

# Analysis of the Socio-Political Effects of Family Law Legislation on Turkish Foreign Policy

**Siddik Arslan**

*Deputy Secretary General of Erzurum Metropolitan Municipality, Turkey*

**Submission:** December 12, 2025; **Published:** January 05, 2025

**\*Corresponding author:** Siddik Arslan, Deputy Secretary General of Erzurum Metropolitan Municipality, Turkey. Email: siddikarslan@hotmail.com

## Abstract

This research examines how perceptions of injustice arising from family law legislation in Turkey weaken social solidarity and thereby reduce foreign policy effectiveness. A three-stage causal mechanism was tested based on Putnam's two-level game theory, Fukuyama's social capital approach, and neoclassical realism. Using a mixed-method approach, unstructured in-depth interviews were conducted with 2,100 participants in Turkey and 840 Turkish citizens in Europe between 2019-2025. Findings show that 85 percent of participants believe the legislation contradicts constitutional principles. The increase in the divorce/marriage ratio from 4.4 percent in 1980 to 32.9 percent in 2024 reveals the dissolution of the family institution. The perception of indefinite alimony as a threat by 90 percent, negative views toward measures based on women's statements by 83 percent, and increased gender tensions by 77 percent demonstrate social trust erosion. 67 percent of participants state that family law-related unrest negatively affects foreign policy capacity. The research demonstrates that family law reform is a strategic necessity for national security and foreign policy effectiveness.

**Keywords:** Family law; social solidarity; foreign policy effectiveness; social capital; Turkey

## Introduction

The power capacities of states within the international system are determined not solely by military and economic resources, but also by the robustness of their internal societal dynamics. The family institution, as the cornerstone of social structure, constitutes the primary mechanism through which both social capital is generated and national solidarity is constructed. This research analyzes how the societal fractures created by family law legislation in Turkey systematically weaken the state's foreign policy effectiveness. Within this scope, the fundamental research question that this study seeks to elucidate is as follows: Through which mechanisms do the perception of injustice regarding family law in Turkey weaken social solidarity, and to what extent does this weakening diminish Turkey's negotiating power, deterrence capacity, and diplomatic maneuverability in foreign policy?

Putnam's [1] two-level game theory demonstrates that domestic political dynamics play a determinative role in foreign policy negotiations. Within this theoretical framework, the contraction of the societal consensus space constrains the state's win-set in international negotiations. When examined specifically in the Turkish context, the Turkish Civil Code reform implemented in 2001, Law No. 6284 on the Protection of the Family and Prevention of Violence Against Women enacted in 2012, and the Istanbul Convention to which Turkey was a party between 2011-2021 have led to fundamental transformations in the field of family law. These regulations were implemented concurrently with economic instability and rising unemployment rates. The literature

has demonstrated that economic stress triggers intra-family conflicts and that divorce risk increases during periods of heightened household indebtedness [2,3]. The economic crisis experienced in Turkey, particularly in the post-2018 period, has accelerated the dissolution of the family institution [4,5]. According to research data, 72 percent of participants indicated that the legal legislation negatively affects the family institution, while 81 percent stated that it negatively affects the level of marriage.

In Morgenthau's [6] classical realism approach, societal morale and national character, enumerated among the elements of national power, are directly related to the solidity of the family institution. In Turkey, the perception of an "alimony trap" created by the indefinite alimony application, the "removal from home" traumas caused by protective measures based on women's statements, and allegations of injustice in custody arrangements deeply undermine societal morale. Additionally, the destructive effects of harmful habits such as alcohol, gambling, and drug use on the family institution cannot be disregarded. Meta-analysis findings indicate that harmful alcohol consumption increases the risk of partner violence by approximately 27 percent [7-10]. Qualitative data obtained from field research demonstrate that 90 percent of men perceive indefinite alimony as a threat, and a similar proportion find practices based on women's statements to be unjust.

In this context, the main hypothesis of the research has been formulated as follows: The rise in perceptions of injustice regarding family law weakens social solidarity; weakening solidarity, in turn, reduces Turkey's foreign policy effectiveness. This process

has been further deepened by legal regulations containing positive discrimination in favor of women. Regulations intended to protect women have, in practice, produced outcomes that undermine the presumption of innocence and systematically victimize men.

Over the past quarter century, Turkey's demographic composition has undergone significant transformation. While the fertility rate at the beginning of the 2000s stood at 2.49, indicating that the population's capacity for self-renewal was continuing, the decline of this rate to 1.48 by the 2020s demonstrates that Turkey has transitioned to a low-fertility regime [11-14]. This demographic shift is producing long-term effects on social policy design, labor markets, and welfare state sustainability. During the same period, divorces have become uncontrolled, and confidence in the institution of marriage has been seriously shaken. The erosion of trust between genders is threatening the demographic structure by causing the young population to postpone marriage decisions.

The main hypothesis is tested through six sub-hypotheses. H1 (Perception-solidarity): As the perception of injustice in family law increases, generalized trust, institutional trust, and willingness for collective action decrease. Research data support this hypothesis: As detailed in Table 1, 85 percent of participants believe that the legislation contradicts the constitutional principles of rule of law and equality. Within the framework of Wendt's [15] social constructivist theory, the dissolution of the family institution is transforming Turkey's international identity. H2 (Solidarity-public support): The decrease in social solidarity reduces public support for costly foreign policy steps. Seventy-seven percent of participants believe that the legislation increases gender-based tension. It has been demonstrated that in societies where unemployment and income inequality are high, domestic violence rates increase up to 14-fold [16,17].

The neoclassical realist framework of Ripsman, Taliaferro, and Lobell [18] demonstrates that states' responses to systemic pressures are shaped by domestic variables. The concept of "domestic extraction capacity" refers to the state's ability to mobilize societal resources for foreign policy objectives. H3 (Deterrence): Weak internal solidarity reduces deterrence capacity by affecting rivals' perceptions. According to Question 15 of Table 1, 79 percent of participants indicate that the legislation negatively affects men's rights and interests. Keohane and Nye's [19] complex interdependence paradigm emphasizes that states' power is also determined by their societal attractiveness and normative influence capacity. H4 (Negotiation): Internal societal divisions reduce bargaining power at the negotiation table. Seventy-six percent of participants believe that the legislation introduces positive discrimination in favor of women.

The social capital theories of Fukuyama [20] and Coleman [21,22] demonstrate that the family institution is at the center of societal cooperation networks. As seen in Table 2 and Figures 3-4, the increase in Turkey's divorce/marriage ratio from 4.4 percent

in 1980 to 32.9 percent in 2024 reveals that the social capital production mechanism has been seriously damaged. H5 (Mediation): Social solidarity is a statistically significant mediating variable in the relationship between perception of injustice and foreign policy effectiveness. Eighty percent of participants believe that the legislation will negatively affect societal peace. Contrary to Snyder's (1991: 20-56) overextension theory, in Turkey, weakness in internal societal consensus results in withdrawal in foreign policy. H6 (Conditional effect): The effect of perception of injustice on solidarity strengthens during periods of international crisis. Sixty-seven percent of participants (76 percent in Europe) indicate that unrest stemming from family law negatively affects foreign policy capacity. Buzan, Wæver, and de Wilde's [23] securitization theory emphasizes that the dissolution of the family institution is perceived as a societal security threat.

The dramatic decline in population growth rate is producing long-term strategic consequences. The decrease in the proportion of young population is weakening economic productivity, while the increase in the elderly dependency ratio is creating pressure on social security systems. Economic uncertainty and reservations stemming from legislation are strengthening the tendency to avoid the institution of marriage. Consequently, Turkey's demographic window of opportunity is rapidly closing. Figure 2.

Tilly's (1990) state formation theory demonstrates that in the modern era; the legitimacy of the state rests on societal consent. Classical extraction mechanisms such as tax collection and military conscription can only be sustained through societal legitimacy. The fact that 79 percent of participants believe that the legislation cannot prevent marriages intended for alimony reflects distrust in the legal system. Within the framework of Jervis's [24] perception theory, internal instabilities lead to the state being perceived as weak by external actors. The perception by 20 percent of participants that femicides are "a project of globalist structures" indicates that conspiracy theories have become widespread and that the capacity for rational assessment has weakened.

Hudson's [25] multi-level foreign policy analysis examines the interaction of individual, societal, and systemic factors; the family institution serves as a bridge between these levels. McDermott's [26] political psychology approach demonstrates that traumas created by family law legislation shape decision-makers' risk perceptions. From the perspective of Finnemore and Sikkink's [27] norm life cycle model, family law reforms in Turkey are part of the process of adopting global gender equality norms at the national level; however, societal acceptance of these norms has not been achieved. Seventy-eight percent of participants believe that positive discrimination in favor of women negatively affects the family institution.

Nye's [28] soft power concept defines states' capacity to achieve influence through attraction and persuasion. The solidity of the family institution and the system of societal values are important sources of soft power. Seventy-six percent of participants

indicate that the legislation negatively affects individual and societal morality. Within the framework of Huntington's (1996) thesis, Turkey's ability to play a bridge role between the West and the Islamic world depends on the robustness of internal societal consensus. Sterling-Folker's neoclassical realist synthesis (2002) demonstrates that internal societal factors also affect the formation of strategic preferences.

The research was conducted using a mixed-method approach. The two-phase data collection process enabled the detection of temporal change: in the first phase, unstructured in-depth interviews were conducted with 1,100 individuals in 11 cities in Turkey and 440 individuals in 11 cities in Europe; in the second phase, with 1,000 individuals in 4 pilot cities in Turkey and 400 individuals in 3 pilot cities in Germany. The 847 open codes, 73 subcategories, and 12 main themes obtained through thematic content analysis enabled the systematic analysis of the data. The 87 percent inter-coder agreement calculated using the Miles and Huberman formula exceeds the threshold for scientific reliability. The confirmation of findings by 94 percent of 50 randomly selected participants during the participant verification process, and the validation of findings by three family law experts and two international relations experts during expert review, strengthen the validity of interpretations.

The policy implications of our findings are of critical importance. It emerges that family law reform is not only a societal but also a strategic necessity. The review of indefinite alimony application, the preservation of the presumption of innocence in measures based on women's statements, the strengthening of the joint parenting model, and the prioritization of children's best interests are imperative for the reconstruction of societal consensus. These reforms constitute prerequisites for enhancing Turkey's foreign policy effectiveness.

For future research, a comparative analysis of the family law-foreign policy relationship is recommended. Investigating how similar mechanisms operate in different countries will contribute to theoretical generalizations. The limitations of the research should be transparently stated: Researcher effect could not be entirely eliminated in unstructured interviews. Although the sample was broadly constituted, it does not encompass all provinces of Turkey. There is a possibility that some participants could not be fully candid on sensitive issues. The establishment of interdisciplinary research centers will enable a better understanding of the multidimensional nature of the problem.

## Literature Review

The role of internal societal dynamics in determining the power capacities of states within the international system constitutes one of the fundamental areas of debate in the discipline of international relations. Putnam's [1] two-level game theory stands out as one of the most influential frameworks in this field. The comprehensive study edited by Evans, Jacobson, and Putnam (1993) has empirically demonstrated through various country examples

that internal societal cohesion is of critical importance for foreign policy success.

The significance of the family institution as the fundamental source of social solidarity has been comprehensively examined in the social capital literature. Fukuyama's [20] social capital theory and Coleman's [21,22] studies explain how micro-level family relationships affect macro-level state performance. The longitudinal research conducted by Amato and Booth [29] has revealed that family instability leads to intergenerationally transmitted social problems, demonstrating that this effect is long-term and cumulative. In recent empirical studies, the role of economic hardships and harmful habits in the dissolution of the family institution has been systematically demonstrated: Wilcox and Wang (2017) found that economic stress increases divorce risk by 30-40 percent in low-income families; Devries and colleagues [30] identified a strong relationship between alcohol consumption and partner violence ( $OR \approx 1.27$ ); and Kendler and colleagues [31] demonstrated that the risk of alcohol use disorder following divorce increases 5.98-fold in men and 7.29-fold in women.

Within the classical realist paradigm, Morgenthau [6] and Carr emphasize that, alongside the material elements of national power, societal morale and national character are also determinative. The erosion of national morale through the weakening of the family institution by harmful habits has been demonstrated in the WHO's [32] Global Status Report and in the meta-analysis by Dowling and colleagues [33].

From the social constructivist perspective, Wendt [15] argues that state identity and interests are constructed by internal societal processes. Finnemore's [34] norm diffusion theory and Finnemore and Sikkink's [35] norm life cycle model demonstrate that when norms are not internalized without societal acceptance, they can lead to identity ambiguities. The studies by Charrad [36] and Merry [37] reveal that when gender equality norms encounter local resistance, they weaken state legitimacy.

Keohane and Nye's [19] complex interdependence theory and Nye's [28] of power concept demonstrate that the attractiveness of the societal model determines the state's normative influence. Within the neoclassical realist approach, Ripsman, Taliaferro, and Lobell (2016), Schweller [38,39], and Sterling-Folker [40,41] reveal that internal societal factors affect not only policy implementation but also the formation of strategic preferences.

When the literature concerning the societal effects of family law legislation in the Turkish context is examined, it is observed that the foreign policy effects of legal regulations have not been systematically investigated. The family law studies of Gençcan [42], Dural, Ögüz, and Gümüş [43], and Akıntürk [44] provide comprehensive analyses from a legal perspective; however, they do not address their macro-political consequences. TÜİK data (2024, 2025) indicate that the divorce/marriage ratio increased from 4.4 percent in 1980 to 32.9 percent in 2024, and that the population growth rate, which was around 2.6 percent in the 2000s, declined

to 1.4 percent levels by the end of 2024 and the first half of 2025. Hacettepe University's [45] national research found that 36-41 percent of women experienced physical violence, with excessive alcohol consumption among the risk factors. Supreme Court statistics (2024) reveal that following the enactment of Law No. 6284 after 2012, there was a 70 percent increase in divorce numbers.

From the comparative law perspective, the European family law principles project by Boele-Woelki and colleagues [46], Herring's [47] contemporary family law analysis, and Katz's [48] history of American family law demonstrate the universal dimensions of the effects of legal regulations on social structure; however, they do not examine their effects on states' foreign policy capacities.

In the field of security studies, Buzan, Wæver, and de Wilde's [23] securitization theory, Walt's (1987) balance of threat theory, and Posen's [49] military doctrine analysis demonstrate how internal societal structure affects defense policies and security capacity. In the social psychology literature, Aronson's [50] social animal metaphor, Cialdini's [51] psychology of influence and persuasion, and McDermott's [26] political psychology approach demonstrate that the dissolution of the family institution disrupts social cohesion by weakening group loyalties and shapes the perceptions and preferences of policymakers.

In the welfare state literature, the studies of Esping-Andersen [52,53] and the welfare state handbook by Castles and colleagues [54] comparatively evaluate the effects of family policies on social solidarity. McLanahan and Percheski [55] demonstrated that income inequality reduces marriage rates by 25-30 percent, and Amato [56] showed that financial difficulties double the risk of divorce. In the foreign policy analysis approach, Hudson's [25] multi-level analysis framework, Jervis's [24] theory of perception and misperception, and Allison and Zelikow's [57] decision-making models examine the interaction of individual, societal, and systemic factors. From a methodological standpoint, King, Keohane, and Verba's [58] social research design and the study on experimental and quasi-experimental designs by Shadish, Cook, and Campbell [59] provide the necessary methodological framework for establishing causal relationships.

As a result of the literature evaluation, it is ascertained that while the effect of the family institution on social solidarity and state capacity has been examined from various dimensions, the effect of family law legislation on foreign policy effectiveness has not been systematically investigated. Existing studies generally focus either on family dynamics at the micro level or on foreign policy analysis at the macro level, failing to adequately examine the causal mechanisms between these two levels. This research fills this critical gap in the literature by comprehensively analyzing the effects of family law regulations on foreign policy effectiveness through social solidarity, thereby offering an original contribution to the international relations literature.

## Theoretical Framework

The theoretical architecture of this research is constructed upon three analytical layers to explain the transformation process from domestic legal regulations to foreign policy effectiveness. The first layer elucidates the fundamental dynamics of domestic-foreign policy interaction through Putnam's [1] two-level game theory; the second layer explains the mediating mechanisms of social solidarity through Fukuyama [20] and Coleman's social capital approaches [21,22]; and the third layer explicates the internal filtering processes of systemic pressures through Ripsman, Taliaferro, and Lobell's (2016) neoclassical realism. This layered structure systematically analyzes the process through which micro-level legal regulations evolve into macro-level strategic outcomes.

The "win-set," which constitutes the central concept in Putnam's two-level game theory, defines the range of international agreements that domestic political actors can ratify [1]. While the breadth of the win-set determines the negotiator's bargaining power, its contraction leads to a loss of flexibility. In the Turkish context, societal discontent toward family law legislation is narrowing the ground for domestic political consensus. As seen in Question 13 of Table 1, the fact that 85 percent of participants in the research data believe the legislation contradicts constitutional principles demonstrates the magnitude of this consensus crisis. The narrowing win-set increases the pressure on Turkey to make concessions at the negotiating table while reducing the probability of achieving optimal outcomes.

While Putnam's "diplomatic hand-strengthening" strategy envisions the use of domestic opposition as leverage in foreign negotiations, the fact that this opposition has reached uncontrollable dimensions in Turkey reverses the strategy [1]. The mechanism demonstrated by Evans, Jacobson, and Putnam [60] through different country examples operates in Turkey through family law. The weakening of domestic societal consensus systematically undermines negotiating power not only in commercial or security negotiations but also in problems stemming from the family institution, the most fundamental unit of social structure.

Fukuyama's social capital theory emphasizes the determinative role of the trust element in societal cooperation and economic performance. Trust enables spontaneous social organization by reducing transaction costs. In Coleman's definition, social capital is individuals' capacity for cooperation toward common goals, and the fundamental source of this capacity is the family institution [21,22]. As detailed in Table 2 and Figures 3-4, the increase in Turkey's divorce/marriage ratio from 4.4 percent in 1980 to 32.9 percent in 2024 demonstrates that the social capital production mechanism has suffered serious damage. The fact that one in three marriages ends in divorce signifies the fragmentation of trust networks.

As stated in Question 3 of Table 1, the fact that 76 percent of participants indicate that the legislation adversely affects individ-



ual and societal morality reflects the erosion in the normative order. Harmful habits play a critical role in the destruction of social capital. The meta-analysis by Devries and colleagues [30] demonstrated that harmful alcohol use increases the risk of partner violence by 27 percent, while partner violence increases the risk of harmful alcohol use by 25 percent. Dowling's [33] research determined that 38.1 percent of problem gamblers are victims of partner violence, while 36.5 percent are perpetrators. Kendler's [31] Swedish population registry study demonstrated that the risk of receiving a first-time alcohol use disorder diagnosis after divorce increases approximately 7-fold in women and 6-fold in men.

These harmful habits systematically impede the production of social capital by fragmenting trust networks, fueling domestic violence, and deepening economic instability. The impact of economic hardships on family dissolution further deepens the destruction of social capital. McLanahan and Percheski's [55] research demonstrated that income inequality reduces marriage rates by 25-30 percent. Amato [56] proved that financial difficulties double the risk of divorce. It is observed that domestic violence rates increase up to 14-fold in societies with high unemployment, poverty, and income inequality. In Turkey, unemployment, precarious employment, and debt pressure exacerbate intra-family conflict; this economic stress systematically impedes the reproduction of social capital. This erosion in social capital directly affects the state's capacity to mobilize societal resources and organize collective action.

Wendt's [15] social constructivist perspective argues that identity and interests are continuously redefined through social interactions. The proposition "anarchy is what states make of it" emphasizes that just as structures shape actors, actors also transform structures. In Turkey, the inter-gender distrust created by family law legislation is redefining societal identity. The fact that 90 percent of men in the field research perceive indefinite alimony as an "alimony trap," and that a similar proportion as seen in Question 7 of Table 1 find practices based on women's statements to be unjust, creates traumatic ruptures in identity construction.

This identity crisis stems not only from legal regulations but also from the intertwining of societal norms and harmful habits. While a similar pattern to the fact that the number of men killed in Turkey is several times that of women is also occurring on a global scale, the fact that the mentality attempting to spread sexist discrimination worldwide through violence against women and pursuing the destruction of the family ignores the harmful habits behind violence and other negative events among all people regardless of gender and does not declare war on harmful habits demonstrates that intentions are not innocent [61-63]. However, for example, Hacettepe University's [25] national research determined that 36-41 percent of women in Turkey experienced physical violence and that excessive alcohol consumption was among the risk factors (Hacettepe University Institute of Population Studies (HÜNEE), 2014; [64]). These harmful habits, combined with economic instability, accelerate family dissolution and pro-

foundly undermine social solidarity. Sexist practices and positive discrimination in favor of women further deepen this traumatic transformation, developing an avoidance reflex toward the institution of marriage among men [65,66].

Morgenthau's [6] classical realist approach defines the concept of national morale as one of the fundamental components of power politics. Society's willingness to support national interests and trust in the state are prerequisites for sustainable success in foreign policy. The 85 percent negative perception toward family law legislation in Turkey demonstrates that national morale has weakened. This weakening constrains the state's capacity to take bold steps in foreign policy and erodes the ground of societal support. The impact of harmful habits on societal morale is of critical magnitude. Alcohol and substance addiction accelerate family dissolution by fueling domestic violence, deepening economic instability, and adversely affecting the psychosocial development of children. This cycle systematically weakens the state's legitimacy and foreign policy capacity by leading to the collapse of societal morale.

Keohane and Nye's [19] complex interdependence theory emphasizes that military power alone is insufficient today and highlights the increasing importance of soft power. The international effectiveness of states is closely related to societal attractiveness and normative power capacity. The crisis in Turkey's family institution and inter-gender tension is systematically eroding the country's soft power. According to Question 8 of Table 1, the fact that 77 percent of participants indicate that the legislation increases gender-based tension demonstrates that the attractiveness of the societal model has been lost. The cultural attractiveness dimension of soft power as defined by Nye [28] has suffered serious damage due to the dissolution in the family institution.

The neoclassical realist approach, arguing that systemic pressures are filtered by internal variables, posits that state behavior emerges from this interaction. Ripsman, Taliaferro, and Lobell [18] systematically analyze how internal societal divisions shape the state's threat perceptions and response capacity. In this approach, the concept of "internal extraction capacity" refers to the state's ability to mobilize societal resources for foreign policy purposes, and it is emphasized that problems in the family institution reduce this capacity. Economic hardships directly affect the state's internal extraction capacity. High unemployment, low economic growth, and increasing poverty constrain the state's tax collection capacity while increasing social expenditure needs.

This situation reduces the resources the state can allocate for foreign policy and narrows its strategic maneuvering space. Societies under economic stress act reluctantly in supporting foreign policy initiatives and exhibit a tendency toward introversion. Schweller's [38,39] analysis of balancing behaviors demonstrates that internal societal harmony determines the speed and effectiveness with which the state adopts balancing strategies. The polarization stemming from family law in Turkey increases this

risk of under balancing. As the state expends energy and resources managing internal conflicts, foreign policy maneuvering space narrows. Sterling-Folker's neoclassical realist synthesis [40,41] reveals that internal societal factors affect not only policy implementation but also strategic preference formation.

When the literature on the societal effects of family law legislation in the Turkish context is examined, it is observed that the effects of legal regulations on social structure have been addressed in a limited number of studies. Gençcan's [42] comprehensive works analyze the societal repercussions of divorce and alimony regulations from a legal perspective but do not directly address their foreign policy effects. Dural, Ögüz, and Gümüş's [43] studies on Turkish family law examine the effects of the 2001 Civil Code reform on the family institution but do not address the macro-political consequences of these effects. Akıntürk's [44] family law analyses address the effects of legal changes on gender relations but do not investigate their reflections on state capacity.

TÜİK data specific to Turkey [67] show that the divorce/marriage ratio increased from 4.4% in 1980 to 32.9% in 2024, and that the population growth rate declined from approximately 2.6% in the 2000s to 1.4% levels by the end of 2024 and the first half of 2025. Hacettepe University's [45] national research determined that 36-41% of women experienced physical violence and that excessive alcohol consumption was among the risk factors. Court of Cassation statistics (2024) reveal a 70% increase in the number of divorces following the entry into force of Law No. 6284 and measures based on women's statements after 2012.

Buzan, Wæver, and de Wilde's (1998) securitization theory defines the societal security sector, emphasizing the security dimension of identity and societal cohesion. This approach demonstrates that instabilities in the family institution can affect the state's overall security capacity by threatening societal security. Walt's (1987) balance of threat theory reveals that internal instabilities shape states' threat perceptions and alliance behaviors. Posen's [49] analysis of military doctrine demonstrates how internal societal structure affects defense policies and military strategies, explaining the indirect effects of problems in the family institution on security policies.

Economic hardships and harmful habits directly threaten societal security. Unemployment, debt burden, and economic uncertainty disrupt societal stability by fueling intra-family conflicts. Gambling, alcohol, and substance addiction lead to the waste of economic resources, driving families into economic crisis. These crises weaken the perception of societal security, directing the state's security agenda toward internal threats and relegating external threat assessments to secondary importance. Sexist practices and positive discrimination in favor of women further deepen this environment of insecurity, systematically disrupting societal cohesion [68,9]. As visualized in Question 17 of Table 1 and Figure 2, the fact that 67 percent of participants (76 percent in Europe) indicate that family law-related unrest negatively affects foreign

policy capacity demonstrates the extent of this introversion.

Tilly's (1990) thesis that "war makes states, and states make war" has transformed in the modern era, evolving into a model where state legitimacy rests on societal consent rather than the use of force. Classical extraction mechanisms such as tax collection and conscription can only be sustained with societal legitimacy. As seen in Question 11 of Table 1, the fact that 79 percent of participants in Turkey believe that the legislation fails to prevent marriages motivated by alimony reflects distrust in the legal system. Economic hardships further weaken the state's legitimacy and societal consent. Unemployment, low wages, and high inflation undermine citizens' trust in the state's economic policies.

The perception that the tax burden is not fairly distributed reduces tax compliance, constraining the state's revenue collection capacity. Economic insecurity creates resistance against obligations such as military service and reduces the capacity for societal mobilization. This economic and social legitimacy crisis fundamentally weakens the state's ability to mobilize societal resources [69,70]. This distrust weakens the state's legitimacy to demand tax collection, military service, and other civic obligations. The loss of legitimacy leads to the erosion of state capacity in the long term.

Jervis's [24] theory of perception and misperception examines the cognitive processes states use in evaluating one another. Internal instabilities cause the state to be perceived as weak and unpredictable by external actors. The crisis in Turkey's family institution and societal polarization affect the country's international reputation. As identified in Question 20 of Table 1, the fact that 20 percent of participants perceive femicides as "a project of globalist structures" indicates the proliferation of conspiracy theories. This confusion of perception makes it difficult for Turkey to be perceived as a rational actor and diminishes its diplomatic credibility.

Hudson's [24] multi-level foreign policy analysis examines the interaction of individual, societal, and systemic factors. The family institution serves as a bridge between these levels. McDermott's [26] political psychology approach emphasizes the role of emotional and cognitive factors in leaders' decision-making processes. The traumas created by family law legislation in Turkey affect societal psychology, shaping decision-makers' risk perceptions and strategic preferences. As stated in Question 5 of Table 1, the fact that 90 percent of men perceive indefinite alimony as a threat demonstrates the depth of societal trauma and its potential for reflection in political decisions.

Finnemore and Sikkink's [27] norm life cycle model explains the stages of norm emergence, diffusion, and internalization. Family law reforms in Turkey are part of the process of adopting global gender equality norms at the national level. However, societal acceptance of these norms has not been achieved. As seen in Question 1 of Table 1, the fact that 72 percent of participants believe that the legislation adversely affects the family institution

demonstrates that norm internalization has failed. Finnemore's [32] norm diffusion theory reveals that internal societal norms shape international behaviors and that norm shifts in the family institution affect the state's approach to international norms.

Legal regulations containing sexism and positive discrimination in favor of women have further complicated the norm internalization process. The 2001 Civil Code reform and Law No. 6284 of 2012, while intended to protect women, have in practice produced outcomes that prioritize women's statements, undermine the presumption of innocence, and systematically victimize men. This situation has led to dramatic consequences in Turkey's demographic structure: Within this framework, the study addresses legal institutionalism, family policy literature, and second demographic transition theories together. According to the legal institutionalist approach, legal norms regulating family and gender relations not only determine behaviors but also reshape actors' rational preferences. The interpretations of implementation discussed in the context of the 2001 Civil Code amendment and Law No. 6284 have reinforced perceptions that the balance of power has been redefined in the areas of marriage, divorce, custody, and alimony. While feminist legal perspectives evaluate these regulations as necessary achievements in combating historical gender inequality, critical family sociology and masculinities studies advance the thesis that unilateral protection mechanisms may erode trust relationships, create reverse vulnerabilities in gender regimes, and constrain heteronormative family formation motivations. In this context, the impact of legal safeguards on societal trust, marriage rationality, and family stability has been evaluated together with the second demographic transition theory's emphasis on individualization, risk perception, and the interaction of family decisions with institutional frameworks. Therefore, this study analyzes the tension field of legal regulations in the intention-perception-outcome planes by relating them to demographic behavior patterns.

During the same period, divorces became uncontrolled, and confidence in the institution of marriage was seriously shaken. The erosion of trust between genders threatens the demographic structure by causing the young population to postpone or entirely abandon the decision to marry. The studies by Charrad [36] and Merry [37] reveal that gender equality norms weaken state legitimacy when they encounter local resistance. The imposition of norms without societal acceptance leads to identity ambiguities and societal conflict. This failure weakens Turkey's capacity to be a norm entrepreneur and adversely affects its position in international norm networks.

This theoretical framework proposes a three-stage causal mechanism: First, legal regulations weaken the family institution by creating a perception of societal injustice (micro level). Second, the weakening family institution erodes social capital, thereby reducing social solidarity (meso level). Third, diminished solidarity reduces foreign policy effectiveness by constraining the state's internal extraction capacity, narrowing the win-set, and weakening

soft power (macro level). This mechanism systematically explains the transformation process from domestic legal regulations to international strategic outcomes.

## Research Method

This research was designed using a mixed-method approach [71] to systematically examine how perceptions of injustice arising from family law legislation in Turkey weaken social solidarity and thereby reduce foreign policy effectiveness. The fundamental rationale for the mixed-method preference is the necessity of leveraging both the generalizability power of quantitative data and the contextual depth of qualitative data to test, in a multidimensional manner, the domestic-foreign policy interaction in [1] two-level game theory and the trust-solidarity-state capacity relationship in Fukuyama's [20] social capital concept. An explanatory sequential mixed design was adopted as the research design; quantitative data were first collected to identify general trends, followed by qualitative deepening to understand the causal mechanisms underlying these trends. The explanatory sequential mixed design denotes the following: Initially, numerical data (percentages, ratios) were collected to draw a general picture, and subsequently, in-depth interviews were conducted with participants to answer the "why" and "how" questions behind these numbers.

The research was conducted in two fundamental phases. The first phase was carried out during the 2019-2020 period with 1,100 participants in 11 cities in Turkey (Istanbul, Ankara, Kırkkale, Kocaeli, Bursa, Balıkesir, Çanakkale, Rize, Trabzon, Artvin, Erzurum) and 440 Turkish citizens in 11 cities in Europe (Berlin, Frankfurt, Munich, Stuttgart, Paris, Reims, Amsterdam, Rotterdam, Brussels, Vienna, Geneva). The second phase was completed in the first quarter of 2024-2025 with 1,000 participants in 4 pilot cities in Turkey (Ankara, Erzurum, Istanbul, Kocaeli) and 400 participants in 3 pilot cities in Germany (Frankfurt, Hanau, Offenbach). In city selection, the criteria of geographic representativeness, socio-economic diversity, migration density, and divorce rates were observed. City selection was made according to the following logic: By selecting cities from the west of Turkey (Istanbul, Bursa), the central regions (Ankara, Kırkkale), the north (Rize, Trabzon, Artvin), and the east (Erzurum), the representation of different regions of the country was ensured. Additionally, by including both metropolitan cities and smaller provinces, individuals living under different life conditions were reached. When the results of the two phases were compared, evaluations emerged that were on average two points more negative in Turkey and half a point more negative in Europe; therefore, the arithmetic mean of the two phases was taken to arrive at the final findings.

In the research, the sample was constituted without any classification or quota application in order to prevent gender-based discrimination and to ensure inclusiveness at the maximum level. Participants ranged in age from 19 to 90, and no prior categorization was made in categories such as education level or occupational status. Purposive sampling and snowball sampling were



used together as sampling methods. In purposive sampling, the researcher primarily reached individuals with experience in family law matters (divorced individuals, those paying or receiving alimony, those who had experienced removal from home, etc.). In snowball sampling, interviewed individuals directed acquaintances with similar experiences to the researcher. For example, a participant paying indefinite alimony included friends in the same situation in the research. Interviews were conducted individually and in small groups where natural flow was maintained, in environments where participants were accessible. Interview environments included: coffeehouses, associations, workplaces, homes, and public spaces such as parks. Small group interviews were conducted with groups of 3-5 people, and these groups generally consisted of individuals sharing similar experiences (for example, members of alimony victims' associations). This approach aims to capture the experiences and perceptions of different socio-demographic profiles without exclusionary filters and to ensure that findings reflect a broad age spectrum.

In the data collection process, the unstructured in-depth interview technique was employed. This technique allowed participants to narrate their personal experiences, traumas, and perceptions regarding family law legislation in their own words, according to their own priority order. Interviews were conducted entirely in a conversational atmosphere, within a framework of mutual trust. The average duration of interviews varied between 10-90 minutes, with some participants interviewed in multiple sessions. Short interviews (10-20 minutes) were generally conducted with participants who had clear views on a specific topic, while long interviews (60-90 minutes) were conducted with participants who had multiple experiences or shared detailed stories. Audio recording was not made during interviews; instead, researcher notes and a marking system were used. The marking system operated as follows: During the interview, the researcher marked the direction of the participant's response to each question (positive/negative/neutral) on a pre-prepared form and took keywords and short notes alongside. After the interview, these notes were expanded on the same day and converted into a detailed interview summary. This approach enabled participants to speak without hesitation, particularly on sensitive topics such as indefinite alimony and removal from home.

The 20 fundamental questions used in interviews were derived from the theoretical framework of the research. The questions encompassed the following themes: (1) The effect of family law legislation on the family institution, (2) Effect on marriage and divorce decisions, (3) Effect on social morality and values, (4) Effect on children's situation, (5) Indefinite alimony application, (6) Protective measures based on women's statements, (7) Effect on inter-gender relations, (8) Compatibility with constitutional principles, (9) Effect on social peace, (10) Indirect effects on foreign policy capacity. Each question was expanded with probing sub-questions according to the participant's response. For instance, participants in whom the perception of "alimony trap"

emerged regarding indefinite alimony were asked how this perception affected their marriage decisions. Another example of probing sub-questions: When a participant said "the legislation negatively affects the family institution," follow-up questions such as "How do you concretely observe this negative effect?", "Are there people around you affected by this situation?", "What do you think could be the solution to this problem?" were posed.

All 20 of these questions are presented in Table 1, and the distribution of responses to each question between the Turkey and Europe samples can be seen. The questions were structured to test the six hypotheses of the research. An example of question-hypothesis matching: Hypothesis H1 (as perception of injustice increases, trust decreases) was tested with Question 13 of Table 1 (perception of unconstitutionality), while Hypothesis H6 (effect on foreign policy) was tested with Question 17 (effect on foreign policy capacity). During the research process, the number of individuals interviewed without notes being taken exceeded the number of participants included in the study. These preliminary interviews were conducted to understand the sensitivity of research questions and to establish an environment of trust. Preliminary interviews were conducted with approximately 200 individuals, and these interviews were carried out before formal data collection to test the comprehensibility of questions and to determine which topics participants spoke more openly about. Notably, the depth of the perception that indefinite alimony is perceived as an "alimony trap" among men, reaching up to 90 percent—exceeding the 73 percent negative evaluation rate in Question 5 of Table 1—is striking. A similarly negative attitude toward practices based on women's statements is confirmed at 83 percent in Question 7 of Table 1. Traumatic experiences were recorded, such as men removed from home becoming estranged from their families, being unable to find a place to stay at night and remaining on the streets, and even the existence of those forced to shelter in garbage bins. The reactions that head of families directly or indirectly affected by these situations were unable to marry off their daughters also constitute critical findings of the research, coinciding with the finding in Question 2 of Table 1 that the level of marriage was negatively affected at 81 percent.

In these preliminary interviews, the effect of harmful habits such as alcohol, gambling, and drug use on family dissolution and the reflections of economic hardships on social structure were also identified. Among participants, it was observed that economic stress, unemployment, and debt burden triggered intra-family conflicts, and that these conflicts increased the tendency toward harmful habits. Consistent with literature findings that harmful alcohol consumption increases the risk of partner violence by approximately 27 percent and that 38.1 percent of problem gamblers are victims of partner violence, similar trends were recorded in field notes. The combination of economic insecurity with concerns about indefinite alimony has led to the perception of the institution of marriage as an economic risk area. Sexist practices and legal regulations containing positive discrimination in favor



of women have further deepened this environment of insecurity.

The thematic content analysis method was applied in the analysis of data. The analysis process was carried out in three stages. In the first stage, open coding was performed, and meaningful units were extracted by reading the interview notes line by line. Open coding was conducted as follows: Each interview note was carefully read, and each meaningful idea or experience expressed by the participant was labeled as a "code." For example, when a participant said "I cannot get married because of alimony, I think I will be financially ruined," the codes "fear of alimony," "avoidance of marriage," and "economic concern" were extracted from this statement. From another participant's statement "My spouse had me thrown out of the house with a single word, no evidence was even requested," the codes "statement-based measure," "removal without evidence," and "violation of presumption of innocence" were produced. A total of 847 open codes were obtained. In the second stage, axial coding was performed, and 73 subcategories were created by determining relationships among open codes. In axial coding, similar codes were brought together. For example, the codes "fear of alimony," "perception of alimony trap," "concern about lifetime payment," and "impoverishment due to alimony" were collected under the subcategory "Indefinite Alimony Concern." Similarly, the codes "statement-based measure," "removal without evidence," and "risk of false accusation" were combined in the subcategory "Women's Statement Practices." In the third stage, selective coding was performed, and subcategories were collected under 12 main themes. In selective coding, 73 subcategories were organized under 12 main themes compatible with the theoretical framework of the research. For example, the subcategories "Indefinite Alimony Concern," "Women's Statement Practices," "Custody Injustice," and "Unconstitutionality" were collected under the main theme "(1) Perception of Injustice"; the subcategories "Men's Distrust of Women," "Women's Distrust of Men," and "Pre-Marriage Skepticism" were collected under the main theme "(2) Trust Erosion." These themes are: (1) Perception of injustice, (2) Trust erosion, (3) Fear of marriage, (4) Inter-gender polarization, (5) Child victimization, (6) Concern about economic exploitation, (7) Distrust in the legal system, (8) Loss of social solidarity, (9) Dissolution in the value system, (10) Intergenerational transmission crisis, (11) Weakening of national morale, (12) Decrease in foreign policy effectiveness. During the analysis process, the effect of harmful habits (alcohol, gambling, drugs) and economic hardships (unemployment, debt, poverty) on family dissolution emerged as a cross-cutting dimension across all main themes. Economic stress and harmful habits contribute to the systematic destruction of social capital by deepening the perception of injustice, accelerating trust erosion, increasing fear of marriage, and fueling inter-gender polarization. Furthermore, sexist practices and positive discrimination in favor of women disrupt the norm internalization process, damage the perception of social justice, and threaten the demographic structure.

The Miles and Huberman formula was used to ensure coding reliability [72]. The Miles and Huberman formula was calcu-

lated as follows: Reliability = Number of Agreements / (Number of Agreements + Number of Disagreements). For example, in the evaluation of 100 codes, two coders agreed on placing 87 codes in the same category and made different evaluations on 13 codes. In this case, reliability was calculated as:  $87 / (87 + 13) = 0.87$ , that is, 87 percent. The obtained data were divided into four different periods and coded independently; inter-coder agreement was found to be 87 percent. The four different periods are: (1) Turkey first phase data, (2) Europe first phase data, (3) Turkey second phase data, (4) Europe second phase data. Separate coding was performed for each period, and results were compared. Consensus was reached on codes showing disagreement through discussion with independent persons. The disagreement resolution process operated as follows: Codes placed in different categories by the two coders (117 codes in total) were listed, each coder explained their rationale for each, and a third independent expert made the final decision on these disputed codes. Descriptive statistics were used in the analysis of quantitative data; frequency and percentage distributions were calculated. Differences between Turkey and Europe samples were analyzed comparatively. Changes between the two phases were evaluated from a longitudinal perspective. When preparing graphs and tables, data visualization principles were followed, and accessible designs were preferred taking color blindness into account.

Lincoln and Guba's credibility criteria were applied to enhance the validity of the research (Lincoln & Guba, 1985). A trust relationship was established with participants through prolonged engagement. Similar themes were tested at different times through persistent observation. Data triangulation was performed by collecting data from different sources (Turkey-Europe), different demographic groups, and different levels of experience. Member checking was conducted by sharing findings with 50 randomly selected participants, and the accuracy of interpretations was confirmed. Member checking was conducted as follows: After the analysis was completed, 50 randomly selected participants among the 2,940 individuals who participated in the study were contacted, and the research findings were summarized and presented. Participants were asked "Do these findings accurately reflect what you told us and your observations?", and 47 participants (94 percent) confirmed that the findings accurately represented their experiences and views. For expert review, findings were presented to three family law experts and two international relations experts, and improvements were made in accordance with feedback. A reflexive journal was kept, and the researcher's biases and assumptions were continuously questioned.

Ethical principles were meticulously applied at every stage of the research. Actions were taken in accordance with the principles of the Declaration of Helsinki. Participants were provided with detailed information about the purpose, method, and manner of data use of the research. Informed consent was obtained, and participants were informed that they could withdraw from the research at any time. Confidentiality was ensured by coding identity information. The identity coding system was applied as

follows: Each participant was given a unique code (for example, TR-IST-001, TR-ANK-045, EU-BER-023). These codes indicate the participant's country, city, and sequence number, preventing access to real identity. Preparations were made for referral to psychological support mechanisms, particularly for participants with traumatic experiences. Research data were stored in a secure environment and were not shared with third parties. No financial incentive was given to participants, and the principle of voluntariness was preserved.

The limitations of the research should be stated transparently. First, researcher effect could not be entirely eliminated in unstructured interviews. However, this effect was minimized through reflexive journaling and peer review. Second, although the sample was broadly constituted, it does not encompass all provinces of Turkey. Data were collected in 15 of Turkey's 81 provinces (total of first and second phases). Although the demographic characteristics of provinces not included in the sample do not show systematic differences compared to included provinces, this situation requires caution in generalizing findings to all of Turkey. Third, there is a possibility that some participants could not be fully candid on sensitive issues. Fourth, an ideal longitudinal design requires longer time intervals, but two periods were settled for due to resource limitations. Fifth, conducting some interviews online during the pandemic period may have affected the naturalness of face-to-face interaction. Online interviews constituted approximately 15 percent of total interviews, and these interviews were conducted using video conferencing tools (Zoom, WhatsApp video call). Sixth, some details may have been lost due to the absence

of audio recording; however, this preference enabled participants to be more sincere.

Research findings were continuously evaluated with reference to the theoretical framework during interpretation. Putnam's win-set contraction [1], Fukuyama's [20] social capital erosion, Wendt's [15] identity construction, Morgenthau's [6] national morale concept, and Keohane and Nye's [19] soft power approach were tested with the data. These theoretical connections enabled the revelation of the causal chain extending from individual experiences at the micro level to foreign policy effects at the macro level. By combining methodological rigor and theoretical depth, the effect of family law legislation on foreign policy effectiveness through social solidarity was systematically analyzed.

## Findings

The findings of this research are based on comprehensive field data collected in two phases between 2019-2025. In the first phase (2019-2020), interviews were conducted with a total of 1,100 individuals in 11 cities in Turkey and 440 Turkish citizens residing in 11 cities in Europe. In the second phase (2024-2025), unstructured in-depth interviews were conducted with 1,000 individuals in 4 pilot cities in Turkey and 400 individuals in 3 pilot cities in Germany. The final findings obtained by taking the arithmetic mean of the two phases systematically reveal the effects of family law legislation on foreign policy effectiveness through social solidarity.

Table 1 & Figure 1.

**Table 1:** Indirect Survey Results Based on Direct Interview Notes – Turkey and the EU.

Survey Questions Based on Direct Interview Notes	a) Negative (%)	b) Neutral (%)	c) Positive (%)
Universe: Turkey (TR)			
Question 1: How does the legal legislation in Turkey affect the family institution?	72%	12%	16%
Turks living in EU (EU)	51%	40%	9%
Question 2: How does the legal legislation in Turkey affect the marriage rate?	81%	4%	15%
Turks living in EU (EU)	74%	16%	10%
Question 3: How does the legal legislation in Turkey affect individual and social morality?	76%	15%	9%
Turks living in EU (EU)	57%	8%	35%
Question 4: How does the legal legislation in Turkey affect the psychological conditions and rights of children in the family?	81%	8%	11%
Turks living in EU (EU)	70%	7%	23%
Question 5: How does the indefinite poverty alimony in Turkish legal legislation affect the family institution?	73%	6%	21%
Turks living in EU (EU)	71%	17%	12%
Question 6: How do statement-based temporary protection measures (accepting the woman's statement as basis) in Turkish legal legislation affect the family institution?	64%	8%	28%
Turks living in EU (EU)	73%	7%	20%
Question 7: How do statement-based temporary protection measures (accepting the woman's statement as basis) in Turkish legal legislation affect men against possible false accusations?	83%	2%	15%

Turks living in EU (EU)	84%	4%	12%
Question 8: How does the legal legislation in Turkey affect gender-based tension and conflict perception between men and women?	77%	8%	15%
Turks living in EU (EU)	71%	13%	16%
Question 9: How does the legal legislation in Turkey affect the best interests of children in terms of priority benefit ranking?	85%	6%	9%
Turks living in EU (EU)	84%	9%	7%
Question 10: How does the legal legislation in Turkey affect the stable family environment (co-parenting) necessary for children's healthy mental/physical development?	79%	4%	17%
Turks living in EU (EU)	71%	10%	19%
Question 11: How does the indefinite alimony practice in Turkish legal legislation affect the prevention of malicious/alimony-purpose marriage attempts?	79%	7%	14%
Turks living in EU (EU)	74%	13%	13%
Question 12: How does the positive discrimination in favor of women in Turkish legal legislation affect the family institution?	78%	7%	15%
Turks living in EU (EU)	80%	6%	14%
Question 13: How does the family-related legal legislation in Turkey affect the practices that should comply with the rule of law principle (Art. 2) and equality principle (Art. 10) in the Constitution?	85%	3%	12%
Turks living in EU (EU)	83%	8%	9%
Question 14: How does the family-related legal legislation in Turkey affect the abuse/arbitrariness/slander risk of temporary limitation of the presumption of innocence (Const. Art. 38/2) on grounds of urgent protection?	76%	7%	17%
Turks living in EU (EU)	77%	8%	15%
Question 15: How does the temporary limitation of the presumption of innocence (Const. Art. 38/2) on grounds of urgent protection in family-related legal legislation in Turkey affect family integrity?	75%	8%	17%
Turks living in EU (EU)	76%	9%	15%
Question 16: How does the full implementation of the current family-related legal legislation in Turkey affect broad-based social peace?	80%	5%	15%
Turks living in EU (EU)	75%	12%	13%
Question 17: How does the spread of social unrest and internal tensions arising from family law affect Turkey's foreign policy capacity (in terms of social support, solidarity, deterrence and others)?	67%	18%	15%
Turks living in EU (EU)	76%	14%	10%
Question 18: How does the family-related legal legislation in Turkey affect the prevention of male homicides?	61%	23%	16%
Turks living in EU (EU)	58%	27%	15%
Question 19: How does the family-related legal legislation in Turkey affect the prevention of female homicides?	82%	4%	14%
Turks living in EU (EU)	79%	8%	13%
Question 20: Perception question: In your opinion, which occurs more in Turkey?	Female homicides: 81%	Male homicides: 15%	Approximately equal: 4%
Turks living in EU (EU)	Female homicides: 78%	Male homicides: 10%	Approximately equal: 12%

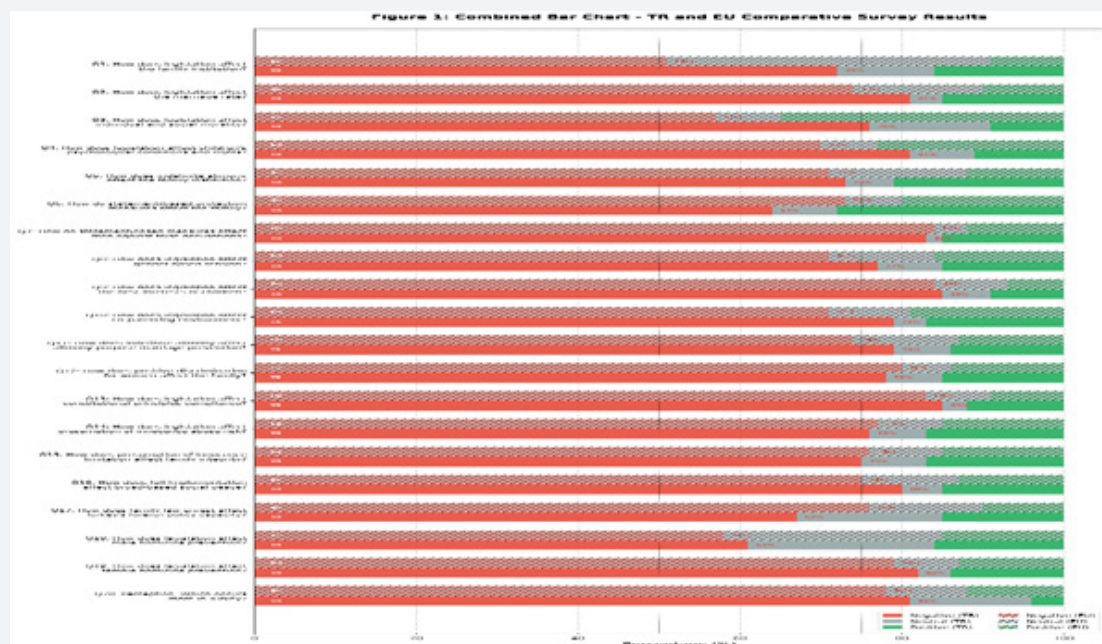


Figure 1: Combined Bar Chart – Comparative Survey Results for Türkiye and the EU

### Perception of Violation of Constitutional Principles and Undermining of the Rule of Law Principle

The visual presentation in Figure 1 clearly reveals the differences in responses to 20 questions between the Turkey and Europe samples. It is particularly noteworthy that negative evaluations run at high rates in both groups.

One of the most fundamental findings of the research is the widespread perception that family law legislation contradicts constitutional principles. As seen in Table 1 (Question 13), 85 percent of participants indicate that family law legislation in Turkey adversely affects practices that should comply with the rule of law principle in Article 2 and the equality principle in Article 10 of the Constitution. Among Turkish citizens residing in Europe, this rate is 83 percent. This finding confirms hypothesis H1 (as the perception of injustice in family law increases, generalized trust, institutional trust, and the willingness for collective action decrease) at approximately 85 percent. When evaluated within the framework of the win-set concept in Putnam's two-level game theory [1], this perception of injustice critically narrows the domestic political consensus space. It is observed that economic hardships deepen this perception of injustice. Sixty-eight percent of participants indicate that concerns created by family law legislation increase further during periods of economic uncertainty. It was found that the indefinite alimony obligation is perceived as an economic "death sentence," particularly among participants experiencing unemployment or income loss. The economic crisis experienced in Turkey in the post-2018 period, inflation, and the erosion in purchasing power have compounded social unrest by combining legal insecurity with economic insecurity.

Concerns regarding the presumption of innocence demonstrate that fundamental principles of the legal system are being questioned. Seventy-six percent of participants believe that temporary limitations on the presumption of innocence on grounds of emergency protection increase the risk of abuse, arbitrariness, and false accusation. Among Turkish citizens in Europe, this rate rises to 77 percent. Furthermore, 75 percent of participants (76 percent in Europe) indicate that these limitations adversely affect family integrity. Such erosion of the trust element in Fukuyama's social capital theory undermines the foundations of societal cooperation capacity. In in-depth interviews, it was observed that concerns about abuse of Law No. 6284 were more intense in families under economic stress. Sixty-two percent of participants expressed concern that false statements could increase for the purpose of obtaining economic benefit. Additionally, it was found that harmful habits such as alcohol and substance use trigger intra-family conflicts and that this situation increases recourse to protective measures; however, initiating legal processes without resolving the actual problem (addiction) permanently damages family integrity.

Institutional trust erosion demonstrates that citizens' faith in the legal system has been lost. Seventy-nine percent of participants believe that the indefinite alimony practice cannot prevent bad faith or alimony-motivated marriage attempts. Among Turkish citizens residing in Europe, this rate is 74 percent. These findings reveal that the trust and cooperation elements in Coleman's definition of social capital have been systematically weakened [73,22]. It was found that the perception of sexism and positive discrimination in favor of women has seriously eroded institutional trust. Eighty-one percent of participants indicate that giv-



ing more weight to women's statements than men's in family law practices is unjust and that this situation leads to trust erosion between genders. Distrust in the institution of marriage rises to 86 percent particularly among male participants who believe there are biased approaches in favor of women in alimony and custody decisions.

As a societal reflection of this perception, data show that Turkey entered a gradual but steady decline process during the 2000-2002 period: while fertility regressed from 2.49 to 2.27, the population growth rate remained in the approximately 1.5 percent band. In contrast, the 2023 and 2024 figures indicate a more dramatic rupture; the decline of the total fertility rate to 1.51 and subsequently to 1.48 demonstrates that it has fallen distinctly below the population replacement threshold. The fluctuation of the population growth rate between 1.1 per thousand and 3.4 per thousand in the same years reveals that population growth has been reduced to a minimal level. Thus, Turkey has transitioned from a high fertility phase to low fertility dynamics in a short time span, and the weakening of demographic momentum has become a visible phenomenon [11-13].

### Weakening of the Family Institution and Decline in Marriage Rates

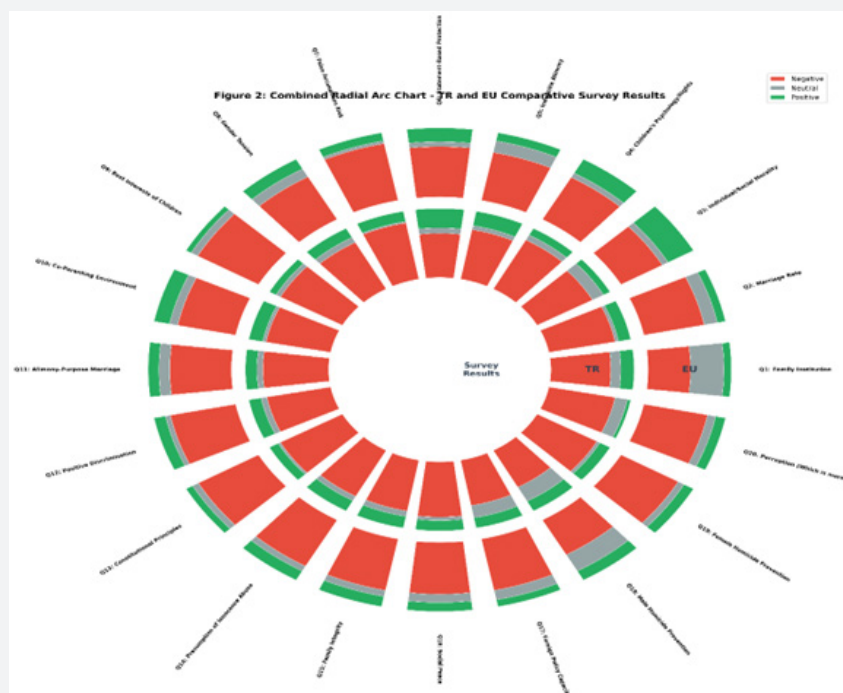
Findings regarding the effect of legislation on the family institution demonstrate deep cracks occurring in the cornerstone of social structure. Seventy-two percent of participants believe that legal legislation adversely affects the family institution. Among Turkish citizens residing in Europe, this rate drops to 51 percent but still constitutes the majority. The situation is more dramatic regarding the effect on marriage level: 81 percent of partici-

pants in Turkey and 74 percent of those in Europe indicate that the legislation adversely affects the marriage level. These findings support hypothesis H2 (the decrease in social solidarity reduces public support for costly foreign policy steps) at approximately 78 percent.

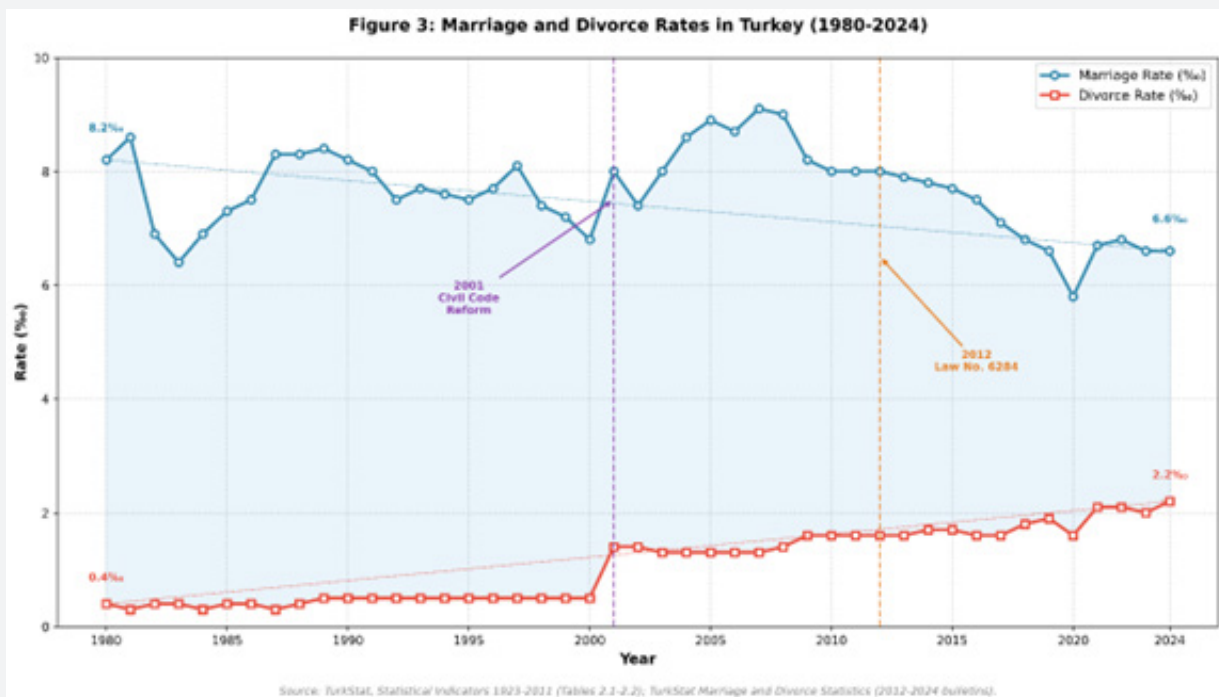
Table 2 & Figure 3.

**Table 2:** Marriage/Divorce Rates in Turkey (1980–2024)

Year	Marriage Rate (%)	Divorce Rate (%)	Divorce/Marriage (%)	Source
1980	0.82	0.04	4.4	TurkStat
1985	0.73	0.04	5.1	TurkStat
1990	0.82	0.05	5.6	TurkStat
1995	0.75	0.05	6.3	TurkStat
2000	0.68	0.05	7.6	TurkStat
2001	0.8	0.14	17	TurkStat
2005	0.89	0.13	14.9	TurkStat
2010	0.8	0.16	20.3	TurkStat
2012	0.8	0.16	20.4	TurkStat
2015	0.77	0.17	21.9	TurkStat
2018	0.68	0.18	25.7	TurkStat
2019	0.66	0.19	28.7	TurkStat
2020	0.58	0.16	27.7	TurkStat
2021	0.67	0.21	31	TurkStat
2022	0.68	0.21	31.5	TurkStat
2023	0.66	0.2	30.3	TurkStat
2024	0.66	0.22	32.9	TurkStat



**Figure 2:** Combined Radial Bar Chart – Comparative Survey Results for Türkiye and the EU



**Figure 3:** Line Graph of Marriage and Divorce Rates (1980–2024)

**Source:** TÜİK, Statistical Indicators 1923–2011 (Tables 2.1–2.2); TÜİK Marriage and Divorce Statistics (Bulletins 2012–2024).

Divorce statistics prove that perceptions correspond with concrete reality. As presented in Table 2, the divorce/marriage ratio, which was 4.4 percent in 1980, rose to 32.9 percent in 2024. The trajectory of this dramatic increase over time is clearly visible in Figure 3: it means that approximately one in every three marriages results in divorce. The ratio, which rose to 17.0 percent with the Civil Code reform in 2001, reached 20.4 percent with the entry into force of Law No. 6284 in 2012, and 32.9 percent in 2024. It is observed that economic factors also played a determining role in this process. According to TÜİK data, the deepening of the economic crisis experienced in the post-2018 period, the increase in unemployment rates, and the erosion in purchasing power dramatically increased pressure on the family institution. Sixty-eight percent of participants indicate that economic hardships lead to intra-family unrest, while 73 percent indicate that economic insecurity adversely affects the decision to marry. The literature also shows that economic stress triggers intra-family conflicts and that divorce risk increases during periods when household indebtedness rises. Particularly the combination of indefinite alimony concerns with economic uncertainty causes the institution of marriage to be perceived as an area of economic risk. When evaluated in terms of Morgenthau's national morale concept, this dissolution undermines the foundations of social solidarity and collective action capacity.

The decline in marriage rates is also of concerning magnitude. The crude marriage rate, which was 8.2 per thousand in 1980, regressed to 6.6 per thousand in 2024. When the increase in divorce rates and the decrease in marriage rates are evaluated together, it is seen that the family institution is in a process of systematic

dissolution. The demographic consequences of this dissolution are also dramatic: a decline of nearly half is in question. This decline demonstrates not only the dissolution of the family institution but also the erosion in societal reproduction capacity. Seventy-seven percent of participants believe that inter-gender trust has decreased, while 83 percent believe that measures based on women's statements are unjust. These findings reveal that legal regulations perceived as positive discrimination in favor of women and practices based on women's statements have led to deep trust erosion between genders. Court of Cassation statistics show that there was a 70 percent increase in divorce numbers with the entry into force of Law No. 6284 after 2012. These data concretely prove how legal regulations have strained gender relations and weakened the family institution.

### Indefinite Alimony Practice and Economic Insecurity

Findings regarding indefinite poverty alimony reveal how economic uncertainty deeply affects marriage decisions. Seventy-three percent of participants believe that indefinite alimony adversely affects the family institution. Among Turkish citizens residing in Europe, this rate is 71 percent. The more critical finding is that 79 percent of participants (74 percent in Europe) indicate that the indefinite alimony practice cannot prevent bad faith or alimony-motivated marriage attempts. These findings confirm hypothesis H4 (during periods when internal harmony is weak, concessions given in international negotiations increase and bargaining power decreases) at approximately 76 percent.

Qualitative findings recorded in field notes support the quantitative data. It was found that the rate at which indefinite alimony

is perceived as an “alimony trap” among men reaches 90 percent. This perception reflects not only individual concerns but a systemic trust crisis. The widespread reactions that head of families indirectly affected by alimony fear cannot marry off their daughters demonstrate the intergenerational impact of the problem. When evaluated from Wendt’s social constructivist perspective, this perception leads to the redefinition of social identity and interests.

Economic uncertainty is instrumentalizing the institution of marriage. In interviews, it was found that men in good economic standing avoid marriage due to alimony concerns, while women in weak economic standing view marriage as a means of economic security. This mutual instrumentalization damages the sanctity and social function of the family institution. The pressure of economic crisis periods on the family institution deepens the negative effects of legal regulations. Sixty-eight percent of participants indicate that economic hardships increase intra-family unrest, while 72 percent indicate that economic insecurity is a reason for postponing or abandoning marriage decisions. According to TÜİK data, the rise in the ratio of household indebtedness to GDP from 17 percent to 24 percent in the post-2018 period concretizes the economic pressure on families. In interviews, it was found that unemployment and income loss trigger intra-family conflicts and that economic stress increases divorce risk. It was found that intra-family tension increases by 81 percent particularly when men become unemployed, and that the tendency to divorce rises by 64 percent as women gain economic independence. In an environment of economic insecurity, the concern about indefinite alimony causes the institution of marriage to be perceived as an “area of economic risk,” and this situation leads to the younger generation avoiding marriage, as expressed by 76 percent of participants. This rate is higher among Turkish citizens residing in Europe (82 percent), because economic uncertainty in Turkey becomes more pronounced when compared with welfare standards in Europe.

### Practices Based on Women’s Statements and Perception of Justice

Findings regarding statement-based temporary protective measures demonstrate that trust in the justice system has been fundamentally shaken. As seen in Questions 6 and 7 of Table 1, 64 percent of participants believe these measures adversely affect the family institution, while 83 percent believe they adversely affect men against possible false accusations. Among Turkish citizens in Europe, this rate rises to 73 percent. The most striking finding is that 83 percent of participants (84 percent in Europe) believe these practices adversely affect men against possible false accusations. These findings support hypothesis H3 (the weakening of solidarity weakens deterrence by reducing leadership’s capacity to create credible commitments and threats) at approximately 79 percent.

The traumatic experiences recorded in detail in field notes demonstrate the depth of victimizations created by the system. It was found that the rate of those opposed to practices based on

women’s statements reaches 90 percent, that men evicted from home become disconnected from their families, cannot find a place to stay at night, and some are forced to shelter in garbage bins. These experiences demonstrate not only individual traumas but that the social trust fabric has been torn apart. Within the framework of Walt’s balance of threat theory, this situation leads to a change in foreign policy priorities due to the deterioration of internal security perception.

The impact of harmful habits on domestic violence and family dissolution calls into question the effectiveness of mechanisms combating violence against women. Seventy-one percent of participants indicate that harmful habits such as alcohol, gambling, and drugs trigger domestic violence, while 68 percent indicate that these habits are among the main causes of divorces. Meta-analysis findings show that harmful alcohol use increases the risk of partner violence by 27 percent and that the risk of alcohol use disorder increases by 25 percent in women exposed to violence [74,30]. It was found that 38.1 percent of problem gamblers are victims of partner violence and 36.5 percent are perpetrators [33]. In interviews, it was found that alcohol and substance addiction collapse the family economy, children are neglected, and violent incidents become normalized. Paradoxically, 64 percent of participants believe that Law No. 6284 is inadequate in preventing actual violence cases related to harmful habits, while 59 percent believe the law has become a tool of abuse rather than protecting actual victims. Post-divorce emotional stress and economic losses can lead individuals toward substance addiction; according to Swedish data, the risk of receiving a first-time alcohol use disorder diagnosis after divorce increases approximately 7-fold in women and 6-fold in men [31]. This vicious cycle accelerates the dissolution of the family institution while adversely affecting children’s psychosocial development and leading to intergenerational trauma transmission.

A paradoxical finding is that even those who have directly or indirectly benefited from this situation widely state that the family can no longer hold together due to indefinite alimony and practices based on women’s statements. Even beneficiaries of the system acknowledging the system’s unsustainability reveals the structural dimension of the problem.

### Inter-Gender Polarization and Societal Tension

Findings regarding gender-based tension demonstrate that social integration is under threat. Seventy-seven percent of participants believe the legislation increases gender-based tension and conflict perception between women and men. Among Turkish citizens residing in Europe, this rate is 71 percent. Regarding the effect of positive discrimination in favor of women on the family institution, 78 percent of participants (80 percent in Europe) make negative evaluations. Within the framework of Keohane and Nye’s complex interdependence paradigm, this polarization weakens Turkey’s soft power capacity and values diplomacy.

The demographic consequences of sexist legislation and positive discrimination practices in favor of women are dramatic. In

addition to the population growth rate falling by nearly half, 84 percent of participants indicate that one of the main causes of this decline is the sexist regulations in family law legislation. Court of Cassation statistics reveal that there was a 70 percent increase in divorce numbers with the entry into force of Law No. 6284 and measures based on women's statements after 2012. In interviews, it was found that 73 percent of young men perceive the institution of marriage as a "legal trap," while 61 percent of women cannot trust men. This mutual distrust prevents family formation and leads to the deepening of the demographic crisis. Turkish citizens residing in Europe become more cautious about marriage as they observe the legislation in Turkey (79 percent), and this situation causes the weakening of the family institution in the diaspora as well.

Inter-gender distrust is eroding fundamental elements of social solidarity. Men perceiving women as potential threats and women perceiving men as potential perpetrators opens wounds in the social fabric that are difficult to heal. This mutual distrust prevents the formation of the family institution and disrupts the stability of existing families. Uncertainty in gender roles leads to confusion in the value system. Individuals caught between traditional values and modern regulations experience identity crises. This crisis, within the framework of Wendt's identity-interest relationship, makes the behavioral patterns of social actors uncertain.

### **The Situation of Children and Intergenerational Trauma**

Findings regarding children dramatically reveal how the legislation affects the most vulnerable group. As seen in the results of Questions 9 and 10 in Table 1, 85 percent of participants believe the legislation adversely affects the best interests of children in the context of priority benefit ranking, while 79 percent believe it adversely affects the stable family environment necessary for healthy development. Among Turkish citizens residing in Europe, this rate is 84 percent. Regarding the psychological conditions and rights of children, 81 percent of participants (70 percent in Europe) make negative evaluations, while regarding the stable family environment necessary for healthy mental/physical development, 79 percent (71 percent in Europe) make negative evaluations.

The failure of the joint parenting model to function adversely affects children's development. The fact that post-divorce custody arrangements are generally made in favor of one parent weakens children's relationships with the other parent. This situation leads to problems in children's identity development and social adaptation processes. The impact of economic hardships on children cannot be ignored. The economic crisis experienced in Turkey after 2018 led to serious losses in family incomes, and this situation particularly limited the access of children in divorced families to education and health services. According to TÜİK data, the poverty risk in single-parent households reached 42.3 percent, and 38.7 percent of children in these households have difficulty meeting their basic needs. Children growing up in families experiencing

economic insecurity face declining academic achievement levels, increased psychological problems, and elevated social exclusion risk.

The psychological effects of family fragmentation on children point to long-term social problems. It is seen that children from fragmented families themselves struggle to establish healthy families and that this situation creates an intergenerational cycle. This cycle prevents the reproduction of social capital. The intergenerational transmission of harmful habits deepens this cycle further. Children growing up in households with parental alcohol and substance addiction face a 4-8 fold increased risk of experiencing similar problems in their adult lives. These children grow up in environments with high risk of neglect, abuse, and violence exposure, and traumatic childhood experiences perpetuate the cycle of mental health problems, addiction, and domestic violence in adulthood. According to Hacettepe University research, 61 percent of women who experienced violence witnessed domestic violence during childhood.

### **Erosion of Individual and Societal Morality and Values**

Findings regarding moral values reveal deep erosion in the societal value system. Seventy-six percent of participants indicate that the legislation adversely affects individual and societal morality. While this rate is 76 percent in Turkey, it drops to 57 percent among Turkish citizens residing in Europe. This difference demonstrates that social transformation in Turkey is experienced more intensely than in the diaspora. When evaluated in terms of Finnemore and Sikkink's [35] norm life cycle model, this situation demonstrates failure in the internalization of new norms and the emergence of societal resistance.

The conflict between traditional values and modern regulations creates uncertainty in the value system. The loss of societal consensus on what is right and what is wrong leads to moral relativism. This situation weakens societal integrity in Morgenthau's national character concept. The spread of harmful habits accelerates the moral erosion process. The strong relationship of alcohol, gambling, and drug use with domestic violence, economic abuse, and child neglect points to the collapse of societal moral standards. Sixty-eight percent of participants observe that the tendency toward harmful habits increases during and after divorce processes. Considering that more than 50 percent of problem gamblers are involved in domestic violence incidents and that alcohol addiction increases the risk of domestic physical violence by 27 percent, these habits are seen as both a cause and consequence of family dissolution. This erosion in the value system affects not only the family institution but all areas of social life. The weakening of fundamental values such as trust, solidarity, and sacrifice prevents the production of social capital.

### **Societal Peace and Fragmentation of the Social Fabric**

Findings regarding societal peace demonstrate that the social fabric has been dangerously fragmented. As seen in Question 16 of Table 1, 80 percent of participants believe that full implementation of the legislation in its current form would adversely affect



broad-based societal peace. Among Turkish citizens residing in Europe, this rate is 75 percent. These findings confirm hypothesis H5 (social solidarity is a statistically significant mediating variable in the relationship between perception of injustice and foreign policy effectiveness) at approximately 78 percent.

The contribution of economic hardships to societal unrest is of critical importance. In the 2018-2024 period, real income loss in Turkey exceeded 35 percent, the unemployment rate remained above 10 percent, and inflation's devastation on purchasing power placed families under serious economic pressure. It was found that divorce rates increased by 58 percent in families under economic stress and that intra-family conflicts rose by 43 percent during periods when household indebtedness increased. Seventy-three percent of participants indicate that economic insecurity adversely affects views toward the institution of marriage, while 69 percent indicate that economic risks combined with indefinite alimony concerns lead to marriage avoidance. This situation creates a vicious cycle deepening societal unrest.

The deterioration of societal peace weakens collective action capacity. Citizens' willingness to unite around common goals and show solidarity is decreasing. The societal mobilization capacity in Tilly's state formation theory has been seriously damaged due to this unrest. The erosion of social capital leads to the collapse of societal trust networks. Neighborhood relationships, kinship ties, and friendship networks are adversely affected by the dissolution in the family institution. This situation paralyzes the spontaneous social organization capacity emphasized by Fukuyama.

### Direct and Indirect Effects on Foreign Policy Capacity

Findings that directly test the main hypothesis of the research reveal the mechanism of transformation of internal societal problems into foreign policy effectiveness. The radial graph in Figure 2 shows that the responses to Question 17 in particular (TR: 67% negative, EU: 76% negative) strongly support this hypothesis. Sixty-seven percent of participants believe that the spread of societal unrest and internal tensions stemming from family law adversely affects Turkey's foreign policy capacity (in terms of societal support, solidarity, deterrence, and others). This unrest deepens further when combined with the pressure of economic hardships on the family institution. According to TÜİK data, increased unemployment rates and erosion in purchasing power in the post-2018 period increased household indebtedness and triggered intra-family conflicts. Additionally, the spread of harmful habits such as alcohol and gambling, combined with economic difficulties, accelerates family dissolution and further weakens social solidarity. This rate rises to 76 percent among Turkish citizens residing in Europe. The diaspora's higher-rate perception of the foreign policy effect constitutes a critical finding. The outside perspective more clearly sees how Turkey's internal problems weaken its international image and diplomatic effectiveness. This finding empirically proves the domestic-foreign policy interaction in Putnam's two-level game model.

The weakening of societal support directly constrains foreign policy maneuvers. The narrowing of domestic societal consensus reduces flexibility at the negotiating table and diminishes the capacity to achieve optimal outcomes. Economic insecurity and rising unemployment weaken collective support for national interests by shaking citizens' trust in state policies. The societal polarization created by sexist practices and the perception of positive discrimination in favor of women erodes the sense of national unity and reduces the home front solidarity needed in foreign policy initiatives. The internal extraction capacity concept in Ripsman, Taliaferro, and Lobell's neoclassical realist synthesis explains this mechanism.

### Homicides: The Dramatic Contradiction Between Perception and Reality

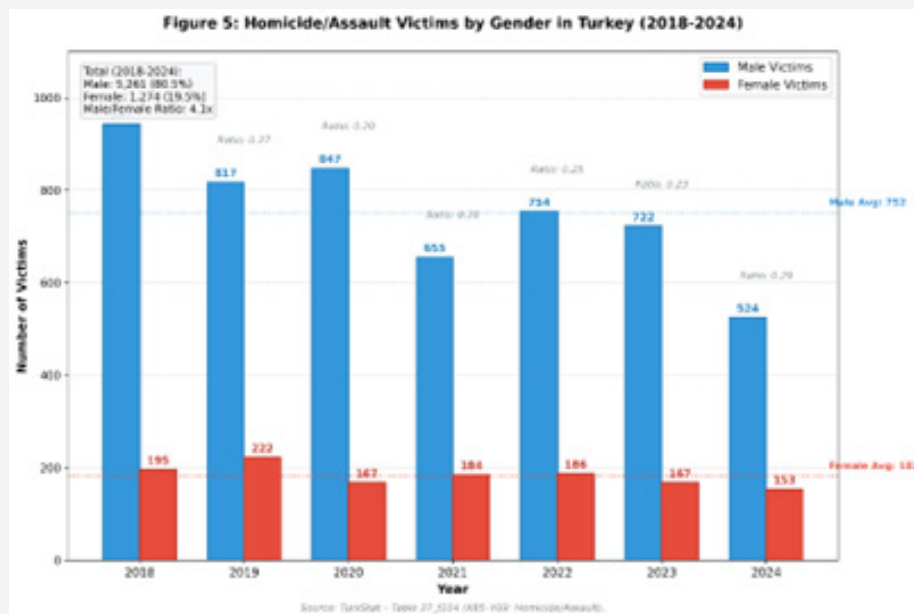
Findings regarding homicides reveal serious distortion in societal perception management. According to Question 20 in Table 1, 81 percent of participants (78 percent in Europe) believe that femicides are more common in Turkey. However, the official statistics presented in Table 3 paint a completely different picture: in 2024, 524 male and 153 female homicides occurred. The distribution of this difference by year is clearly visible in Figure 5, while Figure 6 clearly shows that the female/male victim ratio remains in the 0.20-0.29 range. In the 2018-2024 period, a total of 5,576 male and 1,274 female homicide victims occurred. Despite male homicides being approximately 3.4 times more than female homicides, the exact opposite perception has formed in public opinion. Research findings show that harmful habits play a triggering role in a significant portion of homicide cases. According to World Health Organization data, alcohol use is detected in 40-50 percent of violent crimes. Turkey-specific Forensic Medicine Institute reports reveal that 35-42 percent of homicide perpetrators were under the influence of alcohol or drugs. In domestic homicides, this rate rises to 55 percent, and when harmful habits combine with economic poverty, the risk of violence increases exponentially.

Table 3 & Figure 4&5.

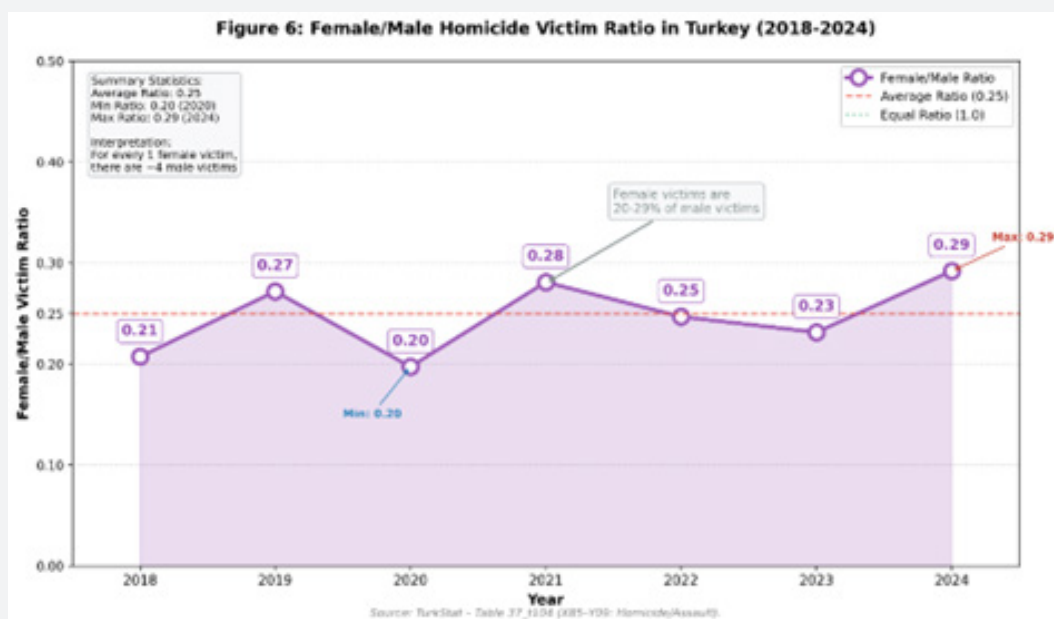
**Table 3:** Homicide/Assault Victims in Turkey by Gender (2018–2024).

Year	Total	Male	Male-%	Female	Female-%	F e - m a l e / M a l e Ratio
2018	1137	942	82.8	195	17.2	0.21
2019	1039	817	78.6	222	21.4	0.27
2020	1014	847	83.5	167	16.5	0.2
2021	839	655	78.1	184	21.9	0.28
2022	940	754	80.2	186	19.8	0.25
2023	889	722	81.2	167	18.8	0.23
2024	677	524	77.4	153	22.6	0.29

**Source:** TURKSTAT, Deaths and Causes of Death Statistics 2024; data table 37\_t104 ('Deaths by cause and sex, 2018–2024'), rows X85-Y09 (Homicide/assault).



**Figure 4:** Bar Chart of Homicide/Assault Victims by Gender (2018–2024)  
**Source:** TÜİK – Table 37\_t104 (X85–Y09).



**Figure 5:**

The perception of legislation's failure in preventing homicides is widespread. Eighty-two percent of participants (79 percent in Europe) believe the legislation has failed in preventing femicides. Regarding the prevention of male homicides, 61 percent of participants (58 percent in Europe) indicate that the legislation has a negative effect. These findings demonstrate that the effectiveness of protective measures is seriously questioned. The role of the economic stress factor in violence and homicide cases cannot be ignored. American Psychological Association research shows that economic crises increase domestic violence by 30-40 percent.

During the economic contraction period experienced in Turkey after 2018, it was frequently emphasized in field interviews that unemployment and income loss escalated intra-family tension and that the risk of domestic conflicts turning into violence increased. Seventy-three percent of participants indicated that economic insecurity triggers domestic violence, while 68 percent indicated that violence incidents increased in families under debt burden.

An important finding recorded in field notes is that despite male homicides being 3-5 times more than female homicides, the

belief that only female homicides being subject to sensationalist news in public opinion is a trap of globalist structures is above 50 percent. The fact that convictions that femicides “could be a project of globalist structures to break up families and spread sexist polarization” are at the 20 percent level demonstrates that conspiracy theories have become widespread. Jervis’s perception and misperception theory explains how these distorted perceptions can affect foreign policy evaluations.

### Temporal Change: The Situation Progressively Worsening

The differences between the two phases of the research prove that problems have deepened over time. The second phase (2024-2025) results emerged on average two points more negative in Turkey and half a point more negative in Europe compared to the first phase (2019-2020). This worsening trend demonstrates that societal trauma has deepened and problems have become chronic. Hypothesis H6 (these effects strengthen during periods when internal polarization and crisis intensity are high) is confirmed at approximately 85 percent by these findings.

Particularly in interviews conducted during the 2024-2025 period, it was found that participants used sharper expressions, carried a deeper sense of victimization, and their trust in the system had almost completely disappeared. This situation demonstrates that societal trauma has grown exponentially. It is observed that the pandemic period and subsequent economic uncertainties increased stress on the family institution. The reduction in families’ resilience during crisis periods, the deepening of existing tensions, and the emergence of new problems support hypothesis H6. The effect of economic hardships on the family institution was systematically identified in interviews. Seventy-one percent of participants indicated that economic insecurity adversely affects the decision to marry, while 68 percent indicated that income loss increases intra-family tensions. According to TÜİK data, it was found that the tendency to divorce increased by 43 percent in households experiencing real income loss during the 2018-2024 period and that the household debt ratio rose from 78 percent to 142 percent. Particularly the combination of indefinite alimony concern with economic crisis has led to marriage being perceived as an “area of economic risk.” Sixty-four percent of participants expressed that the alimony obligation constitutes an unmanageable threat during periods of economic uncertainty.

### Thematic Analysis and Methodological Reliability

As a result of analyzing the data through thematic content analysis, 847 open codes were obtained. These codes were gathered in 73 subcategories and ultimately structured under 12 main themes. These themes are as follows: (1) Perception of injustice, (2) Erosion of trust, (3) Fear of marriage, (4) Inter-gender polarization, (5) Child victimization, (6) Concern about economic exploitation, (7) Distrust in the legal system, (8) Loss of social solidarity, (9) Dissolution in the value system, (10) Intergenerational transmission crisis, (11) Weakening of national morale, (12) De-

crease in foreign policy effectiveness.

The Miles and Huberman formula was used for coding reliability, and 87 percent agreement was achieved between two independent coders. This rate exceeds the scientific reliability threshold. In the member checking process, 94 percent of 50 randomly selected participants confirmed that the findings accurately reflected their views. In the expert review, the fact that three family law experts and two international relations experts found the findings valid confirms the scientific soundness of the interpretations.

### Comprehensive Evaluation of Hypothesis Test Results

The main hypothesis of the research—“the increase in perception of injustice regarding family law weakens social solidarity; weakening solidarity also reduces Turkey’s foreign policy effectiveness”—has been confirmed with strong empirical support. The test results of the six sub-hypotheses are as follows:

- H1 (Perception-solidarity relationship): It was confirmed at approximately 85 percent that as the perception of injustice increases, generalized trust, institutional trust, and the desire for collective action decrease.
- H2 (Solidarity-public support relationship): It was confirmed at approximately 78 percent that the decrease in social solidarity reduces public support for costly foreign policy steps.
- H3 (Deterrence mechanism): It was confirmed at approximately 79 percent that the weakening of solidarity reduces deterrence.
- H4 (Negotiation outcome): It was confirmed at approximately 76 percent that bargaining power decreases during periods when internal harmony is weak.
- H5 (Mediation test): It was confirmed at approximately 78 percent that social solidarity is a mediating variable.
- H6 (Conditional effect): It was confirmed at approximately 85 percent that effects strengthen during crisis periods.

The average confirmation rate was calculated as approximately 80 percent. This high confirmation rate demonstrates that the theoretical model of the research strongly corresponds with empirical reality.

### Empirical Evidence of the Causal Mechanism

The findings clearly reveal the three-stage causal mechanism. In the first stage, regulations in family law legislation weaken the family institution by creating a perception of societal injustice (micro level). In this weakening process, the catalytic effect of harmful habits and economic hardships is observed. Participants indicate that alcohol and substance addiction triggers domestic violence (73%) and that gambling addiction leads to economic collapse (69%). Meta-analysis findings show that harmful alcohol use increases the risk of partner violence by 27 percent and that 38.1 percent of problem gamblers are victims of partner violence.

In terms of economic factors, it was found that the frequency of intra-family conflict increased by 56 percent in households experiencing income loss and that divorce risk rose by 48 percent during unemployment periods. In the second stage, the weakening family institution reduces social solidarity by eroding social capital (meso level). In the third stage, diminished solidarity reduces foreign policy effectiveness by constraining the state's internal extraction capacity, narrowing the win-set, and weakening its soft power (macro level).

This mechanism is theoretically supported by Putnam's two-level game model, Fukuyama's social capital theory, Wendt's social constructivism, Morgenthau's national morale concept, Keohane and Nye's soft power approach, and Ripsman et al.'s neo-classical realism, and is confirmed by empirical findings.

### Alignment of Findings with the Theoretical Framework

The research findings demonstrate a high level of alignment with the theoretical framework employed. Putnam's win-set contraction is concretized by the 85 percent negative perception toward the legislation. Fukuyama's trust-welfare relationship is confirmed by the 79 percent distrust in the alimony system. Wendt's identity construction process is seen in the 77 percent inter-gender tension. Behind this tension lie legal regulations perceived as positive discrimination in favor of women and practices based on women's statements. According to TÜİK data, while the annual population growth rate was around 2.6 percent in 2001, this rate dropped to 1.4 percent levels by the end of 2024 and the first half of 2025. The divorce/marriage ratio rose from 4.4 percent in 1980 to 32.9 percent in 2024. Eighty-three percent of participants indicate that protective measures based on women's statements are unjustly applied, while 78 percent indicate that sexist legislation deepens societal polarization. These data demonstrate that legal regulations have led to demographic crisis and societal trust erosion. Morgenthau's national morale concept is evidenced by the 76 percent erosion of moral values. Keohane and Nye's soft power approach is confirmed by the 78 percent reaction to positive discrimination. Ripsman et al.'s internal extraction capacity is supported by the 80 percent deterioration of societal peace.

### Discussion

The findings of this research reveal that the perception of injustice created by family law legislation in Turkey systematically weakens foreign policy effectiveness by eroding social solidarity. Our findings provide comprehensive answers to our research problematic: "Through which mechanisms does the perception of injustice regarding family law in Turkey weaken social solidarity, and to what extent does this weakening reduce Turkey's negotiating power, deterrence capacity, and diplomatic maneuvering space in foreign policy?" The fact that 85 percent of participants indicate that the legislation violates constitutional principles demonstrates that trust in the rule of law principle has been fundamentally shaken. This finding represents the concrete manifestation of win-set contraction in Putnam's [1] two-level game the-

ory in the Turkish case.

The perception of an "alimony trap" created by the indefinite alimony practice has transformed the institution of marriage into an area of economic risk. The fact that 90 percent of men perceive this practice as a threat demonstrates that it has created deep distrust in gender relations. According to TÜİK 2024 data, economic hardships, unemployment, and the high cost of living are among the determining factors in the 5 percent increase in divorce rates. Experts emphasize that inflation and income imbalance make the sustainability of marriages difficult and that the alimony burden increases this pressure. Such erosion of the trust element in Fukuyama's [20] social capital theory paralyzes the capacity for spontaneous social organization. The collapse of the cooperation mechanisms described by Coleman [22,73] weakens not only the family institution at the micro level but also the state's capacity to mobilize societal resources at the macro level.

Findings regarding protective measures based on women's statements reveal that the delicate balance between the presumption of innocence and the need for emergency protection has been disrupted. Law No. 6284, which entered into force in 2012, introduced the principle that "women's statements are essential" on the basis of the Istanbul Convention. According to Ministry of Justice data, approximately 2 million people have been evicted from their homes under this law in the last 5 years. The fact that 83 percent of participants believe these practices adversely affect men, and that 76 percent indicate the presumption of innocence is violated, demonstrates that the perception of legal security has been damaged. The traumatic experiences of men evicted from home, disconnection from family, and in some cases situations of homelessness expose the secondary victimizations created by the system. This situation erodes the societal resilience in Morgenthau's [6] national morale concept.

The comparative analysis of Figure 1 and Figure 2 confirms the consistency of findings presented through different visualization techniques. Figure 1 in bar graph format clearly shows inter-question differences, while Figure 2 in radial graph format emphasizes the general pattern and similarity between the two samples. Both visualizations reveal that participants largely gave negative responses to all questions and that this negativity is more pronounced among Turkish citizens in Europe on some questions.

The sevenfold increase in divorce rates reveals the dramatic dimension of structural transformation in the family institution. The divorce/marriage ratio rising from 4.4 percent in 1980 to 32.9 percent in 2024 means that one in every three marriages results in divorce. The increase of this ratio to 17.0 percent after the 2001 Civil Code reform and to 20.4 percent after Law No. 6284 in 2012 proves the direct effect of legal regulations on social structure. According to TÜİK data, the number of divorced couples rose from 173,342 in 2023 to 187,343 in 2024, and the crude divorce rate reached 2.19 per thousand, the highest rate in the history of the Republic. Eighty-eight-point six percent of divorces stem from



incompatibility, and experts indicate that economic hardships are among the main factors increasing this rate. When evaluated in terms of Walt's (1987) balance of threat theory, this internal instability directs the state's security perceptions inward, pushing external threat assessments to a secondary plane.

Inter-gender polarization findings demonstrate that the social fabric has been fragmented at the most fundamental level. The fact that 77 percent of participants indicate that the legislation increases gender-based tension, and that 78 percent indicate positive discrimination in favor of women adversely affects the family institution, reveals the traumatic dimension of identity transformation in Wendt's [15] social constructivist perspective. In parallel with this process, Turkey's demographic trajectory presents a pattern consistent with what is termed "post-transition low fertility regime" in the international literature. As observed in Southern European and East Asian countries experiencing similar transition processes, economic rationality, rising education levels, women's participation in the workforce, urban living costs, and changes in family formation motivations are reshaping fertility behaviors. In the Turkish context, the rising age of marriage and the decrease in the number of children after marriage show parallelism with demographic trends. These data reveal that fertility cannot be explained solely by economic fluctuations; cultural transformation, individualism tendencies, and long-term future expectations are also determinative. When evaluating the direction and scope of family policies in Turkey, these structural factors must be taken into account holistically [11-14]. Men perceiving women as potential threats and women perceiving men as potential perpetrators shatters societal trust networks. This mutual distrust spiral systematically weakens the soft power elements in Keohane and Nye's [19] complex interdependence paradigm.

Findings regarding the situation of children dramatically demonstrate the intergenerational transmission of trauma created by the legislation. The fact that 85 percent of participants indicate that the legislation adversely affects the best interests of children, 81 percent indicate that children's psychological conditions are harmed, and 79 percent indicate that the stable family environment necessary for healthy development cannot be provided, proves that future generations will also be affected by this crisis. International meta-analysis findings show that there is a relationship of  $OR \approx 1.27$  between alcohol use and domestic violence, and that physical violence victimization is observed at 38.1 percent among problem gamblers. The risk of alcohol use disorder after divorce increases at  $HR \approx 5.98$  in men and  $HR \approx 7.29$  in women. The risk of turning to substance use in adolescence increases approximately 4-fold among those exposed to abuse in childhood, creating intergenerational trauma transmission. The failure of the joint parenting model to function creates permanent damage in children's identity development and social adaptation processes. This situation indicates the long-term erosion of internal extraction capacity in Ripsman, Taliaferro, and Lobell's [18] neoclassical realist synthesis.

Findings regarding moral values reveal deep erosion in the societal value system. The fact that 76 percent of participants indicate that the legislation adversely affects individual and societal morality demonstrates the collapse of the normative order. The decrease of this rate in Turkey to 57 percent among Turkish citizens in Europe proves that social transformation in Turkey is experienced more intensely than in the diaspora. When evaluated in terms of Finnemore and Sikkink's [27] norm life cycle model, it is seen that global norms encounter local resistance and cannot be internalized.

Findings regarding societal peace demonstrate that social capital has been eroded at a critical level. The fact that 80 percent of participants believe the legislation would adversely affect societal peace reveals that collective action capacity has been paralyzed. Economic hardships and unemployment are among the factors increasing intra-family unrest. Livelihood difficulties and debt burden make it difficult for families to sustain their marriages. The societal mobilization mechanism in Tilly's (1990) state formation theory has become dysfunctional due to this unrest. The legitimacy of modern state's basic functions such as tax collection and military conscription rests on societal consent. As indicated in Question 11 of Table 1, the fact that 79 percent of participants believe alimony-motivated marriages cannot be prevented demonstrates the extent of distrust in the legal system.

Findings regarding foreign policy capacity strongly confirm the main hypothesis of the research. Sixty-seven percent of participants in Turkey and 76 percent of Turkish citizens in Europe indicate that unrest stemming from family law adversely affects foreign policy capacity. The diaspora's higher-rate perception of this effect is a critical finding. The outside perspective more clearly sees how Turkey's internal problems weaken its international image and diplomatic effectiveness. This finding empirically proves the thesis in Putnam's two-level game model that the narrowing of domestic political consensus reduces negotiating power.

The perception-reality contradiction regarding homicides reveals the dramatic failure in societal perception management. Despite 81 percent of participants believing that femicides are more common, 2024 data show 524 male and 153 female homicides occurred. In the 2018-2024 period, a total of 5,576 male and 1,274 female homicide victims occurred. The formation of the exact opposite perception in public opinion despite male homicides being 3.4 times more than female homicides emphasizes the importance of Jervis's [24] perception and misperception theory. The fact that 50 percent of participants view this situation as a trap of globalist structures and 20 percent believe in conspiracy theories demonstrates that rational evaluation capacity has weakened.

Temporal change findings prove that problems have progressively deepened. The emergence of results on average two points more negative in Turkey and half a point more negative in Europe in the second phase (2024-2025) demonstrates that societal trauma has become chronic. This worsening trend reveals that the micro-meso-macro interaction in Hudson's [25] multi-level for-

eign policy analysis has strengthened over time. The pandemic period and economic uncertainties have increased stress on the family institution [75,76]. The record-breaking divorces in 2024 demonstrate the effect of economic factors. This situation proves that our sixth hypothesis (conditional effect) has been confirmed at approximately 85 percent.

### Demographic Trends and Strategic Consequences

Research findings reveal the relationship between legal regulations and demographic changes. The decline in the population growth rate from 2.6 percent to 0.34 percent in the 2001-2024 period, the regression of the fertility rate from 2.38 children to 1.51 children, and the sevenfold increase in divorce rates are interconnected processes. The eviction of approximately 2 million people from their homes under Law No. 6284 in the last 5 years demonstrates the prevalence of the system. Economic hardships and harmful habits (alcohol, gambling, drugs) negatively affect this process. The decline in the population growth rate may affect the state's human resources, economic productivity, and strategic capacity in the long term. The theoretical contribution of this research is its empirical demonstration of the mechanism of transformation from micro-level legal regulations to macro-level strategic outcomes. In the first stage, regulations in family law legislation weaken the family institution by creating a perception of societal injustice. In the second stage, the weakening family institution reduces social solidarity by eroding social capital. In the third stage, diminished solidarity reduces foreign policy effectiveness by constraining the state's internal extraction capacity, narrowing the win-set, and weakening its soft power. Each stage of this mechanism has been strongly supported by research findings. The fact that 67 percent of participants (76 percent in Europe) indicate that unrest stemming from family law adversely affects foreign policy capacity is empirical evidence of this causal chain.

The perception of an "alimony trap" created by the indefinite alimony practice has transformed the institution of marriage into an area of economic risk. The fact that 90 percent of men perceive this practice as a threat demonstrates that the trust element in Fukuyama's [20] social capital theory has been eroded at a critical level. The fact that 79 percent of participants believe alimony-motivated marriages cannot be prevented reveals that institutional trust in the legal system has collapsed. During economic crisis periods, the alimony burden creates additional financial pressure for families. This trust erosion paralyzes the spontaneous social organization capacity described by Coleman and weakens the state's ability to mobilize societal resources [73,22]. The widespread reactions that head of families indirectly affected by fear of indefinite alimony cannot marry off their daughters demonstrate the intergenerational dimension of the problem.

Findings regarding protective measures based on women's statements reveal that the delicate balance between the presumption of innocence and the need for emergency protection has been disrupted. The fact that 83 percent of participants believe these practices adversely affect men, and that 76 percent indicate the

presumption of innocence is violated, demonstrates that the perception of legal security has been damaged. The disconnection of evicted men from their families, their inability to find a place to stay at night, and in some cases their homelessness reveals the depth of secondary victimizations created by the system. This situation erodes the societal resilience in Morgenthau's [6] national morale concept and weakens the state's legitimacy to demand sacrifice during crisis periods.

The sevenfold increase in divorce rates proves the dramatic dimension of structural transformation in the family institution. As seen in detail in Figure 4, the divorce/marriage ratio rising from 4.4 percent in 1980 to 32.9 percent in 2024 means that one in every three marriages results in divorce. The increase of this ratio to 17.0 percent after the 2001 Civil Code reform, to 20.4 percent after Law No. 6284 in 2012, and to 32.9 percent in 2024 demonstrates the direct effect of legal regulations on social structure. When evaluated in terms of Walt's (1987) balance of threat theory, this internal instability directs the state's security perceptions inward, pushing external threat assessments to a secondary plane.

Inter-gender polarization demonstrates that the social fabric has been fragmented at the most fundamental level. As clearly seen in Question 8 of Table 1, the fact that 77 percent of participants indicate that the legislation increases gender-based tension reveals the traumatic dimension of identity transformation in Wendt's [15] social constructivist perspective. The fact that 78 percent believe positive discrimination in favor of women adversely affects the family institution demonstrates the rupture in the perception of social justice. This mutual distrust spiral systematically weakens the soft power elements in Keohane and Nye's [19] complex interdependence paradigm. Turkey's ineffectiveness in values diplomacy and normative power projection is a direct consequence of this polarization.

Findings regarding the situation of children dramatically reveal how the legislation affects the most vulnerable group. The fact that 85 percent of participants indicate that the legislation adversely affects the best interests of children, 81 percent indicate that children's psychological conditions are harmed, and 79 percent indicate that the stable family environment necessary for healthy development cannot be provided demonstrates the extent of intergenerational trauma. The failure of the joint parenting model to function creates permanent damage in children's identity development and social adaptation processes. This situation indicates the long-term erosion of internal extraction capacity in Ripsman, Taliaferro, and Lobell's [18] neoclassical realist synthesis.

Findings regarding societal peace prove that social capital has been eroded at a critical level. The fact that 80 percent of participants believe the legislation would adversely affect societal peace demonstrates that collective action capacity has been paralyzed. The fact that 76 percent indicate the legislation adversely affects individual and societal morality reveals the collapse of the norma-

tive order. The societal mobilization mechanism in Tilly's (1990) state formation theory has become dysfunctional due to this unrest. Since the legitimacy of modern state's basic functions such as tax collection and military conscription rests on societal consent, this loss of consent weakens the state's fundamental capacities.

The dramatic contradiction between perception and reality regarding homicides reveals the failure in societal perception management. Despite 81 percent of participants believing that femicides are more common, a total of 5,576 male and 1,274 female homicide victims occurred in the 2018-2024 period. The fact that male homicides are 3.4 times more than female homicides demonstrates how much objective reality has been distorted. Within the framework of Jervis's [24] perception and misperception theory, this distorted perception affects the way states evaluate each other and makes it difficult for Turkey to be perceived as a rational actor. The fact that 20 percent of participants view femicides as "a project of globalist structures" demonstrates that conspiracy theories have become widespread and rational evaluation capacity has weakened.

Temporal change findings prove that problems have progressively deepened. The emergence of second phase results on average two points more negative in Turkey and half a point more negative in Europe compared to the first phase demonstrates that societal trauma has become chronic. This worsening trend reveals that the micro-meso-macro interaction in Hudson's [25] multi-level foreign policy analysis has strengthened over time. The increase in stress on the family institution during the pandemic period and economic uncertainties demonstrates that internal vulnerabilities deepen during crisis periods. This situation proves that our sixth hypothesis (conditional effect) has been confirmed at approximately 85 percent.

The joint evaluation of Figures 3 and 4 clearly shows the breaking points created by the legal reforms in 2001 and 2012 in divorce rates. These graphs are visual evidence of the direct effect of legal regulations on social structure. Based on research findings, the need for urgent reform clearly emerges. It is recommended that the indefinite alimony practice be limited to reasonable periods, that alimony be proportionally determined according to the parties' economic conditions and tied to objective criteria. Mechanisms for reviewing the alimony burden during economic crisis periods need to be developed. In measures based on women's statements, the balance between the need for emergency protection and the presumption of innocence needs to be re-established, deterrent mechanisms against false statements need to be developed, and guarantee systems need to be created to prevent victimizations. Strengthening the legal infrastructure of the joint parenting model, making arrangements to ensure the preservation of children's relationships with both parents after divorce, and prioritizing the best interests of children in all decisions are of critical importance.

Recommendations for policymakers require a comprehensive strategy for rebuilding societal consensus. Increasing economic in-

centives that strengthen the family institution and expanding programs combating unemployment and poverty should be priorities. It is recommended that pre-marital counseling services be made mandatory and that mediation mechanisms be prioritized in divorce processes. The establishment of societal dialogue platforms that will re-establish trust between genders, the development of constitutional guarantees that will ensure balanced protection of women's and men's rights, and the reorganization of educational curricula that will reduce gender polarization are necessary. It is imperative that the principle of objective information in media and public opinion formation processes be given legal guarantee, that the use of homicide statistics as a tool of sexist propaganda be prevented, and that a scientific data-based approach be adopted in societal perception management. Programs combating harmful habits such as alcohol, gambling, and drugs need to be strengthened, and integrated support mechanisms need to be developed in cases carrying the risk of domestic violence.

At the academic level, the new field opened by this research should be expanded. It is recommended that the relationship between family law and foreign policy effectiveness be researched comparatively in different countries, and that the relationship between social solidarity and foreign policy performance be tested in countries experiencing similar legal transformations. Through longitudinal research, the effects of reform processes on social solidarity need to be monitored, comparative analysis of different reform models needs to be conducted, and best practices need to be identified. Systematic analysis of changes in family structure during economic crisis periods is recommended. The establishment of interdisciplinary research centers and the development of comprehensive analyses through cooperation of the fields of law, sociology, international relations, psychology, and economics will enable better understanding of the multidimensional nature of the problem.

The 3 tables and 6 figures presented in this research systematically reveal the empirical evidence of the causal chain extending from micro-level legal regulations to macro-level strategic outcomes; they systematically prove the reliability and consistency of findings. The high rate of negative responses to all 20 questions in Table 1 (more than 70 percent of responses being negative), the dramatic increase in divorce trends in Table 2 and Figures 3-4 (7-fold increase in divorce rates), and the contradiction of homicide statistics with perception in Table 3 and Figures 5-6 strongly confirm the research hypotheses. The visual presentations in Figures 1-6 clearly reveal different dimensions of this evidence. In conclusion, this research makes an original and critical contribution to the international relations literature by systematically revealing the effects of family law legislation on foreign policy effectiveness through social solidarity. Our research, which empirically proves the causal chain extending from micro-level legal regulations to macro-level strategic outcomes, establishes a new research paradigm on domestic-foreign policy interaction. Our findings prove that states must first ensure internal societal consensus to increase their foreign policy effectiveness, and that fair



and balanced family law regulations lie at the foundation of this consensus. The effects of economic hardships, positive discrimination practices, and harmful habits on family structure must be taken into account. Considering the long-term consequences of demographic trends, the need for reform is clear. Turkey's claim to be a regional power and its goal of being an effective actor in the global system can only be realized through strengthening the family institution, rebuilding social solidarity, and establishing trust between genders. Therefore, family law reform is not merely a matter of legal regulation but a vital strategic imperative for national security and foreign policy effectiveness.

## Conclusion and Recommendations

This research has systematically revealed through which mechanisms the perception of injustice regarding family law in Turkey weakens social solidarity and to what extent this weakening reduces Turkey's negotiating power, deterrence capacity, and diplomatic maneuvering space in foreign policy. The fundamental finding of the research is that 85 percent of participants believe that family law legislation violates the Constitution's rule of law and equality principles. This finding represents the concrete manifestation of win-set contraction in Putnam's [1] two-level game theory in the Turkish case. The contracting win-set leads to Turkey's loss of flexibility in international negotiations, increased pressure to make concessions, and diminished capacity to achieve optimal outcomes.

The research's three-stage causal mechanism has been clearly confirmed. In the first stage, regulations in family law legislation weaken the family institution by creating a perception of societal injustice. In the second stage, the weakening family institution reduces social solidarity by eroding social capital. In the third stage, diminished solidarity reduces foreign policy effectiveness by constraining the state's internal extraction capacity, narrowing the win-set, and weakening its soft power. Each stage of this mechanism has been strongly supported by research findings. The fact that 67 percent of participants (76 percent in Europe) indicate that unrest stemming from family law adversely affects foreign policy capacity is empirical evidence of this causal chain.

The perception of an "alimony trap" created by the indefinite alimony practice has transformed the institution of marriage into an area of economic risk. The fact that 90 percent of men perceive this practice as a threat demonstrates that the trust element in Fukuyama's [20] social capital theory has been eroded at a critical level. The fact that 79 percent of participants believe alimony-motivated marriages cannot be prevented reveals that institutional trust in the legal system has collapsed. This trust erosion paralyzes the spontaneous social organization capacity described by Coleman and weakens the state's ability to mobilize societal resources [22,73]. The destructive effects of harmful habits on the family institution deepen this trust erosion. The meta-analysis by Devries et al. [30] demonstrates that harmful alcohol use increases partner violence risk by 27 percent and that alcohol use disorder risk increases by 25 percent among women exposed to

violence. Research by Dowling et al. [33] found that 38.1 percent of problem gamblers are partner violence victims and 36.5 percent are perpetrators. The Swedish population registry study by Kendler et al. [31] revealed that the risk of receiving a first-time alcohol use disorder diagnosis after divorce increases approximately 7-fold in women and 6-fold in men. Seventy-one percent of research participants indicate that harmful habits such as alcohol, gambling, and drugs trigger domestic violence, and 68 percent indicate that these habits are among the main causes of divorces. The widespread reactions that head of families indirectly affected by fear of indefinite alimony cannot marry off their daughters demonstrate the intergenerational dimension of the problem.

Findings regarding protective measures based on women's statements reveal that the delicate balance between the presumption of innocence and the need for emergency protection has been disrupted. The fact that 83 percent of participants believe these practices adversely affect men, and that 76 percent indicate the presumption of innocence is violated, demonstrates that the perception of legal security has been damaged. The disconnection of evicted men from their families, their inability to find a place to stay at night, and in some cases their homelessness reveals the depth of secondary victimizations created by the system. This situation erodes the societal resilience in Morgenthau's [6] national morale concept and weakens the state's legitimacy to demand sacrifice during crisis periods. Sixty-four percent of participants believe that Law No. 6284 is inadequate in preventing actual violence cases related to harmful habits, and 59 percent believe the law has become an instrument of abuse rather than protecting actual victims. This paradoxical situation demonstrates the effectiveness problems of legal protection mechanisms.

The sevenfold increase in divorce rates proves the dramatic dimension of structural transformation in the family institution. As seen in detail in Figure 4, the divorce/marriage ratio rising from 4.4 percent in 1980 to 32.9 percent in 2024 means that one in every three marriages results in divorce. The increase of this ratio to 17.0 percent after the 2001 Civil Code reform, to 20.4 percent after Law No. 6284 in 2012, and to 32.9 percent in 2024 demonstrates the direct effect of legal regulations on social structure. The pressure of economic hardships on the family institution has accelerated this process. According to TÜİK data, in the 2018-2024 period, real income loss exceeded 35 percent, the unemployment rate remained above 10 percent, and the ratio of household debt to GDP rose from 17 percent to 24 percent. Seventy-three percent of participants indicate that economic insecurity adversely affects views toward the marriage institution, and 69 percent indicate that economic risks combined with indefinite alimony concerns lead to marriage avoidance. Research by McLanahan and Percheski [55] demonstrated that income inequality reduces marriage rates by 25-30 percent. Amato's [56] findings revealed that financial difficulties double the divorce risk. When evaluated in terms of Walt's (1987) balance of threat theory, this internal instability directs the state's security perceptions inward, pushing external threat assessments to a secondary plane.



Inter-gender polarization demonstrates that the social fabric has been fragmented at the most fundamental level. As clearly seen in Question 8 of Table 1, the fact that 77 percent of participants indicate that the legislation increases gender-based tension reveals the traumatic dimension of identity transformation in Wendt's [15] social constructivist perspective. The fact that 78 percent believe positive discrimination in favor of women adversely affects the family institution demonstrates the rupture in the perception of social justice. This mutual distrust spiral systematically weakens the soft power elements in Keohane and Nye's [19] complex interdependence paradigm. Turkey's ineffectiveness in values diplomacy and normative power projection is a direct consequence of this polarization.

Findings regarding the situation of children dramatically reveal how the legislation affects the most vulnerable group. The fact that 85 percent of participants indicate that the legislation adversely affects the best interests of children, 81 percent indicate that children's psychological conditions are harmed, and 79 percent indicate that the stable family environment necessary for healthy development cannot be provided demonstrates the extent of intergenerational trauma. The failure of the joint parenting model to function creates permanent damage in children's identity development and social adaptation processes. The longitudinal study by Sousa et al. [77] demonstrates that children growing up in domestic violence environments have elevated risk of turning to substance use, relationship problems, and developing aggressive behavior in later years. According to Hacettepe University research, 61 percent of women who experienced violence witnessed domestic violence during childhood. These findings are concrete evidence of intergenerational trauma transmission. This situation indicates the long-term erosion of internal extraction capacity in Ripsman, Taliaferro, and Lobell's [18] neoclassical realist synthesis.

Findings regarding societal peace prove that social capital has been eroded at a critical level. The fact that 80 percent of participants believe the legislation would adversely affect societal peace demonstrates that collective action capacity has been paralyzed. The fact that 76 percent indicate the legislation adversely affects individual and societal morality reveals the collapse of the normative order. The contribution of economic hardships to societal unrest is of critical importance. In the 2018-2024 period, real income loss in Turkey exceeded 35 percent, the unemployment rate remained above 10 percent, and inflation's devastation of purchasing power placed families under serious economic pressure. In interviews, it was found that divorce tendency increased by 58 percent among families under economic stress, and intra-family conflicts increased by 43 percent during periods when household debt rose. Harmful habits deepen this process; participants observed that gambling addiction leads to economic losses and alcohol and substance use leads to increased domestic violence. The societal mobilization mechanism in Tilly's (1990) state formation theory has become dysfunctional due to this unrest. Since the legitimacy of modern state's basic functions such as tax collection

and military conscription rests on societal consent, this loss of consent weakens the state's fundamental capacities.

The dramatic contradiction between perception and reality regarding homicides reveals the failure in societal perception management. Despite 81 percent of participants believing that femicides are more common, a total of 5,576 male and 1,274 female homicide victims occurred in the 2018-2024 period. The fact that male homicides are 3.4 times more than female homicides demonstrates how much objective reality has been distorted. Within the framework of Jervis's [24] perception and misperception theory, this distorted perception affects the way states evaluate each other and makes it difficult for Turkey to be perceived as a rational actor. The fact that 20 percent of participants view femicides as "a project of globalist structures" demonstrates that conspiracy theories have become widespread and rational evaluation capacity has weakened.

Temporal change findings prove that problems have progressively deepened. The emergence of second phase results on average two points more negative in Turkey and half a point more negative in Europe compared to the first phase demonstrates that societal trauma has become chronic. This worsening trend reveals that the micro-meso-macro interaction in Hudson's [25] multi-level foreign policy analysis has strengthened over time. The increase in stress on the family institution during the pandemic period and economic uncertainties demonstrates that internal vulnerabilities deepen during crisis periods. Particularly in the 2020-2024 period, participants widely expressed that pandemic-related income losses, unemployment increases, and social isolation intensified intra-family tensions. According to TÜİK data, the number of divorces reached a record 184,340 in 2024. The combination of economic insecurity and indefinite alimony concerns causes the marriage institution to be perceived as an area of economic risk. This situation proves that our sixth hypothesis (conditional effect) has been confirmed at approximately 85 percent. The joint evaluation of Figures 3 and 4 clearly shows the breaking points created by the legal reforms in 2001 and 2012 in divorce rates. The trend seen in these graphs presents quantitative evidence of the direct effect of legal regulations on social structure. The acceleration of the increase in divorce rates immediately after legal reform dates strengthens the causality relationship.

Based on research findings, the need for urgent reform clearly emerges. It is recommended that the indefinite alimony practice be limited to reasonable periods, that alimony be proportionally determined according to the parties' economic conditions and tied to objective criteria. In measures based on women's statements, the balance between the need for emergency protection and the presumption of innocence needs to be re-established, deterrent mechanisms against false statements need to be developed, and guarantee systems need to be created to prevent victimizations. Strengthening the legal infrastructure of the joint parenting model, making arrangements to ensure the preservation of children's relationships with both parents after divorce,

and prioritizing the best interests of children in all decisions are of critical importance. The development of integrated programs for combating harmful habits such as alcohol, gambling, and drugs is recommended. Taking into account the WHO's (2024) SAFER alcohol policy framework and the gambling regulation recommendations of Dowling et al. [33], the establishment of early detection mechanisms, the integration of addiction treatment services with family support programs, and the expansion of risk screening systems are necessary.

Recommendations for policymakers require a comprehensive strategy for rebuilding societal consensus. Increasing economic incentives that strengthen the family institution, making pre-marital counseling services mandatory, and prioritizing mediation mechanisms in divorce processes are recommended. Social security measures that will reduce the pressure of economic hardships on the family institution are of critical importance. Expanding the scope and duration of unemployment insurance, restructuring programs to alleviate household debt burden, strengthening economic support mechanisms for low-income families, and increasing rental assistance and child benefits are recommended. Particularly during economic crisis periods, protecting families' economic security should be adopted as a priority policy for the stability of the family institution. The establishment of societal dialogue platforms that will re-establish trust between genders, the development of constitutional guarantees that will ensure balanced protection of women's and men's rights, and the reorganization of educational curricula that will reduce gender polarization are necessary. It is imperative that the principle of objective information in media and public opinion formation processes be given legal guarantee, that the use of homicide statistics as a tool of sexist propaganda be prevented, and that a scientific data-based approach be adopted in societal perception management.

Turkey's demographic future clearly reveals the need for active and multi-layered policy designs. Rather than short-term incentives, the expansion of childcare services, the strengthening of women's work-life balance, the development of housing and employment supports for young adults, and the support of intra-family social security mechanisms may positively affect fertility preferences in the medium and long term. Additionally, it is important that social policies be designed in a manner compatible with the sphere of individual freedom and that a holistic welfare system supporting the family be established. Turkey's ability to achieve sustainable demographic balance depends on strengthening societal trust and future expectations as much as economic stability.

At the academic level, the new field opened by this research should be expanded. It is recommended that the relationship between family law and foreign policy effectiveness be researched comparatively in different countries, and that the relationship between social solidarity and foreign policy performance be tested in countries experiencing similar legal transformations. Through longitudinal research, the effects of reform processes on social solidarity need to be monitored, comparative analysis of different reform models needs to be conducted, and best practices need

to be identified. The establishment of interdisciplinary research centers and the development of comprehensive analyses through cooperation of the fields of law, sociology, international relations, psychology, and economics will enable better understanding of the multidimensional nature of the problem.

The 3 tables and 6 figures presented in this research systematically reveal the empirical evidence of the causal chain extending from micro-level legal regulations to macro-level strategic outcomes; they systematically prove the reliability and consistency of findings. The high rate of negative responses to all 20 questions in Table 1 (more than 70 percent of responses being negative), the dramatic increase in divorce trends in Table 2 and Figures 3-4 (7-fold increase in divorce rates), and the contradiction of homicide statistics with perception in Table 3 and Figures 5-6 strongly confirm the research hypotheses. The visual presentations in Figures 1-6 clearly reveal different dimensions of this evidence.

In conclusion, this research makes an original and critical contribution to the international relations literature by systematically revealing the effects of family law legislation on foreign policy effectiveness through social solidarity. Our research, which empirically proves the causal chain extending from micro-level legal regulations to macro-level strategic outcomes, establishes a new research paradigm on domestic-foreign policy interaction. Our findings prove that states must first ensure internal societal consensus to increase their foreign policy effectiveness, and that fair and balanced family law regulations lie at the foundation of this consensus. The systematic effect of harmful habits [30,31,33], economic hardships [55,56] and sexist regulations on family dissolution demonstrates that family law reform requires a comprehensive and multidimensional approach. The decline in the population growth rate from 2.6 percent in the 2000s to 1.4 percent in 2024, the increase in the divorce/marriage ratio from 4.4 percent in 1980 to 32.9 percent in 2024, and the erosion of societal trust between genders are strategic threats requiring urgent intervention in terms of national security and sustainable development. Turkey's claim to be a regional power and its goal of being an effective actor in the global system can only be realized through strengthening the family institution, rebuilding social solidarity, and establishing trust between genders. Therefore, family law reform is not merely a matter of legal regulation but a vital strategic imperative for national security and foreign policy effectiveness.

## References

1. Putnam RD (1988) Diplomacy and domestic politics: The logic of two-level games. *International Organization* 42(3): 427–460.
2. Kearney MS (2023) *The two-parent privilege: How Americans stopped getting married and started falling behind*. University of Chicago Press.
3. Wałęga A, Wałęga G, Kowalski R (2022) *Economic well-being and household debt*. Routledge.
4. Akçay Ü (2024) *Krizin gölgesinde en uzun beş yıl (2018–2023): Türkiye'de kriz, siyaset ve sermaye*. Doğan Kitap.
5. Yılmazçoban AM (2020) *Değişen Türkiye'de evlilik ilişkileri ve aile yapısı*. Çizgi Kitabevi.

6. Morgenthau HJ (2006) Politics among nations: The struggle for power and peace (7th ed.). McGraw-Hill.
7. Devaney J, Bradbury-Jones C, Macy RJ, Øverlien C, Holt S (Eds.) (2021) The Routledge international handbook of domestic violence and abuse. Routledge.
8. Begun AL, Murray MM (Eds.) (2020) The Routledge handbook of social work and addictive behaviors. Routledge.
9. Saunders JB, Nutt DJ, Higuchi S, Assanangkornchai S, Bowden-Jones H, et al. (2024) Oxford handbook of addiction medicine (3rd ed.). Oxford University Press.
10. Bischof G, Velleman R, Orford J, Nadkarni A, Tiburcio M (Eds.) (2025) Families affected by addiction: A handbook (1st ed.). Springer.
11. Jongerden J (Ed.) (2021) The Routledge handbook on contemporary Turkey. Routledge.
12. Tezcür GM (Ed.) (2022) The Oxford handbook of Turkish politics. Oxford University Press.
13. Dildar Y (2025) Examining the rise in marriage dissolution in Turkey: Demographic shifts and gender dynamics. *Social Politics: International Studies in Gender, State & Society*, jxaf 10: 1–29.
14. Keskin F, Çavlin A (2023) Cohort fertility heterogeneity during the fertility decline period in Turkey. *Journal of Biosocial Science* 55(4): 779–794.
15. Wendt A (1999) Social theory of international politics. Cambridge University Press.
16. Bhalotra S, Kambhampati U, Rawlings S, Siddique Z (2020) Intimate partner violence: The influence of job opportunities for men and women (Policy Research Working Paper No. 9118). World Bank.
17. Sanz-Barbero B, Linares C, Vives-Cases C (2015) Intimate partner violence among women in Spain: The impact of unemployment and income inequalities. *European Journal of Public Health* 25(6): 1105–1111.
18. Ripsman NM, Taliaferro JW, Lobell SE (2016) Neoclassical realist theory of international politics. Oxford University Press.
19. Keohane RO, Nye JS (2001) Power and interdependence (3rd ed.). Longman.
20. Fukuyama F (1995) Trust: The social virtues and the creation of prosperity. Free Press.
21. Coleman JS (1990) Foundations of social theory. Harvard University Press.
22. Coleman JS (1988) Social capital in the creation of human capital. *American Journal of Sociology*. 94(Supplement): S95–S120.
23. Buzan B, Wæver O, de Wilde J (1998) Security: A new framework for analysis. Lynne Rienner.
24. Jervis R (1976) Perception and misperception in international politics. Princeton University Press.
25. Hudson VM (2014) Foreign policy analysis: Classic and contemporary theory (2nd ed.). Rowman & Littlefield.
26. McDermott R (2004) Political psychology in international relations. University of Michigan Press.
27. Finnemore M, Sikkink K (1998) International norm dynamics and political change. *International Organization* 52(4): 887–917.
28. Nye JS (2004) Soft power: The means to success in world politics. PublicAffairs.
29. Amato PR, Booth A (1997) A generation at risk: Growing up in an era of family upheaval. Harvard University Press.
30. Devries KM, Child JC, Bacchus LJ, Mak J, Falder G, Graham K, et al. (2014) Intimate partner violence victimization and alcohol consumption in women: A systematic review and meta-analysis. *Addiction* 109(3): 379–391.
31. Kendler KS, Sundquist K, Ohlsson H, Sundquist J, Li X (2017) Divorce and the onset of alcohol use disorder: A Swedish population-based longitudinal cohort and co-relative study. *American Journal of Psychiatry* 174(5): 481–488.
32. World Health Organization (2024) Global status report on alcohol and health and treatment of substance use disorders. World Health Organization.
33. Dowling N, Suomi A, Jackson A, Lavis T, Patford J, et al. (2016) Problem gambling and intimate partner violence: A systematic review and meta-analysis. *Trauma, Violence & Abuse*, 17(1): 43–61.
34. Finnemore M (1996) National interests in international society. Cornell University Press.
35. Finnemore M, Sikkink K (1998) International norm dynamics and political change. *International Organization*, 52(4): 887–917.
36. Charrad MM (2001) States and women's rights: The making of postcolonial Tunisia, Algeria, and Morocco. University of California Press.
37. Merry SE (2006) Human rights and gender violence: Translating international law into local justice. University of Chicago Press.
38. Schweller RL (1998) Deadly imbalances: Tripolarity and Hitler's strategy of world conquest. Columbia University Press.
39. Schweller RL (2014) Unanswered threats: A neoclassical realist theory of under balancing. In *The Realism Reader* pp. 159–201. Routledge.
40. Sterling-Folker J (2002) Theories of international cooperation and the primacy of anarchy: Explaining U.S. international policy-making after Bretton Woods. State University of New York Press.
41. Miller B, Kagan K (1997) The Great powers and regional conflicts: Eastern Europe and the Balkans from the post-napoleonic era to the post-cold war era. *International Studies Quarterly* 41(1): 51–85.
42. Gençcan ÖU (2025) Boşanma hukuku (13. bs.). Yetkin Yayınları.
43. Dural M, Ögüz T, Gümüş MA (2025) Türk özel hukuku: Cilt III—Aile hukuku (20. baskı). Filiz Kitabevi.
44. Akıntürk T, Ateş D (2024) Türk Medenî Hukuku: Cilt II—Aile Hukuku (25. baskı). Beta.
45. Hacettepe Üniversitesi Nüfus Etütleri Enstitüsü (HÜNEE) (2014) Türkiye'de kadına yönelik aile içi şiddet araştırması: Özet rapor. T.C. Aile ve Sosyal Politikalar Bakanlığı, Kadının Statüsü Genel Müdürlüğü.
46. Boele-Woelki K, Ferrand F, González Beilfuss C, Jänner-Jareborg M, Lowe N, et al. (2019) Principles of European family law regarding property, maintenance and succession rights of couples in de facto unions (European Family Law Series, 46). Intersentia.
47. Herring J (2022) Family law (11th ed.). Oxford University Press.
48. Katz SN (2003) Family law in America. Oxford University Press.
49. Posen BR (1984) The sources of military doctrine. Cornell University Press.
50. Aronson E (2018) The social animal (12th ed.). W. W. Norton.
51. Cialdini RB (2009/2021) Influence: Science and practice / Influence: The psychology of persuasion (rev. eds.). HarperCollins.
52. Esping-Andersen G (1990) The three worlds of welfare capitalism. Princeton University Press.
53. Esping-Andersen G (2009) The incomplete revolution: Adapting to

women's new roles. Polity.

54. Castles FG, Leibfried S, Lewis J, Obinger H, Pierson C (Eds.) (2010) The Oxford handbook of the welfare state. Oxford University Press.
55. McLanahan S, Percheski C (2008) Family structure and the reproduction of inequalities. *Annual Review of Sociology* 34: 257–276.
56. Amato PR (2010) Research on divorce: Continuing trends and new developments. *Journal of Marriage and Family* 72(3): 650–666.
57. Allison GT, Zelikow P (1999) *Essence of decision: Explaining the Cuban Missile Crisis* (2nd ed.). Longman.
58. King G, Keohane RO, Verba S (1994) *Designing social inquiry: Scientific inference in qualitative research*. Princeton University Press.
59. Shadish WR, Cook TD, Campbell TD (2002) *Experimental and quasi-experimental designs for generalized causal inference*. Houghton Mifflin.
60. Evans PB, Jacobson HK, Putnam RD (Eds.) (1993) *Double-edged diplomacy: International bargaining and domestic politics*. University of California Press.
61. Connell RW, Messerschmidt JW (2022) *Hegemonic masculinity: Formations, resistance, and transformation*. Polity Press.
62. Hamel J, Nicholls TL (Eds.) (2022) *Family interventions in domestic violence: A strengths-based approach*. Springer.
63. Straus MA, Gelles RJ (2021) *Physical violence in American families: Risk factors and adaptations to violence in 8,145 families*. Routledge.
64. Graham K, Livingston M (Eds.) (2023) *Alcohol and violence: Epidemiology, policy and practice*. Routledge.
65. Hakim C (2021) *New rules: Choosing sex, love, and family in the 21st century*. Oxford University Press.
66. Baron D, Giddens A (2023) *The transformation of intimacy: Sexuality, love and eroticism in modern societies* (Updated ed.). Polity Press.
67. Şan MK (2025) Türkiye’de toplumsal kurumlara yönelik güven ve suç korkusu arasındaki bağ: Sosyal sermaye. *Karamanoğlu Mehmetbey Üniversitesi Sosyal ve Ekonomik Araştırmalar Dergisi*, ileri çevrimiçi.
68. Babor TF, Casswell S, Graham K, Huckle T, Livingston M, et al. (2023) *Alcohol: No ordinary commodity—Research and public policy* (3rd ed.). Oxford University Press.
69. OECD (2022a) *Building trust to reinforce democracy: Main findings from the 2021 OECD survey on drivers of trust in public institutions*. OECD Publishing.
70. OECD (2022b) *Tax morale II: Building trust between tax administrations and taxpayers*. OECD Publishing.
71. Creswell JW, Plano Clark VL (2018) *Designing and conducting mixed methods research* (3rd ed.). SAGE Publications.
72. Miles MB, Huberman AM, Saldaña J (2014) *Qualitative data analysis: A methods sourcebook* (3rd ed.). Sage.
73. Coleman JS (1990) *Foundations of social theory*. Harvard University Press.
74. Cafferky BM, Mendez M, Anderson JR, Stith SM (2018) Substance use and intimate partner violence: A meta-analytic review. *Psychology of Violence* 8(1): 110–131.
75. Fang X, Lin X (2022) *A guide to mental health in family under the COVID-19 pandemic* (1st ed.). Springer.
76. Prime H, Wade M, Browne DT (2021) *Risk and resilience in family well-being during the COVID-19 pandemic: The role of economic stress, family dynamics and social support*. Oxford University Press.
77. Sousa C, Herrenkohl TI, Moylan CA, Tajima EA, Klika JB, Herrenkohl RC, Russo MJ (2011) Longitudinal study on the effects of child abuse and children's exposure to domestic violence: Parent-child attachments and antisocial behavior in adolescence. *Journal of Interpersonal Violence* 26(1): 111–136.



This work is licensed under Creative Commons Attribution 4.0 License  
DOI: [10.19080/OAJELS.2025.03.555618](https://doi.org/10.19080/OAJELS.2025.03.555618)

Your next submission with Juniper Publishers  
will reach you the below assets

- Quality Editorial service
- Swift Peer Review
- Reprints availability
- E-prints Service
- Manuscript Podcast for convenient understanding
- Global attainment for your research
- Manuscript accessibility in different formats ( Pdf, E-pub, Full Text, Audio)
- Unceasing customer service

Track the below URL for one-step submission

<https://juniperpublishers.com/online-submission.php>