haklarının kadınların lehine iyileştirilmesi için ikinci bakımsız yaklaşım olarak “feminist iktisat” öne çıkarak popüler olmuştur. Bu yaklaşım, boşanma sorunsalında da geçerli olan toplumsal cinsiyet eşitliği ve adaleti ihtiyacından dolayı değerler dizisinde (paradigmatik) bir değişim olarak kabul edilebilir. Ayrıca, eşlerin boşanmaması ya da boşanma sayısının (oranının) düşürülmesi için üçüncü bir bakımsız yaklaşım olarak “oyun kuramı” seçeneğine de başvurulabilir.

**Anahtar Kelimeler:** Boşanma, İktisadi Nedenler - Sonuçlar, GZFT, Feminist İktisat, Oyun Kuramı.

**Keywords:** Divorce, Economic Causes - Results  
SWOT, Feminist Economics, Game Theory.

## INTRODUCTION

The family, which Emerson described as “a fortress that even kings cannot enter,” is destroyed or suffers an irreparable blow when a husband and wife divorce. If the core of civilization is the family, then the absolute foundation symbol of the family is marriage. There are those who compare marriage to a fortress -where those inside want to get out and those outside want to get in- and even those who say there is not much difference between ruling a family and a kingdom.

Divorce, for a marriage that is going bad, means opening the *legendary* “Pandora’s box” that contains bad secrets. This box must be opening so much today – due to the fact that the age of marriage is increasing and the “age of divorce” is decreasing –<sup>1</sup> that the world is full of widowers.

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<sup>1</sup> Bring Back Data (BBD), a collective academic working group comprised of visionaries and compile international data, defines marriage and divorce as opposing phenomena, a cost of love, one of the most human emotions, and it constantly reflects this cost in world statistics, with worrying consequences in the context of aging societies. According to data from the last quarter-century, covering the years 2000-2024, marriage and divorce rates

The life cycle in a family – except for birth and death – usually begins with marriage and ends with divorce. These two vertical and opposite phenomena represent the beginning and end points of a line. Marriage, which is a common action born out of human needs such as maintaining material and spiritual life, increasing happiness, sharing economic prosperity, establishing a family and having children, leaving an inheritance to children, etc., is established with various models,<sup>2</sup> and as a reflection of the changing dynamics of the age, it is also destroyed with various divorce models.<sup>3</sup>

There are many popular jokes in Turkey, as in the rest of the world, about divorce, which is a rather unpleasant and repulsive social issue; however, no divorce itself is a funny or joke event.<sup>4</sup> Because couples who divorce at any age while married enter a “mourning process” that starts with denial, continues with depression due to loss, acceptance and ends with adaptation to the new situation. It is not for nothing that divorce, which has no age but is a mourning process, is considered the most dramatic event after death.

## The Problem of the Research: The Phenomenon of Divorce

Divorce is the complete termination of the current marriage of a husband and wife (woman and husband) by a legal decision, whether or not to remarry.<sup>5</sup>

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have generally trended inversely: while the average marriage rate in OECD countries was approximately 5.1 per 1,000 people in 2000, this figure fell to approximately 3.8 per 1,000 by 2025. On the other hand, divorce, which places varying degrees of strain on parents and leaves children as innocent bystanders, has shown more varied trends across countries, depending on cultural, legal, and economic factors. Divorce rates have increased in most countries, remained stable in some, and decreased in a few: the average crude divorce rate across OECD countries sandwiched between liberal and restrictive laws is currently around 1.8 per 1,000 people, with significant variation. (See BBD, 2025, for details.)

<sup>2</sup> Consanguineous marriages, religious marriages, unmarried couples, homosexual couples, couples who appear to be single, etc.

<sup>3</sup> Consensual, negotiated, violent, court-mediated divorces, divorce parties, etc.

<sup>4</sup> In the Sunnah, one of the fundamental sources of Islam, divorce is also not welcomed. Regarding the issue, the Prophet Muhammad said, “*The most detestable lawful thing in the sight of Allah is divorce: Three things are serious, even if they are a joke, they are serious. Marriage, divorce and raj’ah (returning of a husband to his wife after divorce, -vice versa-).*” (Quoted from Abu Dawud, Ünal, 2013:597.)

<sup>5</sup> Indeed, H.T.Mill, in her pamphlet (1832) on divorce, likened “*marriage to a contract, and divorce to the end of that contract,*” in her fundamental argument. According to her, when a marriage ceases to be “a voluntary union between two persons” and a “business partnership” in which both parties share control and responsibilities equally, and when the family evolves from “the true school of the virtues of liberty” and “the school of sympathy in equality” to “a school of despotism and obedience,” then the bells of divorce will begin to ring for married couples. Therefore, it is imperative to change the traditional understanding of marriage. As she put it, this will enable women to finally become partners rather than servants, to abandon their role as “a mere appendage to the man,” “a part of the household furniture—a resting place where he returns from work or pleasure.” (Becchio et al., 2024.)

Divorces, which are a universal problem, are both a “phenomenon” and an “event”. The fact that divorce occurs one by one as a part of life and with a certain date indicates that it is an event, but the fact that it shows continuity, generality and integrity indicates that it is a phenomenon. Divorce should be considered an event if it is personal and has a certain time, but a fact if it concerns society and its time is uncertain. The fact that each couple divorces for special reasons and encounters different results is an event, but the fact that countless couples divorce for similar reasons and experience similar results is a factual situation. The event of divorce, which is special in itself, turns into a factual structure when it becomes generalized, becomes a subject of statistics and becomes social in various aspects. In this article, there is a transition from event to fact and from fact to event: When the divorce events that occur one by one are reduced from plural to singular, the divorce phenomenon as a whole will be emphasized.

As observed throughout the contemporary world and therefore in Turkey, divorce is at the interface of the transformation in the “household” and “family”<sup>6</sup> institution and corresponds to the most severe crisis in the family. Divorce is the end line of a marriage in crisis that develops over time between spouses. The fact that divine religions that sanctify marriage condemn divorce cannot guarantee a decrease in divorces in societies that are becoming increasingly secular and capitalist.

Taylor (2006: 20) says, “*In the Middle Ages, there was an idealization of society based on three orders: those who pray (oratores), those who fight (bellatores) and those who work (laboratores).*” It is unknown whether the “those who marry and divorce” link could be added to this chain of orders for the post-modern-globalization era, which is not very different from the Middle Ages in some respects. Of course, there is no such class as “those who divorce” in a society; if there is, it is scattered among the other classes.

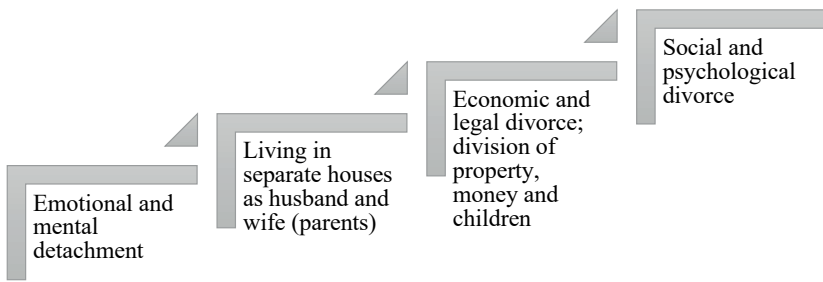
Divorce, which is perceived as a purely micro problem at first glance because it concerns individuals and families, but is actually a macro problem because it concerns society and the country in terms of its consequences, is the event of the legal and actual end of the marriage of a couple (husband and wife). Divorce is

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<sup>6</sup> Although used interchangeably, the concepts of “family” and “household” are different: While family is a group of individuals who are related to each other by marriage, blood ties, or legal means, living together with mutual rights and obligations, a household is a group of one or more individuals (families) living at the same address, with or without kinship ties.

the opposite or crossover form of marriage; like death and life. People marry not to divorce one day, but as if they will never divorce. Marriages and their natural outcome, families, are like companies;<sup>7</sup> no company is established and starts its commercial activities in order to go bankrupt or exit the sector. If a husband and wife are like two partners of a company, they can bankrupt the company due to excessive and uncontrollable fights and turmoil that may start due to reasons such as mismanagement, disagreement and external factors. Every divorced family can harm the society as much as every bankrupt company can harm economy.

Divorce consists of several stages (*Figure 1*). There may not be a hierarchy and overlap between these stages at the beginning, but in any case, divorce is definitely finalized by a court decision in secular societies.



**Figure 1.** Stages of Divorce

This study is based on the that basic assumption (“*research problem*”) and purpose: Divorce is a family crisis centered on the husband and wife, and the way this crisis is managed can create another crisis, that is, an aftershock crisis. Divorce has many different causes and consequences. These can be grouped as personal, familial, social, legal, economic and even political. Although divorce means the definitive separation of the couple; some divorces even result in murder and suicide before and after, and cause chain reactions of socio-economic events. Unlike marriage, not being able to achieve divorce in a civilized and non-violent manner is a problem and result of underdevelopment.

<sup>7</sup> This is an economic metaphor that seems necessary and unpleasant, and it was the subject of a striking short novel called “The Marriage Company” written by the master storyteller Bekir Yıldız in 1972. In this work, which brings a universal critique to the institution of marriage, the main question is asked: ‘*Is the marriage that two people form by promising to be there for each other in health and sickness, in good times and bad, actually a dirty company built on hypocrisy, fakeness and lies?*’

## Researching the Problem: Purpose and Method

The purpose of this study is to diagnose the phenomenon of divorce in a cause and effect relationship (deterministic) context and to present asymmetrical propositions in line with the “SWOT approach”, “feminist economics” and “game theory” for the understanding of society and policy makers in order to prevent the increase in divorce cases and/or to evaluate them correctly.

For this purpose, this thematic research on divorce is constructed according to three structures in terms of content and style: epistemology, ontology and methodology.

*i-Epistemology of the research:* In this study, it is accepted that the divorce problem is not a temporary (conjunctural) but a phenomenal (structural) problem and it is based on the fact that it is the most difficult socio-economic and/or economic-political problem for Turkey, as for all contemporary societies. Since epistemology, or the philosophy of knowledge, is about what knowledge is and how it is obtained, the information here has been obtained by making use of theoretical concepts, official records filtered from social developments, and scientific interpretations.

*ii- Ontology of the research:* Ontology investigates the existence of the problem, the problem of existence. Since divorce in the philosophical context is a part of the glocal (global + local) socio-economic and/or political economy problems, with this research all parties (which are the divorced, divorcing and to be divorce couples and their relatives at the center of the problem, as well as the society that internalizes the problem with reaction or acceptance and the state that intervenes in the divorce process with legal and security tools) are invited to think about the concrete existence of this phenomenon and that the problem should not be ignored or hidden.

*iii- Methodology of the research:* Since methodology is generally the entirety of methods or techniques applied in a certain science or field, it can be said that two complementary methods were applied for this study: Scientific thought method; since the divorce problem examined is related to the questions of ‘what is-what is happening?’, it is based on “positive science”; and on the other

hand, because of its relationship with value judgments such as ‘what-how should it be?’ for the parties, it is based on “normative science”. When a divorce perspective is tried to be drawn from the past to the present and the future, this research has been in line with the “deductive” method of thought by coming from the general/whole to the specific/part. As for the research and examination methods, “descriptive” and “abstractionist” techniques have been preferred. With description, many intertwined concepts have been defined separately and analogies have been used to strengthen their meanings. With the abstraction technique, the elements that are most compatible with real life have been included in the scope of the analysis, and those that are not have been excluded from the analysis.

## LITERATURE REVIEW

A large number of theoretical and empirical studies have been conducted examining the problem of divorce according to economic disciplines such as economic sociology, development economics, labor economics, political economy, feminist economics, behavioral economics, etc. Below is a summary of these:

Härkönen (2013) relates the risk of divorce to the process of marriage: According to him, the risk of divorce is not constant throughout the marriage. While several marriages end immediately after the wedding, the probability of divorce increases in the early years. Although marital satisfaction generally declines throughout the married life, the risk of divorce - unless the necessary investments are made - peaks between the 4th and 7th years of marriage.

Aktaş (2011) examines the phenomenon of divorce starting from the historical process from the primitive age to the present day. He compiled local and foreign field studies on the subject by listing the singular and plural reasons for divorce in personal, environmental and financial terms and the difficulties experienced after divorce, and according to an urban (İzmir) survey he conducted based on the “relational screening model”, he obtained findings that the most common reason for divorce for women is adultery, for men it is leaving the house, and also that those who have the most difficulties after divorce are unemployed spouses, etc.

Sandalcılar (2012) emphasizes that the risk of divorce that will occur as a result of a man becoming unemployed and a woman becoming unemployed is

different, and draws attention to the following two different and opposite views: According to the first view, women who are effectively involved in the labor market have a higher risk of divorce than women who are not. According to the second view, men who are not effective in the labor market face a higher risk of divorce than men who are effective.

Giddens (2012) notes that despite many legal restrictions and strict rules, the increasing divorce rates in industrialized societies (especially in Europe) are not a direct indicator of unhappiness in marital: For one thing, divorce rates do not include people who are separated but not legally divorced. Moreover, people who are unhappily married may choose to stay together (because they believe in the sanctity of marriage, or because they are worried about the financial and emotional consequences of separation, or because they wish to stay with each other in order to provide a 'family' home for their children). According to this famous sociologist, feminists are trying to understand how the family serves as an arena of gender crisis and even physical abuse, while drawing attention to unequal domestic power relations that favor men.

McElory (2014) and Mielach (2012) draw on Zagorsky's book "The Impact of Marriage and Divorce on Wealth" (2005) to reinforce the fact that marriage is a powerful anti-poverty strategy with many advantages: Zagorsky finds a striking finding that for American married couples, "While wealth increases by an average of 16% for each year of marriage, the wealth of divorced respondents begins to decline four years before divorce, experiencing a 77% wealth decline." Zagorsky's ideal solution is simple and impressive:<sup>8</sup>"If you really want to increase your wealth, get married, and stay married."

Purkayastha (1999) establishes a relationship between "patriarchal monopoly" that rises on the marginalization of women and "economic development":

<sup>8</sup> According to a new and important theoretical study, two factors contribute to the financial decline surrounding divorce: the loss of the inherent wealth-building aspects of marriage and the loss of government-imposed costs such as alimony and the "divorce industry." The divorce industry consists of laws governing the terms, government agencies, lawyers, and social workers. The causality behind marital wealth creation can also be complex, but three economic drivers appear to be consistent over time. (i) Those who commit to a lifelong partnership can save for raising children, buying a home, and a comfortable retirement. (ii) Married couples share the costs of many essential items, such as housing, insurance policies, cars, food, and utilities. This sharing reduces unit costs (the "economies of scale" theory). (iii) Most marriages encourage the division of labor that is most productive for the family unit. In contrast, cohabiting couples tend to save less and keep their money separate because many people are not fully committed to each other. With divorce, all of these gains turn into losses. Everything that is "positive" takes on a "negative" value, including economic growth, which means the change in national income (McElroy, 2014:14).

According to the model he constructed, there are two decision-making units in the nuclear family consisting of men and women; accordingly, patriarchal monopoly will be defined as an order in which the following conditions are achieved within the home: i- If the woman (wife) cannot work for a wage in the market, she has no access to the market and remains a housewife who will produce household products. ii- There is an exit barrier in the marriage market, such as not allowing divorce.

Semyonow (1980), while trying to find the divorce rate by looking at the strength of the family structure, found a positive relationship between the divorce rate and women's participation in the labor force. Similarly Poortman (2005:304) also found that women who work more hours or work in general have a higher risk of divorce than women who work less or do not work at all, and that women who work full time are particularly at higher risk of divorce: It has been calculated that working women have a 16% higher divorce rate than those who do not work. This positive relationship between the employment of spouses and divorce may be a result of the high risk of divorce in the labor market.

Brammer and Kesseling (1999) investigated the relationship between women's employment and divorce through a time series model: According to the opposing findings; women's employment reduces divorce rates because it increases the family's income and benefits family relations (income effect), while on the contrary, it may increase the probability of divorce because it gives women economic freedom (independence effect). The same authors (2004: 175-et al.) obtained the result that divorce rates are inversely-negatively (-) proportional to income level and birth rate and directly-positively (+) proportional to labor force participation rate in the USA (1960-2000 period) by using the vector autoregressive (VAR) method. Accordingly, an increase in women's labor force participation leads to an increase in divorce rates; an increase in divorce rates leads to an increase in women's labor force participation. However, positive changes in women's labor force participation decrease divorce rates, while a positive change in women's average income increases divorce rates and women's labor force participation.

Cliber (2016) has also examined the problematic of divorce using game theory: According to him, divorce does not have to be a "zero-sum game" where one of the couple wins and the other loses, and the sum of the gains

and losses equals zero: The general belief is that spouses not getting divorced means “winning”. Although this is generally true, it does not also mean that everyone has to lose. The greatest losses in any divorce occur when couples fight harshly and excessively. The damage done by fights can be financial or emotional, but inevitably the “*lesson of King Solomon*” applies: Fights reduce the values that are being fought for; these are almost always things that are valued. If we stop believing that we lose when others win and focus on finding ways to meet everyone’s needs, we can avoid the trap of zero-sum thinking and preserve the value of the things that are important to us; in other words, no one can lose even in divorce.

Apostolou (2025) examined the relationship between per capita income and the divorce rate using historical and contemporary data covering the United Kingdom, the United States, and 107 other societies. The analysis found a concave relationship between the two variables: an increase in per capita income corresponds to an increase in the divorce rate, while beyond a certain threshold, an increase in per capita income is associated with a decrease in the divorce rate.

Padder et al. (2025) conducted statistical hypothesis testing using two decades of global data to understand divorce, examining the socioeconomic and psychological factors that influence marital change. Their findings provide important insights into how divorce trends are changing, providing policymakers and researchers with a data-backed foundation for developing effective intervention strategies to promote marital stability and reduce divorce rates.

Dzando et al. (2025) note that divorce among couples aged 50 and older has increased due to retirement and worsening health significantly over the past three decades, particularly in developed countries. This database-based study, which finds declines in older adults’ well-being due to divorce, highlights the need for gender-sensitive interventions, financial counseling, and expanded social support services to support the well-being of older adults after divorce.

Finally, Bukhtiar et al. (2025) argue that rising global divorce rates have led to a fundamental socioeconomic shift in contemporary family and relationship dynamics, exploring the complex causes and effects of divorce in relation to economic independence and social standards. To effectively combat this growing and chronic global problem, the study calls to both families and societies to

cultivate resilience and resilience through education and law action.

According to the theme of this study, which is based on a deterministic and synthetic understanding, the problems that lead to divorce and are caused by divorce are mainly “socio-economic”. In other words, economic factors (poverty, unemployment, cost of living, poor working conditions, financial violence, etc.) and non-economic factors (psychic, sexual, genetic, legal, etc.) that are considered valid or problematized in divorce either feed each other or are fed by each other.

## THE PHENOMENA OF DIVORCE: ITS ECONOMIC DIMENSION

Divorce means the official dissolution and destruction of the institution of marriage. Divorce has a theoretical dimension depending on its various reasons and consequences that are valid all over the world. The first official divorce case in history was filed in England in the 16th century; the first divorce in the Islamic geography took place during the time of Hz. Muhammed. According to statistics, it is observed that divorces have been increasing unabated all over the world and in Turkey since then.

### Theoretical Framework

Although the main source of divorces is a single visible reason, it is fed by more than one reason together with the invisible ones. Let's say that the main source is financial incompatibility, it can be understood that the reasons that occur as a result of this creating domestic violence and immoral behaviors are derivatives of each other. Attributing divorce solely to financial incompatibility may lead to the risk of shifting the analysis to the axis of “*economism*”,<sup>9</sup> which should be avoided.

Every divorce is special and unique. Divorce can occur for one or more reasons such as personal, psychological, sexual, legal, economic, etc., or it can be based on a reason other than these – unthinkable and even irrational. A dominant reason for divorce can trigger other reasons. In addition, there are reasons for divorce that can also become a result of divorce. For example, alcohol and drug addiction, which are

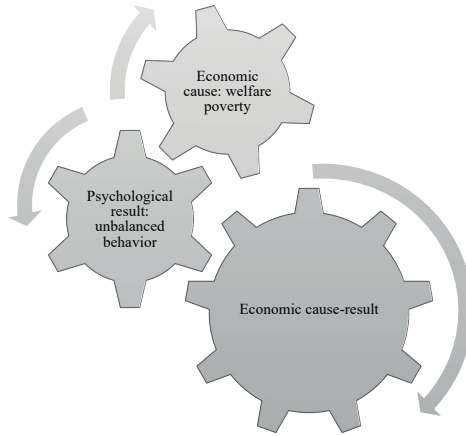
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<sup>9</sup> “*Economism*” means the doctrine that the economy determines everything in social life and economic determinism. In Marxist literature, this is the idea that everything is determined by purely economic reasons and that the struggle of the proletarian class is a purely economic struggle and therefore has no political or social aspect.

psychological problems, can be both a cause and a result of divorce. Any result of divorce can also have cascading consequences. For example, if a divorced woman or man loses the wealth they had while married and becomes even poorer, they may engage in prostitution and/or theft to make ends meet and may be punished for these crimes. Sometimes, causes and consequences are intertwined and therefore contradict each other. For example, in the economic context; one family may be on the verge of divorce due to excessive financial incompatibility, while another family may be on the verge of divorce due to excessive luxury consumption. Another socio-economic factor, unemployment, can be considered the only reason for divorce, depending on the fact that other reasons are not effective. This is explained by the assumption that all variables except one are constant (Latin "ceteris paribus"). Naturally, there are countless couples who are determined to continue their marriage despite unemployment, and only they can face other divorce risks. In short, divorce is a whole of causal and consequential relationships that interact and each of which expresses negativity.

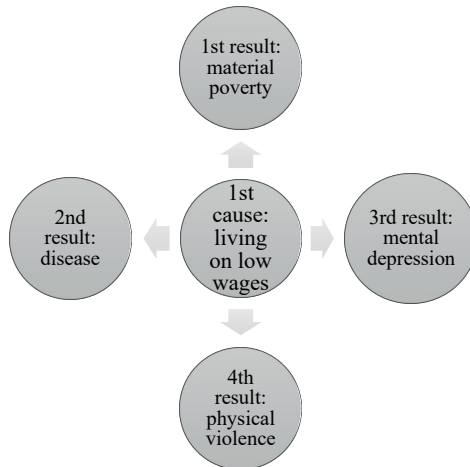
As a thesis of this study, the economic causes and consequences of divorce are usually/mostly intertwined with other non-economic causes and consequences, either arising from them or giving rise to them; there is a correlation and interaction between them.

The causes and consequences of divorce are like the gears of a wheel, turning each other. A cause of divorce can become a consequence in the process; there is a direct/indirect correlation between them; in other words, causes and consequences can replace each other (substitution effect). For example, the poverty of the family can disrupt the psychological balance of the spouses; psychological imbalance can push the spouses not to work and lead them to financial incompatibility (vicious circle effect) (*Figure 2*).



**Figure 2.** Economic - Psychological Cause-Effect Correlation and Interaction in Divorce

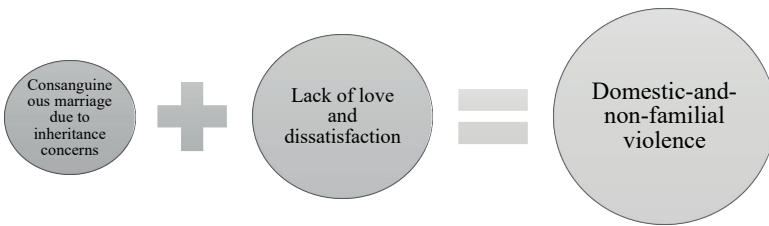
Sometimes a single reason for divorce can lead to more than one result: For example, living on low wages as a reason for divorce from an economic group can lead to both multiple economic (material poverty, low savings, unproductive work, etc.) and multiple non-economic results (disease, physical violence, mental depression, etc.) (Figure 3).



**Figure 3.** Multiple Results of a Single Economic Reason for Divorce

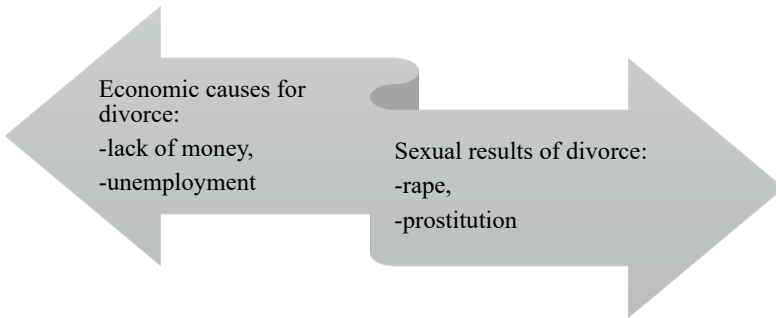
A reason for divorce (for example, consanguineous marriage originating from a feudal structure) can combine with other reasons outside its group,

such as psychological and sexual structure, to create a completely different negative set of results (divorced spouses exhibiting violent behaviors from within the family to outside the family or from outside the family to inside the family) (growth effect). The economic marriage problem, which is not considered important at the beginning but starts to impose itself during the divorce process, can turn into a snowball full of violence when it grows with lovelessness and dissatisfaction (Figure 4).



**Figure 4.** Two Different Reasons for Divorce Lead to a Major Bad Outcome

Sometimes, divorce events that occur due to multiple economic reasons (lack of money, unemployment, etc.) may not necessarily lead to an economic outcome, but may lead to completely opposite but similar outcomes, such as sexual outcomes (rape, prostitution, perversion, etc.) (direction-changing effect) (Figure 5).



**Figure 5.** Multiple Economic Causes in Divorce Leading to a Single Type of Results

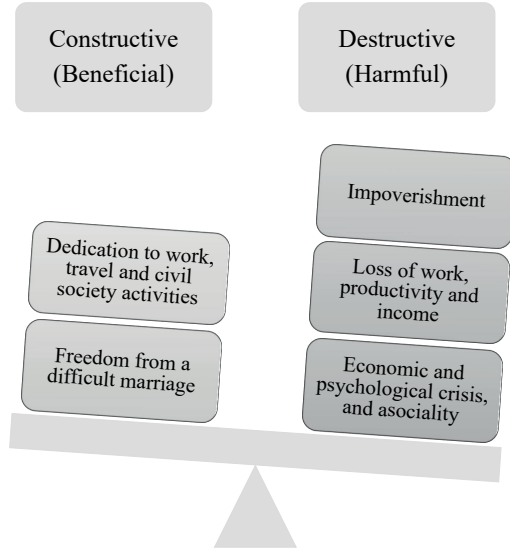
Each cause leading to divorce may lead to exactly the same type of results or very different types; the reasons and results may overlap, but they may not always and in every divorce case; they may be similar/different from each other. One of the reasons may be material (spiritual), its result may be spiritual (material). Parallel

or cross (X) relationships may be established between the reasons and results. In the divorce process, the biological, cultural and economic identity of the married couples; in other words, their ages, traditional lifestyle, professions, social position, financial situation - depending on whether they are childless, have children, have grandchildren or even have elders in the family - may affect the causes and results of the divorce. While the divorced couple is the subject and affected; those outside of them are also the objects and affect.

Another thesis is that, in terms of the results of divorce, for some couples/spouses, it is a “liberation” from violence and a “regaining” of happiness:

If one or both of the couples are directly or indirectly subjecting each other to violence within the framework of the marriage, and therefore the marriage has become a torture mill for them, grinding and grinding them down every day; in this case, the spouses will be able to get rid of violence and torture by getting divorced and have the opportunity to have a new life full of peace and calm. This possible positive or constructive result is undoubtedly valid if it is assumed that the couples will not use any violence against each other or their relatives after the divorce. On the contrary, there are also unhappiness situations created in the spouses when a marriage that started and developed happily ends in divorce after a while.

If the results of divorce are placed on a seesaw or scale, it is highly probable that one party will bear the heavier burden, depending on the effects of the constructive and destructive parties. This probability may also vary depending on the perspective and feelings of each couple, their relatives and their environment, as well as the types of divorce. The event of divorce, which can be assumed to have more and more gray areas than can be expressed in black and white, may initially be destructive (constructive) for some couples, but may later take on a constructive (destructive) quality. In this case, divorce may mean opening or closing doors to a new life. Nevertheless, it is generally known that the destructive effects of a marriage established with good intentions ending in divorce on the spouses and other parties outweigh the constructive effects. (For an economic example, see *Figure 6*.)



**Figure 6.** Constructive and Destructive Results of Divorce in Economic Context

The constructive effects of divorce are liberation, while the destructive effects are poverty. The wealth that is multiplied in marriage decreases with divorce. In fact, a healthy marriage is also the guarantee of a healthy and rich economy.

## **A General Look at the Causes and Consequences of Divorce**

Divorce is the totality of causal and consequential relationships of the deterioration in family management that begins with fights and conflicts between husband and wife and deepens. According to this understanding, divorces have a series of theoretical and observational causes and consequences -in a size that cannot be expressed in numbers- regardless of the amount and rate.

As seen in *Table 1*, all divorces are a multifaceted and deep problem -complex in itself- including personal, psychological, environmental, cultural, legal, medical, sexual, technological, political, global, economic and even “feminist-economic”.

**Table 1.** General / Theoretical Reasons and Results of Divorce

Source of divorce	Possible causes of divorce	Possible results of divorce
<i>Personal</i>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>- Being against marriage; prejudice that one is not suitable for marriage; being forced to get married;</li> <li>- Wrong and hasty choice of spouse;</li> <li>- Spouses being extremely immoral, unbearable, jealous of each other and their surroundings;</li> <li>- Irresponsible behavior; ignorance;</li> <li>- Being drunk;</li> <li>- Running away from home;</li> <li>- Making excuses that the spouse has lost their former physical beauty; seeing the spouse as ugly, feeling disgusted by them;</li> <li>- Stubbornness, not being able to compromise;</li> <li>- Large age difference between the bride and groom; incompatibility of temperament, complexion and spirit;</li> <li>- Incompatibility in the early years of marriage...</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>- Sociopathic personality (introversion);</li> <li>- Remarriage;<sup>10</sup> finding rival spouses;</li> <li>- One spouse leaving home, becoming homeless;</li> <li>- Spouses seeking to remarry the same or different persons;</li> <li>- Never considering remarriage after divorce;</li> <li>- Living with a stepmother/stepfather;</li> <li>- Monotonous life...</li> </ul>

<sup>10</sup> In order for spouses to remarry, the divorce must be finalized and (except for a court decision) normally a few months must have passed (for women, a “waiting period” in legal terms, equivalent to the period of childbirth, such as 10 months or 300 days).

<p><i>Psychological / Psychiatric</i></p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>- Anxiety disorder;</li> <li>- Frequent tension (stress) crises;</li> <li>- Intention to divorce from the beginning, trying to divorce;</li> <li>- Inability of spouses to create a “we” from “me” and “you”; selfishness; feeling of seeing marriage as a “burden” and “cost”;</li> <li>- Spouses starting to see each other as unattractive and wanting to marry someone else;</li> <li>- Spouses not spending enough time with each other;</li> <li>- Lack of communication between spouses; little time sharing;</li> <li>- End of respect and love within the family; intolerance;</li> <li>- Excessive pride and arrogance;</li> <li>- Psychopathic personality (constantly insulting, swearing, beating, intimidating, anger, etc.);</li> <li>- Madness, schizophrenia, mental illness;</li> <li>- Excessive love of aesthetics and make-up;</li> <li>- Frequent sudden outbursts of anger and rage, lack of control over anger...</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>- Intense feelings of regret consisting of “if only” and “maybe”;</li> <li>- Feelings of hurt pride (humiliation);</li> <li>- Suffering after a happy marriage;</li> <li>- Joy after an unhappy marriage;</li> <li>- Alcohol and drug addiction;</li> <li>- Suicide, violence, murder;</li> <li>- Hateful language towards divorced women, alienation;</li> <li>- Excessive addiction to cosmetics and make-up;</li> <li>- Loneliness/being alone<sup>11</sup>...</li> </ul>
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<sup>11</sup> It is known that loneliness is not only valid for divorced people; it is a psychological problem of the age for everyone, young and old, who feels ‘alone’. As can be understood from the following interesting comment by Cerrahoğlu (2018), robots have started to be produced for the lonely, the Saudi Arabian government even granted citizenship to a robot, and most recently, the “*Ministry of Loneliness*” was established by (former) Prime Minister T. May in England to combat this great drama called “the reality of modern life”.

<p><i>Family (Spouse, Child) and Environmental (Relative, Neighbor, Friend) Relationships</i></p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>- Spouses' habit of solving their problems and violent disagreements at home;</li> <li>- Spouses' constant quarreling and reconciling; running away to their parents' house or staying in a hotel during the quarreling process;</li> <li>- Spouses' extremely ignorant and ill-mannered behavior in society;</li> <li>- Spouses living with their parents unwillingly;</li> <li>- Spouses' parents (elderly people like grandmothers and grandfathers) over-spoiling their children at home;</li> <li>- Elders' intervention from inside/outside regarding the education, health and upbringing of their spouses and children;</li> <li>- Women being forced to look after elderly elders and/or disabled siblings in the same house as servants;</li> <li>- Rumors threatening the marriage;</li> <li>- Being ostracized among relatives and/or neighbors;</li> <li>- Being forced into marriage;</li> <li>- Consanguineous marriages due to concerns about inheritance;</li> <li>- Being forced into marriage at a young age;</li> <li>- Bargaining;</li> <li>- Cruelty of parents to children and children to parents in the family<sup>12</sup>...</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>- Living alone in a separate house after separation from spouse, or with parents, siblings or friends in the same house;</li> <li>- Children being traumatized;</li> <li>- Step-parents for old and new children;</li> <li>- A child who is not of working age (0-15 years old) being the subject of custody and alimony disputes due to an incompatible parent;</li> <li>- Thanks to compatible couples, the child has a sense of optimism that the parents are not actually divorced and will one day reunite;</li> <li>- If the divorce is not due to the child, the parents' love and financial support for the child continues;</li> <li>- The emergence of step-mother/step-father roles as divorcees marry new spouses;</li> <li>- While the spouses are the first to be affected by divorce, the children are the most negatively affected: The child being forced to take sides,<sup>13</sup> neglect of children's rights, child abuse, separation from children, children's possible failure in school;</li> <li>- Relatives, neighbors and friends generally do not look favorably on divorced couples;</li> <li>- Intervening in mediators so that the spouses can remarry (either with each other or with someone else)...</li> </ul>
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<sup>12</sup> The family unit may be broken not only by the separation of the spouses but also by the spouses or children leaving the home to escape cruelty (one directed at the other) between the parents and the children in question.

<sup>13</sup> When couples divorce, while the husband and wife are separated from each other like two opposite sides of a stream, the children they are parents of may also be subject to the idiom of "*caught between two streams*" and some may fall into the stream and be swept away to unknown places.

<p><i>Social / Cultural</i></p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>- The conflict between the established social structure and the developing legal structure;<sup>14</sup></li> <li>- Moving away from traditions and religion;</li> <li>- Being overly traditional or overly modern;</li> <li>- Overly free environment;</li> <li>- Feudal structure that sees women as second class;</li> <li>- Differences and conflicts between spouses in terms of race, religion, sect, ethnicity, etc.;</li> <li>- "Neighborhood pressure" for noisy, incompatible, aggressive couples to divorce;</li> <li>- The gap in the level of education between spouses or being equally highly educated;</li> <li>- Forced cultural assimilation (assimilation) practice by spouses;</li> <li>- Social exclusion (not going to the market or entertainment venues together; prohibiting seeing friends, etc.);</li> <li>- Increasing migration from villages to cities and urbanization;</li> <li>- Believing that divorce is based on fortune-telling, amulets, horoscopes;</li> <li>- Women being highly educated and feeling freer as a result<sup>15</sup>...</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>- Moving away from old etiquette and traditions or re-adopting them;</li> <li>- acquiring a modern cultural environment;</li> <li>- Losing interest in work;</li> <li>- Moving away from religion or taking refuge in religion;</li> <li>- Living a life of idleness;</li> <li>- Divorced couples trying to continue their old social life (as if they were not divorced) or becoming antisocial or participating in excessive social activities...</li> </ul>
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<sup>14</sup> The English philosopher Russell (1983: 145), who emphasized that the basis of marriage is neither only economy (*Marxian understanding*) nor sexuality (*Freudian understanding*) and that these two understandings cannot prevail over each other, stated in his book "*Marriage and Morality*" that one of the strangest aspects of divorce is the difference and contradiction between "law" and "custom" that frequently emerges; while the French philosopher of the Enlightenment (18th century), Montesquieu (1998: 373), drew attention to the difference between "divorce" and "nullification" in his book "*The Spirit of the Laws*", stating that divorce is achieved with the consent of both parties, while nullification is achieved according to the interests of one of the spouses, especially the man.

<sup>15</sup> There are opinions and observations that divorce is more common among highly educated couples. However, this is only true for couples who use their high education as a power struggle and are already in a bad relationship. On the contrary, theoretically, high education is actually a factor that supports, not hinders, the quality of family life.

<p><i>Legal</i></p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>- Proven adultery; strong suspicion of this;</li> <li>- Mutual harsh accusations;</li> <li>- Desire to live without marriage;</li> <li>- Laws and practices facilitating divorce;</li> <li>- Marriage by taking advantage of one's innocence, deceiving, intimidating or misleading (for example, with one's twin);</li> <li>- Disappearance of one of the spouses;</li> <li>- Long-term imprisonment (as a detainee or convict) of one of the spouses...</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>- Filing for divorce; the spouses losing or winning but the children definitely losing;</li> <li>- High lawyer and court costs;</li> <li>- Unilateral or mutual material/moral compensation payments;</li> <li>- Disputes over inheritance, alimony and child custody;</li> <li>- A smooth divorce by mutual consent;</li> <li>- A contested divorce that creates tension in the spouses' new lives;</li> <li>- The court process being tedious;</li> <li>- The court process ending too quickly (in a single hearing) to give the spouses a chance to reconsider;</li> <li>- One of the spouses injuring, killing or having the other person killed</li> <li>- Being sentenced to severe judicial penalties for attempted murder or committing murder (being a murderer);</li> <li>- The custody of the child being given to the mother, father or both (joint custody);</li> <li>- The end of the husband-wife relationship but the continuation of parenthood;</li> <li>- Enforcement proceedings that started due to the change in income structure due to divorce;</li> <li>- Mediation within the family court;</li> <li>- Inadequacy of social services...</li> </ul>
<p><i>Medical/ Biological</i></p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>- If one of the spouses has a serious, permanent, chronic, contagious disease;</li> <li>- One of the spouses is receiving long-term hospital treatment;</li> <li>- Mental, physical and mental inadequacy;</li> <li>- Disability...</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>- Refusal of treatment, treatment becoming more difficult, seeking treatment, being able to receive treatment;</li> <li>- Regaining health after an unhappy marriage;</li> <li>- Losing health after a happy marriage...</li> </ul>

<p><i>Emotional / Sexual</i></p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>- Spouses' dissatisfaction or excessive sexual desire;</li> <li>- Infertility or excessive and unplanned fertility;</li> <li>- Passing the childbearing age;</li> <li>- Impotence (for the husband) and frigidity (for the wife);</li> <li>- Refusing sexual intercourse;</li> <li>- Breaking away from romantic sexual life and preferring plastic (artificial) sexual tools;</li> <li>- One of the spouses refusing to have children;</li> <li>- Bad surprises on the wedding night; the woman not being a virgin;</li> <li>- Domestic sexual crimes and (rape, incest, telling bed secrets to others, forcing the spouse or daughter into prostitution, directing the spouse to pornography against their will, encouraging them to swinger parties);</li> <li>- Sexual perversions (homosexuality, transsexuality, pedophilia, zoophilia, etc.);</li> <li>- Pregnancies outside of marriage; divorce after getting married and having children...</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>- Turning to a free sexual life;</li> <li>- Gaining the habit of masturbation instead of normal sexual intercourse;</li> <li>- Honour frenzies and murders ('tribalism' similar to terrorism);</li> <li>- Engaging in prostitution, entering this sector;</li> <li>- Engaging in sexual crimes and exhibiting deviant behaviour;</li> <li>- Getting pregnant outside of marriage (women); impregnating (men)...</li> </ul>
<p><i>Technological / Media</i></p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>- With the development of the information economy (new industrialization), women have partially separated from home and prioritized work life;</li> <li>- Excessive addiction to the internet and social media (to the point of neglecting their spouse and family);</li> <li>- Spouses watching each other with smartphones and recording each other with cameras;</li> <li>- The media sector that uses advanced technology (newspapers, TV, Internet, etc.) has devalued the philosophy of marriage with news, advertisements and especially TV series, movies and magazine programs, and despite the reactions, has developed a divorce culture...</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>- Excessive addiction to the internet and social media;</li> <li>- Substituting one's spouse with the internet and pornography;</li> <li>- The media portraying divorced famous women as 'sexual objects' and spouses iconizing them...</li> </ul>

<i>Political</i>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>- The spouses' harsh ideological/political conflict, partisanship;</li> <li>- The insensitivity of political parties to the institution of family and women's rights;</li> <li>- The government's weak, incomplete or wrong family policies;</li> <li>- One of the spouses going to another country as a political refugee or wanting to go without reaching an agreement ;</li> <li>- The marriage (by agreement) made in order to gain citizenship in another country (it ends with the acquisition of this right)...</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>- The government's positive discrimination in the scope of employment and social security, especially for women who are in weak groups and divorced due to violence by their husbands;</li> <li>- The spouse who becomes a refugee with the divorce wants to renounce his citizenship or/and is trying to renounce it;</li> <li>- The differences in the attitudes of political parties towards men and women getting close (dating) before marriage (or after divorce) and living in the same house without being married<sup>16</sup>...</li> </ul>
<i>Global</i>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>- The transformation of the family on the basis of individual and unmarried life has become a new and rising trend in the world;</li> <li>- With external migration events, the problems of separation of spouses in the country they migrate to while they are married in the country of origin...</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>- International organizations and states have begun to review new policies and welfare state models in the face of the increase in the elderly population and homeless children as an extension of the drastic transformation in the family institution that has developed around living without marriage and not having children;</li> <li>- Cases of fake marriages and divorces in countries of migration...</li> </ul>

<sup>16</sup> According to a field study, it is understood that nationalist-conservative (right) parties in Turkey, just like social democratic-socialist (left) parties, mostly take a moderate-tolerant attitude towards young people dating before marriage, but - unlike left parties - they do not accept living in the same house without getting married and perceive it as a threat to society (Çaha, et al., 2014:100,103).

<p><i>Economic/ Financial</i></p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>- The groom coming to the rich bride's house/being brought there (intimate marriage);</li> <li>- Not sharing the wedding expenses and/or jewelry equally and fairly; avoiding expenses, smuggling jewelry;</li> <li>- Homelessness, living in permanent rented houses;</li> <li>- One or both spouses being unemployed or becoming unemployed;</li> <li>- Not getting a job even if possible and not working, forcing spouse to work instead of you;</li> <li>- Poverty, extreme financial incompatibility;</li> <li>- Excessive luxury consumption;</li> <li>- Stinginess within the family; malfeasant and paraphilic behaviors;</li> <li>- Being fond of gambling and games of chance;</li> <li>- Getting into excessive debt, not paying your debts, causing creditors to threaten the family, forcing your spouse into debt;</li> <li>- Not meeting the needs of the house by being stingy;</li> <li>- Saving without your spouse's knowledge, taking money from their pockets and using their credit cards excessively and without permission;</li> <li>- Corruption and theft within the house or elsewhere;</li> <li>- The husband opening another house without the knowledge of his wife and living there;</li> <li>- One of the spouses, despite the other's disapproval, making it a habit to move into his mother-in-law's house in order to get rid of the rent and fixed expenses;</li> <li>- The economic crises<sup>17</sup> and high cost of living in the country...</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>- Women who did not feel the need to work when they were married start looking for a job and working after divorce;</li> <li>- Women who are unable to work start begging;</li> <li>- Sharing of property and money; fighting over sharing;</li> <li>- Decrease in the wealth of the spouses, increase in poverty;</li> <li>- Engaging in gambling and games of chance to compensate for losses;</li> <li>- Begging, falling into begging;</li> <li>- Coming to the conclusion that marriage and family prevent progress in one's profession/job (making a career), and therefore, divorce is the right decision to advance in one's profession;</li> <li>- Changing professions; the distinction between men and women in professions<sup>18</sup> also starts to apply to married and divorced people;</li> <li>- Spouse support is cut off after divorce when one of the husband and wife is not working;</li> <li>- Divorced couples change cities and countries and migrate internally/externally due to the effect of the divorce;</li> <li>- Temporary (frictional) unemployment occurs during change of place and profession;</li> <li>- One or both of the divorced couples being negatively affected by the economic crisis;</li> <li>- The spouses' work and retirement plans changing after the divorce;</li> <li>- Encountering the financial difficulties of remarrying</li> <li>- The children of the divorced spouses having to work after the age of 12 ("child labor")...</li> </ul>
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<sup>17</sup> Economic crises are of many types: For example; inflation between 10-50% per month (hyperinflation); stagnation within inflation (stagflation); markets reducing production and increasing unemployment for at least two consecutive quarters per year (negative growth, recession); financial collapse, which means stagnation lasting more than a year (depression).

<sup>18</sup> In many societies, professions are divided into "women's work" and "men's work" as a subject of "horizontal stratification". In general, "women's work" consists of low-status, low paid, temporary, and insecure unskilled jobs, while "men's work" consists of high-paid, permanent, and secure qualified jobs that require authority and responsibility. In Turkey, women are generally unpaid family workers in the agricultural sector and those work-

<p><i>Feminist / Feminist Economics</i></p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>- Women gaining economic independence and becoming economically free due to having a job;<sup>19</sup></li> <li>- Violating and ignoring gender equality and justice and the constant use of this as a “weapon” by the husband in the family;</li> <li>- Legitimization of discrimination and violence against women in society by the husband in the family;</li> <li>- The acceleration of the divorce process that has already started due to the fact that women, who are the subject of the “insufficient participation assumption”<sup>20</sup> in terms of the labor market, are subject to a lower wage regime than men in some sectors;</li> <li>- Violating women’s economic (real estate, movable and monetary gains) rights, “reifying” women’s labor while using it as a factor of production at home and at work, and collecting all savings in the husband’s single account;</li> <li>- One spouse enslaving the other financially;</li> <li>- Suffocation in an extreme feudal structure or continuing a capitalist life based on exploitation and interest relations...</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>- Considering the increase in divorces, marriage is seen and shown as an obstacle to individual and economic freedom;</li> <li>- Not getting married at all after a bad marriage experience; recommending others not to get married either;</li> <li>- Transitioning to flexible working hours with divorce and accordingly, starting to be content with flexible (usually) low wages and status;</li> <li>- The fact that divorce generally results against women, with the influence of feminist movements, contributes to the awareness and activation of ideas and policies regarding gender equality and justice;</li> <li>- The economic crises that are experienced pave the way for fake marriages and divorces...</li> </ul>
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ing in textile workshops for minimum wage. “Vertical stratification” means that women and men with the same education are employed in different job levels in the same profession; women cannot reach upper management levels as much as men and are faced with promotion discrimination (“glass ceiling syndrome”) (Parlaktuna, 2010:1222).

<sup>19</sup> Considering a woman working and earning money just like a man as a direct and sole reason for divorce, apart from being an insult to women and the philosophy of equality between men and women in terms of rights, it is also wrong and an empty myth to think that it makes women stronger against men and thus speeds up divorce. Because, women being both educated and wealthy will never harm family unity and harmony, but will benefit them.

<sup>20</sup> According to the “insufficient participation deadlock or cycle” assumption, low-educated women living in cities are more likely to work in uninsured - unregistered jobs such as childcare, cleaning, and cooking, but their wages are low. The labor supply of low-educated urban women in insured jobs is low. With the low wages they receive, it is difficult for these women to spend on their daughters that will provide them with high returns on education; they will have to make do with uninsured, low wages like their mothers (DPT-DB, 2009: 22).

## DISCUSSION: ASYMMETRIC APPROACHES TO THE DIVORCE PHENOMENA

Married or marrying people<sup>21</sup> can be grouped into three categories according to the phenomenon of divorce: “those who marry to never divorce”, “those who will divorce depending on the circumstances”, and “those who see marriage as a potential divorce and are ready to divorce at any time”. Then, there are those who never divorce, who are not married anyway, but single. It is a crude irony that it is easy for single people to divorce their spouses. For those who are sincerely married, divorce is equivalent to the death of their spouses. Although it does not receive much attention, there are also mediatic theories that marriage is built on divorce.

Divorce, which means the breakdown of family unity, is a reality of the capitalist world that revolves around the wheels of interest and exploitation, and also of Turkey, which is a part of that world. Turkey has a divorce map. Divorce cases are frequently encountered in cities with a high population, high industrial index, and widespread violence. Divorce is a problematic of all times: Some married people were getting divorced yesterday, they are getting divorced today, and they will get divorced tomorrow, too. If divorce cases are increasing globally, there are special (individual) and general (social) reasons for this, ordinary and extraordinary. The consequences of divorce are also special and general. (See *Table 1.*)

As seen in some countries, if divorce rates are decreasing, one of the reasons for this is the hardening of negative factors within and outside the family, as well as the preference for living together in the same place without an official bond instead of marriage. People with predominant metaphysical beliefs attribute divorce to fate and astrology. However, in reality, divorce is not a fate, but an event that results from the violation of a written or unwritten social contract, and also from various uncollectible material and spiritual debts, not from zodiac signs.

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<sup>21</sup> Although marriage is defined as “a shackle with a lost key”, as Altan (1998: 163) puts it, and although it actually limits personal freedom and independence, it still maintains its characteristic of being an institution adopted by the overwhelming majority of adults, probably because it ensures the continuity of the human race and the need for family within moral and legal boundaries, despite all the diverting propaganda of the post-modern world.

When a couple (husband and wife) used to be a “narrow family”, “urban family”, “neo-local family” or “nuclear family” with their children and divorced, that is, when the nucleus was broken, the children who were left behind, scattered and living in one’s home, started to face a new definition that negated the modern family structure, this time as “incomplete family”, “half family” and “surplus family”.

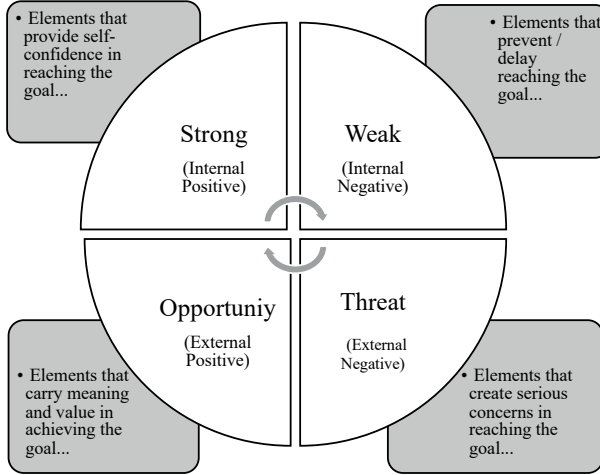
Divorce is a dramatic socio-economic phenomenon based on family, which shows that the husband and wife can no longer fulfill the duties, responsibilities and functions expected of them. This phenomenon can be approached from three different perspectives: “SWOT analysis”, “feminist economics discipline” and “game theory”. Here, special reasons can be drawn attention to for calling the three approaches mentioned collectively, as in the title, “*asymmetric*”: First, all approaches appear to be analytically different from each other, substitute each other and are partially complementary. Secondly, asymmetry coincides with a conceptual preference for the scientific discussion of a sensitive socio-economic problem such as divorce. The most important reason is that all three approaches have a dialectical feature, as they can be positioned as thesis and antithesis against each other and can pave the way for a potential synthesis.

## **SWOT Approach**

Marriage and divorce are enemy siblings; they are opposite poles. Depending on the situation, each of them has various opportunities (O) and threats (T) that they create together with their strengths (S) and weaknesses (W) in terms of economic and non-economic areas, in other words, a SWOT dimension (*Figure 7*).

Considering the general cultural, socio-economic structure and emotional expectations in the world, love and marriage are attributed with art and aesthetics, the most beautiful heartfelt poems are composed for them, but divorce is never glorified and is not looked upon favorably. In this context, if divorce is an asymmetric form of marriage, a comparative SWOT analysis of these two phenomena can be made (*Table 2*). The SWOT model, which can be adapted to marriage and divorce like many institutions, activities and events, has two legs on which it stands and walks: First, to diagnose the strong,

weak, opportunistic and threat sides of marriage and divorce (“*diagnostic leg*”); The second is to implement the measures that need to be taken to prevent the strong from weakening, to strengthen the weak aspects, to realize the opportunities and to eliminate the threats (“*treatment leg*”).



**Figure 7.** Components of SWOT Analysis

**Tablo 2.** SWOT Matrix for Marriage and Divorce

	S (++)	W (-)	O (+)	T (--)
Marriage	<p>++ Marriage is the “<i>opportunity (alternative) cost</i>”<sup>22</sup> of being single, which includes many deprivations, and married people maximize their individual benefits by sharing them; they also share their benefits they maximize.<sup>23</sup></p>	<p>- For some, marriage is the “<i>opportunity cost</i>” of building a career, in other words, it is something that is given up. Children born to spouses who do not have a developed sense of duty and responsibility may grow up as problematic as they themselves, and the socioeconomic costs of this may be passed on to future generations (<i>negative sustainability, i.e. unsustainability</i>).</p>	<p>+ Marriage is a cost-benefit calculation. Spouses stay married to the extent that it increases their mutual benefits and decreases their mutual costs.</p>	<p>-- It is common in some regions that women are seen primarily as a factor of production rather than a production actor by their husbands and economic environment, and that women are forced to have children, which is seen as a base, as a characteristic of the patriarchal society, thus hindering women’s liberation.</p>

<sup>22</sup> Opportunity cost means, if there are two (or more) goals to be achieved, giving up one (some) to reach the other (the others); in short, what is given up.

<sup>23</sup> This situation is explained according to the principle of “benefit maximization” or “cost minimization” in the “*microeconomics*” theory, which examines the economic decisions and behaviors of individuals-families and businesses. In marriage, total benefit (TB) is maximized thanks to the income obtained, movable and immovable assets owned and increased welfare. At the point where TB is at its maximum, the “marginal benefit” (MB), which means the change in TB created by the last change in the amount of consumption/expenditure (in marriage), becomes zero (o). As TB starts to decrease gradually, the spouses become dissatisfied and accordingly MB starts to take on negative values (“*principle of diminishing marginal benefit*”). Here, when MB decreases and falls below o, divorce risks arise and accelerate in a way that threatens the marriage. Accordingly, if the maximum benefit achieved while married falls below the maximum benefit to be provided after divorce; In other words, if the benefits to be gained by divorce exceed the benefits gained while married, the spouses can give up on continuing the marriage and decide to divorce, and divorce becomes the “solution set” of the dissolved marriage for them. It should be known that in real life, in practice, spouses do not have a benefit-measuring device in their hands and do not act with such a device.

<b>D i v o r c e</b>	<p>++ Although it is generally not praiseworthy, if the divorced couple is very self-confident and devoted to their individuality in terms of financial gain, spending and savings, they can satisfy all their economic feelings at this stage.</p> <p>++ If the spouses are using one-sided or mutual never-ending deadly violence, divorce will be the best way to get rid of violence forever but find peace.</p>	<p>- When it is look at the experiences of couples, it is seen that when they divorce, they lose all the material gains and spiritual gains they have gained and saved while they were married, either suddenly or gradually. In this case, the divorce event is experienced as a dramatic experience of marriage.</p>	<p>+ A woman who is educated and skilled but cannot work because her husband does not allow it can start working in a job suitable to her education and skills after divorce.</p>	<p>-- The current gender inequality, which is most prevalent in the labor market, will be further reinforced by the discrimination against divorced women. While the labor market will demand less divorced women's labor than married women, other markets will find women and divorcees worthy of lower wages and status.</p> <p>-- In addition, violence that begins while engaged or married or develops after divorce may increase and result in the ex-husband's madness against the woman and even murder.</p>
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According to the SWOT model, if marriage is the cornerstone of a happy family, each active divorce risk is an earthquake of varying magnitudes that can shake that marriage or have the potential to create fault lines. In order for the family not to collapse and create debris through a divorce that creates an earthquake-like effect, precautions should be taken to render those risks passive. As follows:

*i- First of all, the traditional value order should be preserved:* Spouses should reach the highest level of awareness of the material and spiritual values that keep the family together, such as love, respect, compassion, tolerance, support, trust, work, sufficient income, balanced spending and saving, etc., and should constantly remind themselves and their children of the vital importance of these values.

*ii- Strengthening should be done:* Dialogue and transparency should be preferred against elements that create verbal and physical tension and violence

between spouses and children at home; thus, the weak columns and walls of the family building will be strengthened.

*iii- Spiritual alarms and cameras should be installed in the house:* Spouses should be alert against elements that disturb the family from outside, they should not allow malicious people to enter like thieves and steal the peace and happiness in the family; they should even replace the keys of the house that have been damaged.

*iv- Make-up and cosmetic surgery should not be applied to marriage:* When a marriage is prevented from being seen as it is and being what it seems, signals for divorce are given. Marriages age just like spouses, but the way to rejuvenate a marriage is not by applying excessive make-up and cosmetic surgery to the family relationships of the spouses, but by continuing them faithfully. Every sensitive and positive effort to be shown against illnesses in the family in a spiritual sense will serve to make the marriage “sustainable”.<sup>24</sup>

*v- Good marriages should be made from the beginning and/or good marriages should be taken as a model:* Such behavior can be the primary ‘antidote’ to divorce. The ideal is to have a good marriage; if this is not possible, during the process, various help can be received from experienced spouses whose marriage seems good, or even expert psychologist support can be sought. The aim is to save the marriage and not fall into the divorce trap.

*vi- Marketized marriages that usually end in divorce should be avoided:* Sub-capitalistic (liberal, statist, mixed) systems have created a new source of income (sector) for the parties by approaching the supply and demand of marriage with a market logic. This is the marketized form of the arranged marriage procedure through the media (TV, newspapers, internet).<sup>25</sup> Furthermore, if

<sup>24</sup> The simplest formula for a “sustainable marriage”, which is the subject of countless personal development prescriptions, is this: love, respect and peace at home! Keeping this trio alive; preventing it from being affected even by global warming; taking derivative proverbs such as “a little bit of fighting is good, a lot of fighting is bad” seriously...

<sup>25</sup> The desires of the candidates of brides and grooms to get married and the family fights of the married couples have been turned into a show and entertainment commodity in TV programs - which have recently broken viewing records in Turkey and have been sentenced to astronomical fines by the Radio and Television Supreme Council (RTÜK) because they are damaging family morals. Sometimes these ‘market’ love affairs that end in marriage, after a while, become the subject of a ‘play’ and are played by divorced couples in the second act. It is debatable whether it is right for women and men to publicize their private feelings and expectations about marriage through advertising.

it is assumed that what is good for the economy may not always be good for the family unit, divorce may not be considered a good development for the economy.<sup>26</sup>

## **Feminist Economics Approach**

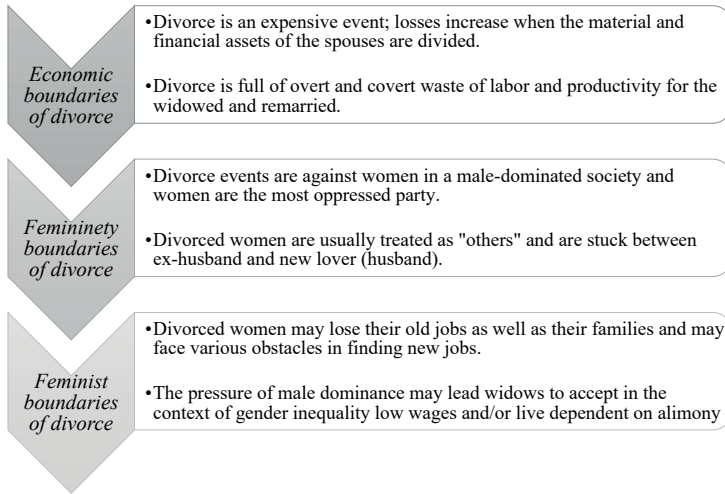
The phenomenon of divorce falls within the boundaries of feminism and feminist economics, as it concerns women. The doctrine of “feminism”, which advocates equality between women and men in the economy and in terms of the opportunities and possibilities offered by other areas of life, has accelerated women’s divorce from their husbands from the 1960s to the present day,<sup>27</sup> according to some, and has also enabled them to obtain the rights arising from divorce. The discipline/area of “*feminist economics/economy*”<sup>28</sup>, which emphasizes the role of women in economic life and includes economic regulations aimed at preventing gender discrimination and bringing women to the forefront in social life, has claims, actions and policies regarding women’s employment, fair wages and income distribution, equal working conditions and partnership in all areas of life (economic growth, politics and social security) (Figure 8).

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<sup>26</sup> Asking “*Why is more divorce a good sign for the economy?*” Weissmann (2014) answers, “*So instead of saying goodbye to each other, spouses do this in their unsatisfactory relationships.*” Then he makes the following striking quotes: i- According to a 2013 report by J. Schaller from the University of Arizona, cited by Bloomberg, a 1 point increase in unemployment results in a 1.7% decrease in divorce. ii- Researchers at the Universities of Maryland and K. Carolina found that women without a college education are more likely to end their marriages in recessions. iii- M. Zandi, chief economist at Moody’s Analytics, states that while the economy is normalizing today, family dynamics are also normalizing, but birth and divorce rates are increasing.

<sup>27</sup> S. Coontz explains in an interview that feminism did not make good marriages worse, but gave women the opportunity to escape unhappy or unfair marriages, and in this sense was the catalyst for many divorces in the 1970s and 1980s; and that feminist reforms also allowed women to get better jobs, receive equal pay and promotions (Brooke, 2011). (For liberal, cultural, radical, etc. feminist perspectives on divorce; on whether divorce is a litmus test of feminism; on divorce as gender equality, see also: Ambert, 1985; Carbone, 1994; Yefet, 2020.)

<sup>28</sup> Until feminist movements (and/or feminist economics), when the economy was identified with men, women’s care for children was not systematically charged or included in the national income. However, feminism would make us realise that women’s care services were at least as important as car production or plants (The Economist, 2015).



**Figure 8.** Economic, Femininity and Feminist Boundaries of Divorce

Reminding us that divorce is not a minor issue, Thomson (2014) emphasizes that it is important to focus on the impact it has on the economy as well as how it affects families emotionally: Divorce has a huge impact on the economy and although it is sometimes unavoidable, there are ways that people can begin to prevent it. Getting married in old age and establishing financial stability before marriage are solid ways that couples try to ensure that they do not divorce. If the divorce rate continues to fall and families become more dual-income, the economy will improve. Suet-Lin (2012) also states that divorce is a gendered experience and therefore does not affect men and women in the same way, and looks at the economic consequences of men and women divorcing from a post-structuralist and post-modern feminism perspectives.<sup>29</sup>

Feminist economics emphasizes the visibility and awareness of women's economic identity; while advocating that women's welfare be increased, corrected and protected together with men, not against or in spite of them. Feminist economists challenge this because men's decisions and phenomena

<sup>29</sup> In contrast to "modern feminism"'s emphasis on gender differences between men and women, "postmodern feminism" is based on the assumption that it ignores the differences within each gender. "Poststructuralist feminism", on the other hand, understands gender stereotypes as a cultural structure of patriarchy and aims to deconstruct them in order to enable individuals to become conscious of themselves. Apart from these, there are other derivative feminist movements in our era, such as "Marxist feminism", which focuses solely on capitalism as the cause of gender oppression, and "material feminism", which argues that patriarchy also exists in non-industrial areas and in the division of labor within the home, and that all material conditions play a vital role in the production of gender. (See: Hutcheon, 1985; Dolan, 1989; Hesse-Biber, Leavy & Leavy, (2007; Gimenez, 2018).

are dominant and mainstream Neoclassical economic policies also affect women disproportionately. And therefore, according to Kabeer (2016) and Becchio et al (2023), feminist economists are needed more than ever.

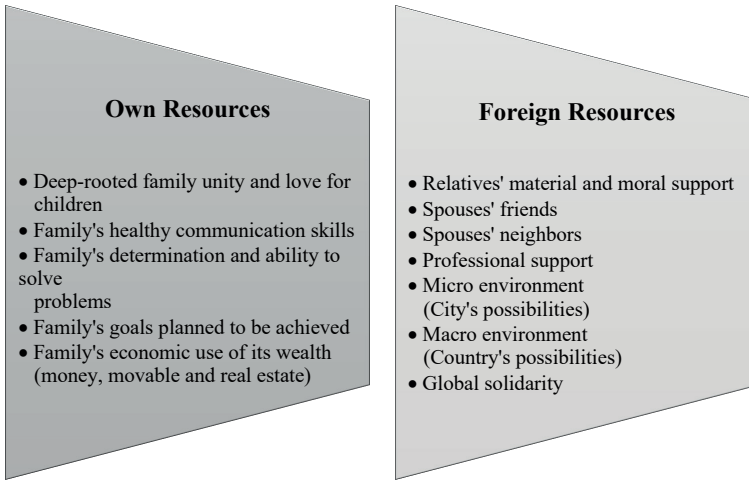
In male-dominated societies, it has been difficult to expect the established order to change towards a balance between women and men and/or to the detriment of men. In Western societies where the feminist movement took root, men also believed that women should be fed from the same pool of rights. Feminism viewed divorce as an eliminatory tool to separate healthy marriages from unhealthy ones and supported the survival of healthy marriages.

Blaming the increase in divorces on feminism and feminist economics, which advocate women's liberation and economic independence against men who hold the monopoly of freedom and family patriarchy, will not express any scientific value other than a masculinist reaction. The "divorce revolution" is not something that feminism boasts about, but rather a problem that requires an analysis in terms of why the increase in divorces negatively affects economic growth (change in national income) (Haury, 2012). On the other hand, there are economists who claim that when couples divorce, expenses will double and be recorded as income for someone else, and therefore growth will be positive (expansion of the economy) rather than negative (contraction of the economy) (Paltt, 2011). The absolute majority still view marriages, ended by divorce as an advantage, as a "wealth-enhancing" and "anti-poverty strategy" (McElroy, 2014).

Divorce is a three-stage problematic: intense tension and conflicts before the divorce; the difficult divorce sequence; the gaps that are difficult to fill after the divorce. From a feminist economics perspective, this problem can be solved by mobilizing the family's "own resources" and "foreign resources."<sup>30</sup> (For two windows of resources see, *Figure 9*.) If it is read it in reverse, when a family exhausts its own resources that it has developed over time and the foreign resources it has received from outside, then it collapses, in other words, divorce occurs.

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<sup>30</sup> The internal (domestic) and external (foreign) resources that constitute the financial resources of companies are also valid for the family. For example, the capital, reserve funds and provisions of the company shareholders (family members) constitute the "equity capital"; the loans the company (family) receives from banks and the bonds it issues to borrow (loans from others) constitute the "external resources". In place of the material resources mentioned here, various moral supports can also be included in the context of family-marriage-divorce.



**Figure 9.** Internal and External Sources That Can Be Used Against Divorce in Terms of Feminist Economics

**Source:** Canel, 2011: 27. (Developed and schematized by the author.)

## Game Theory Approach

The “Game theory”, which is a microeconomic subject that examines the economic behavior of individuals and companies and was developed by mathematician J. Nash (who was also divorced), can also be adapted to divorced couples. Game theory examines the mutually best possible strategic decision options where the gains of a decision unit (one of the spouses) depend on the reactions of the others.

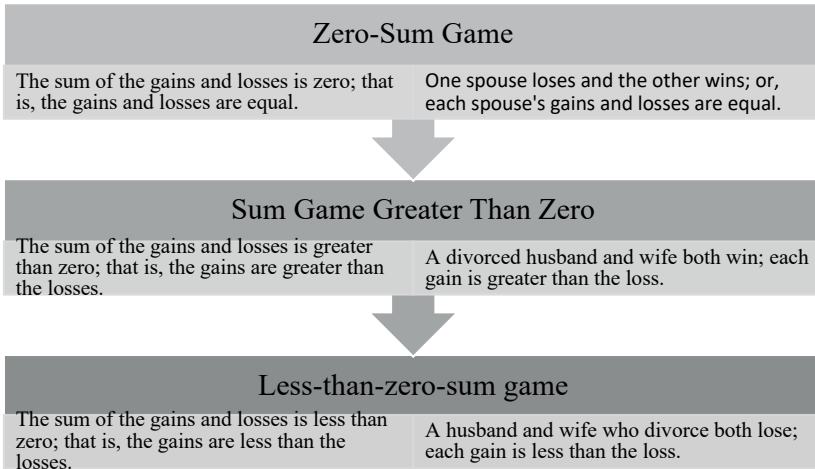
Like those who are married monogamously, divorcees are at least two players. The concern of two or more players to increase their own interests by making alternative decisions is also valid in polygamous marriages. According to Amstutz (2015), the following order should be followed in a divorce event, which is a conflict game process: One; the parties to the conflict should determine what is important. Two; the parties should clarify how the common interests and general welfare of the family will be considered and planned. Three; the parties should try to re-conceptualize the conflict based on values. Finally, the parties can explore alternative approaches in communication and negotiation.

“*Static games*”, which also apply to divorce, are games in which all decisions are made once and simultaneously within a given time period; “*dynamic games*” are games in which many decisions are made within a time period.

Each of the three aspects of game theory, namely “*zero-sum*”, “*greater than zero*” and “*less than zero*” games (see *Figure 10*), can apply to all divorce cases, regardless of how they turn out (Maurer, 2021; Willis, 2023). For couples, divorce is more like a “*less-than-zero-sum game*” in which both parties lose. In contrast to this negative game, a “*greater-than-zero-sum game*” occurs when both couples end the divorce negotiations with mutual satisfaction and gain. If one couple loses and the other wins as a result of the divorce, this is called a “*zero-sum game*” – in the sense that the sum of the gain and the loss is zero. The assumption called “*Prisoner’s Dilemma*” or “*Nash Equilibrium*” in game theory,<sup>31</sup> which requires considering both one’s own and one’s friend’s interests, can also be explained in terms of divorced couples: If one of the spouses who decide to divorce (out of two prisoners detained in a theft case) blames himself/herself (confesses to a joint crime) instead of unilaterally accusing his/her spouse (the other one betrays the prisoner) during the divorce, the divorce will cause less harm to the spouses (the total penalty of one of the two prisoners will be divided in half instead of being doubled).

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<sup>31</sup> Game theory, particularly the concept of the “Nash Equilibrium” (NE), provides a powerful framework for understanding the strategic interactions between divorcing spouses and predicting their behavior during the divorce process. NE provides insights into how divorcing spouses or estranged partners make stable decisions to maximize their own expectations by considering interests and strategies regarding divorce negotiations, such as the division of money and property, child custody, and alimony arrangement (Myers, 2024).



**Figure 10:** Alternative Game Strategies and Their Adaptation to Divorce Events

## CONCLUSION

One of the dynamics of a society and an economy is the increase in quality marriages and therefore productive families. Each divorce is a kind of dynamite that destroys that dynamic and paves the way for potential chaotic and crisis situations. Without forgetting that both marriage and divorce are based on financial means and spiritual expectations and are generally expensive, it can be said with socioeconomic rationality: *“If you are going to get divorced, don’t get married; if you are married, don’t get divorced.”* Bad surprises in life can push spouses towards divorce and create a void in their lives. However, life does not accept emptiness; it also requires looking at the bright side. The much-vaunted *“logic marriage”* in contrast to *“love marriage”* can even be the reason for an illogical divorce that is regrettable. The reasons for divorce can be so extreme and can push the parties so hard that even if they hit the wall called children and come back, they can also break down that wall by eroding it.

If marriage is a game of chess, can divorce be considered the end of that game with checkmate? The answer to this question may vary depending on the perspective. However, what does not change is that divorce, which means the breakdown of the family unity as a result of the family becoming unmanageable, turns into a scabbed social wound. With every divorce, that

wound bleeds, with every marriage, that wound scabs over. There is no definitive cure for that wound. However, with early diagnosis and effective intervention, many marriages on the verge of divorce can be saved and/or that society can be saved from the possible negative results of a toxic marriage thanks to divorce.

Divorce, an important socio-economic phenomenon, is one of the silent, insidious and shy dangers in a society. The family institution, which is the smallest but most fundamental cell of society, is threatened most economically because daily life has become capitalist. The oppression of women by men due to gender inequality is not coincidental and feminist movements have undertaken a mission for over half a century to prevent the material exploitation of women in every field and to make women's existence visible, especially in terms of political economy.

The phenomenon of divorce is like a double-edged knife; while the knife is a savior in the hands of a surgeon, it is deadly in the hands of a murderer: While divorce is a savior against a marriage that wears out, 'consumes' and 'kills' the husband and wife from within, it can act as a terminator if it is caused by those who try to destroy a happy marriage from the outside. The specific examination tools of this study, SWOT, feminist economics and game strategies, determine the quality or structure of this knife and contain various powerful maneuvers to make women co-producers and sharers of an equal and fair world with men.

It is not known whether Prophet Moses would have added a clause saying "Do not get divorced" as per the command he received from God, if he had read the "Ten Commandments" to his own people (i.e. the entire world today). However, it is known for sure that divine religions have approached divorce with a "distance": The decision to divorce, which Judaism has made somewhat flexible, has been tied to various conditions (adultery, insanity, disappearance, etc.) in Christianity and Islam, as is also the case in civil law. Divorce has even been considered "an event that shakes the heavens and the earth", as Prophet Muhammad stated in a hadith.

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