

HACETTEPE UNIVERSITY  
INSTITUTE OF POPULATION STUDIES

**INVESTIGATING THE IMPACT OF SOCIO-  
DEMOGRAPHIC DYNAMICS ON DIVORCE RISK IN  
TURKEY**

Hande Deniz TÜRK

Supervisor  
Prof. Dr. Mehmet Ali ERYURT

Department of Demography  
A Master's Thesis

Ankara  
July 2024



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## ACCEPTANCE AND APPROVAL

Investigating the Impact of Socio-Demographic Dynamics on Divorce Risk in Turkey

Hande Deniz TÜRK

This is to certify that we have read and examined this thesis and in our opinion it fulfills the requirements in scope and quality of a thesis for the degree of Master of Arts in Demography.

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12/06/2024

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## ÖZET

Bir kurum olarak aile, bireylerin değerlerini ve davranışlarını derinden etkilemekte ve bu değerlerin nesiller arasında aktarılması için bir kanal görevi görmektedir. Evlilik, genellikle aile hayatının başlangıcıdır ve toplum içinde çok önemli bir kurum olarak kabul edilir. Buna karşılık boşanma, bu sosyal kurumun yasal olarak çözülmesi anlamına gelmektedir. Modern değerler ve küreselleşme karşısında geleneksel normlar değişmekte, bu da aile yapısında değişikliklere ve boşanma oranlarında artışa yol açmaktadır. Bu tez, Türkiye'de sosyo-demografik özellikler, geleneksel değerler ve boşanma riski arasındaki karmaşık ilişkiyi incelemektedir.

15-49 yaş arası kadınlara odaklanan 2018 Türkiye Nüfus ve Sağlık Araştırması verilerinin kullanıldığı çalışmada, boşanma riskini analiz etmek için lojistik regresyon modelleri ve medeni durum ile ilişkili değişkenler arasındaki etkileşimi keşfetmek için çoklu müteakabiliyet analizi kullanılmıştır.

Bulgular, bir kadının evlilik sırasında çalışmasının boşanma riskini önemli ölçüde artırdığını ortaya koymaktadır. Evlilik yaşının artması daha yüksek boşanma oranlarıyla ilişkilidir, ancak daha genç evlilik yaşı diğer değişkenler kontrol edildiğinde daha yüksek boşanma riskiyle ilişkilidir. Kadınların daha yüksek eğitim seviyeleri, kesin olmamakla birlikte, artan boşanma riskiyle bağlantılıdır. Evliliğin ilk yıllarında boşanma eğilimi daha fazlayken, çocukların varlığı evlilikleri koruyucu bir etki yaratmaktadır. Aile zoruyla gerçekleşen evlilikler ve başlık parası ya da dini tören olmadan yapılan evlilikler çözülmeye daha yatkındır. Geniş aile yapısı ve akrabalar arası evlilikler daha düşük boşanma olasılığı ile ilişkilidir. Etnik köken ve yerleşim yeri de evlilik istikrarında önemli bir rol oynamakta, Kürtler ve kırsal bölgelerde yetişenler daha düşük boşanma riskiyle karşı karşıya kalmaktadır.

Bu tez, geleneksel değerlerin azalması ile artan boşanma oranları arasındaki karmaşık ilişkiyi vurgulamakta ve gelenekselliğin erozyona uğramasının aileler için özünde olumsuz olmadığını, bireysel özerklik ve kişisel tatmine yönelik toplumsal bir değişimi yansıttığını öne sürmektedir. Boşanma oranlarındaki küresel durgunluğa

rağmen, muhtemelen kadınların toplumdaki haklarının ve toplumsal cinsiyet eşitliğinin güçlendirilmesinin henüz aile ilişkilerine yansımadağı farklı bir demografik geçiş aşaması nedeniyle Türkiye'de bir artış olmuştur. Bu çalışma, Türkiye'de geleneksel değerlerin evlilik istikrarını doğal olarak koruduğı fikrine karşı çıkmakta, bunun yerine tatmin edici olmayan evliliklerde sürekliliğı zorlayabileceğini öne sürmektedir. Geleneksel değerlerin, modernleşme ve kadınların statülerinin yükseltilmesiyle uyumlu bir şekilde evrilmesi, gelecekte daha fazla evlilik memnuniyetine ve potansiyel olarak daha düşük boşanma oranlarına yol açabilir.

Özetle bu tez, sosyo-demografik faktörlerin ve geleneksel değerlerin boşanma riski üzerindeki çok boyutlu etkilerini vurgulayarak Türkiye'deki evlilik dinamiklerinin anlaşılmasına katkıda bulunmaktadır. Geleneksel değerlerin evlilik istikrarı ve memnuniyetinde oynadığı rolün, yaşanmakta olan daha geniş sosyo-ekonomik ve kültürel dönüşümler göz önünde bulundurularak daha incelikli bir şekilde yorumlanması çağrısında bulunmaktadır.

## SUMMARY

The family, as an institution, profoundly influences the values and behaviors of individuals and serves as a channel for transferring these values across generations. Marriage is commonly the initiation of family life and is regarded as a pivotal institution within society. Conversely, divorce represents the legal dissolution of this social institution. In the face of modern values and globalization, traditional norms are being replaced, leading to alterations in family structure and an increase in divorce rates. This thesis examines the complex relationship between sociodemographic characteristics, traditional values and divorce risk in Turkey.

Utilizing data from the 2018 Turkey Demographic and Health Survey, which focuses on women aged 15-49, the study employs logistic regression models to analyze the risk of divorce and multiple correspondence analysis to explore the interplay between marital status and related characteristics.

The findings reveal that a woman's employment during marriage significantly increases the risk of divorce. An increase in the age at marriage correlates with higher divorce rates, yet younger age at marriage is associated with a greater risk of divorce when controlling for other variables. Higher education levels of women are linked to increased divorce risk, though not conclusively. Early years of marriage are more susceptible to divorce, while the presence of children offers a protective effect. Forced marriages and marriages without a bride price or religious ceremony are more prone to dissolution. Extended family structure and marriages between relatives are associated with lower divorce probability. Ethnic background and place of residence also play a significant role, with Kurdish individuals and those from rural areas facing lower divorce risks.

This thesis highlights the complex relationship between the decline in traditional values and rising divorce rates, suggesting that the erosion of traditionalism is not inherently negative for families but reflects a societal shift towards individual autonomy and personal fulfillment. Despite the global stagnation in divorce rates, there

has been an increase in Turkey, possibly due to the unique demographic transition phase where the strengthening of women's rights in society and gender equality is not yet reflected in family relationships. The study challenges the notion that traditional values inherently safeguard marital stability in Turkey, proposing that they may instead enforce continuity in unsatisfactory marriages. The evolution of traditional values, aligned with modernization and enhanced status for women, may lead to greater marital satisfaction and potentially lower divorce rates in the future.

In sum, this thesis contributes to the understanding of marital dynamics in Turkey by highlighting the multidimensional effects of sociodemographic factors and traditional values on divorce risk. It calls for a subtle interpretation of the role traditional values play in marital stability and satisfaction, taking into account the broader socio-economic and cultural transformations underway.

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**LIST OF ABBREVIATION**

CDR	Crude Divorce Rate
DHS	Demographic and Health Survey
MCA	Multiple Correspondence Analysis
OR	Odds Ratio
SET	Social Exchange Theory
TDHS	Turkey Demographic and Health Survey
TURKSTAT	Turkish Statistical Institute
UN	United Nations

## CHAPTER 1

### INTRODUCTION

As an institution that directly affects the values and behaviors of individuals and transmits the values generation to generation, the family emerges as an important subject of social science. Marriage is the most common way to start a family which is considered as an important institution in the society. On the other hand, divorce means a legal termination of this social institution. While modern values and globalization replace the traditional norms and values, the family structure also starts to change and divorce become more common (Bales & Parsons, 1956; Esser, 1993; Andersson, 1995; Yüksel-Kaptanoğlu, Eryurt & Koç, 2012; Bianchi, 2014; Lesthaeghe, 2014).

Marriage and divorce are important demographic events those lead to changes in population regarding size and structure. In recent decades, changes have been observed in the family institution and the family has undergone a structural transformation (Bales & Parsons, 1956; Esping-Andersen & Billari, 2015). It has been observed that the prevalence of the institution of marriage, once a universal norm, is declining (Cherlin, 2004). Cohabitation as an alternative to legal marriage is becoming more widespread. This shift is particularly pronounced among economically disadvantaged populations for whom the tangible benefits of legal marriage are less obvious (Oppenheimer, 1997; Adams, 2004; Cherlin, 2010). While the prevalence of marriage decreases, there has been an increasing trend in divorce rates. The rise in divorce rates globally is a reflection of the changing family dynamics (Lesthaeghe, 2014). Migration from rural areas to urban centers and across national borders has changed family structures and dynamics, often leading to increased individualism and a reassessment of traditional family roles (Lesthaeghe, 2014; Varışlı, Kurdoğlu & Ergin, 2024). The economic transformation of families from producing and consuming units to primarily consuming entities has left them with little reason to tolerate an unsatisfactory marriage. (Bales & Parsons, 1956; Adams, 2004; Balestrino, Ciardi, Mammini, 2013; Turgut, 2017). The search for personal fulfilment has taken precedence over lifelong commitment to marriage. The increasing importance given

to personal happiness and self-actualization has led individuals to terminate marriages that do not fulfil their personal expectations (Esser, 1993; Balestrino et al., 2013; Bianchi, 2014). The increasing social and legal acceptance of divorce and the decreasing stigma associated with the dissolution of marriage also contribute to this change (Andersson, 1995; González & Viitanen, 2009; Wagner, 2020).

The empowerment of women through education and employment has been a particularly influential factor in the increasing divorce rates. As women gain more opportunities and rights, their participation in the labor force and increased individual freedom have been put forward as an explanation for the higher divorce rates (Oppenheimer, 1997; Esping-Andersen & Billari, 2015). The ability to be financially independent gives women more options outside of marriage, which may lead to higher divorce rates when marital satisfaction is low (Becker, 1991; Sayer, Bianchi, & Robinson, 2004; Harkönen, 2013; Bianchi, 2014).

Furthermore, the decline in fertility rates has been associated with the rise in divorce. Huber and Spitze (1980) suggest that smaller family sizes may contribute to higher divorce rates, as couples with fewer children may face fewer barriers to separation. Lewin's (2005) study suggests that the freedom to choose a spouse, which is a relatively recent development in historical context, may also contribute to higher divorce rates. The ability to marry based on personal choice rather than social obligation may be a change that may not always lead to lasting relationships.

The decision of a marriage or a divorce is affected by psychological and subjective factors as well as demographic and cultural factors (Kalmijn, 1998). Furthermore, homogamy, which can be defined as a marriage between individuals who have similar characteristics including cultural and social backgrounds, plays a role in the decision of marriage and divorce (Lewin, 2005).

In Turkey, as in many other parts of the world, marriage continues to exist based on traditional values and religious beliefs. However, marital stability is not immune to the forces of change. The phenomenon of divorce has become an increasingly important field of study as societies develop and the dynamics within marital relationships change with

socio-economic and cultural transformations. This thesis aims to reveal the complex relationship between the sociodemographic characteristics of spouses and divorce risk in Turkey. The main research question guiding this study is: ‘How do sociodemographic characteristics and traditional values affect the divorce risk of married couples in Turkey?’

The main hypothesis of this study proposes that spouses' adherence to traditional values reduces the risk of divorce. This hypothesis is based on the assumption that traditional values foster compatibility and commitment within a marriage. Traditional values often view marriage as a sacred institution where divorce is not considered as an option. Moreover, these values create social barriers that discourage separation, even in the face of marital dissatisfaction. By examining the influence of traditional values on divorce, this thesis aims to explain the role of cultural and social factors in marital stability.

In addition to the main hypothesis, this thesis explores two other arguments related to divorce. Firstly, it examines how sociodemographic characteristics influence the decision to divorce. Factors such as age, education level, employment status and region can impact the likelihood of divorce. By analyzing these sociodemographic factors, this thesis aims to provide a comprehensive understanding of the complex interplay between individual characteristics and divorce. Secondly, the decision to divorce is influenced by the compatibility of the spouses. Couples who have higher levels of compatibility are believed to have a stronger foundation for their relationship, making them less likely to consider divorce as an option.

The theoretical basis of this thesis is grounded in social exchange theory, which suggests that the decision to maintain or terminate a relationship is determined by both conscious and unconscious evaluations of the costs and benefits involved (Donovan & Jackson, 1990). Traditional values can act as an important cost factor by imposing social stigma and other constraints that make divorce a less viable option (Levinger, 1965). Additionally, the sanctity attributed to marriage in religious contexts may increase tolerance within a marriage, thereby reducing the propensity to divorce (Wilcox & Wolfinger, 2007).

This thesis will contribute to the understanding of marital stability in Turkey by examining the interaction between sociodemographic characteristics, traditional values, and divorce risk. Through statistical analyses and a comprehensive literature review, this research will elucidate the factors that sustain the institution of marriage and the pressures that challenge its resilience.

The data utilized in the analyses are from the 2018 Turkey Demographic and Health Survey (TDHS) conducted by the Hacettepe University Institute of Population Studies. The TDHS data provide information specifically on women aged 15-49. Along with marital and sociodemographic characteristics, this dataset is suitable for this study as it includes variables related to traditional practices associated with marriage. To measure the risk of divorce, logistic regression analysis has been chosen as the primary multivariate analysis, using divorced status as a dichotomous dependent variable. This analysis assesses the impact of various factors on the risk of divorce. Additionally, multiple correspondence analysis (MCA) is employed to examine the relationships between marital status and characteristics related to women and their marriages.

The introduction chapter provides an overview of the thesis and its objectives. In the Literature Review and Theoretical Framework chapter, the Level and Trend of Divorce section will present general concepts and statistics related to divorce. The Literature Review will discuss previous research and studies conducted on divorce, reviewing the existing literature, and highlighting key findings and theories. The Theoretical Framework will build upon the literature review, discussing the theoretical foundations of the research by analyzing and explaining relevant theories and concepts related to divorce.

The Data and Methodology section will describe the data used in the analysis and introduce the research methodology, explaining the analysis techniques employed, such as logistic regression and multiple correspondence analysis. The Results section will present detailed findings of both descriptive and multivariate analyses, providing a comprehensive explanation of the results obtained. Finally, the Conclusion and Discussion section will compare the findings of the research with the existing literature, interpret the research question based on the findings, and offer recommendations related to the phenomenon of divorce.



## **CHAPTER 2**

### **LITERATURE REVIEW AND THEORETICAL FRAMEWORK**

This chapter is divided into three sections. The first section will provide a general overview of divorce, including definitions and legal concepts. It will also discuss the methods used to measure divorce. Furthermore, a comparative analysis of global divorce rates and trends, with a specific focus on Turkey, will be presented, allowing for a deeper understanding of the global landscape. The second section will summarize existing studies in the literature, providing a comprehensive review of the research and highlighting key findings and contributions of previous studies. The final section will define the theoretical framework of this study based on major theories of divorce. The theoretical perspectives and concepts underpinning this study will be discussed, establishing a foundation for the research.

#### **2.1. Level and Trend of Divorce**

This section provides an overview of divorce, focusing on its definitions, levels, and trends worldwide, with particular attention to Turkey. The first subsection explores the definitions of divorce and marriage, considering different cultural contexts. The next subsection reviews the legal foundations of marriage and divorce globally. Following this, the data collection methods and statistical studies used in examining these topics are outlined. The fourth part presents an overview of the general level of divorce in Turkey, while the fifth part examines global trends in divorce.

##### **2.1.1. What is marriage? What is divorce?**

Marriage and divorce are significant occurrences that can be classified as both demographic and cultural-social events. Specific statistics and definitions associated with marriage and divorce vary from one country to another, depending on whether they are established as civil or religious institutions. For meaningful comparisons of

statistics across countries, comprehensive definitions of marriage and divorce applicable on a broader scale are essential. According to the United Nations (2014), these terms are defined in the Principles and Recommendations for a Vital Statistics System as follows:

*“Marriage is an act, ceremony or process by which the legal relationship of spouses is constituted. Divorce is a final legal dissolution of a marriage, that is, that separation of spouses which confers on the parties the right to remarriage under civil, religious and/or other provisions, according to the laws of each country.”*

In the context of Turkey, marriage is legally defined in the Turkish Civil Code as a formal agreement entered into by a man and a woman with the intention of cohabitation, duly authorized by a legal authority. Similarly, divorce is legally defined as the definitive dissolution of a marriage, signifying the separation of a man and a woman through a court decree that grants them the right to enter into civil remarriage. These precise definitions, stipulated by the Turkish Civil Code, serve as the foundation for the collection and presentation of statistical data by the Turkish Statistical Institute (TURKSTAT, 2011).

### **2.1.2. Legislation**

Marriage and divorce are both historical phenomena that have been practiced with diverse rituals and regulations across various cultures. In contemporary times, nearly every country has established legal frameworks pertaining to divorce. While divorce was not prevalent in the ancient Western world, there were no significant barriers to obtaining a divorce until the reign of Constantine, the Roman emperor from 306-337. With the advent of Christianity under Constantine's rule, the Church assumed authority over all matters, including marital affairs (Balestrino, Ciardi, Mammini, 2013). Until the mid-twentieth century, divorce was largely disregarded as a significant event, as religious doctrines heavily influenced societal norms in the Western world. However, since the mid-twentieth century, profound transformations have occurred in family structures and attitudes towards divorce across industrialized nations.

González and Viitanen's study reveals that legal reforms facilitating divorce have a significant impact on divorce rates. The introduction of no-fault divorce and legalization in countries where divorce was previously prohibited led to significant increases in divorce rates. The study also shows that the introduction of unilateral divorce, which allows one spouse to initiate divorce without the consent of the other, also contributed to the rise in divorce rates. These effects were found to be significant and, in some cases, long-lasting (2009).

In the United States, divorce has never been subject to legal barriers, yet it was during the 1970s that divorce rates experienced a substantial surge following the implementation of unilateral divorce laws. These laws granted individuals the ability to pursue divorce without requiring the consent of their spouses (Balestrino et al., 2013). The traditional perspective suggests that facilitating divorce through legal means should result in higher divorce rates. However, economic theory offers an opposing perspective by suggesting that only efficient divorces will take place regardless of the legal framework (González & Viitanen, 2009; Wolfers, 2006).

Prior to the establishment of the Republic in 1923, divorce in the Ottoman Empire was primarily governed by Sharia and Ottoman Family Law which were based on Islamic principles. Under the rules of the Hanafi school of law, it was exceedingly difficult for women to obtain a divorce, even in cases where the marriage was unwanted (Altınbaş, 2014).

The establishment of the Republic of Turkey heralded significant legal reforms, among which the implementation of the Turkish Civil Code on October 4, 1926, was a pivotal moment in the legalization and regulation of divorce. Inspired by the Swiss Civil Code, this legislation replaced Islamic law, introducing a secular legal framework that provided for civil marriage and divorce (The Ministry of Family and Social Policies, 2015).

As Turkey underwent significant social and economic transformations, its legal framework also adapted to meet the evolving needs of its population. During the 1980s, there was a growing realization of the importance of establishing divorce

processes that were more accessible and compassionate. In direct response to this societal shift, the Turkish government introduced Law No. 3444 in 1988. Further reforms were driven by increasing awareness of individual rights and the need for protection within the family unit. The introduction of Law No. 4320 on the Protection of the Family in 1998 was a landmark step, providing legal measures against domestic violence and ensuring the safety and rights of family members, particularly women and children (Altınbaş, 2014).

Comprehensive amendments were made to the Turkish Civil Code at the turn of the millennium. The new Civil Code, which came into effect in 2002, modernized family law to better reflect contemporary social values. Key changes included the strengthening of gender equality, the introduction of the principle of joint property acquired during marriage, and clearer regulations regarding the custody and maintenance of children post-divorce. In the context of the Turkish Civil Code No. 4721, the grounds for divorce are listed as adultery, attempted murder, extremely bad or humiliating behavior, committing a crime and leading a dishonorable life, abandonment, mental illness, and the fundamental breakdown of the marital union (T.C. Cumhurbaşkanlığı Mevzuat Bilgi Sistemi, 2001). To address the complexities of family disputes, Law No. 4787 of 2003 established specialized family courts. These courts, designed to handle all family-related cases, operate under the jurisdiction of a single judge and are supported by multidisciplinary teams, including social workers, psychologists, and educators, to provide holistic and informed judgments (T.C. Cumhurbaşkanlığı Mevzuat Bilgi Sistemi, 2003).

### **2.1.3. Statistics of Divorce**

The collection and presentation of divorce statistics play a crucial role in the development, implementation, and evaluation of public policies and programs by governmental agencies and legislative bodies. These statistics are utilized by academic and intellectual institutions, scholars, researchers, writers, and journalists to explore emerging family structures, dissolution rates, and associated factors. Religious organizations and voluntary associations also take a keen interest in divorce statistics

as they serve as indicators of the quality and stability of family life. Moreover, the business sector recognizes the significance of divorce data, employing it to forecast market trends for goods and services and to inform the development of new products. Thus, divorce statistics find relevance across a wide range of sectors, contributing to informed decision-making and societal understanding.

In nearly every nation, comprehensive data on marriage and divorce have been systematically collected. Vital records, court records, and national surveys serve as the primary sources of divorce information. Divorce records and national surveys offer convenient access to data for analyzing current levels and trends in marriage and divorce. Understanding these trends is crucial for projecting fertility rates, population changes, and their correlation with social and economic issues. However, it is important to acknowledge that marriage and divorce statistics derived from registration systems and court records solely encompass registered marriages, disregarding consensual unions and unofficial ceremonial marriages. Consequently, surveys play a vital role in examining marital behaviors, including both formal and informal unions. The Principles and Recommendations for a Vital Statistics System emphasize the significance of population censuses and sample surveys as superior sources of data for studying the formation and dissolution of various types of marital unions (UN, 2014). Therefore, when investigating the full spectrum of unions, analyses pertaining to their formation and dissolution are more reliable when based on data obtained from censuses and surveys.

International agents such as the United Nations, the World Bank, and EUROSTAT present divorce indicators for almost all countries and regions of the world. For most countries, marriage and divorce data are collected from civil registries and/or court records according to national practices in order to present country profiles in United Nations reports (UN, 2014). Data are also obtained from official publications produced by national statistical offices.

In Turkey, statistical data for marriages have been provided by TURKSTAT since 1982, and statistics on divorces have been compiled by TURKSTAT since 1927 for the entire country. Marital events, specifically the officially registered ones, were gathered from 1927 to 1967 for province and district centers. From 1968 to 1981, in addition to province and district center levels, data were provided for sub-districts and villages with municipal organizations. Since the beginning of 1982, statistics on marital events have been collected and presented at the national level for the entire country (TURKSTAT, 2011).

The data collection method for marriages changed in 2003. Before 2003, information on marital events was collected from the marriage offices of municipal organizations and from the population offices in subdistricts and villages. On February 7, 2006, the Ministry of Interior, the General Directorate of Civil Registry and Nationality, and TURKSTAT signed a protocol to access data on marital events obtained from the Central Population Administration System (MERNIS) database since 2003. The data collected from MERNIS have been published by TURKSTAT (TURKSTAT, 2011).

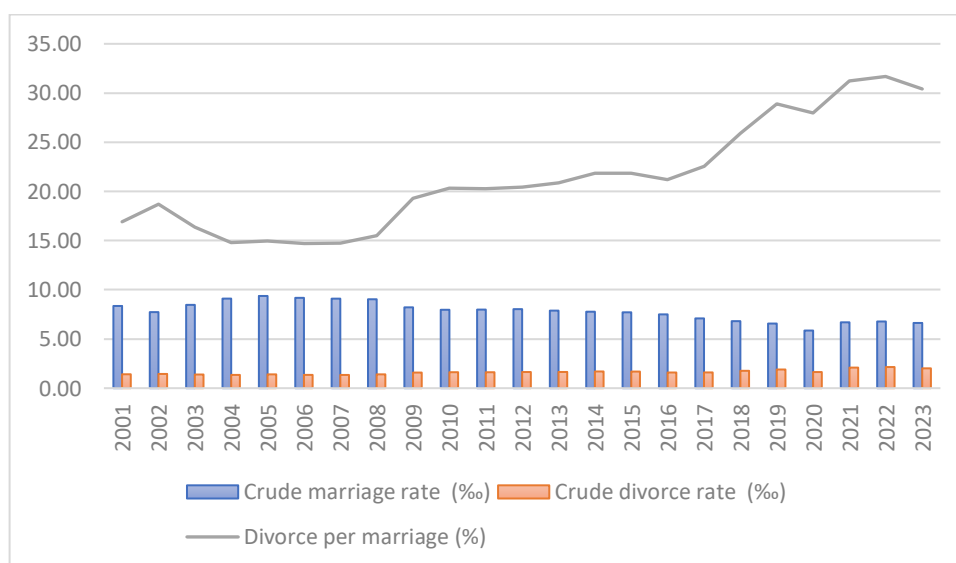
The crude marriage and divorce rates are widely employed as primary measures for representing the levels and trends of these events on a global scale. These rates essentially indicate the number of marriages and divorces per 1,000 individuals within a given year. However, it is important to acknowledge that crude rates are derived from the total population, which includes individuals who are not currently at risk of marriage or divorce. As a result, these indicators possess limitations because they do not account for the age structure of the population (Rowland, 2003). Therefore, careful interpretation of these indicators is necessary, considering the potential for misleading representations of the levels. An alternative perspective on divorce levels can be gained by examining the number of divorces per 100 marriages occurring within a year.

### 2.1.4. Divorce in Turkey

Marriage is a prevalent phenomenon in Turkey, as evidenced by the 2018 Turkey Demographic and Health Survey, which indicates that a majority of women (70%) of childbearing age were married at the time of the survey. It is noteworthy that a significant number of marriages in Turkey are intended to last a lifetime, often ending with the death of one of the spouses. Despite the relatively low levels, the divorce rate in Turkey has exhibited a gradual increase.

Figure 2.1 illustrates the fluctuating and slightly declining trend of the crude marriage rate in Turkey over the years, while also highlighting the comparatively low levels of the crude divorce rate, which have experienced a noticeable increase since 2008 (TURKSTAT, 2023).

**Figure 2.1.** Crude Divorce Rate (%), Crude Marriage Rate (%) and Divorce per Marriage (%) in Turkey.



Source: TURKSTAT 2024

Figure 2.1 reflects an acceleration in the divorce rates in Turkey following the year 2016. Economic stress, changes in employment rates, or changes in the cost of living can have an impact on marriage stability (Andersson, 1993). The period after 2016 has been a turbulent one for the economy in Turkey, and it is likely that the

decline in family well-being has contributed to the deterioration of marriages in Turkey.

Additionally, the development of technology and the widespread use of social media may contribute to the increase in divorces by exerting an indirect effect on marital relationships (Adams, 2004; Varışlı, Kurdoğlu, & Ergin, 2024). The widespread use of social media may have altered social perceptions regarding the sanctity of marriage and the acceptability of divorce. Simultaneously, digital platforms have raised awareness of domestic violence and facilitated support for individuals in abusive relationships. This increased visibility and community support may encourage individuals to leave unsatisfying marital relationships.

The relative decline in marriage rates can be attributed to several factors. Firstly, changes in social values have led to the increased recognition of alternative family structures and the abandonment of traditional marriage ties (Lesthaeghe, 2014). Secondly, economic independence, especially among women, may encourage individuals to prioritize personal satisfaction over societal expectations (Becker et al., 1977). In addition, the psychological effects of modern life, such as increased stress and the pursuit of individual goals, may be causing the institution of marriage to be disregarded or postponed to a later age (Balestrino et al., 2013; Wagner, 2020).

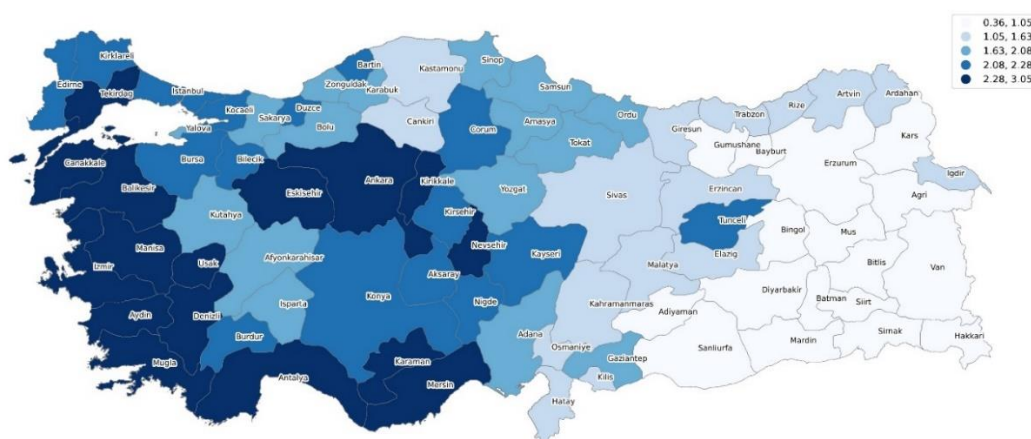
The table below (Table 2.1) presents data on marital status as reported by TURKSTAT (2024). The information is categorized into four groups: never married, married, divorced, and deceased. It shows changes in marital status at the national level from 2008 to the present. A clearer picture emerges with the inclusion of the ratio of divorced individuals to married individuals, indicating an increase in the proportion of divorced individuals compared to married individuals in society. Specifically, this ratio rose from 4.0% in 2008 to 7.8% in 2023. When examining data from 2008 onward, it is observed that, in Turkey, out of every 5 adult men and women, 3 are currently married. However, the proportion of divorced individuals in the population is steadily increasing.



**Table 2.1.** Marital Status from 2008 to 2023 in Turkey (%)

Year	Never married	Married	Divorced	Partner deceased	Divorced per married
2008	27.7	64.4	2.6	5.3	4.0
2009	27.6	64.3	2.7	5.4	4.2
2010	27.6	64.2	2.9	5.4	4.5
2011	27.4	64.1	3.0	5.4	4.7
2012	27.4	64.0	3.1	5.4	4.9
2013	27.4	63.9	3.3	5.4	5.1
2014	27.4	63.8	3.4	5.4	5.3
2015	27.4	63.6	3.5	5.5	5.5
2016	27.4	63.5	3.6	5.5	5.7
2017	27.4	63.4	3.7	5.5	5.9
2018	27.5	63.2	3.9	5.5	6.2
2019	27.6	62.8	4.1	5.5	6.5
2020	27.9	62.3	4.2	5.6	6.8
2021	28.5	61.6	4.4	5.5	7.1
2022	28.6	61.3	4.6	5.5	7.5
2023	28.7	61.0	4.8	5.6	7.8

When examining divorce rates, it is observed that the Marmara, Aegean, and Central Anatolia regions in Turkey surpass the national average. Despite the Marmara Region having a higher population density, the divorce rate is actually higher in the Aegean Region. Notably, İzmir and Uşak stand out as the two cities in Turkey with the highest crude divorce rate, reaching 3.1 (Figure 2.2).

**Figure 2.2.** Crude Divorce Rate by Province (2023)

Source: TURKSTAT 2024

### 2.1.5. Divorce in the World

Global divorce rates have exhibited fluctuations over time. As suggested by the second demographic transition theory and modernization theory, there has been a noticeable increase in divorce rates (Esser, 1993; Bianchi, 2014). However, recent observations indicate a slowdown in this upward trend, especially in developed countries.

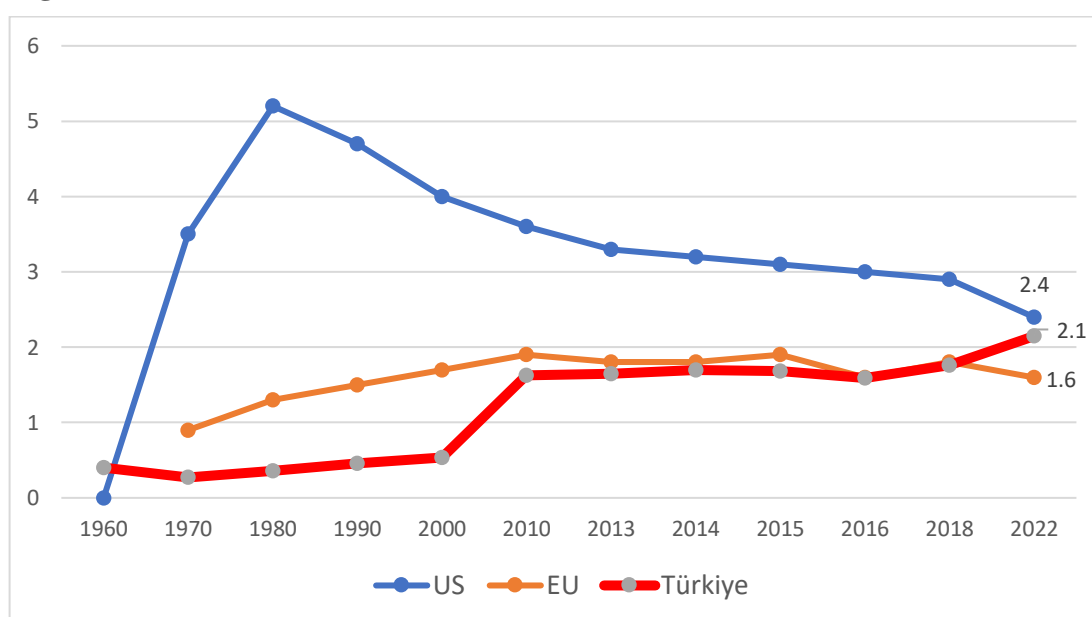
Table 2.2 provides crude divorce rates for various countries in different years, presenting the trends and changes in divorce rates over time. The figures show that divorce rates have generally increased in many countries between 1970 and 2019. However, it is important to note that the rate of increase has varied among countries. Some countries have experienced a significant rise in divorce rates, such as Estonia, where the divorce rate increased from 3.2 in 1970 to 5.2 in 1995, before declining to 2.1 in 2019. On the other hand, there are countries where the increase in divorce rates has been relatively modest or stable. For instance, Denmark, Sweden, and Finland have shown relatively consistent divorce rates over the years, with only slight fluctuations. Furthermore, some countries have experienced a decline or a slowdown in divorce rates in recent years. The United States, for example, had a divorce rate of 4.4 in 1995, which decreased to 2.7 in 2019.

**Table 2.2.** Crude Divorce Rates By Country, 1970, 1995 And 2019

Country	1970	1995	2019
Latvia	4.6	3.1	3.1
Lithuania	2.2	2.8	3.1
Costa Rica			2.8
Cyprus	0.2	1.2	2.6
Denmark	1.9	2.5	1.8
Sweden	1.6	2.6	2.5
Finland	1.3	2.7	2.4
Luxembourg	0.6	1.8	3.1
United States	3.5	4.4	2.7
Chile			3.2
Korea	0.4	1.5	2.2
Czech Republic	2.2	3	2.3
Estonia	3.2	5.2	2.1
Switzerland	1	2.2	2
Australia	1	2.8	1.9
France		2.1	1.9

**Table 2.3.** Crude Divorce Rates By Country, 1970, 1995 And 2019 (Continued)

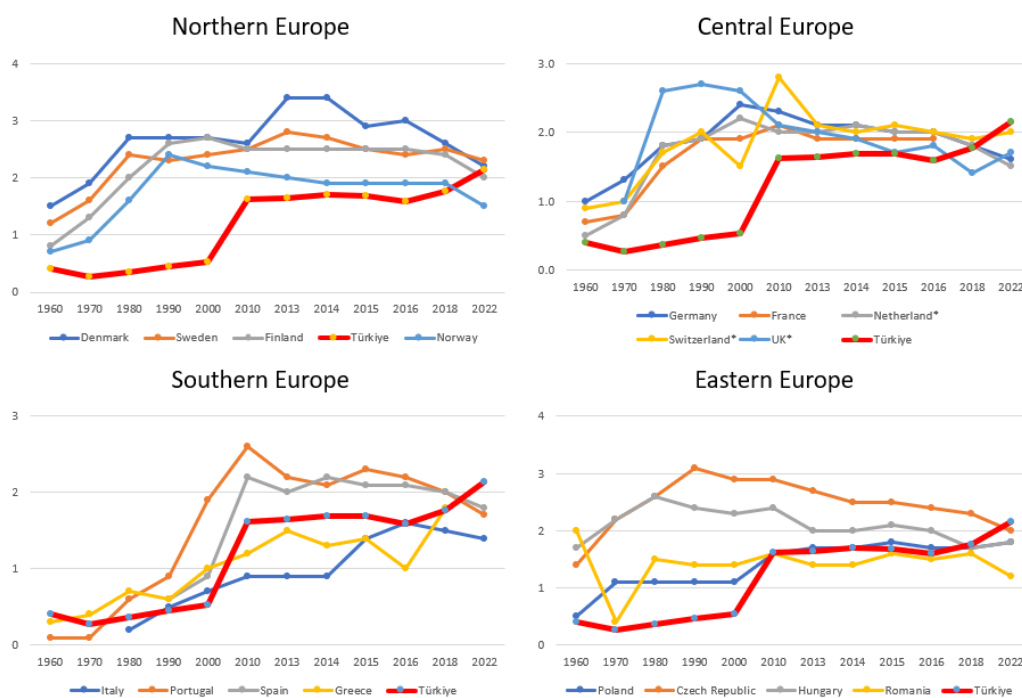
Greece	0.4	1	1.8
Israel	0.8	1.6	1.8
Iceland	1.2	1.8	1.6
OECD-27 average	1.4	2.4	2
Belgium	0.7	3.5	2
Norway	0.9	2.4	1.9
Portugal	0.1	1.2	2
Germany	1.3	2.1	1.8
Austria	1.4	2.3	1.8
United Kingdom	1	2.9	1.8
Netherlands	0.8	2.2	1.7
Spain		0.8	1.9
Turkey			1.9
Japan	0.9	1.6	1.7
New Zealand	1.1	2.6	1.7
Hungary	2.2	2.4	1.8
Slovak Republic	0.8	1.7	1.7
Poland	1.1	1	1.7
Bulgaria	1.2	1.3	1.6
Croatia	1.2	0.9	1.5
Romania	0.4	1.5	1.6
Italy		0.5	1.4
Slovenia	1.1	0.8	1.2
Mexico	0.6	0.4	1.3
Ireland			0.7
Malta			0.7

**Figure 2.3.** Global Trends in Crude Divorce Rates

Source: EUROSTAT for EU; Our world in data for US; TURKSTAT for Turkey

Figure 2.3 illustrates the trends in divorce rates in the United States (US), the European Union (EU), and Turkey from 1960 to 2022. The US experienced a significant increase in divorce rates, peaking in the 1980s. Post-1980s, a steady decline is observed, with the rate decreasing to 2.4 by 2022. The EU average shows a relatively stable divorce rate from 1960 to 2000, with a slight increase. However, post-2010, there is a notable decline, albeit gradual, with the rate at 1.6 in 2022. Turkey's divorce rates remained relatively low until the early 2000s, after which there was a sharp increase. By 2022, the rate reached 2.1.

**Figure 2.4.** Europe Trends in Crude Divorce Rates



Source: UN Yearbook, EUROSTAT

When European Union member states and Western countries are categorized, taking into account their similarities, the emerging picture regarding divorce rate trends is illustrated in Figure 2.4.

Divorce rates in the European Union and Western countries exhibit a pattern that reflects the socio-cultural and legal paradigms in these regions. A noticeable trend is the initial rise in divorce rates, which can be attributed to the liberalization of divorce laws (González and Viitanen, 2009), the shift towards more individualistic societal

values (Balestrino et al., 2013), and the increasing empowerment of women in both the domestic and public spheres (Esping-Andersen & Billari, 2015). This rise is indicative of the changing attitudes towards marriage and the growing acceptance of divorce as a viable resolution to marital discord (Cherlin, 2004).

In many developed Western societies, divorce rates have reached a plateau or even begun to decline (Wagner, 2020). However, Turkey, along with a few other countries, has not yet experienced this stagnation or downward trend. Several theories may explain this divergence, highlighting the impact of modernization, the deinstitutionalization of marriage, and increasing gender equality. Modernization is often assumed to inherently lead to the differentiation of society, which in turn affects traditional institutions such as marriage. This differentiation includes the 'functional loss' of marriage, where the institution's role diminishes in society due to the influence of the welfare state and the market (Bales & Parsons, 1956). Additionally, the rise of romantic love, the moral justifiability of divorce, and better educational and career opportunities for women contribute to changing marital dynamics (Esser, 1993; Cherlin, 2004; Lesthaeghe, 2014; Esping-Andersen & Billari, 2015). As societies modernize, traditional marriage roles evolve, leading to initial increases in divorce rates as individuals seek personal fulfillment and gender equality (Balestrino et al., 2013).

Another theory explaining the divergence in divorce trends is the deinstitutionalization of marriage. This process is characterized by a weakening of social norms that traditionally shaped partners' behavior, along with the emergence and spread of new living arrangements as alternatives to marriage. Cultural changes, individualization, self-actualization, and higher levels of personal autonomy drive this shift. In societies where these factors are prominent, traditional marriage may lose its central role, leading to changes in divorce rates (Cherlin, 2004; Lesthaeghe, 2014).

The evolution of gender roles and the increasing participation of women in education and employment have fundamentally reshaped family dynamics and divorce rates. Economic independence, higher education, and a quest for personal fulfillment have empowered women to challenge traditional marital roles. As women gain greater

autonomy, the dynamics within marriages shift, often leading to higher divorce rates initially. Over time, however, these changes may stabilize as new norms around marriage and partnership are established (Esping-Andersen & Billari, 2015; Wagner, 2020).

The Second Demographic Transition theory provides a comprehensive framework for understanding these changes. It posits that the profound transformations in family structures and fertility patterns observed since the 1960s are driven by a series of social revolutions and broader societal changes. These include the contraceptive revolution, the sexual revolution, individualization, secularization, and gender equality (Lesthaeghe, 2014). According to this theory, divorce rates will initially rise due to these transformative forces but will eventually decline as societies adjust to new norms and values.

The divergence in divorce trends between Turkey and many developed Western societies can be understood through the lens of these theories. While many Western countries have undergone significant modernization and established more egalitarian norms, Turkey is still in the process of this transition. The graphs depicting divorce rates across various regions show that while many Western societies have seen a plateau or decline in divorce rates, Turkey's rates have not yet stabilized. This discrepancy highlights the different stages of societal transformation and the varying pace at which gender egalitarianism is adopted.

## **2.2. Literature Review**

In the previous chapter, various aspects of divorce were discussed with a special emphasis on the case of Turkey, focusing on the definitions, levels, and global trends of divorce. The literature review section aims to provide comprehensive insight into the factors influencing the risk of divorce by analyzing previous studies and current research. The studies conducted to explain the complex interaction of these factors and the nuanced nature of the divorce phenomenon will shed light on the analyses to be made in this thesis.

Studies in the literature approach the phenomenon of divorce from various dimensions, exploring its reasons, processes, and outcomes through frameworks such as psychological, economic, and legal perspectives (Eryavuz & Birecikli, 2018).

‘The Reasons of Divorce in Women the Context of Studies in Turkey (2000-2018): A Systematic Review’ compiles the studies investigating the reasons for divorce in Turkey between 2000 and 2018 (2018). The synthesis of research on the reasons for divorce in Turkey in 2000-2018 reveals a number of specific factors that force spouses to take the decision to separate. According to the presented results, the most striking reasons for divorce are stated as ‘violence’ and ‘unfaithfulness’. The prevalence of violence and coercion as a cause of divorce has been substantiated by a significant body of research (Oruç & Kurt, 2009; Aktaş, 2011; Salman, 2011; Uçar, 2011; Sarpkaya, 2013; Aybey, 2015; Özabacı et al., 2015; Sağlam & Aylaz, 2017). Issues such as neglect and irresponsibility have been identified as contributing factors (Aktaş, 2011; Sağlam & Aylaz, 2017). Severe incompatibility has been recognized as a significant factor leading to the termination of marriage (Uçan, 2007; Aktaş, 2011; Uçar, 2011; Can & Aksu, 2016). Economic difficulties have been cited as a cause for concern in the marital breakdown (Uçan, 2007; Uçar, 2011). Additionally, problems such as gambling and drug addiction have been associated with the dissolution of marriages (Can & Aksu, 2016). Infidelity has been extensively documented as a primary cause of divorce (Uçan, 2007; Oruç & Kurt, 2009; Salman, 2011; Sarpkaya, 2013; Aybey, 2015; Can & Aksu, 2016).

Albrecht and Kunz's research on divorced couples has revealed that infidelity, diminishing love, emotional problems, and financial issues are among the most frequently cited reasons for divorce. Individuals evaluate their satisfaction with their marriage through a variety of cognitive and emotional processes. The ability to communicate and resolve conflicts within the marriage is a very important factor in assessing marital satisfaction and stability. The presence of emotional intimacy and a bond based on love is of great importance in the maintenance of marriage (1980). Attachment theory also suggests that strong emotional bonds between spouses contribute to marital satisfaction and stability. Emotional bonding and a sense of

belonging enable couples to overcome difficulties and maintain marital stability. Strong commitment to the spouse, supported by shared values and experiences, can act as a disincentive to divorce even in the face of marital dissatisfaction (Donovan & Jackson, 1990).

The aforementioned studies indicate that marriage, assumed to be established through emotional bonds, is primarily affected by conflicts related to emotions and communication. However, socio-demographic, cultural, and economic characteristics of individuals in relation to their marriages also contribute to shaping these emotions and are subjects of research as factors influencing divorce.

The relationship between age at marriage and divorce has been one of the most debated issues in the literature. Numerous studies have explored this relationship, finding that marriages at both early and later ages are associated with higher odds of divorce (Becker, Landes, & Michael, 1977; Lewin, 2005). According to Becker, Landes, and Michael (1977), individuals who marry at a young age may face higher search costs and have less information about themselves, their partners, and the marriage market. Their empirical analysis supports this claim, highlighting that marrying at a younger age is associated with a higher likelihood of divorce. Additionally, their study reveals an upturn in divorce rates beyond the age of 30, suggesting that age at marriage has a U-shaped effect on divorce rates, with higher rates observed both at younger and older ages.

Marriage at younger ages has been found to be associated with higher divorce rates in certain studies, suggesting that women who marry at young ages may not have fully developed their identities or had the opportunity to discover their own goals and aspirations. This can lead to an increase in marital dissatisfaction and a higher probability of divorce (Lehrer, 2008; Harkönen, 2014). However, other studies, such as those by Yüksel-Kaptanoğlu, Eryurt, and Koç (2012), suggest that increasing age at marriage can increase the likelihood of divorce.

Young couples, according to certain studies, have been consistently shown to have higher divorce rates due to their lower psychological and socioeconomic



maturity, potentially unreasonable expectations, and a shorter search that led to an unstable match or the better outside options (alternative partners) these partners might face (Lyngstad & Jalovaara, 2010). This indicates that both very early and very late marriages can pose significant challenges to marital stability, emphasizing the importance of a balanced approach to the timing of marriage.

Many studies have been conducted to explore the relationship between the educational levels of spouses and the risk of divorce. According to Lewin (2005), when spouses have different levels of education, cultural disparities, varying preferences, and differences in social activities can emerge. These factors may contribute to an increased likelihood of divorce. Jalovaara (2003) analyzed 1990 census records of marital partners and found that educational attainment is indeed associated with divorce risk. Couples with at least a secondary-level education have a lower risk of divorce compared to those with only basic education. The lowest risk of divorce is found among couples where both spouses have completed tertiary education. The study also identifies an exception: couples with an educational disparity, particularly where the husband is more educated than the wife, face a higher risk of divorce. However, this does not imply that higher education in general leads to a higher risk of divorce; rather, it underscores the potential impact of educational mismatches within marriage.

According to the results of their study, Eryavuz and Birecikli (2018) found that as women's education level increases, the duration of their marriages tends to be shorter. Individuals with higher levels of education enjoy enhanced prospects in the labor market, which in turn enables them to have greater financial resources to bear the expenses associated with separation (Wagner, 2020). Conversely, Martin and Bumpass (1989) conducted a study and discovered that there is a higher probability of separation among individuals with lower levels of education.

The proposition put forth by Esping-Andersen and Billari (2015) suggests that highly educated women are more prone to divorce. This can be attributed to several factors, including their greater financial independence and career opportunities, which may empower them to leave unhappy marriages. Additionally, the embrace of

individualistic values and the pursuit of self-realization may prioritize personal fulfillment over maintaining a marital relationship. Moreover, the trend of highly educated women opting for unconventional partnerships and having fewer children can also contribute to a higher likelihood of divorce.

The economic standing of individuals and their participation in the labor market have been identified as significant determinants of divorce risk. Economic downturns disrupt household tranquility and make married life more challenging. Studies indicate that financial difficulties often lead couples to emotionally drift apart, resulting in divorce (Andersson, 1995). Jalovaara (2003) highlights the relationship between spouses' employment status and divorce risk, noting that unemployment in husbands holds greater significance than in wives. Couples with unemployed wives have a higher risk of divorce compared to those with employed wives, and this risk is even higher when husbands are unemployed. Thus, the unemployment of either spouse increases the likelihood of divorce.

The increasing emphasis on gender equality, women's rights advocacy, and greater participation of women in social life have transformed marital relationships in terms of gender roles. As women become more involved in the workforce and societal activities, the dynamics of household chores and the division of labor change. These changes consequently impact the balance within marriages and influence the risk of divorce (Bianchi, 2014; Turgut, 2017).

The relationship between women's labor force participation and marital dissolution is influenced by various factors, including economic contributions to the household, gender role ideologies, and dynamics of marital satisfaction. The economic independence hypothesis posits that women's employment increases divorce rates by altering power dynamics within marriages and reducing economic reliance on the marital union (Oppenheimer, 1997; Harkönen, 2014; Eryavuz and Birecikli, 2018; Koç and Kutlar, 2021). The Beckerian specialization model suggests that marital satisfaction is maximized when one spouse specializes in market work and the other in domestic work. Women entering the labor force disrupts this traditional division of labor, thereby altering marriage dynamics. The increased economic independence of

women may lead to shifts in power dynamics and decision-making processes, potentially increasing divorce risk as both spouses gain more authority in marital decisions (Becker, Landes, and Michael, 1977). However, female employment can also stabilize partnerships by enhancing families' economic security and balancing the roles and responsibilities of spouses (Esser, 1993; Oppenheimer, 1997; Wagner, 2020).

Divorce has profound psychological and socio-economic implications for couples. Socio-economically, women lacking family support and economic independence often face heightened challenges due to societal biases. These women endure significant post-divorce hardships, especially those with lower education and financial status who struggle to support their children and encounter social stigma (Leopold, 2016). Divorced women may also face threats of violence or even death due to societal perceptions and reactions to their decision to divorce (Aksu and Can, 2019). Promoting women's empowerment and achieving gender equality can help alleviate these adverse outcomes, enabling women to leave unhappy marriages without fear of reprisal and potentially contributing to higher divorce rates.

Becker, Landes, and Michael (1977) offer a compelling explanation for the paradoxical relationship between income and divorce rates. They note that while higher-income individuals are commonly perceived to divorce more frequently, empirical studies often reveal the opposite trend. This discrepancy arises from a misunderstanding of underlying dynamics. Individuals who experience unexpectedly positive financial outcomes, such as students who later become successful professionals, may have a higher likelihood of divorce due to the disruptive effects of these unanticipated gains. Conversely, statistical evidence typically shows that high anticipated incomes have a negative impact on divorce rates, resulting in lower observed divorce rates among high-income earners. This perspective underscores the importance of distinguishing between expected and unexpected changes in income when assessing their influence on marital stability.

Urban environments are characterized by unique social and economic opportunities that can influence marital stability. Esser (1993) suggests that the diverse and plentiful opportunities for personal and professional growth in urban settings

provide individuals with alternatives outside of marriage, which can contribute to higher divorce rates. Urban environments often lack the close-knit communities that are more common in rural areas (Bales & Parsons, 1956). According to Turgut (2017), the absence of strong community ties and reduced family involvement in urban settings can remove important social and emotional barriers to divorce. In rural areas, community and family play a crucial role in providing support and mediating conflicts, thereby strengthening marital bonds. In contrast, the relative anonymity and isolation of urban life can lead to weaker social support networks, making it easier for individuals to contemplate and pursue divorce. Empirical studies support the notion that urban upbringing is associated with higher divorce risk. Yüksel-Kaptanoğlu, Eryurt, and Koç (2012) found that individuals who grow up in urban areas are more likely to experience divorce compared to their rural counterparts. Similarly, Eryavuz and Birecikli (2018) demonstrated that urban upbringing is a significant predictor of divorce risk. These findings underline the impact of the urban environment on individuals' perceptions and experiences of marriage. Additionally, urban cultures often promote values of individualism and self-reliance, which can conflict with the collective and interdependent nature of marital relationships. These cultural attitudes may lead individuals to prioritize personal growth and satisfaction over marital commitments, further contributing to higher divorce rates.

Modernization and globalization bring significant social changes, affecting family structures and dynamics (Esser, 1993; Cherlin, 2004; Balestrino et al., 2013; Lesthaeghe 2014). These processes lead to shifts in power dynamics and the erosion of values that traditionally strengthened family ties, contributing to family crises and increasing divorce rates (Turgut, 2017; Varışlı, Kurdoğlu & Ergin, 2024). As societies modernize, traditional frameworks supporting marriage—such as religious, legal, and moral rules—are challenged, impacting the institution's stability (Aksu & Can, 2019). Traditional values create a normative framework within which divorce is viewed as a last resort, thereby reducing its prevalence. These values encompass beliefs about the sanctity of marriage, prescribed gender roles, and familial obligations, which exert considerable influence on divorce risk (Levinger, 1965; Yodanis, 2005). Traditional views on marriage as a lifelong commitment deter individuals from pursuing divorce,

even in unhappy marriages (Donovan & Jackson, 1990). Traditional views on gender roles within the family can also create normative barriers to divorce, making it difficult for individuals to envision life outside of their prescribed roles (Adams, 2004). Additionally, empirical studies show that cultural homogamy and shared religious affiliation contribute to lower divorce rates. Couples who share cultural and religious backgrounds have a stable marital foundation due to aligned values and beliefs (Lewin, 2005; Kalmijn, 2007).

The risk of divorce is not evenly distributed across the timeline of a marriage. Research indicates that couples face the highest risk of divorce between the fourth and seventh years of marriage. This period, often referred to as the "seven-year itch," marks a critical phase where initial romantic ideals may clash with reality, leading to higher marital dissatisfaction (Kulu, 2014). After this period, the risk of divorce begins to decline gradually as couples accumulate investments in their marriage, such as shared property, social networks, and emotional bonds, which increase barriers to leaving the marriage. In Turkey, data from the Turkish Statistical Institute (TURKSTAT, 2024) shows that 33.4% of divorces occur within the first five years of marriage. This statistic aligns with global trends and underscores the vulnerability of marriages during the early years. As couples navigate the challenges of early married life, those who endure beyond this critical period tend to develop stronger marital bonds that contribute to long-term stability.

Children represent a significant investment in the marital relationship, both emotionally and financially. According to Becker, Landes, and Michael (1977), children can be viewed as "shared investments" that bind couples together. The presence of children, particularly young ones, tends to lower the risk of divorce. Parents often forgo or postpone divorce due to concerns about the adverse effects on their children. This perspective is supported by Lyngstad and Jalovaara (2010), who found that couples with children have lower divorce risks compared to childless couples. However, the relationship between children and divorce risk is complex. While children can strengthen marital bonds, the absence of children might reflect underlying issues within the marriage. Couples who do not have children may have

lower initial trust in their marriage or face fertility issues, which can strain the relationship (Harkönen, 2014). Therefore, the presence of children not only acts as a stabilizing force but also signifies a certain level of commitment and trust between spouses.

The concept of marriage-specific capital refers to the investments that couples make in their marriage, which are unique to the marital relationship and cannot be easily transferred to another partnership. These investments include emotional bonds, shared experiences, and mutual support systems (Brüderl & Kalter, 2001). The more a couple invests in their marriage, the less likely they are to seek dissolution, as the cost of breaking these investments is high. This capital creates a strong foundation for the marriage, making it more resilient to challenges and reducing the likelihood of divorce (Donovan & Jackson, 1990).

The literature provides a detailed picture of the factors contributing to the risk of divorce. Socio-demographic characteristics, economic factors, traditional values, psychological well-being, and cognitive processes all play roles in shaping the dynamics of marital dissolution. Traditional values, in particular, serve both as a buffer against and a lens through which other factors are interpreted, influencing the decision to divorce in complex ways.

### **2.3. Theoretical Framework**

In the previous section, a literature review was provided on the factors that contribute to divorce risk. In this section, the theoretical framework of the study will be explained by drawing upon the studies found in the literature.

The institution of marriage, as the fundamental unit of society, has undergone significant transformations, with divorce emerging as a pivotal phenomenon influencing individual lives and societal structures (Bianchi, 2014). In Turkey, characterized by its unique cultural structure and dynamic social transitions, it is particularly important to investigate traditional and demographic characteristics on the risk of divorce (Yıldırım, 2004). This thesis attempts to explore the complex

relationship between traditional customs, demographic factors and divorce risk in the Turkish context. Bringing together theoretical perspectives and empirical evidence, this study aims to explain the determinants of marital stability and the impact of various demographic and traditional factors on the divorce decision.

Social Exchange Theory (SET) is a conceptual framework that explains social change and stability as a process of negotiated exchange between parties. It posits that human relationships are formed through subjective cost-benefit analysis and the comparison of alternatives. This theory is particularly applicable to family relationships, where patterns of power and perceptions of inequality are prevalent. Family life is full of interactions that foster these perceptions of inequality, making SET a valuable tool for understanding these dynamics. According to SET, when individuals perceive a relatively balanced level of reciprocity in a social exchange, they are more likely to be satisfied with that exchange. This framework allows for the analysis of equality and reciprocity, dynamics of attraction and dependency, and the rewards and costs within family relationships. By examining these aspects, SET provides a comprehensive lens through which to understand the complexities of family interactions and the factors that contribute to marital stability or dissolution.

SET is based on several key assumptions that underpin its explanatory power. First, it assumes that individuals are rational actors who make decisions based on cost-benefit calculations. This rationality implies that people, whether intentionally or unintentionally, evaluate the rewards and costs associated with their relationships, striving to make choices that optimize their personal benefit. Second, the theory posits that individuals aim to maximize their gains from social relationships. This pursuit of maximization means that people are continually assessing their interactions to ensure they derive the highest possible value (Wagner, 2020).

A critical aspect of SET is the concept of the comparison level, which refers to the standard against which individuals evaluate the quality of their relationships. This comparison level is shaped by past experiences and societal norms, representing what individuals believe they deserve in a relationship. It serves as a benchmark for satisfaction; if the perceived outcomes of a relationship meet or exceed this

benchmark, individuals are likely to be satisfied and committed. Conversely, if the relationship falls short of this standard, dissatisfaction ensues, potentially leading to considerations of ending the relationship. This concept is integral to understanding how individuals assess their marital satisfaction and make decisions about the future of their relationships (Albrecht & Kunz, 1980).

When applying SET to marital relationships, marital stability can be understood as a function of three main components: marital quality, barriers to divorce, and alternative attractions. Marital quality encompasses the benefits partners receive from the marriage, such as companionship, emotional support, and shared responsibilities. High marital quality leads to greater satisfaction and stability. Barriers to divorce include financial, emotional, and social costs associated with ending the relationship. These barriers can deter couples from pursuing divorce even when they are dissatisfied. Alternative attractions refer to the perceived availability and desirability of other potential partners or the prospect of being single. If a spouse perceives better alternatives outside the marriage, the likelihood of divorce increases (Donovan & Jackson, 1990).

Figure 2.5 illustrates marital stability and instability in relation to marital satisfaction, based on the principles of SET showing that people seek to maximize their benefits and minimize their costs in relationships, evaluating them in terms of comparison levels and alternatives. This evaluation function shows that marital stability is influenced not only by the satisfaction within the marriage but also by the perception of available alternatives. Individuals weigh their current marital satisfaction against their expectations (comparison level) and compare it with what they believe they could have in alternative relationships. The interplay between these factors determines whether they stay in the marriage or consider leaving.



**Figure 2.5.** Marriage Evaluation Based on Social Exchange Theory

<p>Marital Stability with Marital Satisfaction</p> <p>Marital Satisfaction <math>\geq</math> Comparison Level</p> <p>The alternative relationships available <math>&lt;</math> Comparison Level</p>	<p>Marital Instability with Marital Satisfaction</p> <p>Marital Satisfaction <math>\geq</math> Comparison Level</p> <p>The alternative relationships available <math>&gt;</math> Comparison Level</p>
<p>Marital Stability with Marital Dissatisfaction</p> <p>Marital Satisfaction <math>&lt;</math> Comparison Level</p> <p>The alternative relationships available <math>&lt;</math> Comparison Level</p>	<p>Marital Instability with Marital Dissatisfaction</p> <p>Marital Satisfaction <math>&lt;</math> Comparison Level</p> <p>The alternative relationships available <math>\geq</math> Comparison Level</p>

Incorporating the cost of divorce into the evaluation function emphasizes that marital stability and instability are influenced not only by satisfaction and perceived alternatives but also by the perceived barriers to divorce. High costs of divorce, such as emotional, social, legal, and financial factors, act as strong deterrents, promoting marital stability even in less satisfying marriages. Conversely, when the perceived cost of divorce is low, individuals are more likely to pursue divorce, especially if they are dissatisfied and see more appealing alternatives (Levinger, 1965). Many of the factors listed as costs are related to traditional values. As these values diminish, barriers are expected to decrease, thereby increasing the risk of divorce. On the other hand, financial constraints, considered the most significant obstacle to divorce, hold greater importance for women (Aksu & Can, 2019). Furthermore, the erosion of traditional gender roles and increased female participation in the workforce weaken the strength of this barrier (Albrecht & Kunz, 1980).

The theory also considers the investments made in a relationship, such as time, emotional energy, shared memories, and financial assets. The greater the investment, the less likely individuals are to pursue divorce, as they have more to lose from the dissolution of the marriage. A sense of fairness or equity also plays a role. If one partner feels they are putting more into the relationship than they are getting out, they may feel taken advantage of, leading to marital dissatisfaction and potentially divorce (Donovan & Jackson, 1990).

Becker, Landes, and Michael (1977) put forward the economic analysis of marriage and divorce, which treats marriage as a form of long-term contract entered into when both parties expect the utility of being married to exceed that of remaining single. This utility is conceptualized in terms of "full wealth," which includes both market and nonmarket contributions to the household's well-being. Divorce is analyzed in a statistical framework and the probability of divorce is regarded as a function of expected gains from marriage and unexpected outcomes. Factors such as the decision-making process, the cost of searching for a suitable spouse, individual preferences, marriage-specific capital, and marital uncertainty are considered to play a role in the analysis of the probability of divorce. This theoretical perspective provides a framework for understanding how individuals act in the marriage market and how they decide whether to stay married or end their marriage.

Becker et al. (1977) discuss investments that are specific to a particular marriage, such as children, shared experiences, and specialized skills that are more valuable within the marriage than outside of it. The framework considers the costs associated with finding a suitable partner and the role of information in marital decisions. Additionally, the study incorporates uncertainty into the decision-making process, acknowledging that unexpected changes in the marriage's outcomes can lead to divorce. The economic model emphasizes the division of labor between spouses in producing household commodities. This study also provides a theoretical foundation for the assertion that homogamy in marriage can decrease the likelihood of divorce. They argue that "*a larger discrepancy between the traits of mates and what they would be in the optimal sorting - for example, discrepancies between intelligence, social background, religion or race - raises the probability of dissolution and lowers the probability of remarriage if divorced*" (p. 1156). This is because such discrepancies reduce the gains from marriage, which are maximized when spouses' traits are complementary and contribute most effectively to the household's combined wealth. Conversely, homogamy enhances these gains by aligning the spouses' traits more closely with the optimal sorting, thereby reducing the costs associated with marital search and increasing the utility derived from the marriage. As a result, marriages characterized by greater homogamy are theorized to have a lower probability of dissolution.

Traditional values may enhance marital-specific capital by reinforcing the importance of family and shared commitments, increasing the costs of divorce. They can lower search costs by providing social structures and norms that facilitate partner selection within a shared value system. Traditional values might reduce uncertainty within marriage by setting clear expectations and norms for behavior, thus stabilizing marriages. They often prescribe a division of labor that maximizes household production efficiency, potentially increasing the economic gains from marriage and reducing the incentive for divorce (Levinger, 1965).

This thesis employs social exchange theory to explore the intricate dynamics influencing divorce risk in Turkey, particularly focusing on the role of women's sociodemographic characteristics. Social exchange theory provides a robust framework for understanding how individuals evaluate their marriages based on perceived rewards, costs, and available alternatives. By examining how traditional values, as a cost factor, potentially reduce divorce likelihood, this study investigates whether these values enhance marital stability by increasing the perceived costs of divorce. Furthermore, the theory helps analyze if traditional values serve as a buffer, promoting marital quality and cohesion, thereby indirectly influencing divorce decisions. This approach allows for a comprehensive evaluation of how sociodemographic factors and cultural values interplay in shaping marital stability and dissolution within the unique socio-cultural context of Turkey.

Additionally, similarity of spouses in various traits such as socioeconomic background, education, religion, or ethnicity, which is the concept of homogamy, contribute to marital stability. Traditional values may promote homogamy by encouraging marriages within the same social, cultural, or religious groups, which in turn could lower the probability of divorce as suggested by the economic analysis of Becker, Landes, and Michael (1977) and Social Exchange Theory (Donovan & Jackson, 1990). In order to test this theory and to observe the effect of homogamy on divorce, variables measuring homogamy were included in the empirical analyses.

## CHAPTER 3

### DATA AND METHODOLOGY

Building on the theoretical framework presented in the previous chapter, which attempts to explain the relationship between traditional values and socio-demographic characteristics in marital stability, this chapter of the thesis presents the data and methodology used to empirically investigate these complex relationships. The methodological approach is designed to test hypotheses derived from social exchange theory, Becker's economic analysis of marriage, and the concept of homogamy using the data of Turkey Demographic and Health Survey (TDHS), conducted by the Institute of Population Studies at Hacettepe University in 2018. The methodology chapter aims to explain the methods of analyses conducted, intending to provide empirical evidence to explain and validate the theoretical underpinnings of marital stability and divorce risk in Turkey.

This chapter starts with a presentation of the data utilized in this thesis, accompanied by a comprehensive depiction of its characteristics. Subsequently, the method of analysis employed, namely logistic regression analysis, is introduced, and its advantages and limitations within the context of this study are discussed. Through the logistic regression analysis, four different models created by systematically grouping the factors whose effects and relationships are investigated, and the final model created with a holistic approach as a result of these models are explained in detail. Finally, Multiple Correspondence Analysis (MCA) is introduced as an auxiliary method of analysis.

#### **3.1. Data Source**

This study uses data from the Turkey Demographic and Health Survey (TDHS), conducted by the Institute of Population Studies at Hacettepe University in 2018 as part of the international DHS project. These surveys, conducted every five years, aim to provide comprehensive and nationally representative information on

family and household structure, fertility, infant and child mortality, family planning and various aspects of maternal and child health in Turkey. The main objective of these surveys is to provide valuable information on the overall demographic structure of the country.

TDHS 2018 has two types of questionnaires: the Household Questionnaire and Woman's Questionnaire (15-49).

Household Questionnaire is used to enumerate all individuals residing in selected households, as well as visitors, and to collect information on the socioeconomic status of these households. In addition to providing basic demographic data for Turkish households, the questionnaire also collects information necessary to identify eligible women for individual interviews. The first part of the questionnaire includes the listing of household members and visitors, starting with the household head. In this section, basic information such as age, gender, place and region of birth, education level, employment status, marital status and relationship with the household head is collected for each individual listed. First section provides the required information for the selection of eligible women. In the second section, basic information about never-married women in ages of 15-49 is collected. The last section of the questionnaire is reserved for collecting data on the dwelling itself and the ownership of various consumption goods in the household. This section provides additional context on the living conditions and material assets owned by the surveyed households.

Individual (Women's) Questionnaire includes the following topics: Background characteristics, Migration history, Pregnancy, birth history and fertility preferences, Knowledge and use of contraceptive methods, Antenatal and postnatal care, Breastfeeding and nutrition, Immunization, Early childhood development, Marriage history and marriage characteristics, Women's work history, Husband's background characteristics, Women's status, Anthropometric measurements of women and children

### 3.1.1. 2018 Turkey Demographic and Health Survey (TDHS 2018)

A weighted, multistage, stratified cluster sampling approach was used in the selection of the TDHS sample. Such sample designs enable to obtain indicators for the whole nation, for urban and rural areas, and for the five major regions of the country (West, South, Central, North and East). Additionally, certain indicators which are based on sufficient number of observations, are available for the NUTS 1 regions.

In all, 15,775 households were selected for the 2018 TDHS. At the time of the listing phase of the survey, 13,962 households were considered occupied and, thus, available for interview. Of the occupied households, 79% (11,056) households were successfully interviewed.

In the interviewed 11,056 households, 9,056 women age 15-49 were identified as eligible for the individual interview. Interviews were successfully completed with 7,346 of these women (81%).

**Table 3.1.** Number of Households, Number of Interviews, TDHS 2018

	Urban	Rural	Total
Households selected	11,420	4,355	15,775
Households found	10,119	3,843	13,962
Households interviewed	7,537	3,519	11,056
Eligible women	6,606	2,450	9,056
Eligible women interviewed	5,245	2,101	7,346

In this thesis, basically, the sections listed below are used:

**Background characteristics:** The section provides basic information about age, education and ethnicity of women.

**Migration History:** This section provides information on place of birth in terms of region and residence, as well as details about the location where women and men lived until the age of twelve.

**Marriage History:** This section includes all the marriages which have been taken places in the lifetime of the respondents. This section provides the information on number of marriages; the timing of the marriages and divorces, if any; the type of the wedding ceremony (civil or religious); how the marriage decision is taken (by families or by couples); whether the bride price is given; living arrangements at the beginning of the marriage; whether the marriage is consanguineous; and who take the divorce decision, if any.

**Pregnancy and Fertility:** This section provides all the information about fertility and parenthood including the birth history. Therefore, the data on whether the women have a child in a marriage or have not, comes from this section.

**Husband's Background:** This section provides detailed information on age, educational and occupational status, the economic sector, social and health security, mother tongue, foreign languages, childhood place of residence and region of the last husbands.

**Women's work history:** This section provides detailed information on the woman's work history.

Units of analysis in this thesis are ever-married women aged 15-49, living in Turkey. In the sample of TDHS 2018, 70,2% of women remained married, 1,2% were widowed, 2.6% were divorced. Additionally, .6% declared themselves as separated. Table 3.2 below provides a descriptive profile of women sample with regard to the current marital status.

**Table 3.2.** Current Marital Status, TDHS 2018

	Sample		Weighted Sample	
	Frequency	Percent	Frequency	Percent
Never in union	1,862	25.3	2,205	30
Married	5,156	70.2	4,820	65.6
Widowed	89	1.2	77	1
Divorced	192	2.6	195	2.7
No longer living together/separated	47	0.6	50	0.7
Total	7,346	100	7,346	100

In 2018 Turkey Demographic and Health Survey, the marriage term includes either civil or religious marriages in addition to marriages which are declared by women as marriage, even though there is not any ceremony. Marriage is predominantly practiced as civil marriages in Turkey. According to TDHS-2018 data, to have both civil and religious ceremony is the most common custom for marriage, while the proportion of marriages without any ceremony is the lowest. Table 3.3 shows the proportions and observations of different types of marital ceremony for the last marriages.

**Table 3.3.** Types of Marriage Ceremony, TDHS 2018

	Sample		Weighted Sample	
	Frequency	Percent	Frequency	Percent
Civil and religious	5,165	70.3	4,796	65.3
Only civil	135	1.8	160	2.2
Only religious	159	2.2	154	2.1
None	19	0.3	26	0.4
Never married	1,868	25.4	2,209	30.1
Total	7,346	100.0	7,346	100.0

Although the definitions of marriage and divorce include both official and unofficial forms, this thesis focuses on the official formation.

There are various definitions of marriage and divorce, including both official and unofficial forms in the literature. Among them, legal separation signifies the formal separation of married couples through a legal process. De facto separation refers to informal cessation of cohabitation by spouses. Conversely, annulment denotes the judicial declaration of marriage invalidation. In this thesis, divorce is considered solely in legal terms, encompassing only cases of civil marriage and legal divorce. The general profile of the sample used in this study is outlined below.



**Table 3.4.** Current Marital Status in the Study, TDHS 2018

	Sample		Weighted Sample	
	Frequency	Percent	Frequency	Percent
Married	5,013	96.8	4,672	96.4
Divorced	167	3.2	172	3.6
Total	5,180	100.0	4,844	100.0

**Table 3.5.** Types of Marriage Ceremony in the Study, TDHS 2018

	Sample		Weighted Sample	
	Frequency	Percent	Frequency	Percent
Civil and religious	5,052	97.5	4,691	96.8
Only civil	128	2.5	153	3.2
Total	5,180	100.0	4,844	100.0

The cases in which the marriages are informal and women are widowed were excluded from the sample for convenience. The overall composition of the THDS 2018 sample used in this study is presented in tables below, which contains frequencies for the variables used in both descriptive and multivariate analyses. Since the information about the spouse is available only for the last marriages and to investigate the effect of having children from previous relationships, all figures present the general profile of the sample for the most recent marriages.

**Table 3.6.** Marital Characteristics and the Composition of the Sample, TDHS 2018

	Sample		Weighted Sample	
	Frequency	Percent	Frequency	Percent
<b>Marital Status</b>				
Married	5,013	96.8	4,672	96.4
Divorced	167	3.2	172	3.6
<b>Number of Marriages</b>				
1	5,016	96.8	4,677	96.5
2	157	3	162	3.4
3	5	0.1	4	0.1
4	2	0	1	0
<b>Marriage Cohort</b>				
1980-1989	273	5.3	255	5.3
1990-1999	1,529	29.5	1,407	29.0
2000-2009	1,901	36.7	1,787	36.9
2010-2018	1,451	28.0	1,376	28.4
Missing	26	0.5	20	0.4

**Table 3.7.** Marital Characteristics and the Composition of the Sample, TDHS 2018  
(Continued)

<b>Marriage Duration</b>				
0-5	962	18.6	917	18.9
6-15	1,954	37.7	1,844	38.1
15+	2,237	43.2	2,062	42.6
Missing	27	0.5	22	0.4
<b>Marriage Order</b>				
First	5,016	96.8	4,677	96.5
Second and higher	164	3.2	168	3.5
<b>Age at Marriage for Women</b>				
0-17	1,034	20.0	908	18.7
18-24	3,046	58.8	2,834	58.5
25+	1,074	20.7	1,083	22.4
Missing	26	0.5	20	0.4
<b>Age at Marriage for Men</b>				
0-17	125	2.4	108	2.2
18-24	2,392	46.2	2,209	45.6
25+	2,625	50.7	2,499	51.6
Missing	38	0.7	28	0.6
<b>Presence of Children in Last Marriage</b>				
No	444	8.6	424	8.8
Yes	4,736	91.4	4,420	91.2
<b>Presence of Children in Former Marriage/s</b>				
No	4,999	96.5	4,680	96.6
Yes	181	3.5	164	3.4
<b>Number of Children born in Last Marriage</b>				
0	444	8.6	424	8.8
1	979	18.9	980	20.2
2	1,743	33.6	1,694	35.0
3	1,111	21.4	998	20.6
4+	903	17.4	748	15.4

**Table 3.8.** Traditional Practices and the Composition of the Sample, TDHS 2018

	Sample		Weighted Sample	
	Frequency	Percent	Frequency	Percent
<b>Marriage Decision</b>				
The couple	2,885	55.7	2,787	57.5
Family	2,069	39.9	1,877	38.7
Eloped	207	4.0	164	3.4
Abducted	15	0.3	15	0.3
Other	4	0.1	2	0
<b>Consent for Marriage (Only Arranged Marriage)</b>				
No (Forced marriage)	293	14.2	271	14.4
Yes	1,776	85.8	1,606	85.6
<b>Bride Price</b>				
No	4,338	83.7	4,174	86.2
Yes	842	16.3	670	13.8
<b>Type of Ceremony</b>				
Civil and religious	5,052	97.5	4,691	96.8
Only civil	128	2.5	153	3.2
<b>Initial Family Type</b>				
Extended Family	2,921	56.4	2,527	52.2
Nuclear Family	2,259	43.6	2,318	47.8
<b>Consanguineous marriages</b>				
Not relative	3,953	76.3	3,720	76.8
Relative	1,227	23.7	1,124	23.2
<b>Place of Meeting</b>				
At school	270	5.2	254	5.3
At work	397	7.7	422	8.7
Family/relatives	3,139	60.6	2,850	58.8
Friends	763	14.7	722	14.9
Internet	70	1.4	77	1.6
Other	541	10.4	518	10.7

**Table 3.9.** Matching Characteristics of the Couples and the Composition of the Sample, TDHS 2018

	Frequency	Sample Percent	Weighted Sample Frequency	Percent
<b>Match on Age</b>				
Women older than man (+2)	177	3.4	158	3.3
Age homogamy (+-2)	1,826	35.3	1,750	36.1
Men older than women (2-5)	1,406	27.1	1,351	27.9
Men older than women (6-10)	1,352	26.1	1,215	25.1
Men older than women (+10)	359	6.9	324	6.7
Missing	60	1.2	47	1.0
<b>Educational Homogamy1</b>				
Same level of education	2,443	47.2	2,303	47.5
Men are more educated	1,710	33.0	1,511	31.2
Women are more educated	1,008	19.5	1,012	20.9
Missing	19	0.4	18	0.4
<b>Educational Homogamy2</b>				
Same and low level of education	1,686	32.5	1,532	31.6
Same and high level of education	757	14.6	771	15.9
Men are more educated	1,710	33.0	1,511	31.2
Women are more educated	1,008	19.5	1,012	20.9
Missing	19	0.4	18	0.4
<b>Ethnic Homogamy</b>				
Turk-Turk	3,881	74.9	3,733	77.1
Kurd-Kurd	820	15.8	647	13.4
Turk-Kurd	188	3.6	169	3.5
Other matches	281	5.4	282	5.8
Missing	10	0.2	12	0.3
<b>Regional Homogamy</b>				
Same region	4,236	81.8	3,771	77.9
Different region	814	15.7	936	19.3
Other	129	2.5	135	2.8
Missing	1	0	2	0.0
<b>Residential Homogamy</b>				
Urban-Urban	2,213	42.7	2,252	46.5
Rural-Rural	1,743	33.6	1,432	29.6
Urban-Rural	1,140	22.0	1,075	22.2
Missing	84	1.6	85	1.8

**Table 3.10.** Socio-demographic Characteristics of Women and Men and the Composition of the Sample, TDHS 2018

	Frequency	Sample Percent	Frequency	Weighted Sample Percent
<b>Working Status of Women</b>				
Not worked during last marriage	4,477	86.4	4,178	86.3
Worked during last marriage	703	13.6	666	13.7
<b>Women's Education</b>				
No education/Primary incomplete	699	13.5	558	11.5
First level primary	2,060	39.8	1,903	39.3
Second level primary	889	17.2	812	16.8
High school and higher	1,532	29.6	1,571	32.4
<b>Men's Education</b>				
No education/Primary incomplete	104	2.0	83	1.7
First level primary	1,784	34.4	1,607	33.2
Second level primary	2,268	43.8	2,148	44.3
High school and higher	1,005	19.4	988	20.4
Missing	19	0.3	18	0.4
<b>Women's Ethnicity</b>				
Turkish	4,018	77.6	3,868	79.8
Kurdish	918	17.7	739	15.2
Arabic	115	2.2	119	2.5
Other	129	2.5	119	2.5
<b>Men's Ethnicity</b>				
Turkish	4,004	77.3	3,852	79.5
Kurdish	944	18.2	763	15.8
Arabic	104	2.0	107	2.2
Other	118	2.3	110	2.3
Missing	10	0.2	12	0.3
<b>Women's Childhood Region</b>				
West	1,141	22.0	1,315	27.2
South	643	12.4	633	13.1
Central	1,137	21.9	1,175	24.3
North	724	14.0	494	10.2
East	1,437	27.7	1,122	23.2
Abroad	98	1.9	105	2.2
<b>Husband's Childhood Region</b>				
West	1,080	20.8	1,272	26.3
South	616	11.9	603	12.4
Central	1,165	22.5	1,206	24.9
North	752	14.5	500	10.3
East	1,479	28.6	1,166	24.1
Abroad	87	1.7	96	2.0
Missing	1	0.0	2	0.0
<b>Women's Childhood Residence1</b>				
Province	1,388	26.8	1,394	28.8
District	1,457	28.1	1,478	30.5
Subdistrict/village	2,283	44.1	1,920	39.6
Missing	52	1.0	52	1.1
<b>Women's Childhood Residence2</b>				
Urban	2,845	54.9	2,872	59.3
Rural	2,283	44.1	1,920	39.6
Missing	52	1.0	52	1.1

**Table 3.11.** Socio-demographic Characteristics of Women and Men and the Composition of the Sample, TDHS 2018 (Continued)

<b>Husband's Childhood Residence1</b>				
Province	1,250	24.1	1,247	25.7
District	1,519	29.3	1,509	31.2
Subdistrict/village	2,366	45.7	2,037	42.1
Missing	45	0.8	50	1.0
<b>Husband's Childhood Residence2</b>				
Urban	2,769	53.5	2,757	56.9
Rural	2,366	45.7	2,037	42.1
Missing	45	0.9	50	1.0

### 3.2. Methodology

The multivariate analysis in this study is carried out with logistic regression models using data of 2018 Turkey Demographic and Health Survey. Additionally, Multiple Correspondence Analysis (MCA) is carried out to present the visual relationships between variables and identify patterns in the data.

#### 3.2.1. Logistic Regression

The regression methods are used in analyzing the relationship between one dependent variable and one or more independent variables in the context of several purposes, such as estimation, data summarizing, estimation of coefficients in the presence of other variables, and to determine the important predictors of the dependent variable. The most known and used regression methods are simple and multiple linear regression methods (Alpar, R., 2011). In the simple and multiple linear regressions, dependent variable should be continuous variable. In the cases where the dependent variable is categorical, the least squares methods used in estimation of the parameters cannot be applied, since the assumptions of this method do not hold. Therefore, in the cases of categorical dependent variable, logistic regression method, mathematical modeling approach to describe the relationship of several predictor variables to a categorical dependent variable, is employed in the analyses. In the logistic regression, the independent variables can be continuous or discrete (ordinal or nominal) variables (Alpar, R., 2011).

In the case of two-category dependent variable, “binary logistic regression method” is applied. In the binary logistic regression models, the dichotomous outcome is transformed by the logit transformation, changing the range of  $P(X)$  from  $[0,1]$  to  $(-\infty, 0]$  or  $[1, +\infty)$ . The basic linear regression model cannot be applied to the binomial random dependent variable without the transformation, since the linear regression model which does not fall in the interval of  $[0,1]$ , is not suitable for modelling probability.

The general mathematical formulation of the logistic model is expressed as follows:

$$\pi(x) = P(Y = 1 | X = x) = \frac{e^{(\beta_0 + \beta_1 x)}}{1 + e^{(\beta_0 + \beta_1 x)}} \quad (3.1.)$$

In the logistic regression method, the odds ratio which is used in the retrospective case control studies is obtained for the risk estimation (Alpar, R., 2011). The odds is the ratio of the probability calculated as the probability of occurrence of an event divided by the probability of not occurrence of this event.

Formally, the formulation of the odds is:

$$odds(D) = \frac{P(D)}{1 - P(D)} \quad (3.2.)$$

An odds ratio (OR) is calculated as a ratio of two odds, as follows:

$$OR = \frac{\frac{P(D_1)}{1 - P(D_1)}}{\frac{P(D_2)}{1 - P(D_2)}} \quad (3.3.)$$

The logit transformation is done by taking the natural logarithm of the odds of an event.

$$logit \pi(x) = g(x) = \ln \left( \frac{P(D)}{1 - P(D)} \right) \quad (3.4.)$$

When the natural logarithm of an odds is taken, the model is transformed into a linear model:

$$\ln \left( \frac{P(D)}{1-P(D)} \right) = \ln e^{(\beta_0 + \beta_1 x)} = \beta_0 + \beta_1 x \quad (3.5.)$$

As stated above, the function  $g(x)$  is suitable to modeling a probability, since the values of  $g(x)$  range from 0 to 1 as  $x$  varies from  $-\infty$  to  $+\infty$  (Alpar, 2011). Logit model provides a wide variety of desirable features of the linear regression model. While  $\beta_i$  shows the change in dependent variable when the independent variable  $x$  changes by one unit in the linear model, it shows the change in the logit in the logistic model. Another difference among the two models is that, in linear regression, residuals are normally distributed with zero mean and constant variance, while in the logistic regression, residuals show binomial distribution with zero mean and variance of  $\pi(1-\pi)$ .

Maximum likelihood (ML) estimation which is an approach to estimate the parameters in nonlinear models, is used in the logistic regression models. In the ML estimation method, the probability of occurrence of an event is tried to be maximized. ML estimations of the coefficients are generally made by using standard computer packages for logistic regression.

When the sample size ( $n$ ) approaches to infinity, the maximum likelihood estimator is consistent, adequate and normally distributed asymptotically. Besides, it is noted that when the sample size is relatively small, the ML estimation gives no poor results (Alpar, R., 2011).

In this study, the dependent variable is divorce, which is measured as a dichotomous outcome, indicating whether the last marriage ended or not (1= divorced; 0 = still married). Since the logistic regression analysis is a useful regression technique for modeling dichotomous dependent variable, logistic models are preferred to be used to describe the relationship of several predictor variables with divorce.



### 3.2.1.1 Advantages and Limitations of Logistic Regression Analysis

Logistic regression analysis offers several advantages that make it a valuable tool in various fields. Firstly, it provides easy usage and a mathematically flexible function for analyzing two-category outcomes. The results obtained from logistic regression models can be meaningfully interpreted, allowing researchers to gain insights into the relationships between predictor variables and the outcome of interest (Wilson & Lorenz, 2015). The method utilizes maximum likelihood (ML) estimation, which is a widely applicable approach suitable for a variety of situations (Wilson & Lorenz, 2015). Logistic regression also accommodates both categorical and continuous predictor variables, enabling the modeling of complex relationships in fields such as medicine, social sciences, and business (Ranganathan, 2017).

However, logistic regression analysis also has some limitations that should be considered. Firstly, it assumes a linear relationship between the independent variables and the logit of the dependent variable. In practice, this assumption may not always hold true, potentially leading to inaccurate results (Ranganathan, 2017). Secondly, logistic regression assumes the absence of multicollinearity, which means that there should not be high correlation among the independent variables. When multicollinearity is present, logistic regression estimates may become unstable and difficult to interpret (Wilson & Lorenz, 2015). Additionally, logistic regression can be sensitive to outliers, which can potentially bias the parameter estimates obtained from the analysis (Nurunnabi, Ali, Imon, & Nasser, 2012).

In the context of this thesis focusing on divorce risk estimation, logistic regression analysis is a suitable method. It allows for the estimation of the risk of an event, ensuring that the estimated risk always falls between 0 and 1. The absence of multicollinearity in the studied data further supports the appropriateness of logistic regression analysis. Additionally, the presence of only a small number of outliers in the data, which do not significantly impact the analysis, further justifies the use of logistic regression in this thesis.

### **3.2.1.2. Construction of Logistic Regression Model**

Logistic regression analysis is well suited to examine binary outcomes by estimating the probability of an event based on predictor variables. In this thesis, the binary dependent variable is coded as 1 for divorce and 0 for non-divorce. The analyses focus on recent marriages, specifically whether these marriages resulted in divorce. All predictor variables are treated as categorical variables. The aim is to model the probability of divorce by investigating the relationship between the selected categorical predictors and the probability of divorce.

During the construction of logistic regression models, factors were identified based on existing literature and systematically categorized under specific subheadings. Prior to developing the multivariate models, univariate logistic regressions were conducted for each factor to assess their individual significance. Variables that demonstrated statistical significance in the univariate analyses were subsequently incorporated into the multivariate regression models.

The variables under investigation were grouped into four principal categories, each forming the basis for a distinct logistic regression model:

Model 1 assesses the impact of individual characteristics of women on the risk of divorce. Educational status of women indicates the highest level of education attained by the women. Working status of women is a factor that reflects whether women are employed at the time of their last marriage. Age at marriage denotes the age at which women enters into marriage. Childhood place of residence and region represent the geographical context in which women grew up until the age of 12, which is indicative of their socialization environment.

Model 2 explores the relationship between marriage-specific characteristics and divorce. Marriage duration is the length of time women have been married or were married before divorce. Presence of children in the last marriage indicates whether any children were born in the most recent marriage. The presence of children in previous marriages reflects whether women had children from previous marriages.

Model 3 investigates the potential influence of traditional marital practices on the risk of divorce. Marriage decision identifies who make the decision to initiate the marriage. Forced marriage are the marriages which are arranged without the spouses' consent. Arranged marriages are marriages organized by families with the approval of the spouses. Self-decision marriages are based on the mutual decision of the spouses, and other category encompasses categories such as abduction and elopement. Consanguinity variable indicates whether spouses are related by blood or not, regardless of the degree of kinship. Initial family type shows whether the family is formed as a nuclear or extended unit at the beginning of the marriage. Marriages are included in the extended family category if anyone other than the spouses is living at initial formation. Marriage ceremony variable includes whether the marriage is performed only in a civil ceremony or in combination with a religious ceremony. Bride price variable captures whether the husband paid bride price to the wife's family during the establishment of the marriage.

Model 4 examines the likelihood of divorce in relation to the sociodemographic compatibility of spouses, characterized by match on age, educational composition, ethnic composition and residential composition.

The analytical process begins with the execution of univariate logistic regressions to identify significant predictors of divorce. The statistically significant variables are then used to construct multivariate logistic regression models. Four different logistic regression models were developed with the aforementioned variables which are described in detail. The information from these models leads to the development of the final model, which incorporates the significant predictors to provide a holistic understanding of divorce risk factors. The models, along with the variables they encompass, are systematically presented in Table 3.10.

In addition to the variables included in the multivariate logistic regression models, there are additional variables that were used in descriptive analyses, univariate logistic regression models, and Multiple Correspondence Analysis (MCA). Variables which are related to husband's socio-demographic characteristics capture the age at marriage, education level, childhood place of resident and region. Wealth index

represents the welfare of the household in which the woman resides at the time of the interview. Marriage cohort indicates the marriage cohort of the woman's last marriage. Way of meeting provides information about the context and circumstances of the relationship formation. Number of children born in the last marriage indicates the number of children born during the woman's last marriage. Composition of regions captures the composition of the regions where the woman and the husband live until the age of 12.

**Table 3.12. Model Summaries**

VARIABLES	MODEL 1	MODEL 2	MODEL 3	MODEL 4	FINAL MODEL
<b>Individual Characteristics of Women</b>					
Educational status of woman	✓				
Working status of woman	✓				✓
Age at marriage	✓				✓
Childhood resident of woman	✓				
Childhood region of woman	✓				
Ethnicity of woman	✓				
<b>Marriage Specific Characteristics</b>					
Marriage duration		✓			✓
Presence of children in last marriage		✓			✓
Presence of children in former marriage		✓			
<b>Traditional Characteristics of Marriage</b>					
Marriage decision			✓		✓
Bride price			✓		✓
Marriage Ceremony			✓		✓
Initial family type			✓		✓
Consanguinity			✓		✓
<b>Matching Characteristics of Spouses</b>					
Match on Age				✓	
Educational Composition				✓	✓
Ethnic Composition				✓	✓
Residential Composition				✓	✓

### 3.2.2. Multiple Correspondence Analysis (MCA)

Multiple Correspondence Analysis (MCA) is a statistical technique derived from Correspondence Analysis (CA) specifically for analyzing the relationships between multiple categorical variables. MCA can also be thought of as an extension of Principal Component Analysis (PCA) but is specifically designed for categorical data rather than quantitative data. MCA allows researchers to examine patterns and relationships between several categorical variables simultaneously, providing a comprehensive understanding of the data structure (Abdi & Valentin, 2007). MCA is particularly useful in analyzing survey data with multiple questions with categorical responses. By providing a low-dimensional representation of the data structure, MCA facilitates a comprehensive understanding of complex categorical data sets (Greenacre, 2016).

MCA is based on geometric calculations of data tables where rows and columns represent different categories of variables. The data table is treated as a matrix and the size of the matrix is reduced by preserving as much information as possible. This reduction is achieved by transforming the categorical data into a low-dimensional space, typically two or three dimensions, which can then be visualized and interpreted. (Roux & Rouanet, 2004).

MCA results can be visualized using a biplot, which shows the relationships between variables and observations in a low-dimensional space (Greenacre, 2016). In a biplot, the proximity of points indicates similarity in response patterns. Categories that are close to each other are associated with similar responses, while those that are far apart exhibit different response patterns. This visual representation helps to identify clusters of categories or observations and provides insight into the underlying structure of the data (Abdi & Valentin, 2007).

In addition to the biplot, MCA provides other statistical measures such as inertia, which represents the amount of variation explained by each dimension (Roux & Rouanet, 2004). Contributions indicate the contribution of each category to the dimensions. Categories with high contribution are effective in defining the dimensions

(Greenacre, 2016). Cosines Squared (COS2) measures the quality of representation of each point in each dimension. Higher COS2 values indicate that the point is well represented by the dimension (Le Roux & Rouanet, 2010).

In this thesis, MCA is not used as a primary analysis method, but as a complementary tool to logistic regression models. While logistic regression models are used to examine the relationships between variables and divorce risk, MCA increases the interpretability and insights of the models by providing a visual representation of the relationships in the data. By visualising the links between variables and identifying clusters, MCA helps to understand the underlying patterns that logistic regression models may suggest but do not explicitly show. Specifically, MCA is utilized to foresee which groups of variables are more closely related, providing insights into whether there is clustering in the data based on marital status. This visualization aids in selecting variables for logistic regression models and helps explain their effects by offering a visual output that highlights the relationships and clusters in the data.

## CHAPTER 4

### RESULTS

This chapter provides a comprehensive presentation of the findings derived from the descriptive analyses, Multiple Correspondence Analysis (MCA) and the logistic regression models. Descriptive analysis provides a detailed overview of the distributions and variations of the variables analyzed. MCA presents an overall picture of the relationship between marital status and the variables that are the subject of this research and reveals the pattern between the factors investigated. On the other hand, logistic regression modelling allows for a more in-depth analysis of the factors influencing the incidence of divorce. Combining these analytical approaches, this chapter aims to present the results of the empirical analysis of the hypotheses under investigation.

#### 4.1. Results of Descriptive Analysis

This chapter aims to provide a comprehensive overview of the descriptive analysis conducted on divorce. In the preceding chapter, the data source and methodology employed in this study were thoroughly explained. The focus of this chapter is to present the divorce percentages based on various key individual and marital characteristics. Additionally, the analyses explore traditional practices associated with marriages, such as consanguinity, arranged marriages, and bride price. Furthermore, descriptive analyses examine key matching characteristics of couples such as age homogamy, educational homogamy, ethnic homogamy and residential homogamy.

The summary of the descriptive analysis shows that the divorce rate is high among women who works at the time of their marriage, have higher level of education, grow up in urban areas and from western region of Turkey. When marital dynamics are analyzed, it is observed that divorces are more common among couples who do not have children, those who are united only through civil marriage, those who meet



through social relations, those who get married under family pressure and those who forms marriage as nuclear family. It is observed that divorce rate is higher in the first five years of marriages. Furthermore, the assessment of spousal compatibility suggests that divorce rates are notably higher among certain groups compared to those in homogamous unions. While Turkish-Kurdish couples exhibit the highest rate of dissolution, unions between Turkish individuals show a similarly high rate. The likelihood of divorce increases if at least one of the spouses has an urban upbringing. Tables below present the variables which are analyzed in this study and the corresponding divorce rates.

In this chapter, first section aims to show the relationship between main demographic characteristics of the spouses and divorce percentages. Then, differentiation of divorce proportions among women according to marital and matching characteristics is displayed in second and third section, respectively.

**Table 4.1.** Summary of Descriptive Analysis of Socio-demographic Characteristics

Variables	Divorce Rate	Married Rate
<b>Educational status of woman</b>		
No education/ Primary incomplete	1.4	98.6
First level primary	2.6	97.4
Second level primary	3.4	96.6
High school and higher	5.6	94.4
<b>Educational status of the husband</b>		
No education/ Primary incomplete	1.2	98.8
First level primary	2.2	97.8
Second level primary	3.9	96.1
High school and higher	4.7	95.3
<b>Ethnicity of woman</b>		
Turkish	4.1	95.9
Kurdish	0.9	99.1
Arabic	0.8	99.2
Other	5.1	94.9
<b>Ethnicity of the husband</b>		
Turkish	4.0	96.0
Kurdish	1.6	98.4
Arabic	0.0	100.0
Other	4.6	95.4
<b>Childhood residence of woman</b>		
Urban	4.7	95.3
Rural	1.7	98.3
<b>Childhood residence of the husband</b>		
Urban	4.5	95.5
Rural	1.8	98.2

**Table 4.1.** Summary of Descriptive Analysis of Socio-demographic Characteristics  
(Continued)

<b>Childhood region of woman</b>		
West	5.2	94.8
South	2.8	97.2
Central	4.3	95.7
North	3.2	96.8
East	1.4	98.6
Abroad	4.8	95.2
<b>Childhood region of the husband</b>		
West	4.8	95.2
South	2.5	97.5
Central	4.1	95.9
North	2.6	97.4
East	1.9	98.1
Abroad	10.5	89.5
<b>Working status of woman</b>		
Worked during last marriage	16.4	83.6
Not worked during last marriage	1.5	98.5
<b>Wealth Index</b>		
Poorest	1.5	98.5
Poorer	3.3	96.7
Middle	3.4	96.6
Richer	3.2	96.8
Richest	5.6	94.4

**Table 4.2.** Summary of Descriptive Analysis of Marital Characteristics

Variables	Divorce Rate	Married Rate
<b>Way of Meeting</b>		
At school	2.8	97.2
At work	5.0	95.0
Through family/relative	2.4	97.6
Through friends	6.2	93.8
At Internet	5.2	94.8
Other	5.0	95.0
<b>Who decide on marriage</b>		
Forced marriage	5.2	94.8
Arranged marriage	2.3	97.7
Self decision	4.1	95.9
Other	0.0	100.0
<b>Bride price</b>		
With bride price	1.3	98.7
Without bride price	3.9	96.1
<b>Marriage ceremony</b>		
Civil and religious	3.4	96.6
Only civil	9.2	90.8
<b>Consanguinity</b>		
Not Relative	4.1	95.9
Relative	1.8	98.2
<b>Initial family type</b>		
Extended family	2.3	97.7
Nuclear family	5.0	95.0

**Table 4.2.** Summary of Descriptive Analysis of Marital Characteristics (Continued)

<b>Age at last marriage</b>		
10-19	2.9	97.1
20-24	3.1	96.9
25+	5.2	94.8
<b>Marriage Duration</b>		
0-5	5.5	94.5
6-15	4.5	95.5
15+	1.6	98.4
<b>Presence of children in last marriage</b>		
With children	3.0	97.0
Without children	9.4	90.6
<b>Presence of children from former marriage/s</b>		
With children	5.5	94.5
Without children	3.5	96.5

**Table 4.3.** Summary of Descriptive Analysis of Matching Characteristics

Variables	Divorce Rate	Married Rate
<b>Age composition of the couples</b>		
Woman older than the husband (+2)	4.4	95.6
Age homogamy (+-2)	3.7	96.3
Women younger than the husband (+2)	3.4	96.6
<b>Educational composition of the couples</b>		
Same and low level of education	2.3	97.7
Same and high level of education	5.1	94.9
The husband is more educated	2.4	97.6
Woman is more educated	5.4	94.6
<b>Ethnic composition of the couples</b>		
Turk-Turk	4.0	96.0
Kurd-Kurd	0.9	99.1
Turk-Kurd	4.1	95.9
Other matches	3.5	96.5
<b>Childhood residents of the spouses</b>		
Urban-Urban	4.9	95.1
Rural-Rural	1.4	98.6
Urban-Rural	2.7	97.3
<b>Childhood regions of the spouses</b>		
Same region	3.4	96.6
Different region	3.3	96.7
Other	8.1	91.9

#### 4.1.1. Differentials in Demographic Characteristics of the Spouses to Divorce Percentages

This section aims to investigate the variations in divorce proportions among women and men with diverse socio-demographic characteristics. Specifically, the impact of factors such as educational status, working status, ethnic background, childhood place of region, childhood place of residence, and economic conditions of households on the distribution of divorced individuals are examined. The objective is

to assess how these characteristics contribute to the prevalence of divorce within the population under study.

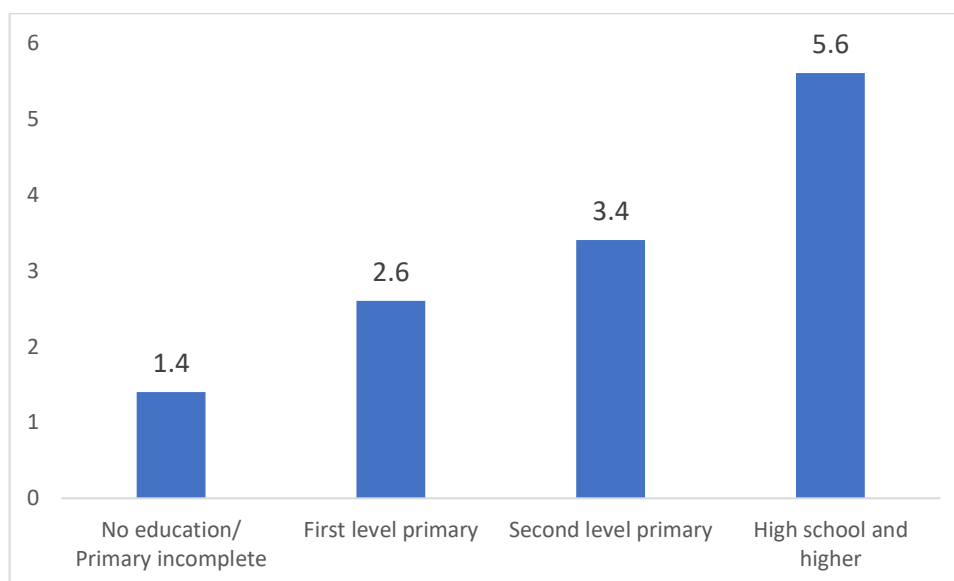
Firstly, to examine how educational attainment impacts divorce rates, four types of educational status are identified: "No education/ Primary incomplete", "First level primary", "Advanced degree", and "High school and higher". Descriptive analysis reveals that for both men and women, higher levels of education are associated with higher divorce proportions, as indicated in Table 4.4. Notably, the effect of education on divorce rates is more pronounced for women. In particular, the divorced percentages increase from 1.4 percent in the "No education/Primary incomplete" group to 5.6 percent in the "High school and higher" group. Similarly, for men, the proportion of divorced individuals rises from 1.2 percent in the "No education/Primary incomplete" group to 4.7 percent in the "High school and higher" group. Figure 4.1 illustrates that the proportion of divorced women tends to increase as the level of education they attain rises.

**Table 4.4.** Marital Status According to Educational Status of Woman

	No education/ Primary incomplete	First level primary	Second level primary	High school and higher
Divorced	1.4	2.6	3.4	5.6
Married	98.6	97.4	96.6	94.4
Total number of individuals	558	1903	812	1572

**Table 4.5.** Marital Status According to Educational Status of the Husband

	No education/ Primary incomplete	First level primary	Second level primary	High school and higher
Divorced	1.2	2.2	3.9	4.7
Married	98.8	97.8	96.1	95.3
Total number of individuals	83	1607	2147	989

**Figure 4.1.** Divorce Percentages According to Educational Status of Women

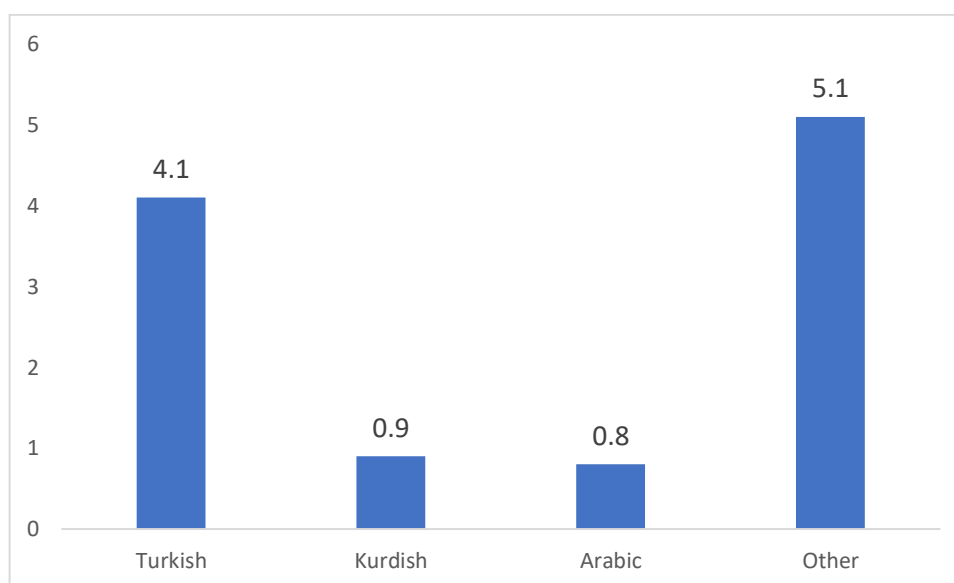
The influence of ethnic origin on individuals' attitudes and behaviors can potentially impact their marital behavior. According to this conventional perspective, divorce rates differ among different ethnic groups. Table 4.6 and Table 4.7 presents the proportions of divorced men and women according to their ethnic origin based on mother tongue information. Among the existing ethnic groups, the highest rates of divorced individuals, for both men and women, are observed in the "other" group, which comprises ethnic groups with relatively small populations in Turkey. When focusing on the dominant ethnic groups, Turkish women and men exhibit the highest divorce rates, with percentages of 4.1 and 4.0, respectively. In contrast, Kurdish women and men have the lowest divorce rates, with percentages of 0.9 for women and 1.6 for men.

**Table 4.6.** Marital Status According to Ethnicity of Woman

	Turkish	Kurdish	Arabic	Other
Divorced	4.1	0.9	0.8	5.1
Married	95.9	99.1	99.2	94.9
Total number of individuals	3868	738	119	118

**Table 4.7.** Marital Status according to Ethnicity of the Husband

	Turkish	Kurdish	Arabic	Other
Divorced	4.0	1.6	0.0	4.6
Married	96.0	98.4	100.0	95.4
Total number of individuals	3852	764	107	109

**Figure 4.2.** Divorce Percentages According to Ethnicity of Woman

The places of residence where people grow up are influential on attitudes and behaviors, especially considering different living conditions in rural and urban areas. Table 4.8 and Table 4.9 presents the divorce proportions of men and women according to the childhood place of residence until the age of 12 in urban and rural areas. Based on descriptive analysis, among men whose most of the time of childhood passed in urban, the divorce proportion is higher than among men whose childhood place of residence is rural (4.5% and 1.8%, respectively). In the same way, the percentage of divorced women who lived in urban in their childhood is more than twice as the divorce proportion among women whose childhood place of residence is rural (4.7% and 1.7%, respectively). Moreover, when the childhood residential settlement is analyzed at district and province levels, the divorce proportions also differentiate as displayed in Figure 4.3. As urban areas, district centers and provincial centers have different divorce rates for women; the rate of divorce among women who lived in

provincial centers during childhood is 5.2 percent, while it is 4.3 percent among women who lived in district centers.

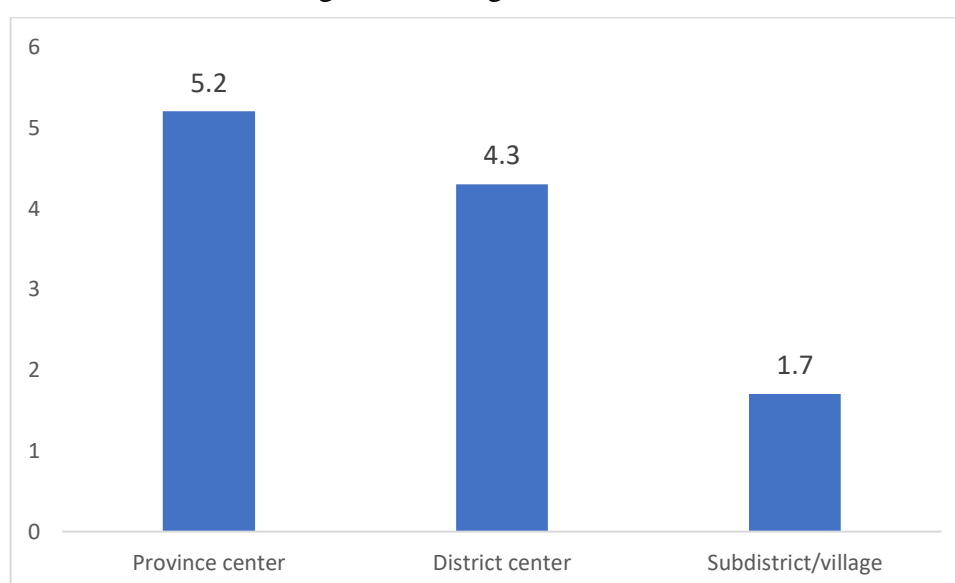
**Table 4.8.** Marital Status According to Childhood Place of Residence of Woman

	Urban	Rural
Divorced	4.7	1.7
Married	95.3	98.3
Total number of individuals	2872	1920

**Table 4.9.** Marital Status According to Childhood Place of Residence of the Husband

	Urban	Rural
Divorced	4.5	1.8
Married	95.5	98.2
Total number of individuals	2872	1920

**Figure 4.3.** Divorce Percentages According to Childhood Residence of Woman



When examining divorce rates across different regions, significant variations in proportions can be observed. Specifically, individuals who grew up in the Eastern region tend to have the lowest proportion of divorced men and women, whereas those who grew up in the Western region have the highest proportion (Table 4.10 & Table 4.11). Interestingly, the percentage of divorced men from the Central region is comparable to that of divorced men from the West, with rates of 4.1 percent and 4.8 percent respectively. In the same way, for women, the percentages of divorce increase

substantially as the childhood place of region transitions from East to West (Figure 4.4).

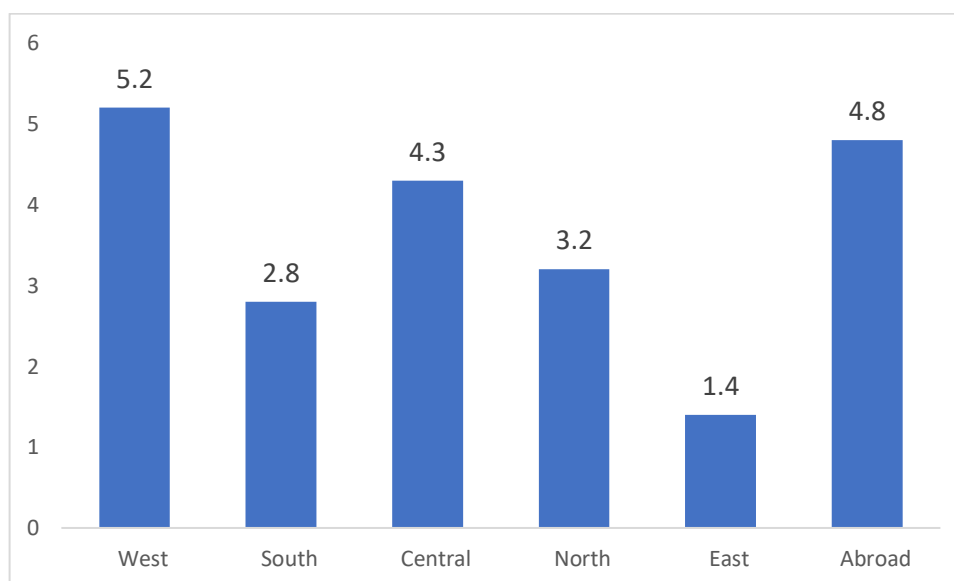
**Table 4.10.** Marital Status According to Childhood Region of Woman

	West	South	Central	North	East	Abroad
Divorced	5.2	2.8	4.3	3.2	1.4	4.8
Married	94.8	97.2	95.7	96.8	98.6	95.2
Total number of individuals	1315	633	1175	494	1123	105

**Table 4.11.** Marital Status According to Childhood Region of the Husband

	West	South	Central	North	East	Abroad
Divorced	4.8	2.5	4.1	2.6	1.9	10.5
Married	95.2	97.5	95.9	97.4	98.1	89.5
Total number of individuals	1272	603	1206	500	1166	95

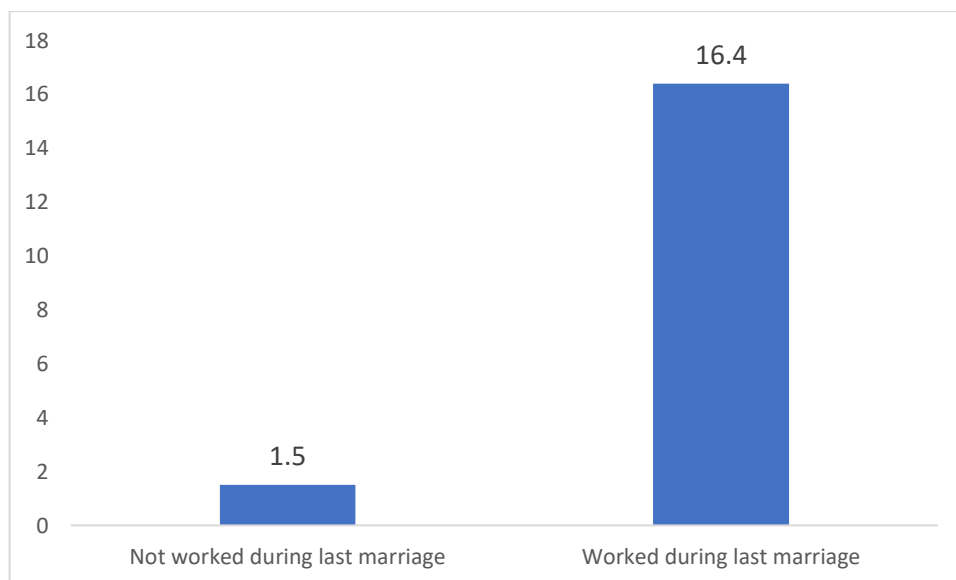
**Figure 4.4.** Divorce Percentages According to Childhood Region of Woman



The divorce rate among women who have participated in labor force during their marriages is considerably higher compared to women who have not worked during their marriages (16.4% and 1.5% percent respectively).

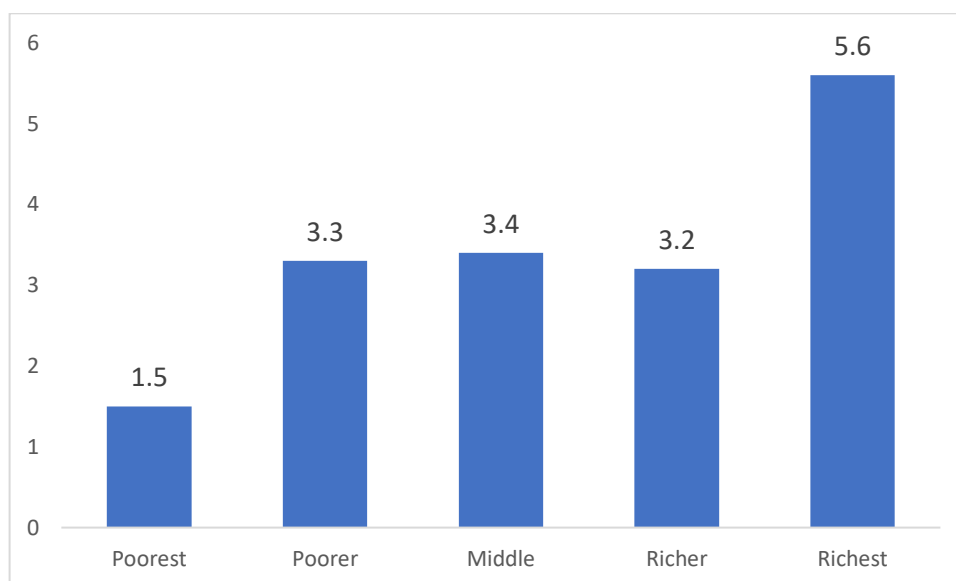


**Figure 4.5.** Divorce Percentages According to Working Status of Woman during the Last Marriage



The wealth index serves as an indicator of the economic well-being of households in which women reside at the time of survey conduct, as determined by the ownership of certain goods. It is important to acknowledge that the wealth index may not capture the welfare of couples in cases where women are divorced or living separately from their husbands. Consequently, for divorced women, this index reflects the economic circumstances of the households in which they currently reside following the divorce. On the other hand, the wealth index sheds light on the income status of women. Based on this information, divorce rates exhibit variations according to the wealth index. Descriptive analysis reveals a significant increase in the divorce rate as the wealth status of women rises (Figure 4.6). Notably, women residing in the wealthiest households exhibit the highest divorce rate, while those in the poorest households display the lowest divorce rate (5.6% and 1.5% respectively).

**Figure 4.6.** Divorce Percentages According to Wealth Index



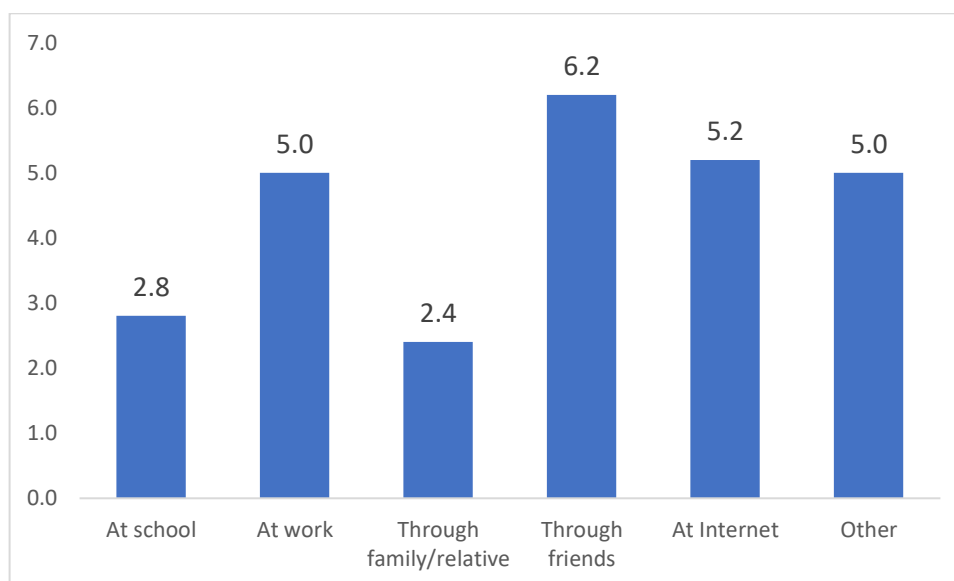
#### **4.1.2. Differentials in the Marital Characteristics to Divorce Percentages**

The incidence of divorce varies significantly based on the marital characteristics of unions. This chapter aims to examine the characteristics of marriage under two main subheadings. While exploring the establishment of marriage, the features related to marriage formation are examined. Additionally, the characteristics pertaining to the process of marriage are presented under the subheading of marital characteristics.

##### **4.1.2.1. Marriage Formation**

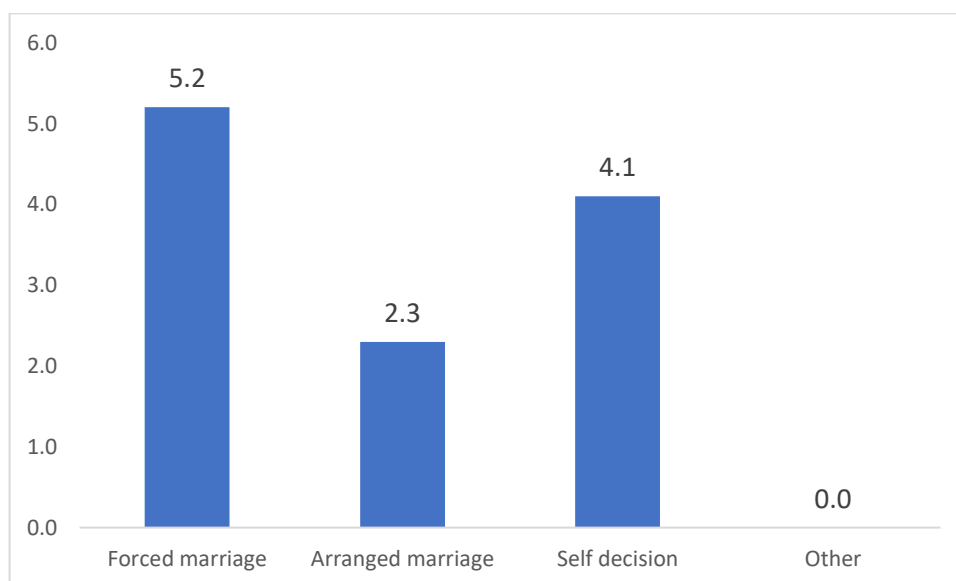
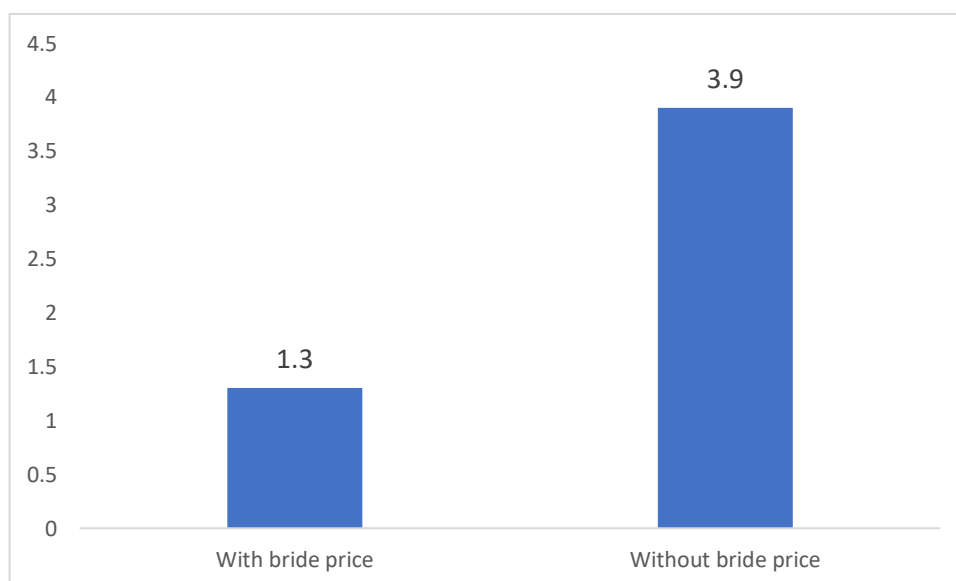
In this section, the features related to the establishment of marriage are explored. This will involve an examination of factors such as way of meeting, marriage decision, bride price, marriage ceremony, consanguinity, and age at marriage that shape the initial stages of marriage.

**Figure 4.7.** Divorce Percentages According to Way of Meeting



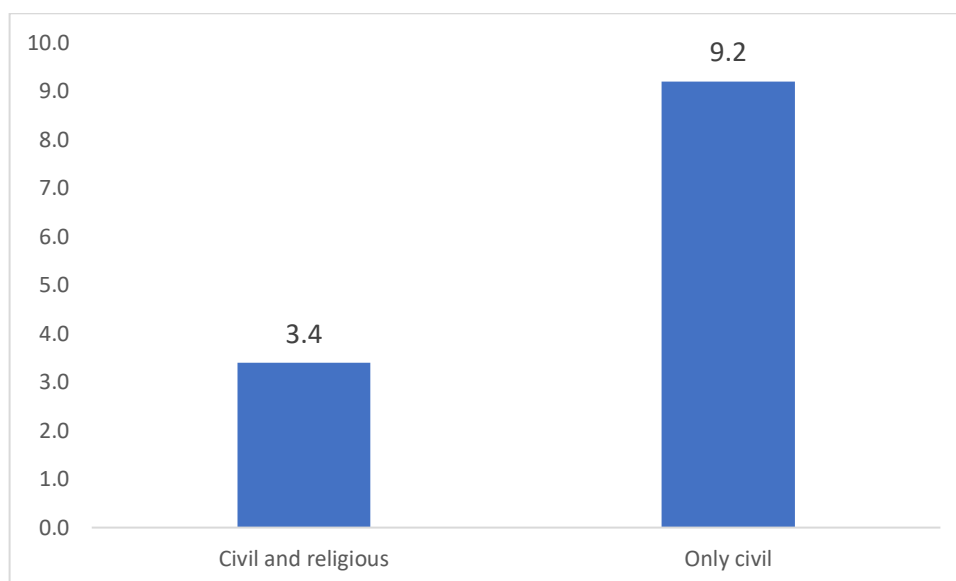
Regarding the establishment phase of marriage, the factor of how and where couples meet is being investigated. The incidence of divorce varies among these groups depending on the places where couples meet or the intermediaries who facilitate their introduction. The divorce rate is 6.2 percent for couples who meet through friends, 5.2 percent for couples who meet through the internet and 5 percent for couples who marry their colleagues. However, couples who meet and marry at school have a lower divorce rate of 2.8 percent. The lowest divorce rate, 2.4 percent, is observed among couples who meet through their families and relatives.

The way in which the decision to enter into marriage is made is a significant factor that contributes to variations in divorce rates. Specifically, when examining the different decision-making processes, notable differences in divorce percentages emerge. For instance, among women who independently made the decision to marry their husbands, the divorce rate stands at 4.1 percent. In contrast, for women whose marriages were arranged by their families with their consent, the divorce rate decreases to 2.3 percent. However, among women whose families arranged their marriages without their consent, the divorce rate increases to 5.2 percent. It is worth noting that the divorce proportion is 2.4 percent among women who eloped (Figure 4.8).

**Figure 4.8.** Divorce Percentages According to Who Decide on Marriage**Figure 4.9.** Divorce Percentages According to Whether Bride Price is Given or Not

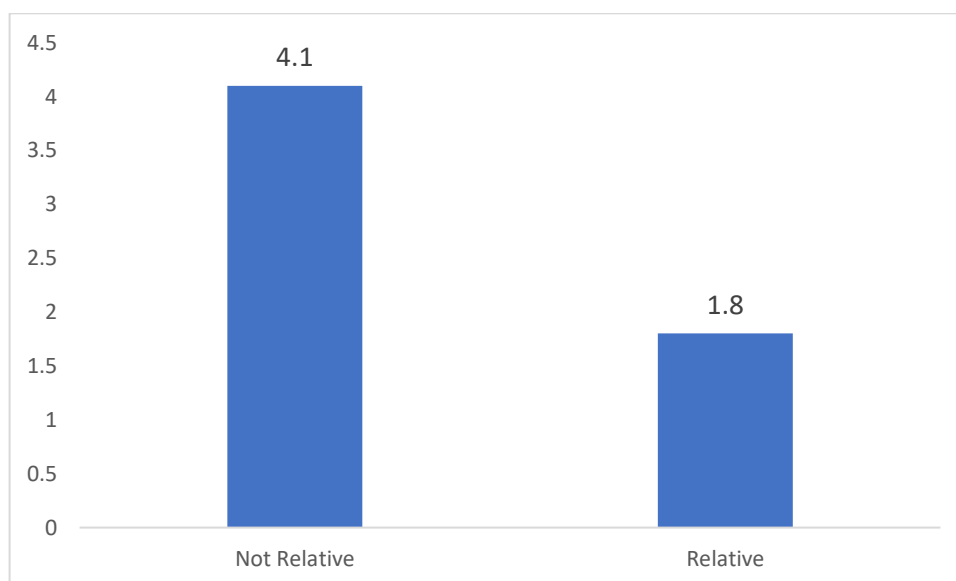
The practice of bride price, an ancient tradition observed in various parts of the world, including Turkey, is examined in this study to assess its impact on the risk of divorce. As a tool to gauge the influence of traditionality on divorce risk, the concept of bride price is utilized. Analyzing the 2018 Turkey Demographic and Health Survey (TDHS) data, it is observed that among marriages where no bride price is given, the proportion of divorced women is found to be 3.9 percent. In contrast, this proportion decreases to 1.3 percent among women who entered into marriages where a bride price was paid by their husbands.

**Figure 4.10.** Divorce Percentages According to Marriage Ceremony



The incidence of divorce differs between marriages conducted solely through religious ceremonies and marriages conducted through official civil ceremonies. In this study, the analysis focuses only on marriages conducted through official civil ceremonies. Therefore, the objective is to examine whether the inclusion of religious marriage alongside civil marriage has an impact on divorce rate. As depicted in the figure, the divorce rate is 9.2 percent for marriages conducted solely through official civil ceremonies, whereas it decreases to 3.4 percent for marriages conducted with the inclusion of religious ceremonies. It is important to note that, regardless of beliefs, in Turkey where conducting religious ceremonies is a tradition, the proportion of marriages without religious ceremonies is quite low. In the sample used for our analysis, this proportion is only 3.2 percent. Therefore, it is crucial to interpret this relatively high divorce rate with caution.

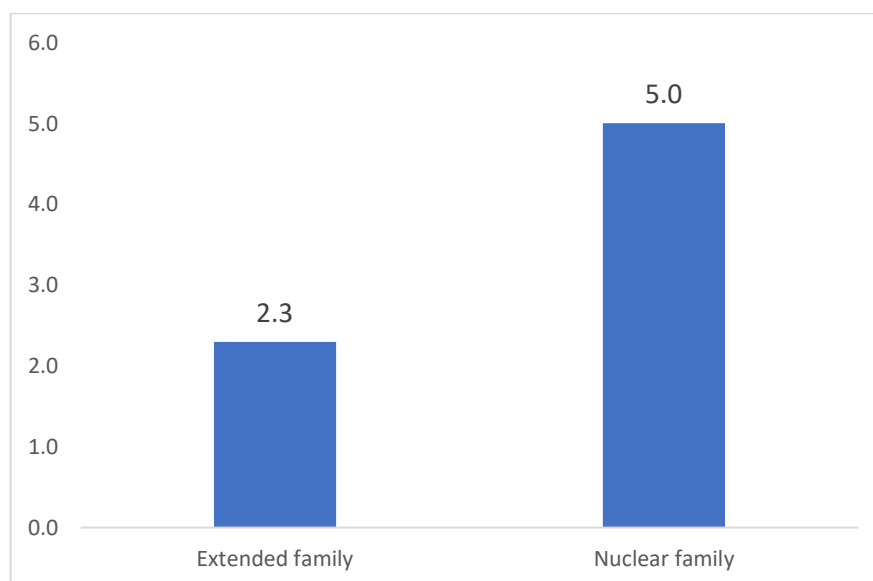
**Figure 4.11.** Divorce Percentages According to Consanguinity Among Spouses



Marriage between relatives is a significant factor in the formation of marriages and contributes to variations in divorce rates among women. According to 2018 TDHS, it is found that among ever-married women, 23.2 percent entered into marriages with a relative. Descriptive analysis reveals that the divorce rate is 1.8 percent in consanguineous marriages, whereas it is 4.1 percent in non-consanguineous marriages, as illustrated in Figure 4.11. These findings highlight the impact of marrying relatives on the likelihood of divorce among women.

During the formation of marriages, two distinct family structures can be identified: the nuclear family and the extended family. The nuclear family refers to the situation where the husband and wife commence living together without the presence of other individuals. In contrast, the extended family encompasses other family members, relatives, and close acquaintances who reside with the couple following their marriage.

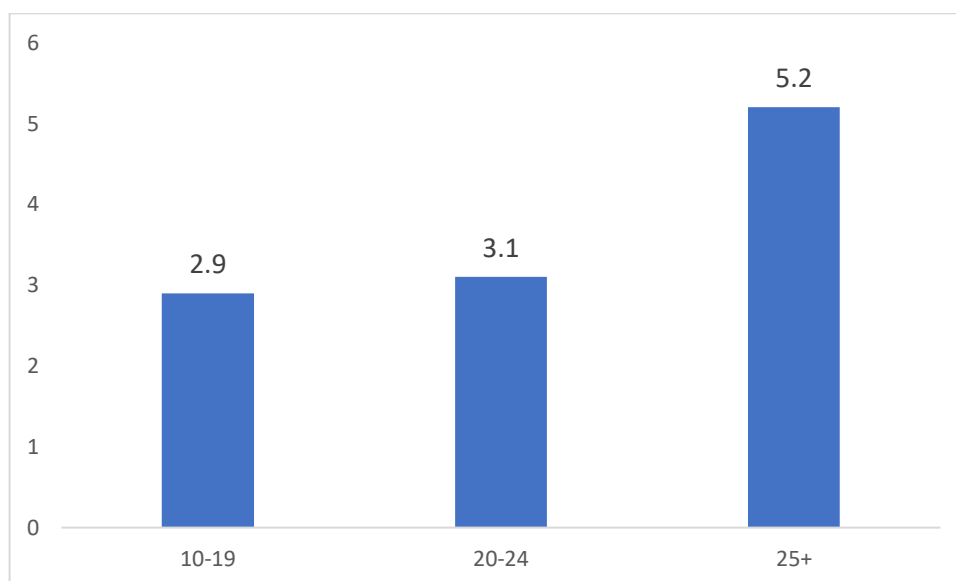
**Figure 4.12.** Divorce Percentages According to Initial Family Type



The Figure 4.12 illustrates that marriages in which the couple lives with family members other than their children exhibit a lower proportion of divorces (2.3%). Conversely, couples who live as a nuclear family demonstrate a higher divorce rate of 5 percent. These findings suggest that the presence of extended family members may contribute to greater stability within marriages, potentially providing additional support and resources that help mitigate the risk of divorce.

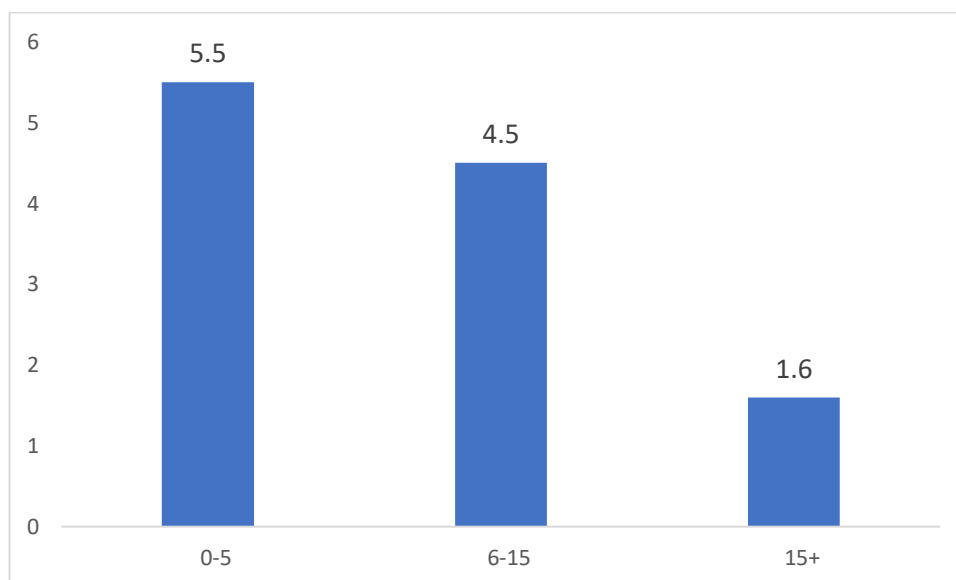
In this study, the youngest age of marriage encountered among women in the sample used for analysis is 10. Additionally, the proportion of women marrying after the age of 30 is relatively low (5.7%). Furthermore, the number of women in each age group was taken into consideration. Based on these findings, it is observed that as the age of marriage increases among women, the divorce rate also tends to increase. Among women who married before the age of 20, the divorce rate is 2.9 percent, while for women marrying between the ages of 20-24, the rate is 3.1 percent. For women marrying after the age of 25, the divorce rate is 5.2 percent.

**Figure 4.13.** Divorce Percentages According to Age at Marriage for Women



#### 4.1.2.2. Marriage Characteristics

**Figure 4.14.** Divorce Percentages According to Duration of Marriage

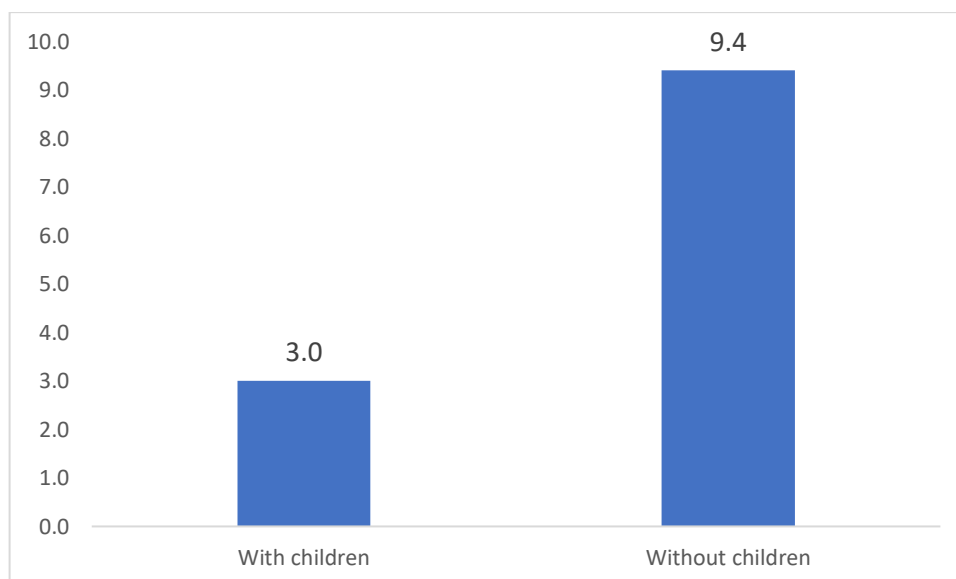


The descriptive analysis findings reveal that the duration of marriage plays a significant role in explaining the variation in divorce rates. As the duration of marriage increases, the incidence of divorce tends to decrease. Among couples who have been married for five years or less, the divorce rate is 5.5 percent. In contrast, for couples with a marriage duration of 6-15 years, the divorce rate decreases to 4.5 percent. The



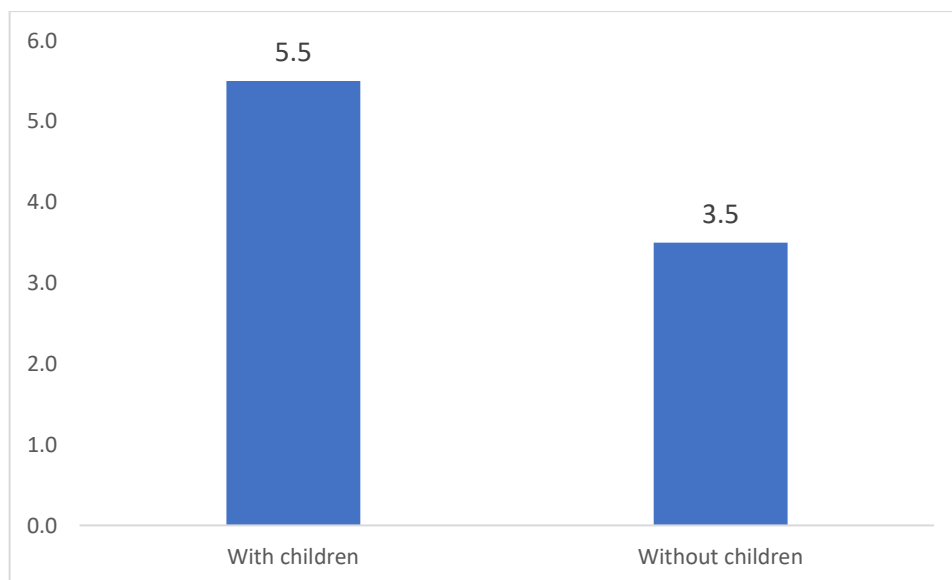
lowest divorce rate, at 1.6 percent, is observed among couples who have been together for more than 15 years. These findings highlight the inverse relationship between marriage duration and divorce incidence, suggesting that longer-lasting marriages are associated with lower divorce rates.

**Figure 4.15.** Divorce Percentages According to Presence of Children in Last Marriage

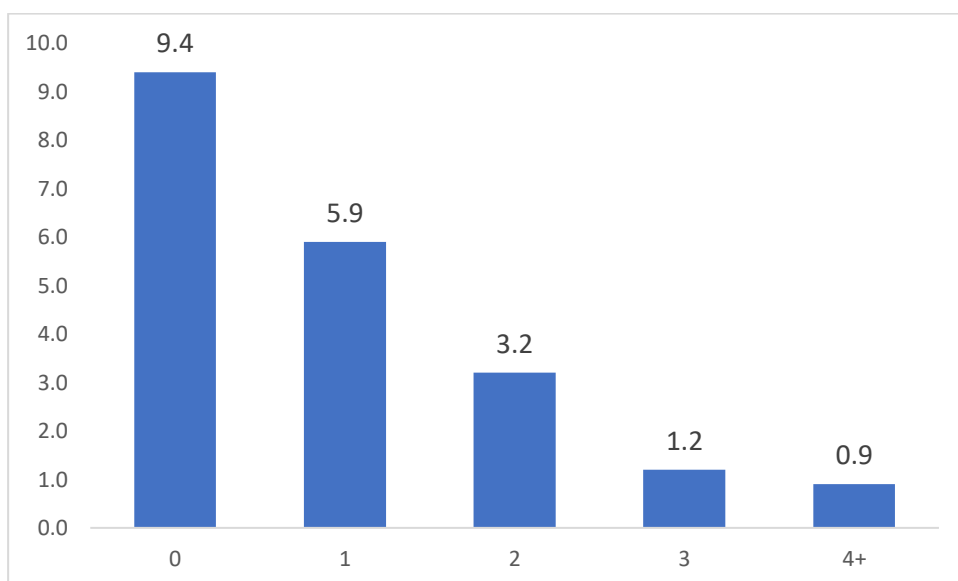


The literature suggests several theoretical connections between having children and divorce, with the widely accepted notion that having children complicates the decision to divorce. Consistent with this claim, when examining the most recent marriage, childless women exhibit a divorce proportion of 9.4 percent, whereas women with children have a significantly lower proportion of 3.0 percent (Figure 4.15). Another noteworthy aspect regarding the impact of having children pertains to children born from previous marriages. Women who have children from previous marriages tend to have a higher likelihood of divorce compared to childless women at the time of their current marriages (Figure 16). These findings underscore the influence of children, both from the current and previous marriages, on the dynamics of divorce.

**Figure 4.16.** Divorce Percentages According to Presence of Children in Former Marriage/S



**Figure 4.17.** Divorce Percentages According to Number of Children in Last Marriage/S



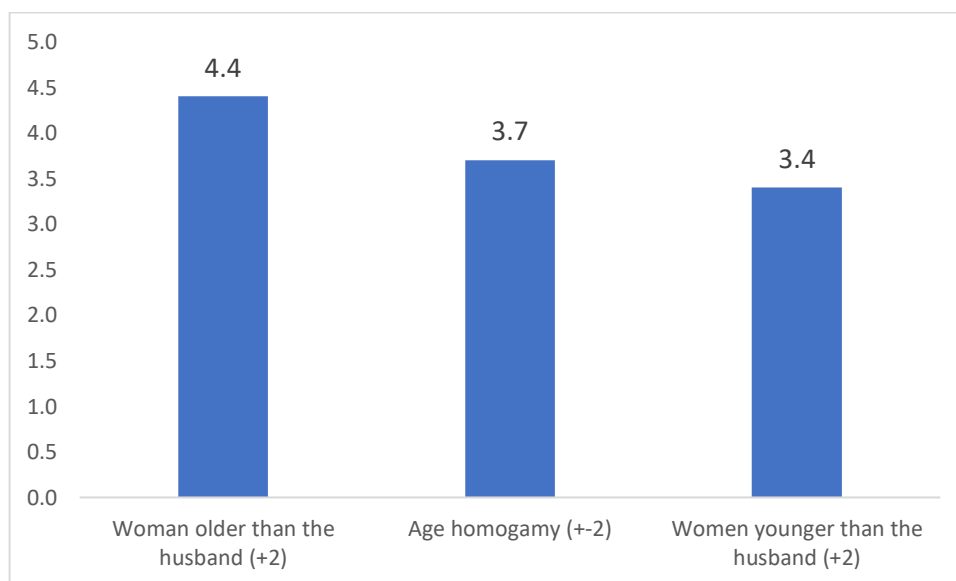
The number of children also has an impact on divorce proportions, as evidenced by the findings of the descriptive analysis. Families with children generally exhibit lower divorce rates compared to families without children, as indicated in Figure 4.15. Specifically, among women who have more than four children, the divorce proportion is remarkably low at 0.9 percent, in contrast to the proportion among women who have only one child, which stands at 5.9 percent. These findings

highlight the inverse relationship between the number of children and divorce rates, suggesting that larger family sizes may contribute to greater marital stability.

#### 4.1.3. Differentials in the Matching Characteristics of the Spouses to Divorce Percentages

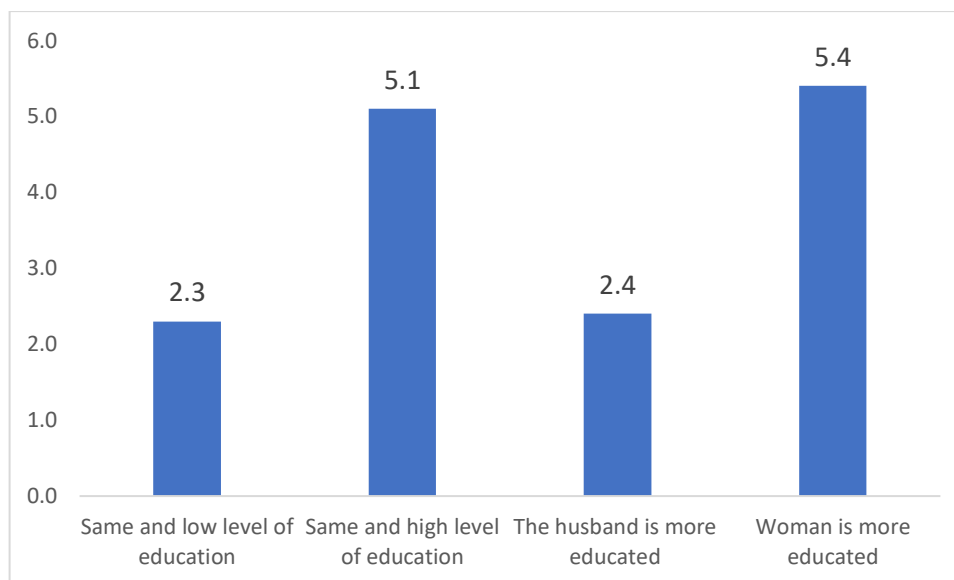
The presence of similarities in the characteristics of spouses is anticipated to exert a significant influence on the level of marital satisfaction experienced. Conversely, in situations where spouses possess divergent background characteristics, this can potentially contribute to an increased risk of divorce. This section of this paper presents findings from a descriptive analysis that explores the relationship between spouses' matching characteristics and the corresponding rates of divorce.

**Figure 4.18.** Divorce Percentages According to Age Composition of the Couples



Based on the data obtained from the 2018 TDHS, a significant proportion of spouses exhibit similarity in terms of age, comprising approximately 36.1 percent of the sampled population. Upon conducting a descriptive analysis, it is revealed that among women who are older than their husbands, the divorce rate stands at 4.4 percent. In contrast, marriages characterized by age homogeneity display a slightly lower divorce rate of 3.7 percent. Notably, the lowest divorce rate is observed among women whose husbands are older than them (3.4%).

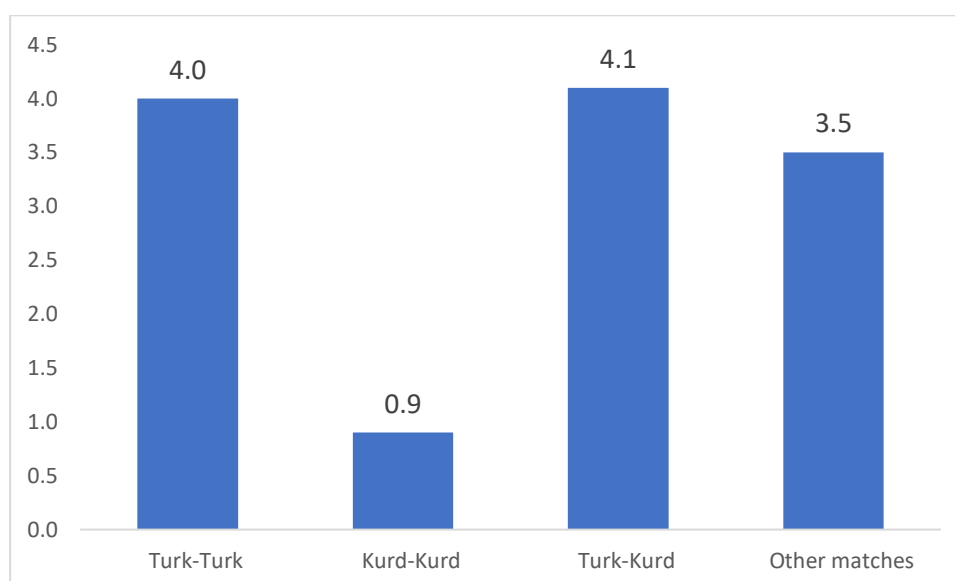
**Figure 4.19.** Divorce Percentages According to Educational Composition of the Couples



The issue of compatibility in terms of education is another crucial factor that affects the dynamics between spouses. The proportion of divorced women varies significantly depending on the level of compatibility in education among couples. Figure 4.19 shows this descriptive relationship. It is noteworthy that among women who are married to more educated men, the divorce percentage is observed to be the lowest. Conversely, the proportion of divorced women is highest among those who are more educated than their husbands, with rates of 2.4 percent and 5.4 percent respectively.

However, a more detailed analysis of educational homogamy reveals a different perspective. When examining marriages characterized by educational homogamy at higher levels, the proportion of divorced women is more than twice that of marriages where the educational levels of spouses are the same but at a lower level. Specifically, the divorce rate is 5.1% among women in marriages with higher educational homogamy, while it is 2.3% among women whose educational level matches that of their husbands but at a lower level. These findings shed light on the complex interplay between educational compatibility and divorce proportions among couples.

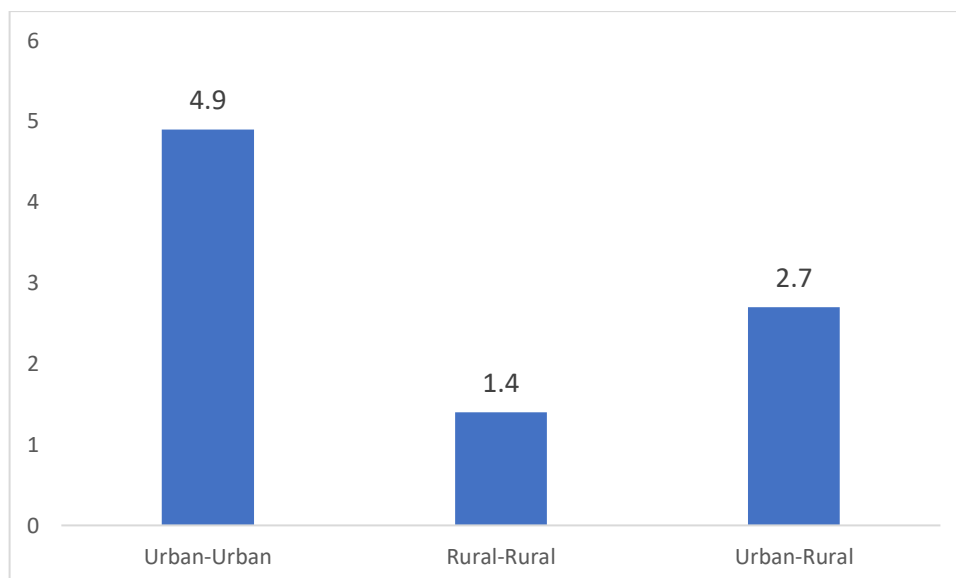
**Figure 4.20.** Divorce Percentages According to Ethnic Composition of the Couples



In the context where ethnicity plays a significant role in shaping the values and attitudes of individuals, influenced by their respective cultural backgrounds, it is expected that the presence of ethnic homogamy would have an impact on the stability of marriages. Analyzing the 2018 TDHS data, it is evident that marriages between individuals of Turkish and Kurdish ethnicities are not prevalent, accounting for only 3.5 percent of all marriages, while marriages between individuals from other ethnic backgrounds constitute 5.8 percent of the total.

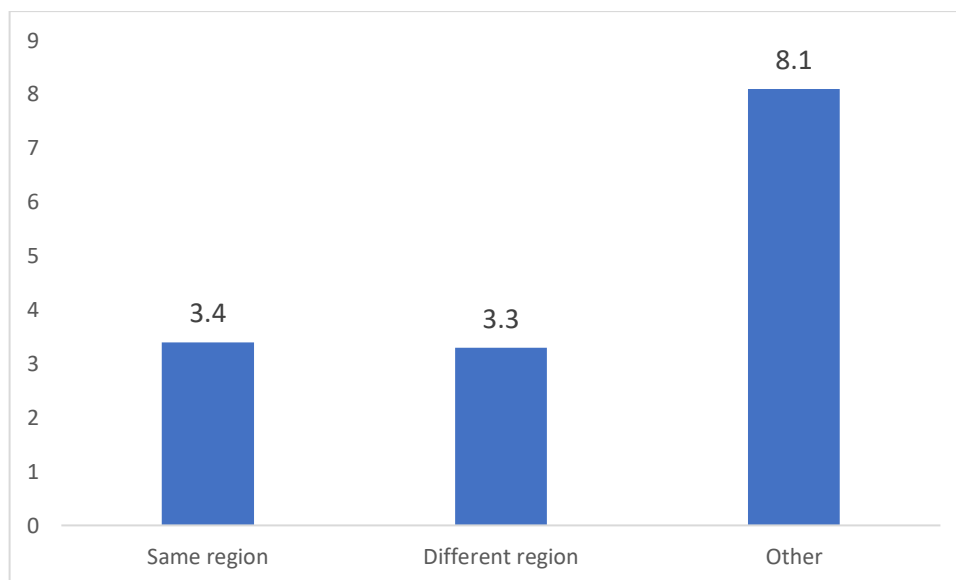
Descriptive statistical analysis reveals that marriages in which both spouses are Kurds have the lowest proportion of divorced women (0.9 %). Conversely, the highest divorce percentages are observed among couples consisting of individuals from different ethnicities, particularly in the case of Turk-Kurd marriages, where the divorce rate reaches 4.1 percent. Upon examination of the results derived from the descriptive analysis, it is inconclusive to assert that the presence of ethnic homogamy in marriages distinctly influences divorce rates. This is due to the fact that the divorce rate among Turkish couples is found to be as high as of Kurdish-Turkish couples (4.0 %). Therefore, based on these findings, it cannot be definitively concluded that the existence of ethnic homogamy within marriages significantly differentiates divorce rates.

**Figure 4.21.** Divorce Percentages According to Comparison of Childhood Residents of the Spouses



It is anticipated that regional and residential differences among spouses can contribute to conflicts that ultimately lead to divorce. In Turkey, there is a prevailing tendency for individuals to marry those who hail from the same region and share the same place of residence, accounting for 77.9 percent and 76.1 percent respectively. Upon analyzing the divorce percentages based on residential characteristics, it becomes evident that the highest rate is observed among marriages where both wives and husbands originate from urban areas, reaching 4.9 percent. Conversely, the lowest percentage is found among couples who are both from rural areas, standing at 1.4 percent. It is important to note that the primary differentiating factor is not the residential homogamy itself, but rather the specific place of residence.

**Figure 4.22.** Divorce Percentages According to Comparison of Childhood Regions of the Spouses



When examining divorce rates based on the regions where spouses grow up, there appears to be no significant variation between couples who are raised in the same regions and those who are raised in different regions. For couples who spent their childhood in the same region, the divorce rate is 3.4 percent, whereas for couples whose childhood was spent in different regions, this rate is 3.3 percent. However, when considering individuals who constitute a very small portion of the population and whose childhood is spent abroad, they are regarded as a other group, and it is observed that the divorce rate is significantly higher in this group (8.1%).

#### **4.2. Results of Multiple Correspondence Analysis**

In the previous section, the results of detailed descriptive analyses conducted to illustrate how divorce rates vary according to the sociodemographic and marital characteristics of spouses are presented. In this section, the results of the Multiple Correspondence Analysis (MCA) performed on the same dataset containing these variable sets are presented.

MCA is conducted to explore the multidimensional space of divorce risk factors. The biplot (Figure 4.23), which visualizes the results of MCA, represents the

relationships between various categorical variables related to marital status. The analysis yields a two-dimensional solution that cumulatively explains 19.0% of the total variation within the data. The first dimension (Dim1) accounts for 12.8% of the variance, while the second dimension (Dim2) explains an additional 6.2%.

The positioning of divorced women on the positive side of the X-axis (Dim1) indicates that the analysis has successfully identified the characteristics that differentiate them from married women, who are centrally located. The central position of married women suggests that they are more representative of the overall dataset, likely due to their larger numbers compared to divorced women. The centrality of Turkish ethnic origin also reflects their predominance in the dataset.

Given that divorced women are situated on the positive side of the X-axis, attributes closer to them on this axis are inferred to be more associated with higher divorce risk. Conversely, attributes positioned farther away or on the opposite side of the axis are less associated with divorce. The biplot identifies three primary groups:

First group with High Association with Divorce (Right side of the X-axis): This group includes women who exhibit characteristics such as having worked during their marriage, growing up in urban areas, marrying after the age of 25, having higher educational attainment, and living in the highest income households. Additionally, women in this group are characterized by having no children, getting married solely through civil ceremony, forming nuclear families, making marriage decisions independently, and meeting with their spouses through social circles like friends or working place. The early years of marriage (0-5) also appear to be more susceptible to divorce risk.

Second Group with Low Association with Divorce (Left side of the X-axis): This group predominantly consists of women from rural areas who married at a young age (10-19), possess low educational levels, and have not worked during their marriage. Their marriages are characterized by attributes such as arranged marriages, extended family structures, marriages facilitated by family introductions, and religious



ceremonies accompanying civil marriages. The presence of children, positioned close to this group, indicates the stabilizing effect of children on marital stability.

Third Group with Low Association with Divorce (Positive side of the Y-axis): This group includes women with very low education levels, Kurdish and Arabic ethnic origins, residing in eastern Turkey, and living in the lowest income households. The tradition of bride price is highly associated with this group. These attributes are positioned far from divorce, indicating a lower prevalence of divorce among them.

One of the hypotheses in this thesis is that traditional family values enhance marital stability and reduce the risk of divorce. The MCA results support this hypothesis. Attributes associated with a higher risk of divorce are aligned with modern values, such as higher education, urban upbringing, and marrying later in life. Conversely, attributes linked to traditional family structures—such as arranged marriages, extended family structures, or consanguineous marriages—along with characteristics consistent with traditional gender roles, such as low educational levels, not being employed outside the home, marrying at a young age, and rural upbringing, are positioned farther from divorce, indicating a weaker association. Additionally, the third group, which exhibits a distinct profile characterized by a very low association with divorce, includes women with traditional attributes, particularly geographic ones such as residing in eastern Turkey and Kurdish and Arabic ethnic backgrounds. This group's positioning further substantiates the hypothesis that traditional family values are linked to greater marital stability.

Overall, the MCA biplot provides a clear visualization of the relationships between socio-demographic factors, marital characteristics and divorce risk. It reveals that divorced women are characterized by modern family structures and higher socio-economic status, while women with traditional family values and lower socio-economic status are less associated with divorce. These insights enhance the understanding of the patterns suggested by logistic regression models, providing a comprehensive view of the factors influencing marital stability.

**Figure 4.23.** Multiple Correspondence Analysis



### **4.3. Results of Logistic Regression Analysis**

This study employed binary logistic regression as the main method of analysis. This section provides the result of logistic regression models constructed for this study.

#### **4.3.1. Univariate Regression Models**

In this section, univariate logistic regression analysis is employed to examine the relationship between the variables under investigation and the divorce status. Each variable's impact on the odds of divorce and the statistical significance of these effects were assessed through the constructed univariate logistic regression models. The results of these models can be found in the tables presented below. Utilization of univariate logistic regression analysis allows focusing on individual variables and their impact on divorce, providing valuable insights into the factors contributing to marital dissolution. By analyzing the results presented in the following tables, a clearer understanding of the relationship between the variables and divorce can be obtained, contributing to the overall understanding of the research topic.

##### **4.3.1.1. Socio-demographic Characteristics of Women and the Husband**

This sub-section presents the effects of socio-demographic characteristics on likelihood of divorce using univariate logistic regression analysis. The analysis focuses on the educational level, ethnicity, childhood residence, childhood region of both spouses and the working status of women, in addition to the wealth index of current households in which women live. Table 4.12 shows the strength and direction of the association between these factors and the likelihood of divorce.

Women who work during their last marriage have significantly higher odds of divorce compared to those who do not work. Women with higher educational levels showed increased odds of divorce compared to those with the lowest education levels and the results are statistically significant. The odds ratios were 1.877 ( $p = 0.107$ ) for first level primary, 2.579 ( $p < 0.05$ ) for second level primary, and 4.235 ( $p < 0.05$ ) for

high school and higher education compared to the lowest education level. Husband's education level shows similar pattern for divorce risk however the odds ratios are not statistically significant. Kurdish women had significantly lower odds of divorce (OR = 0.228,  $p < 0.05$ ) compared to Turkish women. For men, Kurdish ethnicity was associated with lower odds of divorce (OR = 0.375,  $p < 0.05$ ) compared to Turkish men. Women and men who grew up in rural areas had lower odds of divorce (women: OR = 0.354,  $p < 0.05$ ; men: OR = 0.389,  $p < 0.05$ ) compared to those from urban areas. Women from the East had significantly lower odds of divorce (OR = 0.260,  $p < 0.05$ ) compared to those from the West. Men from South (OR = 0,512,  $p < 0.05$ ); from North (OR=0,513,  $p < 0.05$ ); from East (OR = 0,390,  $p < 0.05$ ) have also significantly lower odds of divorce compared to those from the West. The wealth index was positively correlated with the odds of divorce across all categories, with the richest group having the highest odds ratio (OR = 3.877,  $p < 0.05$ ). Women in higher wealth categories are significantly more likely to be divorced compared to those in the poorest category. The odds of divorce increase progressively with wealth, with the "Richest" category showing the highest odds ratio.

**Table 4.12.** Socio-Demographic Characteristics of Women and the Husband

	Significance	OR	95% C.I.for OR	
			Lower	Upper
<b>Working status of woman</b>				
Not worked during last marriage		1.000		
Worked during last marriage	0.000	12.579	9.119	17.353
Constant	0.000	0.055		
<b>Educational status of woman</b>				
No education/ Primary incomplete	0.000	1.000		
First level primary	0.107	1.877	0.872	4.041
Second level primary	0.021	2.579	1.153	5.767
High school and higher	0.000	4.235	2.013	8.908
Constant	0.000	0.030		
<b>Educational status of the husband</b>				
No education/ Primary incomplete	0.002	1.000		
First level primary	0.529	1.946	0.245	15.458
Second level primary	0.220	3.621	0.463	28.306
High school and higher	0.166	4.301	0.545	33.956
Constant	0.000	0.026		

**Table 4.12.** Socio-demographic characteristics of women and the husband  
(Continued)

<b>Ethnicity of woman</b>				
Turkish	0.000	1.000		
Kurdish	0.000	0.228	0.107	0.486
Arabic	0.105	0.179	0.023	1.428
Other	0.533	1.299	0.571	2.957
Constant	0.000	0.020		
<b>Ethnicity of the husband</b>				
Turkish	0.014	1.000		
Kurdish	0.001	0.375	0.206	0.684
Arabic	0.996	0.000	0.000	
Other	0.689	1.201	0.490	2.942
Constant	0.994	0.000		
<b>Childhood residence of woman</b>				
Urban		1.000		
Rural	0.000	0.354	0.241	0.521
Constant	0.000	0.029		
<b>Childhood residence of the husband</b>				
Urban		1.000		
Rural	0.000	0.389	0.268	0.565
Constant	0.000	0.029		
<b>Childhood region of woman</b>				
West	0.000	1.000		
South	0.017	0.523	0.307	0.892
Central	0.284	0.815	0.561	1.185
North	0.096	0.626	0.361	1.086
East	0.000	0.260	0.149	0.453
Abroad	0.848	0.913	0.359	2.320
Constant	0.000	0.034		
<b>Childhood region of the husband</b>				
West	0.000	1.000		
South	0.022	0.512	0.290	0.907
Central	0.453	0.864	0.590	1.266
North	0.033	0.513	0.277	0.948
East	0.000	0.390	0.239	0.636
Abroad	0.012	2.431	1.218	4.852
Constant	0.000	0.039		
<b>Wealth Index</b>				
Poorest	0.000	1.000		
Poorer	0.028	2.204	1.088	4.464
Middle	0.021	2.270	1.134	4.544
Richer	0.028	2.166	1.085	4.323
Richest	0.000	3.877	2.014	7.461
Constant	0.000	0.032		

#### 4.3.1.2. Marital Characteristics

In this subsection the individual association between each marital characteristics and divorce probability is analyzed by univariate regression analysis. Factors such as the way couples meet, who decides on the marriage, the presence of a

bride price, the type of marriage ceremony, consanguinity, initial family type, age at marriage, marriage duration, and the presence of children are examined in order to present whether they play significant roles in the dynamics of a marital relationship. The results of the univariate regression analyses are presented in Table 13

The context in which couples meet appears to influence partially divorce risk. Meeting through friends significantly increases the odds of divorce by a factor of 2.362 ( $p < 0.05$ ), suggesting that social settings may play a role in the future stability of the relationship. Meeting at work and meeting through internet, showed odds ratio of 1.851 and 2,022 respectively, although these are not statistically significant ( $p > 0.05$ ).

The decision-making process in marriage is a critical factor. Marriage in which families are involved in the marriage decision with the consent of the spouses is associated with a decrease in divorce risk (OR = 0.424,  $p < 0.05$ ), indicating that familial support may contribute to marital stability if the consent of the marrying individuals is obtained. Forced marriages are used as the reference category and shows the highest risk, suggesting that marriage decisions by families without the consent of the spouses may lead to instability. The odds of divorce are approximately 24.1% lower for marriages where the couple made their own decision compared to forced marriages, although this difference is not statistically significant.

The presence of a bride price is associated with a significantly lower risk of divorce (OR = 0.315,  $p < 0.05$ ), indicating that traditional practices may have a protective effect on marriage. Couples who have only a civil ceremony are nearly three times more likely to divorce (OR = 2.956,  $p < 0.05$ ) compared to those who have both civil and religious ceremonies, supporting the idea of protective effect of traditional practices. Marriages between relatives show a lower risk of divorce significantly (OR = 0.432,  $p < 0.05$ ), which may reflect traditional and cultural pressures to maintain the marriage. Marriages formed as nuclear families had more than twice the odds of divorce compared to marriages formed as extended families (OR =  $p < 0.05$ ), highlighting the potential influence of family support systems on marital stability.

Marrying at the age of 25 or older increases the odds of divorce by 1.815 times ( $p < 0.05$ ) compared to marrying between the ages of 10-19. Women who marry between the ages of 20-24 do not show a statistically significant difference in the odds of divorce compared to women who marry between the ages of 10-19 ( $p > 0.05$ ).

Longer marriage durations are associated with a lower risk of divorce. Marriages lasting 16 years or more have a 71% lower risk of divorce (OR = 0.290,  $p < 0.05$ ) compared to those lasting 0-5 years. Marriages lasting 6-15 years also have lower risk of divorce with the odds ratio of 0.806 showing statistically insignificant difference.

The presence of children significantly decreases the likelihood of divorce by 70,6% compared to the marriages where no children exist (OR = 0.294,  $p < 0.05$ ). On the other hand, having children from previous relationships showed an increased odds ratio of 1.689 for divorce risk, although this is not statistically significant ( $p > 0.05$ ).

**Table 4.13.** Marital Characteristics

	Significance	OR	95% C.I.for OR	
			Lower	Upper
<b>Way of Meeting</b>				
At school	0.000	1.000		
At work	0.166	1.851	0.775	4.420
Family/relatives	0.758	0.883	0.401	1.944
Friends	0.038	2.362	1.051	5.309
Internet	0.267	2.022	0.584	7.008
Other	0.159	1.844	0.788	4.314
Constant	0.000	0.044		
<b>Who decide on marriage</b>				
Forced marriage	0.009	1.000		
Arranged marriage	0.007	0.424	0.228	0.791
Self decision	0.337	0.759	0.433	1.332
Other	0.656	0.503	0.024	10.360
Constant	0.000	0.036		
<b>Bride price</b>				
Without bride price		1.000		
With bride price	0.001	0.315	0.157	0.631
Constant	0.000	0.023		

**Table 4.13. Marital Characteristics (Continued)**

<b>Marriage Ceremony</b>				
Civil and Religious		1.000		
Only Civil	0.000	2.956	1.676	5.212
Constant	0.000	0.060		
<b>Consanguinity among spouses</b>				
Not relative		1.000		
Relative	0.000	0.432	0.271	0.690
Constant	0.000	0.028		
<b>Initial family type</b>				
Extended Family		1.000		
Nuclear Family	0.000	2.270	1.644	3.133
Constant	0.000	0.035		
<b>Age at last marriage</b>				
10-19	0.003	1.000		
20-24	0.826	1.043	0.717	1.518
25+	0.002	1.815	1.243	2.650
Constant	0.000	0.038		
<b>Marriage Duration</b>				
0-5	0.000	1.000		
"6-15"	0.241	0.806	0.563	1.155
16+	0.000	0.290	0.187	0.451
Constant	0.000	0.036		
<b>Presence of children in last marriage</b>				
Without children		1.000		
With children	0.000	0.294	0.204	0.425
Constant	0.000	0.057		
<b>Presence of children from former marriage/s</b>				
Without children		1.000		
With children	0.129	1.689	0.859	3.321
Constant	0.000	0.047		

#### 4.3.1.3 Matching Characteristics of the Spouses

This subsection presents the univariate analysis of the relationship between matching characteristics such as age and education level of the spouses, ethnic origin, childhood residence and region and divorce status. The analysis is based on odds ratios derived from logistic regression models that provide insight into the strength and direction of the associations. The results are presented in Table 4.14.

The analysis reveals no significant association between the age composition of the couples and the likelihood of divorce. Couples with age homogeneity (a difference of  $\pm 2$



years) and those where men are older do not show a statistically significant difference in the odds of divorce compared to couples where women are more than two years older.

The educational composition of spouses shows a significant association with divorce. Couples with the same high level of education and those where women are more educated have more than twice the odds of divorce compared to couples with the same low level of education.

Ethnic composition is a significant factor for divorce risk. Marriages where both spouses belong to the Kurdish ethnicity are associated with a significant decrease in the likelihood of divorce by approximately 79 percent compared to Turk-Turk couples. Compared to couples with Turkish ethnic backgrounds, Turk-Kurt marriages and other ethnic compositions show lower divorce odds, although these do not exhibit a statistically significant difference.

The childhood residence of spouses is strongly associated with divorce. Couples from rural-rural backgrounds have significantly lower odds of divorce compared to urban-urban couples. Couples with one partner from urban background and the other from rural background also have lower odds of divorce, though to a lesser extent. On the other hand, couples from different regions do not exhibit a significant difference in divorce odds compared to couples from the same region. However, couples where at least one spouse is from abroad have significantly higher odds of divorce.

**Table 4.14.** Matching Characteristics

	Significance	OR	95% C.I.for OR	
			Lower	Upper
<b>Age composition of the couples</b>				
Women older than man (+2)	0.691	1.000		
Age homogamy (+-2)	0.586	0.802	0.363	1.771
Men older than women	0.444	0.738	0.339	1.607
Constant	0.000	0.040		
<b>Educational composition of the couples</b>				
Same and low level of education	0.000	1.000		
Same and high level of education	0.000	2.293	1.443	3.643
Men are more educated	0.892	1.033	0.645	1.654
Women are more educated	0.000	2.453	1.594	3.772
Constant	0.000	0.036		

**Table 4.14.** Matching characteristics (Continued)

<b>Ethnic composition of the couples</b>				
Turk - Turk	0.005	1.000		
Kurd - Kurd	0.000	0.213	0.091	0.496
Turk - Kurd	0.976	0.988	0.446	2.188
Other matches	0.721	0.888	0.462	1.706
Constant	0.000	0.027		
<b>Childhood residents of the spouses</b>				
Urban - Urban	0.000	1.000		
Rural - Rural	0.000	0.278	0.172	0.449
Urban - Rural	0.004	0.546	0.361	0.826
Constant	0.000	0.027		
<b>Childhood regions of the spouses</b>				
Same region	0.011	1.000		
Different region	0.779	0.944	0.633	1.409
Abroad	0.003	2.578	1.371	4.846
Constant	0.000	0.048		

Based on the results of the univariate logistic regression analysis, it can be concluded that various factors significantly influence the risk of divorce. These factors include the working status of women, educational status of both partners, ethnicities, childhood residence, wealth index, and various traditional practices related to marriage. However, it is important to note that the univariate analysis only provides associations between individual variables and divorce risk. Further multivariate analysis and interpretation will be provided in the next section to understand the combined effects of the variables.

### 4.3.2. Multivariate Regression Models

The univariate analysis conducted in the previous section provides valuable insights into the individual associations between various variables and divorce risk. However, in order to obtain a more comprehensive understanding of the factors influencing divorce, it is imperative to employ multivariate analysis. By including more than one variable in the analysis, we can better account for complex interactions and confounding factors that may affect divorce outcomes. This allows us to assess the independent contributions of each variable while controlling for the effects of other variables. As a result, multivariate analysis allows us to discern the unique impact of

each variable on divorce risk beyond the individual associations observed in univariate analysis.

In this section, the results of multivariate logistic regression models that are built separately for specific groups of variables will be presented. The construction of separate multivariate models for certain groups of variables allows us to analyze the specific dynamics within each category in depth. This approach facilitates a deeper examination of the factors affecting the risk of divorce as it allows us to decompose the effects of different variables and assess their relative importance within their respective groups.

#### 4.3.2.1. Model 1: Individual Characteristics of Women

In Model 1, it is aimed to analyze divorce risk as the dependent variable while considering women's individual characteristics as independent variables. The summary of the model and the results are presented in the tables below.

**Table 4.15.** Model 1 Summary

Number of cases included	Missing Cases	Omnibus Tests		-2 Log likelihood		Nagelkerke R Square	Variables in Model
		Chi-square	P Value	Before model	After model		
5102	78	296.394	0.000	1433.231	1136.838	0.232	Educational status of woman, Working status of woman, Age at marriage, Childhood resident of woman, Childhood region of woman, Ethnicity of woman

The model includes a total of 5102 cases, with 78 missing cases. The omnibus tests indicate that the model is statistically significant ( $p < 0.05$ ). The Nagelkerke R Square value suggests that the model accounts for approximately 23.2 percent of the variance in divorce risk. The variables included in the model are the educational status of the woman, working status of the woman, age at marriage, childhood residence of the woman, childhood region of the woman, and ethnicity of the woman.

**Table 4.16.** Results of Model 1

	Significance	OR	95% C.I. for OR	
			Lower	Upper
<b>Educational status of woman</b>				
No education/ Primary incomplete	0.741	1.000		
First level primary	0.781	1.134	0.468	2.748
Second level primary	0.591	1.295	0.505	3.320
High school and higher	0.945	0.968	0.382	2.456
<b>Working status of woman</b>				
Not working during last marriage		1.000		
Working during last marriage	0.000	16.169	11.114	23.521
<b>Age at marriage</b>				
10-19	0.012	1.893	1.152	3.110
20-24	0.058	1.523	0.986	2.355
25+	0.037	1.000		
<b>Childhood resident of woman</b>				
Rural		1.000		
Urban	0.000	3.243	2.037	5.162
<b>Childhood region of woman</b>				
East	0.336	1.000		
West	0.075	1.806	0.942	3.463
South	0.728	1.147	0.529	2.489
Central	0.119	1.706	0.871	3.342
North	0.276	1.556	0.702	3.450
Abroad	0.356	3.891	0.218	69.470
<b>Ethnicity of woman</b>				
Kurdish	0.199	1.000		
Turkish	0.075	2.375	0.916	6159.000
Arabic	0.632	0.494	0.028	8836.000
Other	0.104	3.403	0.779	14872.000
Constant	0.000	0.029		

The results of Model 1 revealing the significance levels, odds ratios (OR), and 95 percent confidence intervals (C.I.) for each independent variable are presented in Table-4.15.

The educational attainment of women does not appear to significantly affect the likelihood of divorce when the effects of other factors are controlled. The odds ratios for all categories of educational status, from lowest education level to highest, are not statistically significant. This suggests that within the context of the variables included in the model, educational attainment alone does not have a strong association with divorce risk.

In terms of the working status of women, those who worked during their last marriage exhibit a significantly higher risk of divorce compared to those who did not work (OR = 16.169). This result is highly significant ( $p < 0.05$ ), indicating a robust association between employment of women and increased divorce risk.

Age at marriage also shows significant results. Women who married between the ages of 10-19 are more likely to experience divorce (OR = 1.893) compared to those who married at the age of 25 or older. The odds ratio for those who married between 20-24 years old indicates an increased risk (OR = 1.523), but the p-value (0.058) suggests that this finding is at the margin of statistical significance.

The model indicates a strong association between childhood residence and divorce status. Women who grew up in urban areas have a significantly higher risk of divorce (OR = 3.243) compared to those from rural backgrounds. This finding is statistically significant ( $p < 0.05$ ).

The region where women spent their childhood does not show a consistent pattern of significant results. However, there is a tendency towards higher divorce risk for those from the West (OR = 1.806) and Central regions (OR = 1.706), although these results do not reach conventional levels of statistical significance.

The ethnicity of women does not yield statistically significant results in this model. While there are indications of varying divorce risks across different ethnic groups, with Turkish ethnicity showing a higher odds ratio (OR = 2.375), these findings do not reach statistical significance.

In summary, the multivariate logistic regression analysis indicates that among the variables considered, the working status and childhood residence of women are the most significant predictors of divorce status. Being employed during the last marriage and growing up in an urban environment are associated with an increased risk of divorce. Additionally, age at marriage is found to be a significant factor associated with divorce risk, with marriages at younger ages being strongly associated with a higher likelihood of divorce. However, educational status, ethnicity and childhood region of women do not show significant associations with divorce risk in this model.

### 4.3.2.2. Model 2: Marriage Specific Characteristics

In this section, the results of the second model, which focuses on marriage-specific characteristics are presented. The model includes marriage duration, presence of children in the last marriage, and presence of children from former marriages.

The summary table below provides an overview of the model and its results (Table 4.17). The analysis includes a total of 5153 cases, with 27 missing cases. The omnibus tests indicate that the model is statistically significant ( $p < 0.05$ ). The Nagelkerke R Square value suggests that the model explains approximately 4.5% of the variance in divorce status.

**Table 4.17.** Model 2 Summary

Number of cases included	Missing Cases	Omnibus Tests		-2 Log likelihood		Nagelkerke R Square	Variables in Model
		Chi-square	P Value	Before model	After model		
5153	27	57.050	0.000	1453.647	1396.598	0.045	Marriage duration, Presence of children in last marriage, Presence of children in former marriage

The results of the logistic regression analysis are provided in the Table-4.18. The analysis reveals that marriage duration has a significant impact on divorce risk. Individuals who have been married for 0-5 years have higher odds of divorce (OR = 2.364) compared to those who have been married for 16 years or more. Similarly, individuals who have been married for 6-15 years also have higher odds of divorce (OR = 2.677) compared to the reference category of 16+ years.

The presence of children in the last marriage is a significant predictor of divorce risk. Marriages without presence of children increase the probability of divorce approximately 2.63 times more than marriages with the presence of children (OR = 2.630). The presence of children from former marriages does not show a significant association with divorce risk. The odds ratio for individuals with children from former marriages is 1.104, indicating a slightly higher likelihood of divorce, but this association is not statistically significant.

**Table 4.18.** Results of Model 2

	Significance	OR	95% C.I. for OR	
			Lower	Upper
<b>Marriage duration</b>				
0-5	0.001	2.364	0.755	1.700
6-15	0.000	2.677	0.259	0.690
16+	0.000	1.000		
<b>Presence of children in last marriage</b>				
With children in last marriage		1.000		
Without children in last marriage	0.000	2.630	1.682	4.111
<b>Presence of children in former marriage</b>				
With children in former marriage	0.792	1.104	0.529	2.304
Without children in former marriage		1.000		
Constant	0.000	0.052		

The findings from the Model-2 shed light on the relationship between marriage-specific characteristics and divorce risk. The results indicate that marriage duration and the presence of children in the last marriage are significant predictors of divorce risk.

#### 4.3.2.3. Model 3: Traditional Characteristics of Marriage

This section will provide the results of logistic regression analysis of Model-3 which explores the relationship between traditional practices related to marriage and divorce risk.

The following Table 4.19 presents the summary of model 3, which was produced to examine how the variables Marriage decision, Bride price, Consanguinity, Initial family type, Marriage Ceremony affect the odds of divorce. The total number of cases included in the analysis is 5180 and there is no missing data. Chi-square value obtained as a result of omnibus tests is 61,492. The P value is 0.000, which indicates that the model is statistically significant. Nagelkerke R Square value was found to be 0.048; that is, the model explains approximately 4.8% of the variance in the dependent variable.

**Table 4.19.** Model 3 Summary

Number of cases included	Missing Cases	Omnibus Tests		-2 Log likelihood		Nagelkerke R Square	Variables in Model
		Chi-square	P Value	Before model	After model		
5180	0	61.492	0.000	1487.902	1426.410	0.048	Marriage decision, Bride price, Consanguinity, Initial family type, Marriage ceremony

Table 4.20 presents the OR values, which demonstrate the impact of each independent variable on the dependent variable as determined by the logistic regression analysis, along with the significance of these values.

**Table 4.20.** Results of Model 3

	Significance	OR	95% C.I. for OR	
			Lower	Upper
<b>Marriage decision</b>				
Arranged marriage	0.005	1.000		
Forced marriage	0.000	3.165	1.663	5.970
Self decision	0.314	1.221	0.839	1.835
Other	0.983	1.033	0.051	20.751
<b>Bride price</b>				
With bride price		1.000		
Without bride price	0.009	2.599	1.260	5.287
<b>Marriage ceremony</b>				
Civil and religious		1.000		
Only civil	0.002	2.507	1.414	4.500
<b>Initial family type</b>				
Extended family		1.000		
Nuclear family	0.000	1.897	1.315	2.649
<b>Consanguinity</b>				
Relative		1.000		
Not relative	0.008	1.938	1.194	3.155
Constant	0.000	0.030		

When the marriage decision variable, which categorizes marriages according to the authority making the decision at the time of marriage, is examined, the OR value for marriages performed without the consent of the spouses (forced marriage) is 3.17 and the p-value is 0.00. This indicates that forced marriages increase the probability of divorce approximately 3.17 times more than marriages with family consent. Although it is observed that marriages in which the couple makes their own decisions increase the likelihood of divorce (1.22%) compared to marriages with family decision and consent of the couple, this increase is not statistically significant.



The results show that the provision of bride price increases the risk of divorce by 2.6 times when marriages without bride price are taken as a reference and this result is statistically significant.

The type of marriage ceremony is found to be a significant factor in divorce risk. Individuals in marriages that only had a civil ceremony have higher odds of divorce (OR = 2.507) compared to those in marriages that had both civil and religious ceremonies.

The results show that nuclear family structure increases the probability of divorce by 1.90 times compared to extended family structure and this result is statistically significant.

Consanguinity, or being in a relationship with a blood relative, shows a significant association with divorce risk. The odds ratio for individuals in consanguineous relationships is 1.938, indicating a higher likelihood of divorce and this association is statistically significant.

The findings from Model 3 provide insights into the relationship between traditional practices and divorce risk. The results indicate that the decision-making process in marriage, the presence of bride price, the type of marriage ceremony, the initial family type, and consanguinity are significant predictors of divorce risk.

#### **4.3.2.3.1. Traditionality Index**

A traditionality index was created using the variables included in Model 3. Each variable is assigned a value of 1 if it exhibited traditional characteristics and 0 if it did not. The index was then generated by summing these values. Binary logistic regression was subsequently conducted using the created index as an independent variable, while considering the divorce status as the dependent variable. The results of this analysis are presented in the Table 4.22 in addition to the Model Summary presented in Table 4.21.

**Table 4.21.** Model Summary

Number of cases included	Missing Cases	Omnibus Tests		-2 Log likelihood		Nagelkerke R Square	Variables in Model
		Chi-square	P Value	Before model	After model		
5180	0	37.647	0.000	1487.902	1450.255	0.029	Traditionality Index

**Table 4.22.** Results of the Model

	Significance	OR	95% C.I. for OR	
			Lower	Upper
Traditionality Index	0.000	0.574	0.475	0.693
Constant	0.000	0.095		

The analysis included a total of 5180 cases, with no missing data. The Chi-square test yielded a significant result ( $p < 0.05$ ), indicating that the logistic regression model was a better fit than the null model. The Nagelkerke R Square value is 0.029, indicating that the Traditionality Index explains approximately 2.9% of the variance in the divorce probability.

The Traditionality Index variable has a significant effect on the dependent variable ( $p < 0.05$ ). The odds ratio for the Traditionality Index is 0.574, suggesting that for each unit increase in the Traditionality Index, the odds of divorce decrease by approximately 42.6%. Overall, the results indicate that the Traditionality Index has a significant effect on divorce risk, with higher levels of traditionality associated with lower odds divorce.

#### 4.3.2.4. Model 4: Matching Characteristics of Spouses

In this section, the results of the logistic regression analysis that explores the relationship between matching characteristics and divorce risk will be presented.

Table 4.23 shows the model summary. The analysis includes a total of 5014 cases, with 166 missing cases. The omnibus tests indicate that the model is statistically significant ( $p < 0.05$ ). The Nagelkerke R Square value suggests that the model explains approximately 5.4 percent of the variance in divorce risk. The variables included in the model are match on age, educational composition, ethnic composition, and residential composition.

**Table 4.23.** Model 4 Summary

Number of cases included	Missing Cases	Omnibus Tests		-2 Log likelihood			Variables in Model
		Chi-square	P Value	Before model	After model	Nagelkerke R Square	
5014	166	63.745	0.000	1338.532	1274.787	0.054	Match on Age, Educational Composition, Ethnic Composition, Residential Composition

The analysis does not find a significant association between age matching and divorce risk. Whether the man is older than the woman or the woman is older than the man does not show a statistically significant impact on divorce likelihood.

The educational composition of the couple shows mixed results. Couples with the same and high level of education have slightly higher odds of divorce (OR = 1.418) compared to couples with the same and low level of education, but this association is not statistically significant. However, when women are more educated than men, there is a significant increase in the odds of divorce (OR = 1.65), suggesting that educational disparities within the couple may influence divorce risk when the education level is high for women.

The ethnic composition of the couple also shows mixed results. Couples where both partners are of the same ethnicity (Turk-Turk) have significantly higher odds of divorce (OR = 4.030) compared to couples where both partners are of Kurdish ethnicity. Additionally, couples where one partner is Turkish and the other is Kurdish also show higher odds of divorce (OR = 3.604), although this association do not reach conventional levels of statistical significance. Other matches, which include couples with different ethnic backgrounds, do not show a significant association with divorce risk.

The residential composition of the couple is a significant predictor of divorce risk. Couples where both partners are from urban areas have significantly higher odds of divorce (OR = 3.116) compared to couples where both partners are from rural areas. Additionally, couples where one partner is from an urban area and the other is from a rural area also show higher odds of divorce (OR = 1,891), indicating that differences in residential backgrounds may influence divorce risk. This finding suggests that women who come from an urban background may have a higher risk of divorce.

The findings from this model provide insights into the relationship between matching characteristics of a marriage and divorce risk. The results indicate that while age matching does not significantly affect divorce risk, educational composition, ethnic composition, and residential composition play a role in marital stability.

**Table 4.24.** Results of Model 4

	Significance	OR	95% C.I. for OR	
			Lower	Upper
<b>Match on age</b>				
Men older than women	0.812	1.000		
Women older than man (+2)	0.544	1.297	0.560	3.000
Age homogamy (+-2)	0.906	0.980	0.694	1.382
<b>Educational composition</b>				
Same and low level of education	0.162	1.000		
Same and high level of education	0.177	1.418	0.855	2.352
Men are more educated	0.621	1.132	0.693	1.848
Women are more educated	0.035	1.653	1.036	2.639
<b>Ethnic composition</b>				
Kurd-Kurd	0.016	1.000		
Turk-Turk	0.004	4.030	1.543	10.525
Turk-Kurd	0.052	3.604	0.990	13.116
Other matches	0.432	1.739	0.438	6.905
<b>Residential composition</b>				
Rural-Rural	0.000			
Urban-Urban	0.000	3.116	1.805	5.382
Urban-Rural	0.044	1.891	1.018	3.514
Constant	0.000	0.019		

#### 4.3.2.5 The Final Model

In this subsection, the results of final logistic regression model, which is developed based on the findings from four separate logistic regression models are presented. These initial models are constructed using variable sets that were determined according to specific characteristics. Through careful analysis and evaluation, the variables that demonstrated a significant impact on the divorce risk are identified and subsequently incorporated them into the final model.

The summary of the final model is presented in Table 4.25. The analysis included a total of 5046 cases, with 134 cases being excluded due to missing data. The statistical significance of the model is assessed using the Omnibus Tests, which yielded a chi-square value of 310.921 with a p-value of 0.000, indicating a highly significant

relationship between the predictor variables and the outcome. The Nagelkerke R Square value suggests that approximately 25.9 percent of the variability in the divorce risk can be explained by the variables considered in the final model.

**Table 4.25.** Final Model Summary

Number of cases included	Missing Cases	Omnibus Tests		-2 Log likelihood		Nagelkerke R Square	Variables in Model
		Chi-square	P Value	Before model	After model		
5046	134	310.921	0.000	1335.969	1025.049	0.259	Educational composition, Working status of woman, Age at marriage, Marriage duration, Presence of children in last marriage, Marriage decision, Bride price, Marriage ceremony, Initial family type, Consanguinity, Ethnic composition, Residential composition

**Table 4.26.** Results of Final Model

	Significance	OR	95% C.I. for OR	
			Lower	Upper
<b>Educational composition</b>				
Same and low level of education	0.000	1.000		
Same and high level of education	0.035	0.507	0.269	0.953
Men are more educated	0.110	1.534	0.908	2.593
Women are more educated	0.106	1.546	0.912	2.620
<b>Working status of woman</b>				
Not working during last marriage		1.000		
Working during last marriage	0.000	16.626	11.137	24.820
<b>Age at marriage</b>				
10-19	0.004	2.275	1.305	3.968
20-24	0.043	1.638	1.016	2.641
25+	0.014	1.000		
<b>Marriage duration</b>				
0-5	0.011	2.220	1.202	4.103
6-15	0.000	2.586	1.611	4.152
16+	0.000	1.000		
<b>Presence of children in last marriage</b>				
With children in last marriage		1.000		
Without children in last marriage	0.063	1.678	0.972	2.894
<b>Marriage decision</b>				
Arranged marriage	0.005			
Forced marriage	0.000	4.518	1.961	10.413
Self decision	0.061	1.571	0.979	2.523
Other	0.946	0.895	0.036	22.281
<b>Bride price</b>				
With bride price				
Without bride price	0.122	1.928	0.840	4.427

**Table 4.26.** Results of Final Model (Continued)

<b>Marriage ceremony</b>				
Civil and religious				
Only civil	0.045	2.152	1.018	4.551
<b>Initial family type</b>				
Extended family				
Nuclear family	0.119	1.410	0.915	2.171
<b>Consanguinity</b>				
Relative				
Not relative	0.220	1.412	0.814	2.450
<b>Ethnic composition</b>				
Kurd-Kurd	0.103			
Turk-Turk	0.025	3.181	1.157	8.743
Turk-Kurd	0.109	3.071	0.780	12.087
Other matches	0.529	1.585	0.378	6.649
<b>Residential composition</b>				
Rural-Rural	0.000			
Urban-Urban	0.000	4.709	2.571	8.622
Urban-Rural	0.001	3.198	1.640	6.238
Constant	0.000	0.036		

The results of the final model are presented in Table 4.26. The results suggest that couples with the same and high level of education have lower odds of divorce compared to couples with the same and low level of education. There is no significant difference in the likelihood of divorce for marriages where men or women are more educated than their spouses.

Women who work during their last marriage have significantly higher odds of divorce compared to those who do not work (OR = 16.626,  $p < 0.05$ ).

Women who get married at younger ages (10-19 and 20-24) have higher odds of divorce compared to those who get married at age 25 or older. The length of marriage plays a role in influencing the likelihood of divorce. A longer duration of marriage is associated with a lower risk of divorce. Marriages of 0-5 years (OR = 2.220,  $p < 0.05$ ) and 6-15 years (OR = 2.586,  $p < 0.05$ ) both show significantly higher divorce likelihood compared to marriages lasting 16+ years. The absence of children in the last marriage is marginally significant ( $p = 0.063$ ) with increased odds of divorce (OR = 1.678).

Forced marriages are significantly associated with higher odds of divorce compared to marriages in which the families decide on the marriage with the consent of couples. Marriages based on self-decision also tend to show higher odds

of divorce compared to arranged marriages, although not statistically significant (OR = 1.571,  $p = 0.061$ ).

The absence of a bride price payment shows increased odds of divorce, though not statistically significant (OR = 1.928,  $p = 0.122$ ). Nuclear family form also shows higher odds of divorce (OR = 1.410), but the statistics are not significant ( $p = 0.119$ ). Marriages not among relatives affect the odd of divorce, however the effect is statistically insignificant (OR = 1.412,  $p = 0.220$ ).

Marriages conducted only through civil ceremonies are more likely to end in divorce (OR = 2.152,  $p = 0.045$ ) compared to those including both civil and religious ceremonies.

Turkish ethnic identity is more decisive on divorce risk than ethnic compatibility. Marriages between Turks show significantly higher odds of divorce (OR = 3.181,  $p = 0.025$ ) compared to Kurd-Kurd marriages.

Couples where both partners are from urban areas have significantly higher odds of divorce compared to couples where both partners are from rural areas (OR = 4.709,  $p < 0.05$ ). Additionally, couples where one partner is from an urban area and the other is from a rural area also have higher odds of divorce (OR = 3.198,  $p < 0.05$ ).

In all analyses conducted within this thesis, it is consistently found that woman's employment during marriage significantly increases the risk of divorce. Descriptive statistics indicated that as women's age at marriage increases, so do the divorce rates. However, multivariate logistic regression results demonstrates that a younger age at marriage is significantly associated with a higher risk of divorce. When other variables are controlled for, an increase in age at marriage significantly reduces the likelihood of divorce. The higher education level of women is also associated with higher odds of divorce, although this is not statistically significant. Additionally, homogamy at higher levels of education contributes to marital stability.

Marriage duration is significant across all models, with early years of marriage being more strongly associated with a higher likelihood of divorce. Consistent with descriptive analyses, the presence of children in the marriage is found to be protective against divorce in all models.

Forced marriages markedly increases the risk of divorce in all analyses. While the presence of bride price is not statistically significant in the final model, it is associated with lower odds of divorce in traditionality model. Descriptive analyses also indicates that marriages involving bride price have lower divorce rates, supporting the idea that traditional values are associated with marital stability.

Marriages with a religious ceremony are consistently associated with lower divorce rates. Extended family structures are linked to lower odds of divorce, although this effect is not statistically significant in the final model. Marriages between relatives also shows lower odds of divorce, but not found to be statistically significant in the final model.

The ethnic background of spouses was significantly related to divorce risk, with Kurdish individuals having lower odds of divorce. Growing up in a rural environment is significantly associated with lower odds of divorce, while urban-urban and urban-rural compositions are linked to higher divorce rates.



## CHAPTER 5

### CONCLUSION AND DISCUSSION

Divorce is a multi-dimensional phenomenon that can be analyzed from various theoretical perspectives. The assumption that marriage is based on the emotional bond between two individuals suggests that the dissolution of this union may be caused by emotional and psychological reasons. However, marriage is also recognized as one of the basic units of society. Therefore, it is affected by social structures, economic conditions, and cultural values. This thesis aims to investigate the reasons for the dissolution of marriages by analyzing the socio-demographic characteristics of the spouses, their commitment to traditional values, and their socio-demographic compatibility.

Social exchange theory suggests that the stability of a marriage depends on the extent to which it fulfils the utilitarian expectations of both spouses (Donovan & Jackson, 1990). Similarly, Beckerian economic analysis of marriage suggests that the marital union is evaluated according to the benefits it provides to the spouses (Becker, Landes and Michael, 1977). These theories shed light on the analyses conducted in this thesis.

The findings of this thesis are in line with Becker's proposition that variables that increase the socioeconomic status of women increase the risk of divorce and potentially reduce the benefits derived from marriage due to potential changes in the division of labor within the household. The Beckerian specialization model suggests that marital stability is optimized through traditional role specialization, thus women's labor force participation and economic independence may increase the risk of divorce (Becker, Landes and Michael, 1977). Moreover, according to the Independence theory, women may prefer divorce over the imbalance in the division of labor within the household by preferring alternatives in the labor market (Oppenheimer, 1997).

In Turkey, the legal requirement for a woman to obtain her husband's permission to work outside the home was abolished in 1990 (anayasa.gov.tr, 1990).

This significant legal change highlights the evolving recognition of women's rights and autonomy in the labor market. The stipulation that "the peace and welfare of the marital union must be observed" when a woman works outside the home underscores the potential dilemmas faced by working women, reflecting the broader social acknowledgment of the potential impacts of women's labor market participation on marital dynamics. This legal context illustrates the balancing act between supporting women's employment rights and addressing the traditional expectations within marriage, thereby acknowledging the nuanced ways in which women's workforce participation can influence the dynamics of marriage in Turkey. Women are forced to balance work and family life, and this may lead to tensions in marital relations. Especially in cases where the requirements of work and family responsibilities conflict, it may be difficult to maintain this balance.

The analyses conducted in this thesis show that the risk of divorce is higher among working women. This finding can be associated with the increase in women's economic independence and consequently the change in power dynamics within marriage. Working women may have more options and freedom in the face of unfavorable situations in marriage by gaining economic independence. This situation can lead to the reshaping of traditional roles within marriage and, in some cases, conflicts (Kalmijn, 2007; Harkönen, 2014; Eryavuz and Birecikli, 2018; Koç and Kutlar, 2021).

Women's participation in workforce can have various effects on marriage, but it is not accurate to establish a direct causal relationship between women's employment and the disruption of marital harmony or increase in divorce rates. The impact of women's employment on marriage is contingent upon several factors, including the communication between working wives and their spouses and the support provided by husbands in achieving a balance between work and home life (Yüksel-Kaptanoğlu, Eryurt & Koç, 2012).

Promoting gender equality and constructing the division of domestic labor based on principles of gender equality can contribute to increased marital satisfaction and potentially reduce the likelihood of marital dissolution (Ruggles, 1997). It is

crucial to recognize that defining women solely based on traditional roles and confining them to domestic responsibilities, while excluding them from social and professional engagement, can be considered a violation of women's rights rather than enhancing marital stability. The modern marriage, in its ideal form, is a partnership where both individuals share responsibilities and support each other's personal growth and aspirations. In light of this, it is crucial to re-evaluate traditionalism in the context of marriage. The idea that women's withdrawal from the labor force and confinement to domestic roles will enhance marital stability is not only outdated, but also damaging to the progress made in the field of women's rights. Instead, redefinition of marital roles that embraces gender equality can lead to more durable and fulfilling marital relationships.

Another significant factor determining women's socioeconomic status is their level of education. Higher education levels are often associated with higher divorce rates, potentially due to greater financial independence and shifts in traditional gender roles (Becker, Landes, & Michael, 1977). This association may reflect the increased individualism and financial independence fostered by higher education (Esser, 1993). However, the relationship between education level and divorce is not as significant as the relationship between women's employment status and divorce (Oppenheimer, 1997).

Low education levels may increase women's commitment to marriage by influencing their employment status. However, considering that highly educated women are more likely to know what they want and have more options to select suitable partners in the marriage market, their chances of entering into highly satisfying marriages may increase, potentially contributing positively to marital stability.

Research has shown that homogamy in education where both spouses have similar educational backgrounds is associated with greater marital stability, suggesting that shared values and goals can enhance marital harmony (Kalmijn, 1991). Thus, rather than focusing solely on women's higher levels of education, similarity in

educational background between spouses may increase the benefits derived from marriage and contribute to marital stability.

Establishing a direct relationship between women's high education levels and the risk of divorce is not straightforward. While research often associates an increase in women's education levels with divorce, this relationship may primarily stem from the correlation between low education levels and other factors affecting marital sustainability.

Multiple Correspondence Analysis reveals that, women with lower education levels are highly associated with adherence to traditional values. Furthermore, women's low educational attainment is more prevalent in rural areas. Women with lower levels of education may be more inclined to prioritize maintaining marital stability over pursuing divorce, even in situations of dissatisfaction or conflict within the marriage. This commitment to traditional values and social norms, coupled with limited exposure to alternative lifestyles and perspectives often prevalent in urban areas, may contribute to a lower likelihood of divorce among women with lower education levels.

In this thesis, particular attention is given to five variables related to the traditional nature of marriage: marriage decision, consanguinity, bride price, initial family type, and religious marriage. The traditionality index created based on these variables is used to measure the relationship between the risk of divorce and adherence to traditional values. The model shows that adherence to traditional values decreases the risk of divorce.

Traditionally, since it is a dominant practice for women to move into their husband's house after marriage, the practice of bride price is widely perceived as monetary compensation that the husband is obliged to pay to the bride's parents. In theory, this payment symbolizes the husband's recognition and appreciation of the bride's contributions in terms of her labor and reproductive abilities. In practice, it is frequently observed that bride price serves as a mechanism that restricts women's autonomy and agency over their bodies and labor as the commodification of a wife,

potentially leading to the mistreatment of women. This mindset leads to the exploitation of women on the grounds that they do not fulfill their domestic duties or want to end the marriage (Anderson, 2007; Sambe, Avanger & Agba, 2013). This traditional practice has no validity in Turkish law. Although the practice has decreased compared to the last century, it continues to be practiced especially in rural areas.

The absence of a bride price is associated with higher odds of divorce according to the results of the analysis conducted in this thesis. This finding suggests that the presence of bride price may have a mitigating effect on the risk of divorce. One possible reason for this may be that marriages in which bride price is practiced tend to be more traditional and conservative, and thus attach more importance to the protection of family unity. In such marriages, divorce may be less preferred due to the social value attached to the maintenance of the institution of marriage, regardless of the compatibility, peace, and prosperity in the marriage.

As bride price is seen as a material compensation for fulfilling the duties of a wife, traditional gender roles are often dominant in these marriages, with women assigned domestic responsibilities. Consequently, divorce rates may be lower in such marriages. However, it is important to note that the low prevalence of divorce does not necessarily indicate a positive association between marital stability and bride price. It should be remembered that women may remain in unhappy or harmful marriages due to social pressures or lack of alternatives.

In addition, there may be individuals who regard the bride price as an investment. For those who view their marriage as a financial investment, the tendency to maintain the relationship may be higher and they may see the dissolution of the marriage as a loss. In summary, while bride price may be associated with lower divorce rates in certain contexts, this may not necessarily reflect marital success or satisfaction. It is important to consider the effects of such practices on women's rights and autonomy, and to recognize that true marital stability may be better measured by mutual satisfaction and equitable partnership in marriage.

Religious marriages without a formal marriage contract pose significant challenges to the well-being and rights of women and children. One of the most worrying issues is the forced marriage of children at a young age. This practice not only violates children's rights to education, personal development and free choice of spouse, but also exposes them to physical, emotional and psychological abuse (Bunting, 2005; Yüksel-Kaptanoğlu & Ergöçmen, 2012). Furthermore, unregistered religious marriages undermine the principles of gender equality and women's empowerment by facilitating polygamous marriages. This often leads to unequal power dynamics within marriage and women may face neglect, abuse and limited autonomy. Such conditions inhibit women's individual rights and their ability to actively participate in society and make independent decisions (Joffe & Witte, 2016). Another major issue is that men can unilaterally divorce their wives without any legal process or oversight, leaving women vulnerable and without legal protection or remedy. This can lead to financial instability, loss of parental rights and social stigmatization (An-Na'im, 2002). The lack of legal documentation exacerbates these problems by leaving women and children without the legal recognition and rights that accompany a registered marriage.

In Turkey, religious marriage does not confer a legally binding right. According to the Turkish Civil Code No. 4271, marriage can only be established with an official marriage contract made in front of an authorized official (T.C. Cumhurbaşkanlığı Mevzuat Bilgi Sistemi, 2003). To protect the rights of minors and women in a society where polygamous and underage marriages are common, it is imperative that marriages be based on a formal contract. Along with the legal obligation of civil marriage, the majority of individuals in Turkey believe that religious marriage is necessary in addition to civil marriage. According to the TDHS 2018, 94.3 percent of marriages included both civil and religious ceremonies, whereas only 2.5 percent had only civil and 2.9 percent had only religious ceremonies. Data from the 2021 Family Structure Survey showed similar trends, with 90 percent of marriages taking place with a religious ceremony and 98.6 percent with a civil ceremony (TURKSTAT, 2022). While civil marriage is also religiously valid, the inclusion of a religious ceremony is recognized as an important tradition that reinforces the religious and cultural identity

of the couple. The prevalence of religious marriage ceremonies in Turkey emphasizes the cultural and social importance of these ceremonies.

Descriptive and multivariate analyses indicate that marriages performed solely through a civil ceremony have a higher risk of divorce compared to those that include a religious ceremony. The lower divorce rates in marriages that include a religious ceremony can be attributed to several factors. First, the inclusion of a religious ceremony may imply a higher level of commitment and dedication to the marriage, as it is seen as a sacred union by the couple and their religious community. This commitment can contribute to greater marital satisfaction and a willingness to resolve conflicts, thus reducing the likelihood of divorce (Ünal, 2017).

Furthermore, religious marriages often affirm traditional gender roles and expectations, which may create a sense of stability and predictability, as each spouse has defined responsibilities and obligations (Becker, 1991). However, it is crucial to critically examine the power dynamics in these marriages and their impact on gender equality. Adherence to traditional gender roles can limit women's agency and decision-making power, leading to unequal power dynamics within the relationship. Social and cultural norms may discourage or stigmatize divorce, especially for women, creating barriers for those seeking to leave unsatisfactory or abusive marriages (Levinger, 1965; Kalmijn, 2007). Therefore, although religious marriages show lower divorce rates, it is crucial to critically examine the power dynamics underlying these marriages and their potential impact on gender equality.

Industrialization and urbanization in parallel with rapid social changes have led to significant transformations in the family structure and family sizes have shrunk. The extended family is defined as a form of family in which more than one generation lives together, in which there is a strong adherence to traditions and customs, and in which kinship is important. The nuclear family consists of a husband and wife and unmarried children (Unal, 2013). The traditional 'extended family' type has been replaced by the 'nuclear family' type consisting of parents and children (Aksu and Can, 2019). The interdependent and patriarchal family structures of the traditional family type have been replaced by smaller families where everyone has a say in decision-making processes.

Alongside the transformation of family structures, there has been a significant reduction in the prevalence of consanguineous marriages. These emerging family forms, which deviate from the traditional family structure, exhibit higher rates of divorce. Within the patriarchal extended family, which functioned as a productive economic entity, divorce was not merely a matter of personal satisfaction but also impacted the operational dynamics and productivity of the family unit. In contrast, for the urban nuclear family that has emerged, production assumes a different connotation. Consequently, the dissolution of marriage may be perceived as a phenomenon concerning only the individuals involved, potentially facilitating an easier path to divorce. On the other hand, couples who can find motivation and support to sustain their marriage with the aid of other family members in an extended family setting may find themselves more prone to divorce in the absence of such support within the nuclear family structure.

The statistical data from TURKSTAT reveal a noteworthy trend: a substantial proportion of divorces take place within the initial ten years of marriage, with the first five years emerging as particularly critical. This pattern suggests that family structure tends to consolidate as marital ties age, possibly as a result of increased mutual understanding and acceptance shared between spouses. This phenomenon is supported by scientific literature, which reveals an inverse correlation between the duration of marriage and the likelihood of divorce, indicating that the maturation of the marital relationship strengthens its stability (Becker et al., 1977; Martin & Bumpass, 1989; Kraft & Neiman, 2009). Prolonged marriage not only increases the investment in the relationship, but also increases the costs associated with the dissolution of the marriage. Becker and colleagues (1977) argue that marital capital, which consists of shared experiences and intimate information about one's spouse, acts as a buffer that strengthens marital stability as time progresses. Within this framework, children are perceived as marriage specific capital which creates a greater determination in parents to maintain marital ties. The desire of the spouses to provide a stable family environment for the children and their responsibilities towards the children can be considered as deterrent factors for the spouses. The complex dynamics of parenthood and responsibilities related to child rearing are implicated as contributory factors to marital stability.



When examining the impact of the number of children within the same framework, it becomes evident that an increase in the number of children leads to a higher investment in the marital relationship and subsequently increases the costs associated with divorce. Additionally, a higher number of children is often associated with a traditional family structure and may contribute to the preservation of the family institution alongside other traditional values. Traditional values and norms often emphasize the importance of maintaining a cohesive family structure for the well-being and upbringing of children. This societal pressure, combined with the desire to provide a stable and nurturing environment for children, can act as a protective factor for the institution of marriage.

The care of children is also subject to the division of labor within the household. The presence of children can act as a deterrent to divorce, as shared responsibility for child-rearing is often preferred over shouldering the burden alone. The joint care of children by both spouses fosters a sense of unity and shared purpose that can strengthen the marital bond and make the prospect of divorce less appealing.

The findings of this thesis also show the impact of marital compatibility in the context of marital stability. The educational composition and childhood residence, in particular, demonstrate robust associations with the likelihood of divorce. Couples with educational mismatches, especially where the woman is more educated than the man, face higher risk of divorce. This suggests that educational incompatibility between couples may lead to difficulties or imbalances that lead to marital instability.

In terms of ethnic composition, the analyses yield an interesting result: couples with homogeneous ethnic backgrounds (Turk-Turk) are shown to have higher propensity to divorce. This finding challenges the notion that shared ethnicity is a protective factor against marital dissolution. Nonetheless, it is crucial to consider the complex dynamics and cultural factors unique to different ethnic groups. The more traditional lifestyle and cultural practices of Kurdish individuals may exert an influence on marital dynamics, potentially contributing to a lower divorce likelihood. However, without a more detailed analysis and additional data, definitive conclusions regarding the specific impact of Kurdish ethnicity on the risk of divorce remain elusive.

The presented evidence supports the notion that increased socioeconomic status among women, particularly through higher labor force participation and educational attainment, is associated with a higher risk of divorce. This correlation can be linked to shifts in traditional gender roles and power dynamics within households, as well as an increase in women's pursuit of personal satisfaction and independence. Conversely, the continuation of traditional practices such as bride price and religious marriage ceremonies is associated with lower divorce rates. The transition from extended family structures to nuclear families and a decrease in consanguineous marriages indicate a shift towards more individualistic family forms that may be more prone to divorce. Urbanization and the evolving family structure also necessitate an approach to interpreting traditional values and their role in marital stability.

The modernization process significantly influences marital stability and divorce rates. Societies undergoing modernization experience broader economic inclusion, reduced early pregnancy rates, and evolving normative frameworks. These changes facilitate marital gains without rigid gender-based labor divisions. As traditional norms are questioned, a new normative order emerges where gender equality becomes integral (Esser, 1993). This shift liberates couples from rigid domestic expectations, fostering economic contribution and equitable sharing of household responsibilities.

While traditional family structures evolve, societies are transitioning towards more egalitarian norms. According to the second demographic transition, divorce rates often initially rise due to normative conflicts as new expectations emerge (Lesthaeghe, 2014). However, as gender equality becomes more widely accepted and integrated into social norms, divorce rates begin to decline, signaling a new balance in stable and egalitarian relationships. This stability suggests that as societies successfully integrate egalitarian values after the transition phase, marriages become more resilient and satisfying. Acceptance of gender equality contributes to marital stability by fostering partnerships where both individuals have greater autonomy, mutual respect, and shared responsibilities (Esping-Andersen and Billari, 2015).

Despite a global stagnation in divorce rates, Turkey witnesses a persistent increase. The reasons underlying this trend are manifold. One plausible explanation may be the

differential stage of demographic transition that Turkey is experiencing compared to Western nations. In the West, cohabitation is increasingly viewed and adopted as an alternative to marriage, which may result in separations that do not culminate in formal divorces, thereby not contributing to official divorce statistics (Cherlin, 2004). On the other hand, the evolving recognition of women's rights and the norms of gender equality are shaping family structures that are more conducive to the enhanced status of women in the changing world (Bianchi, 2014). The restructuring of domestic roles in light of gender considerations or the adaptation of spouses to modernized values may be reflecting in marital expectations, potentially elevating marital satisfaction and consequently manifesting as a decline in divorce rates.

Asserting that traditional values protect the family structure in Turkey is a challenging proposition. While marriages practicing traditional customs appear to exhibit lower divorce rates, the analyses conducted in this thesis are insufficient to associate this with higher marital satisfaction and stability. As suggested by social exchange theory, traditional values may act as barriers that compel individuals to persist in unsatisfactory marriages. The link is multifaceted and complex in nature and the evidence suggests that the decline of traditionalism should not be perceived by society as detrimental for marriage institution. On the contrary, it reflects a transformative social environment in which individual agency and the pursuit of personal fulfilment are increasingly prioritized. The evolution of traditional values, aligning with a changing and modernizing societal structure and promoting the rise in women's social status, as well as reevaluating them in light of gender equality, could presumably lead to increased marital satisfaction. Consequently, it is anticipated that divorce rates may decline during this transitional phase.

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