



## **When Exchange Fails: A *Maqāṣid*-Based Socio-Legal Inquiry into Reciprocity and Rationality in Islamic Divorce**

**Ishaq<sup>1</sup>, Gorski Noor Bellah<sup>2\*</sup>, Helena Rocha vauclair<sup>3</sup>, Moh. Wasik<sup>4</sup>,  
Abdifatah Ouich Mustache<sup>5</sup>**

<sup>1,4</sup>UIN Kiai Haji Achmad Siddiq Jember, Jember, Indonesia

<sup>2</sup>Yale University, New Haven, United States

<sup>3</sup>Instituto Universitário de Lisboa, Lisboa, Portugal

<sup>3</sup>Mogadishu University, Mogadishu, Somalia

\*Corresponding email: [nb.gorski@yale.edu](mailto:nb.gorski@yale.edu)

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### **Abstract**

This study re-examines the phenomenon of divorce through the intersection of social theory and Islamic legal reasoning. It investigates why husband-initiated divorces continue to rise despite the moral discouragement of *talāq* in Islamic ethics. Integrating George C. Homans' social exchange theory, Max Weber's theory of social action, and the *maqāṣid al-shari'ah* framework, the research formulates a tri-theoretical inquiry into reciprocity, rationality, and moral responsibility in marital relationships. Employing a qualitative field approach at the Legal Aid Post (*Posbakum*) of the Jember Religious Court, data were collected through interviews, observation, and document analysis and examined using the Miles–Huberman interactive model. The findings reveal that divorce decisions are frequently triggered by an absence of appreciation and emotional reciprocity within the household—wives' failure to express gratitude, provide motivation, or offer constructive support during economic hardship. In Homans' framework, such an absence reflects the breakdown of success, stimulus, and value propositions. Within the logic of Weberian *zweckrational* action, divorce emerges as a deliberate, instrumentally rational decision. From the *maqāṣid al-shari'ah* perspective, appreciation and mutual support constitute *darūriyyāt* essential to marital harmony, while *ṭalāq* remains a legitimate prerogative of the husband (*qawwām*) only when exercised with ethical and legal responsibility.



[Penelitian ini meninjau kembali fenomena perceraian melalui pertemuan antara teori sosial dan nalar hukum Islam. Fokusnya adalah pada meningkatnya kasus perceraian yang diajukan oleh suami, meskipun ṭalāq secara etis dipandang sebagai tindakan yang tidak disukai dalam Islam. Dengan memadukan Teori Pertukaran Sosial George C. Homans, teori tindakan sosial Max Weber, dan kerangka *maqāṣid al-sharī'ah*, studi ini membentuk telaah tri-teoretis mengenai timbal balik, rasionalitas, dan tanggung jawab moral dalam relasi pernikahan. Penelitian ini menggunakan pendekatan kualitatif lapangan di Pos Bantuan Hukum (Posbakum) Pengadilan Agama Jember-Indonesia, dengan pengumpulan data melalui wawancara, observasi, dan analisis dokumen. Analisis data dilakukan dengan model interaktif Miles–Huberman. Hasil penelitian menunjukkan bahwa keputusan cerai sering kali dipicu oleh ketiadaan apresiasi dan timbal balik emosional dalam rumah tangga—ketika istri gagal mengekspresikan rasa terima kasih, memberikan motivasi, atau menawarkan dukungan konstruktif saat suami menghadapi kesulitan ekonomi. Dalam kerangka Homans, kondisi ini mencerminkan runtuhan proposisi keberhasilan, rangsangan, dan nilai. Dalam logika tindakan rasional Weber (zweckrational), perceraian muncul sebagai keputusan yang dipertimbangkan secara sadar dan instrumental. Dari perspektif *maqāṣid al-sharī'ah*, apresiasi dan dukungan timbal balik merupakan bagian dari kebutuhan pokok (*darūriyyāt*) bagi keharmonisan rumah tangga, sedangkan ṭalāq tetap merupakan hak prerogatif suami (*qawwām*) yang sah selama dijalankan secara etis dan sesuai prinsip hukum Islam.]

**Keywords:** Islamic Divorce; *Maqāṣid al-Sharī'ah*; Social Exchange; Zweckrational Action; Socio-legal Inquiry.

## Introduction

As humans who are always integrated in mutualism with other humans, of course, the existence of other humans is necessary. At least the existence and living together is built on two people in the context of a family, namely husband and wife who are tied in a marriage bond (Solikin and Wasik 2023; Liu and Hsieh 2024). Every human being, from the depths of their conscience, believes that marriage is a lifelong bond, one that only death can dissolve.

However, in taking on the new life of a husband and wife in the sacred bond of marriage, they do not have to go through it easily. There are often different perspectives to interpret the behaviour of life and cause discord between husband and wife who consider themselves unhappy and comfortable with the

marriage bond (Mary et al. 2025; Sadeghian et al. 2025). It is widely known that at the level of reality, fostering marital ties in the family is not an easy thing; instead of happiness that is always obtained, some problems always arise, and they even have to run aground and end the marriage bond (Abdulghani and Alrumayh 2025; Hamid 2022; Jamaa 2018).

In Thomas Kuhn's paradigm, there is an empirical gap, or an anomaly, between the condition of the ideal husband-wife relationship which aspires to be harmonious and eternal forever, and reality, which is faced with anomalies and abnormalities that cause crises and lead to the nadir of divorce (Lourdunathan 2017; Caine et al. 2024a). Expected lasting marriages must end as a result of deviations from unexpected realities and that is why the calculation of divorce continues to skyrocket. Saleh stated that the divorce rate in Indonesia has always increased in the last five years. The divorce rate in 2019 reached 480,618 cases, an increase of nearly 20% from the 2016 divorce rate, which was 40,117 (Saleh et al. 2020; Usman 2013). In this context also what happened in Jember district. The divorce rate in the Jember district increased throughout September. Based on data from the Jember Religious Court (PA), the total number of divorce cases reached 3,000, an increase of 50% from the previous month. The Head of Public Relations of PA Jember, Husen, explained the reasons for the divorce were mostly due to economic problems.

Before conducting in-depth research, it is necessary to conduct a review of the study of talk divorce, in the search carried out by the writing team, there are several supporting studies and as the initial research of this research, the first research was conducted by Maimun et al entitled "The development of *fiqh munakahah* (Marriage Jurisprudence) Material course in Madurese Islamic Universities and Relations with Gender Equality and Divorce Prevention", in this paper it is explained that based on Law number 1 of 1974 which states and requires divorce proceedings before the court, this shows that the task of preventing divorce must be carried out by anyone, both individuals, institutional institutions and including Islamic tertiary institutions, one of the functions is to teach *fiqh munakahah* and gender so that it becomes consumption for the younger generation with a modern *fiqh munakahah* approach and provides space to build gender awareness and prevent divorce (Maimun et al. 2020; Musawwamah et al. 2023). The second is research conducted by Eka Susylawati entitled "Disputes and Quarrels as Reasons for Divorce in the Religious Courts". In religious courts, the reason is called *Ayiqaq*, so in this case, the court appoints an arbitrator, but in

practice, the judge is often sufficient with the testimony of his family and closest relatives. Another reason is that it makes the settlement of cases more protracted and longer compared to the absence of a judge (Susylawati 2019).

While the third research is research entitled The Use of Ex Officio to Fulfil Women's Post-Divorce Right at the Samarinda Religious Court conducted by Lilil and Yuni, this study provides information related to the use of ex officio discourse and the theory of legal purposes used to analyse the issues raised and the fulfilment of *iddah* and *mut'ah* in the Samarinda religious court on divorce decisions through ex officio judges referring to Perma No. 3 of 2017 and SEMA No. 1 of 2017. Meanwhile, the application of ex officio judges to contested divorce refers to PERMA number 3 of 2017 and SEMA No. 2 of 2019 (Bingham et al. 2005; Yuni 2021). Fulfillment of post-divorce women's rights in the Religious Courts through ex-officio is in line with the objectives of the law, namely legal certainty, legal justice, and legal benefits by looking at the three studies above, it shows that research in the divorce genre is indeed very minimal because the reality in the field is that more cases of divorce are contested; this distinction provides an opportunity that the research that the author is conducting is new research related to divorce with an approach dimension of social science.

Islam stipulates that divorce is something that is very hated by Allah, because apart from breaking ties of friendship, which is indeed an act that Allah hates very much, divorce is an action that is harmful and has a serious impact on an optimistic attitude and a good mentality for the life one lives, especially for the life of a child; he will feel 'inferior' with the reality he faces. Nevertheless, divorce is not taboo and should not be done. Islam allows cheating; that's why in the editorial of the hadith narrated by Imam Abu Dawud and Ibn Majah, it is explicitly stated that the halal act that Allah hates so much is *talāq* (Islamic divorce). This permissibility provision must be based on strict reasons and justified by religion and state rules (Puspita Cahyaningrum 2021).

Not only that, but in the construction of classical *fiqh*, divorce is an absolute right and the domain of the husband's authority. This is because the husband said the contract, and if he is going to release the contract (read: divorce), then it is the husband who deserves to say divorce. On the other hand, psychologically men (read: husbands) have the potential to be more careful in expressing their hearts and minds (Ahmad 1993; Rosyadi 2022). So that utterances that should not be uttered arbitrarily can be avoided. This is true; the calculation of payments is still dominated by contested divorce.

What's interesting is that Islam gives the authority to give gifts to men (husbands), but the number of husbands who ask for gifts is less. This fact shows that when it comes to divorce, men take mature steps and logical reasoning calculations. In the paradigmatic social action, Max Weber classifies these actions with (Rusliana and Kahmad 2020; Sobana 2017). Week Rational (rational goals), also known as instrumental rationality actions, namely human behaviour that has rational ideals, where the framework of logical, scientific, and economic thinking for the goals is the destination he chose. That the divorce he did was done with a logical frame of mind to achieve the goal, which was the best for him (Cai and Qi 2019; Wang 2019).

From the description above, it shows an interesting phenomenon to be explored in an elaborative manner, considering that no one has specifically discussed the method of divorce from the point of view of the theory of exchange and social change. This paper aims to conduct an in-depth and critical examination of the underlying causes of divorce through the lens of sociological theories, specifically George C. Homans' Social Exchange Theory and Max Weber's Theory of Social Change. Homans' Social Exchange Theory is employed to analyse the dynamics leading husbands to initiate divorce, while Weber's Theory of Social Change provides a framework for understanding the husbands' rationales and intentions behind the decision to dissolve the marriage.

## Method

This study falls under the category of field research, as it focuses on gathering data directly from sources within the research setting. The approach employed combines a case study with a conceptual framework, allowing the issues under investigation to be examined in depth and interpreted within relevant theoretical perspectives. The research was conducted at the Legal Aid Post (*Posbakum*) of the Jember Religious Court, a strategic site as it serves as the initial access point for individuals filing divorce applications. This setting provides contextually rich data that aligns closely with the research objectives. The primary participants in this study were individuals who had registered for divorce assistance at *Posbakum*. From the broader pool of applicants, six informants were selected based on their representativeness and the relevance of their experiences to the research focus. This purposive selection ensured diversity in background while maintaining alignment with the core issues being explored. The data were drawn from both primary and secondary sources. Primary data were collected through

in-depth interviews with the selected informants, while secondary data consisted of official *Posbakum* reports, relevant legal documentation, as well as supporting literature such as books and scholarly journals. To enhance the depth of understanding, the researcher did not rely solely on interviews but also engaged in direct observation of interactions at *Posbakum* and reviewed pertinent documents related to divorce cases.

Data analysis followed the interactive model developed by Miles and Huberman, which emphasises an iterative rather than linear process. The analysis involved three key stages: data reduction, data display, and conclusion drawing/verification. This cyclical process allowed the researcher to refine the analytical focus continuously as insights emerged from the field, thereby producing findings that are not only descriptive but also analytically rich and reflective (Miles et al. 2014), namely data collection, data condensation, data presentation, and conclusion drawing.

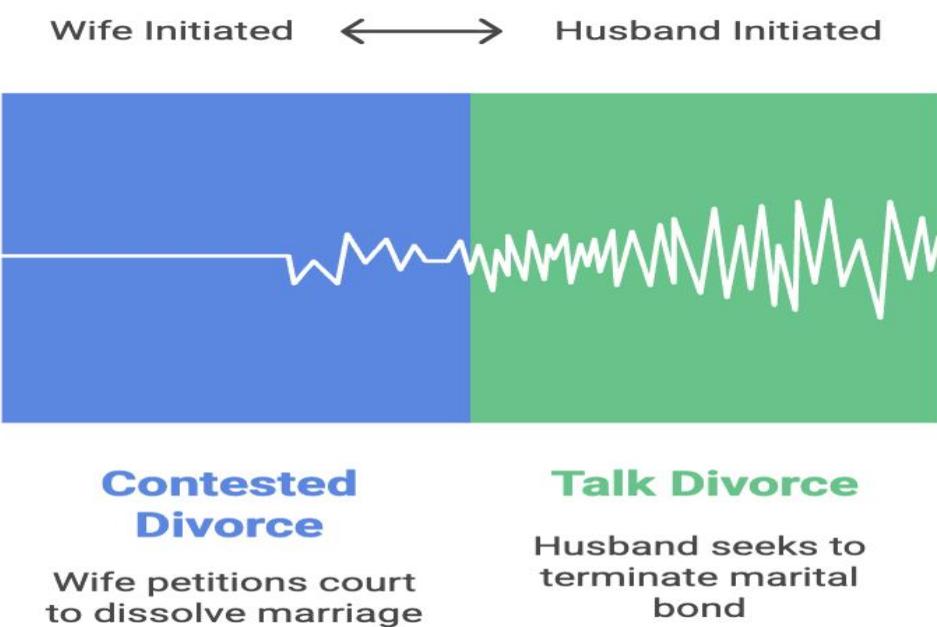
### **The Juridical Architecture of Divorce in Indonesian Law**

In Indonesian positive law, the term 'divorce' does not exist as a general legal category but is specified through distinct classifications. For instance, a contested divorce refers to cases in which a wife petitions the court to dissolve the marriage, while 'talk divorce' applies when a husband seeks to terminate the marital bond (Hasbi and Hasbi 2016). These distinctions are not merely terminological; they reflect underlying legal rationalities aligned with Weber's concepts of instrumental and value rationality. Instrumentally, the law formalises procedures to ensure legal certainty, whereas value rationality emerges from the cultural and religious.

Divorce is a way of breaking the marital relationship between husband and wife which is not caused by the death of one of the parties but is based on the will and desire of the parties (Fitriyani and L 2023; Lubis et al. 2023; Sulaiman 2023; Yuni 2021). Article 114 of KHI emphasises that marriages break up due to divorce that occurs because of divorce and is based on a divorce suit. Divorce cases can occur from the husband's side as well as from initiation from the wife's side. Cases arising from the will of the husband are called talk divorces, where the husband has the position as the petitioner and the wife has the position as the respondent field (Salim 2008; Salim and Azra 2003). The divorce case initiated by the wife is called a contested divorce; in this contested divorce, the wife is the plaintiff, and the husband is the defendant (Bintania 2021).

As explained above, marriages breaking up, as in Article 114 KHI, occur because of contested divorces and talk divorces. Distinctive from the marriage law that does not recognise the term divorce, KHI article 117 emphasises the meaning of divorce, namely the husband's pledge made before the Religious Court session with the procedures stipulated in articles 129, 130, and 131 (Ardi and Shuhufi 2024; Herianingrum et al. 2023). Divorce cases are a type of petition filed by the husband and wife as the petitioner and his wife with legal standing as the respondent, the husband whose marriage took place with Islam who was going to divorce his wife with the matter of the application for divorce submitted to the Religious Court where the wife is.

**Figure 1**  
**Indonesian Divorce Law Reflects Gendered Initiation Roles**



Source: Researcher's illustration based on field data (2025).

In the author's observation that the divorce filed by the husband is based on several problems as reasons for divorce, --the author often encounters at the Jember Religious Court *Posbakum*, the reasons are as follows: *First*, the wife is not grateful and does not accept the obligatory maintenance given by the husband. Even though the husband has given all of his income, the wife always asks for more than the husband can afford. *Second*, the wife often leaves the joint residence without a legitimate purpose and reason and the husband's permission. *Third*, the wife simply does not want to pay attention to the husband,

and the wife is more concerned with herself than the husband's interests, such as never providing food for the husband or washing the husband's clothes. *Fourth*, the wife is often blindly jealous; that is, the wife accuses her husband of having a relationship with another woman without any proof and/or valid reason. *Fifth*, the wife has a love relationship with a man. *Sixth*, the wife does not want to be invited to live in the residence at the husband's parents' house without a clear reason. *Seventh*, the wife does not respect her husband as a legal husband; that is, the wife is too brave and often argues with her husband's words. *Eight*, wives often owe other people without deliberation and without the husband's knowledge, whose use of money is not for the benefit of the household together, and it is even the husband who then pays off the wife's debts. *And last*, the wife suffers from an illness even though the wife has been treated both medically and non-medically (Maksum 2016; Nafisah et al. 2024; Yusoff et al. 2024).

### **The Dynamics of Social Exchange: Homans' Theory and the Logic of Reciprocity in Marital Relations**

No ideas are born from a vacuum. The sentence is not exaggerated and is true. Every idea or notion is born in a certain socio-political context; this idea is not singular, it stands on a related reality. Great thinkers and theorists such as Marx, Max Weber, and E. Durkheim framed their theories in the context of industrialisation, which continued to be massive in the 19th century in Western Europe. Likewise with G. Homans, his idea emerged as a response to the reality of the rapid development of industry in Europe, especially the textile industry. His thinking was influenced by several streams surrounding him, namely as a critique of Durkheimian structural functionalism and the influence of the behavioural sociology (Homans 1958). In this exchange theory, G. Homans wants to review social relations, at least relations between two individuals or between groups. The exchange constructed by G. Homans is a social exchange *that* does not only include material but also non-material, which usually occurs in social relations (Perry 2015).

G. Homans in the theory of exchange (*Theory of exchange*) is found in the propositions he built as his fundamental propositions. He refers to the previous sociological situation, which he considers to have stopped at the *an-sich theory* (Meshram et al. 2023). In the construction of G. Homans, what is required are propositions, because for him, propositions can integrate one theory or concept with another theory. It offers the following proposition:

*First*, Proposition of Success (The Success Proposition). For all actions taken by persons, the more often a particular action of a person is rewarded, the more likely the person is to perform that action. “For all the actions a person performs, the more frequently a particular action a person is rewarded for, the more likely that person is to perform that action (past-present relationship)” (Baynes et al. 2015; Ritzer 1975).

G. Homans in this context emphasises several things that need to be considered. Although it is generally justified that the more often prizes are obtained, the more frequent actions will be taken. In his opinion, gifts that are given intermittently (intermittently irregularly) have the potential to be more likely to cause repetition of behaviour compared to giving rise to rewards regularly. Regular gifts for him will invite boredom and boredom. In contrast to gifts received at irregular distances, it is very likely to cause a repetition of behaviour (Homans 1958).

In household contests, for example, for every behaviour that is carried out by the husband as the head of the family, the more he gets gifts, such as thanks for his efforts and the results of his work, the more often he does the same thing. This is encouraged because there is hope of success in the husband.

*Second*, the Motivator Proposition. If in the past the experience of a request for help (the stimulus) has been the occasion on which giving help (the activity) has been followed by his getting thanks (the reward). If, in experience, the person asking for a request for help (stimulus) has been given an opportunity by the aid provider (activity), it will be followed by him who gets a thank you (gift). G. Homans gave a simple example: If an angler casts his hook into a murky pond and he manages to catch a fish, he will prefer to fish in a murky pond (Homans 1958; Lestari et al. 2023).

If the situation that led to success was very difficult, then a similar situation may not provide a stimulus for the perpetrator. If the crucial stimulation is present too long before the behaviour is required, then it simply cannot stimulate the behaviour. Actors will be more sensitive to stimuli so that the situation is resolved by the failure that occurs. All behaviour carried out by these actors includes a form of awareness and personal attention to the existence of a stimulus or stimulation before acting. Such conditions also often occur in family relationships. Take an example in the family context: If a husband performs a certain behaviour, and other family components, say the wife, are proud of the

actions or efforts made for the wife by telling other people about these efforts, then the husband will repeat these actions (Coltrane 1996).

*Third*, Value Proposition (The Value Proposition). The more valuable a person is as a result of his action, the more likely he is to act (Hamblin and Kunkel 2021). The greater the value of the action given by another person, greater the chance the person will do it again (value-action relationship).

In family life, for example, if the value given by the family element (read: wife) to her husband is considered valuable, then she is more likely to carry out actions that are considered valuable compared to behaviour that is not valuable. In this proposition, there is a choice of behavior in that behavior, where the husband will perform actions that are valued by his wife rather than actions that are not appreciated. (Curtis 1986; Shornack 1986).

At this point, Homans introduces the concept of *reward* and *punishment*. A reward is an action that contains a positive value; the more valuable, the more likely the action will be carried out. On the contrary, *punishment* is an action that contains a negative value; the more a person gets a law, the less he or she as an actor wants to take action.

*Fourth*, the Deprivation-Satiation Proposition. The more often in the recent past a person has received a particular reward, the less valuable any further unit of that reward becomes for him. The more frequently *a person* received a special prize in the near past, the less valuable each subsequent unit of that prize will be (Perry and Garrow 1975). Satiation with a particular reward makes the forgone value of an alternative one relatively greater. Saturation with a *certain reward* makes the value of the relatively larger alternative disappear (Ikhsan et al. 2021).

The more someone gets the same prize as often as possible, the less the actor's value will be. For example, when a husband is asked for help by his wife, but at the same time a child's activities are often left behind, then over time the child will get bored even though the child is given a gift.

### **Distributive Justice and Emotional Reciprocity in Dyadic Relationships**

Homans extends his exchange theory through what he terms the approval-aggression proposition, which he divides into two interrelated dimensions. First, when an individual's behaviour does not receive the expected reward—or instead yields an undesired punishment—it produces frustration and negative emotional responses. Such emotional dissonance may manifest as withdrawal, irritation, or aggression, as the actor perceives the social exchange to be

inequitable. In marital relations, this occurs when a husband fulfils his wife's expectations but receives no emotional recognition or appreciation in return; the imbalance between effort and response generates resentment and weakens reciprocity (Lestari et al. 2023; Shornack 1986; Lamont 2017).

Conversely, the second dimension posits that when a person's actions are rewarded as expected—or even beyond expectation—satisfaction and reaffirmed commitment follow. This positive reinforcement sustains cooperative behaviour within dyadic relationships. Homans associates this dynamic with the principle of distributive justice, namely the fair allocation of rewards and recognition among those engaged in exchange (Lestari et al. 2023; Shornack 1986; Lamont 2017). Within the ethical framework of Islamic law, such justice ('adl) and emotional reciprocity reflect the *maqāṣid al-sharī'ah* objective of preserving familial harmony (*hifz al-nasl* and *hifz al-nafs*), where mutual appreciation functions as both a moral and relational necessity.

Homans' approval-aggression proposition reveals that social justice within intimate relationships is not merely a psychological pattern but an ethical mechanism of maintaining equilibrium. The claim that emotional reciprocity constitutes a form of distributive justice is supported by sociological evidence: in marital interactions, affirmation and gratitude act as symbolic rewards that reinforce stability (Gottman and Levenson 1992). When such symbolic exchanges are denied, the resulting emotional deprivation leads to withdrawal and conflict, mirroring what Homans describes as "aggression following inequity". The warrant connecting these findings to Islamic family ethics lies in the shared assumption that fairness ('adl) governs both material and affective exchanges. This correspondence situates emotional justice as an extension of the moral economy envisioned by the *maqāṣid al-sharī'ah*, where justice is not abstract but lived through mutual recognition and care.

Within the Islamic legal framework, the *maqāṣidiyyah* conception of justice ('adl) and welfare (*maṣlahah*) provides the normative backing for this sociological reading. The *Qur'ān* repeatedly associates righteousness with fairness in human interaction—*wa 'āshirūhunna bil-ma'rūf* (Q. 4:19)—implying that distributive justice in marriage includes affective kindness and acknowledgement. Yet, the qualifier here is crucial: Islam recognises that emotions cannot be legislated but must be cultivated through ethical responsibility (*taklīf akhlāqī*). The approval-aggression dynamic thus offers an analytical bridge between descriptive sociology and prescriptive jurisprudence. While Islamic law codifies rights and

duties, it also anticipates the moral deficits that arise when reciprocity fails. In this sense, Homans' proposition does not contradict Islamic law but rather exposes the sociological conditions under which the law's ethical intent—mutual appreciation, compassion, and equilibrium—either flourishes or collapses.

### **A Weberian Reinterpretation of Human Action within Islamic Marital Ethic**

In this sub, we will elaborate on Max Weber's theory of social action, which will later be used as an analytical knife in this paper to analyze the actions of husbands carrying out divorces. Max Weber is a German sociologist who was born in the city of Erfurt on April 21, 1864, and died in Munich on June 14, 1920, at the age of 56 (Treviqo and Tilly 2015). For Weber, there is a difference between action and behaviour; in general, it is conceptualised that an action is not an action if the action does not have subjective meaning for people to interact. This proves that an actor has an awareness of what is being done, which can be analysed according to the description of the intentions, motives, and stimuli as they experience it (Weber 1978; Caine et al. 2024b).

Max Weber classifies social action into 4 categories, namely as follows: *First, weak rational* (goal-rational), also known as instrumental rationality action, namely human behaviour that has rational ideals, where there is a logical, scientific, and economic thinking framework for the goals he chooses. This action is a social action carried out by someone based on a conscious choice that has something to do with the purpose of the action and the availability of the tools used to achieve it (Rusliana and Kahmad 2020; Lubis et al. 2023; Weber 1978). In this context, marriage, for example, is when people marry when they are adults and have a permanent job with the intention that the household will be lived in harmoniously because it is supported by economic adequacy. These actions have been considered with a logical thinking framework to achieve the goal of household happiness.

The realisation of this goal includes careful calculation and determination of the most effective suggestions to achieve the goals he chooses and careful calculation between the means he considers most likely to achieve the goals he chooses. A palak also clearly considers special circumstances of his actions and thinks about the consequences arising from the actions taken. For Weber, this logical thinking framework is scientific, logical, and economical (Campbell 2020; Hermawati et al. 2015). According to the author's opinion, in instrumental

rational action, a person acts by considering the appropriateness in advance between the means used and the goals to be achieved.

*Second, Werk-rational* (rational values), namely human actions that are involved in important and absolute values. In this act, one pursues values rather than considering means with evaluative neutrality. That the existing tools are only conscious considerations and calculations, while the goal is contained in absolute individual values. Carrying out marriages with religious recommendations and by the traditions of the people. These social actions have been considered beforehand because they prioritise social values and religious values (Алексеева 2023).

The next action is the act of an actor not being able to judge between the way he chooses being the right way or the action that is more appropriate in achieving other goals being based on the goal itself; this action is known as (Werktrational action). In this action, it is difficult to distinguish between the goal and the means used to achieve the goal itself. Even so, this action is still classified as rational, because the ways he chooses already determine the goals to be achieved (Hamblin and Kunkel 2021; Ritzer 1975; Treviño and Tilly 2015).

Value-orientated rational action, at this stage, is different from the first action, which emphasises the suitability between the means and the goals to be achieved. In this second action, an action that remains rational while at the same time taking into account the benefits, by not positioning the goals to be achieved so urgently. Someone only assumes that the most important thing in society is categorized as good and right (Rindova and Martins 2018).

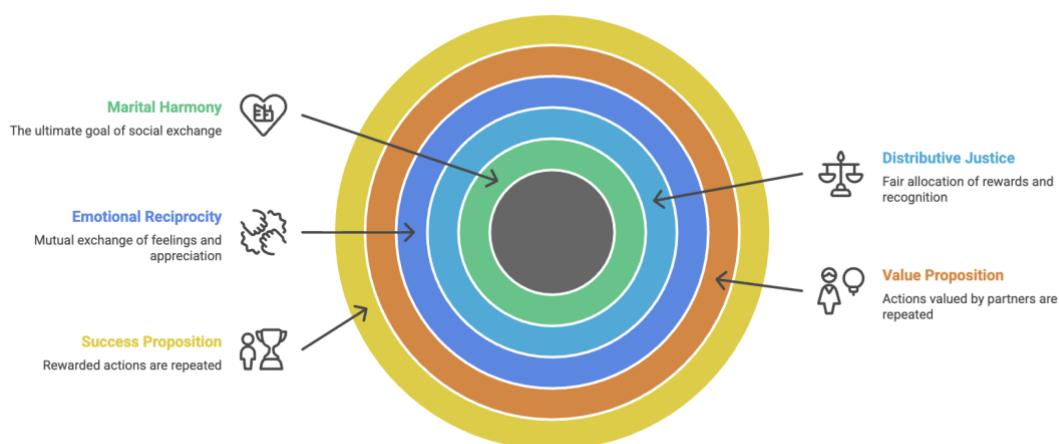
*Third, effective or emotional action*, namely social action, is under the domination of feelings directly. This type of action is more dominated by feelings or emotions without intellectual reflection or conscious planning. This action is spontaneous and irrational and is an act of emotional expression of the individual. The most visible example, in this case, is the affectionate relationship between two pairs of lovers who are in love. This action occurs on stimulation from outside that is spontaneous (English 1997; English and Eldesouky 2020).

Then Weber also explained *effectual action*, namely contrived action, which is filled with emotion and actor pretence. According to Weber, this action is difficult to understand and irrational. This effective action is considered as behaviour that is directly under the domination of feelings. There is no conscious formulation of value or rational calculation with suitable means here. This action is emotional because it is not a rational action (Campbell 2020). Affective action

is an action without careful planning and without awareness in doing so. Spontaneous action of an event.

Fourth, traditional actions, namely the actions of a person based on habits or traditions that arise from established practices. In this type of action, the act of a person exhibiting certain behaviours because of habits inherited from ancestors and forefathers, these actions are without conscious reflection or planning. Carrying out wedding traditions according to the beliefs of the ancestors (Han, 2023). Distinct from the two previous actions, traditional action is an irrational action. Someone in his actions just because the action has become a habit that applies in society without realizing the reasons for taking action and without prior planning regarding the purpose and method he wants to use.

**Figure 2**  
**Homans' Exchange Theory in Marital Relations**



Source: Author's elaboration based on field data (2025).

### **The Dynamics of Divorce Decisions: A Weberian–Homansian Analysis of Marital Exchange and Rational Action**

In the sub-content of this study, the author describes interviews with informants who registered their divorce applications at the *Posbakum* of the Jember Religious Court. The results of the interviews are then described in an elaborative manner from the point of view of exchange theory and social change theory. In this sub-study, there are two discussions, namely:

First, the divorce phenomenon in the Jember Religious Court. Hadi Yusuf said that regarding the reason he divorced his wife, his wife always did not

accept the maintenance he gave, and besides, his wife always left the house without permission. He says, "My wife does not respect me as the head of the household with her ungrateful attitude toward the economic support provided by me even though I have tried my best to make ends meet. Besides that, my wife often returns to her parents' house without my permission. When I come home from work, my wife is not at home. When my wife reminds me, I argue and feel self-righteous." (H. Yusuf, interview, 2022).

The same thing was experienced by Cahyo Agung Saputro; he revealed that apart from his wife often complaining about his living, his wife did not pay attention to his mother. He said, "My wife always complains about my income. Even though I am a farmer, I have worked hard, but the risk is uncertain. I don't know if my risk is a lot or a little. But my wife demands more; not only that, but my wife is also indifferent to my mother. When my mother is sick, my wife only visits and doesn't help me care for my mother my wife asks me not to focus on caring for my mother, and then when advised, my wife denies it and feels right to herself." (C. Agung Saputro, 2022).

More than that, Faiq Sofi divorced his wife because of the habit of his wife always being not only against him but also prioritising lifestyle without paying attention to her husband's income. Faiq Sofi said, "My wife lacks respect for me as the head of the family with the habit of my wife often fighting and refuting my every piece of advice not to get into debt easily to meet her lifestyle needs. My wife is willing to be in debt up to Rp. 1,000,000 to his friends for the sake of fulfilling lifestyles such as clothes, etc., even though my wife knows that I only work as a farm labourer who earns Rp. 50,000, and even then it is not enough for daily shopping needs. I have repeatedly reminded my wife to live a simple life, but my wife never paid any heed to my advice until my wife had a lot of debt without my permission." (F. Sofi, interview, 2023).

Imron Hakiki revealed that the reason he filed for divorce was because his wife did not like living with him close to his workplace. He said, "Between my wife and I, there is no agreement regarding where to live. I do not feel comfortable living at my wife's parents' house because it is far from my place of work, while my wife does not feel comfortable living at the petitioner's parents' house without any clear reason. Besides that, my wife does not respect me as the head of the household with his attitude that often argues when advised, and my wife is more obedient to her parents." (I. Hakiki, interview, 2022).

Nanang Nasrullah explained the factors behind him making his wife happy, how his wife left him when he experienced bankruptcy and economic recession. he said: "My wife did not respect me as the head of the household and when

*my business went bankrupt, my wife left me. my wife said that she could not accept my situation at that time, and when my wife advised me, she did not argue but there was no intention to change things. This is what makes me disappointed and I don't love anymore.*" (Nasrullah 2022).

In contrast to Arik Julianto, who pushed himself to file for divorce because his wife's parents often interfered in their household affairs, he said, "My wife doesn't respect me as her husband, and my wife often contradicts my advice. My wife often complains about household problems to her parents, so my wife's parents often interfere in household affairs between us. And my wife is also more obedient to her parents' advice than my wife's husband. And when reminded that the Respondent was always ignorant and self-righteous (A. Julianto, interview, 2022).

Family conflicts that occur as described above have become commonplace in society. The economic problem is the main problem that underlies the existence of the conflict. If it is observed from the description above, the economy is caused not because the husband who must earn a living is silent and does not fulfil it. However, this is more due to the wife being dissatisfied and feeling inadequate with the income and effort her husband has given her. Instead of the thanks and smiles that the husband gets, instead of the lamentations and complaints that the husband gets.

*First, Exchange Theory Perspectives and Theory of Social Change.* The family is the smallest element of the state whose existence is very urgent and has a significant impact on social life. Everyone, without exception, wants a happy family without any restrictions, namely divorce. From that, all efforts must be made both materially and non-materially; respect, appreciation, positive response, trust, and important prizes are considered. Awards, appreciation, or prizes do not have to be interpreted in material terms; they can be in non-material forms such as appreciation and respect. Between the giver of the response and the recipient of the response, they must give gifts to each other. Another term is often found with the term 'take and give'; this term characterises exchange theory (Angle 2008; Ritzer 1975).

Social exchange is a common thing to do in building relationships. Relations that occur in the form include family members and trans members of the family; this social exchange looks at the communication that is built between the responder and the recipient of the response. When this response relationship occurs, then the social exchange can be conceptualised. Communication or social exchange within the family will ideally take place at any time. But the problem is

whether awareness to give appreciation, appreciation can be realised between family members. As explained above, awards are not only constructed with materials in the form of money and others but also nominally through attitudes of approval, praise, and thanksgiving (Ruciswandaru et al. 2025).

In G. Homans's exchange theory there are several propositions that the author relates to the phenomenon of divorce in this study. The *first proposition* is the success proposition; in this proposition there are provisions for all actions a person takes. The more often these actions get prizes, the greater the probability of people acting. From this successful proposition, it is stated that all families expect rewards in the form of material and non-material gifts when someone does a job. In the context of talking about divorce, such a situation is the same as expressed by the informant above, that the maintenance given to the wife as a result of her work and efforts should get a gift from the wife; on the contrary, what the husband gets is complaints and even the pressure of rejection. The gifts here certainly don't have to be material, where the wife has to give money back to her husband; of course, that's not it. Husband only wants to get a reply in the form of appreciation, which is contributed by praise or thanks. Even though they (husbands) want appreciation for the work they have done. However, they didn't get the award, which caused him to choose to break off the relationship with the cheerful path he took (Nafisah et al. 2024; Yusoff et al. 2024).

*Second*, the Motivator proposition, in this proposition applies if in past events several encouragements have caused people's behavior to be rewarded, then the more similar the present impulse is to past encouragement, the more likely people are to take similar actions -- frequency of reward-response-behavior sell now-. G. Homans in this case gives a simple comparison, he follows the example of an angler who casts his hook in a murky pond and he manages to catch fish, so he will prefer to fish in a murky pond again. From this simile, it is clear that an actor will do his behavior if he gets a reward and satisfaction from what he does. Someone is difficult or even unable to survive to repeat something similar if his actions do not get a satisfactory response (Treviño and Tilly 2015; Hamblin and Kunkel 2021). In the aspect of caring that the husband does in this second proposition because he does not get a satisfactory gift or result from his wife, the husband's efforts as bait to get a response and appreciation from the wife he does not get, of course, that is what makes the husband unable to survive his marriage bond. Like a fisherman, if the hook he throws into a pond doesn't catch any fish, then he will stop fishing in the pond and look for another place.

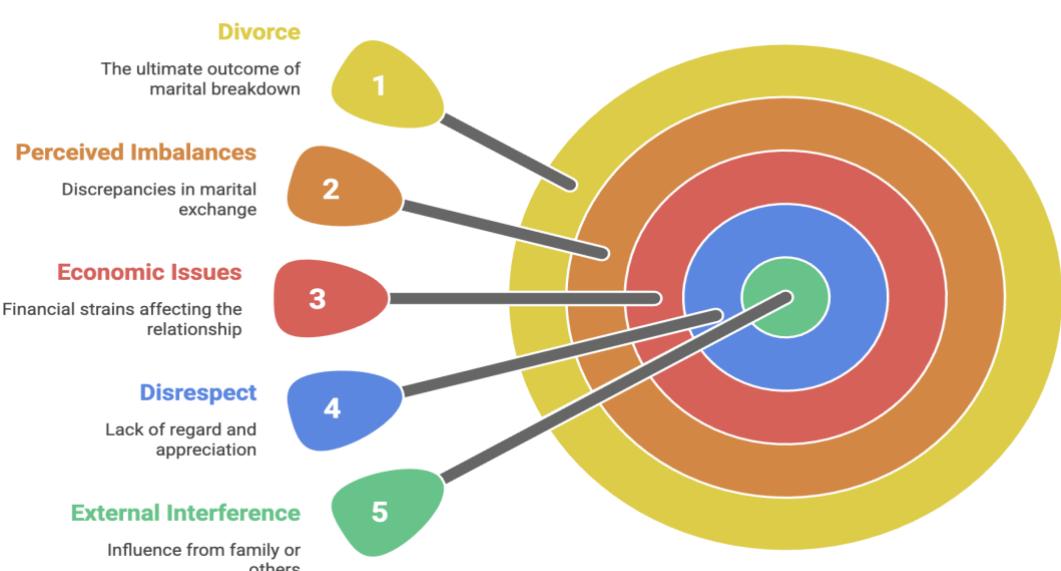
Likewise, if a husband does not get a gift from his wife for the effort he has put in, then the husband will end this action and end in divorce.

*Third* is the value proposition; in this proposition there is a provision that the greater the value of an action given by another person, the greater the person will do it again -a value-action relationship (Nakonezny and Denton 2008). This proposition has little resemblance to the success proposition and the stimulation proposition, but this proposition is more directed at the choice to take profitable action so that it can anticipate activities that are considered to be at a loss. These activities can be considered from the past (stimulus) and the results of activities that provide benefits for him. This election is done to determine the good for them. About divorce, as conveyed by an informant, namely Imron Hakiki, he divorced his wife, who could not be invited to live at his house, even though he did it because he did not want to be far from his place of work and his wife did not want to live in her husband's house because she did not feel comfortable without any logical reasons. Of course for Imron or husbands in general, when the wife cannot give value to the husband's good intentions or actions, the husband will choose the action that they consider better and has value for him. The wife should, for the attitude of her husband who took this action, give even greater action value so that the husband would take even greater action. If not, then he will do what he thinks is more profitable and not stick with that action, so they choose to be cheerful because this path is considered valuable rather than thinking about a wife who doesn't give good value at all for her actions (Arkoun and Lee 2019; Rosidi et al. 2018; Rosyadi 2022).

*Fourth*, the deprivation-boredom proposition: this proposition contains the design that the more often a person receives a special gift in the near past, the less valuable each subsequent unit of reward is. This proposition explains that the more often a person gets a gift, the more the gift becomes saturated. But that doesn't mean gifts here aren't important; here it also applies the other way around: if someone often gets bad treatment and gets something that is unpleasant, then he will feel bored and even cause anger to himself. Homans here also explains that the saturation will eventually be abandoned; rather than maintaining the saturation of getting gifts according to what they want, in the end, there is a little coercion of gifts from the responder to the responder to the point of continuing conflict (Gottman and Levenson 1992; Salazar 2015). A husband who doesn't eventually feel bored and angry if the actions he takes don't get a prize – this marriage will lead to conflict and end in divorce.

*Fifth, Agreement-Aggression:* in this proposition there is a provision that when a person's behaviour does not get the reward as expected or gets the punishment he expects, he will be angry. The act of aggression will likely be carried out, and the consequences of this behaviour will become more valuable to him (Homans 1958; Lestari et al. 2023; Ritzer 1975). As well as the provision that if a person's actions receive the reward he expects, especially a reward that is bigger than what he expected, or do not receive the punishment he imagined, then he will be satisfied, the more likely he is to carry out the agreed action and the more valuable the consequences of such action will be to him. In this context, for example, some informants filed for divorce because their parents intervened too much so that the actions taken by the husband did not satisfy the wife; in the end, they would be angry and disappointed because the husband did not get the gift he expected. Another example is that an informant who divorced his wife left her as a result of her business going bankrupt and experiencing an economic recession (Lu 2011). The husband certainly expected gifts in the form of motivation, encouragement, advice, and solutions to the recession he was experiencing, not just leaving him. This is what caused the husband to divorce him because the husband, instead of getting a gift, instead gets a punishment or a negative response from his wife (English 1997).

**Figure 3**  
**Divorce Decision Dynamics**



Source: Author's elaboration based on PA (2025).

If one observes the husband's act of divorcing his wife as described above, which is based on various considerations from the propositions described above, in the author's observations, the husband's action in the paradigmatic social change of Max Weber enters into the first social action, namely weak Rational (rational-goal), an *action that is* Also known as the act of instrumental rationality, namely human behavior that has rational ideals, where the framework for thinking logically, scientifically, and economically for the goals he chooses. This action is a social action carried out by someone based on a conscious choice that has something to do with the purpose of the action and the availability of the tools used to achieve it (Baynes et al. 2015; Puspita Cahyaningrum 2021; Ruciswandaru et al. 2025). In this context, divorce as described above: the husband takes action to end his marriage because the wife cannot give gifts or awards in the form of praise, or thanks for the husband's efforts to provide a living even though he is dissatisfied with his wife or does not provide motivation, encouragement, solutions when the husband experiences a downturn. These actions have been considered with a logical frame of mind to achieve the goal of happiness for him.

The realisation of this goal includes careful calculation and determination of the most effective suggestions to achieve the goals he chooses and careful calculation between the means he considers most likely to achieve the goals he chooses. A palak also clearly considers special circumstances of his actions and thinks about the consequences arising from the actions taken. For Weber, this logical thinking framework is a scientific, logical, and economic (Campbell 2020). According to the author's opinion, in instrumental rational action, a person acts by considering the suitability beforehand between the means used and the goals to be achieved.

## **Conclusion**

Conflicts between husband and wife are caused by the emergence of responses, responses, or reactions from signalers who are not good enough so differences and inequalities appear in the husband and wife relationship. Divorces carried out by husbands are caused by wives who do not give a positive response to the good actions or efforts that have been made. The wife does not give gifts either in the form of awards or in the form of praise or thanksgiving for the husband's efforts to provide a living even though the wife is dissatisfied or does not provide motivation, encouragement, or solutions when the husband is experiencing a

downturn. The conflict is from the perspective of social exchange theory due to the absence of success propositions, stimulus propositions, value propositions, deprivation-boredom propositions, and agreement-aggression propositions. In the act of divorce, which has been carefully considered in Max Weber's paradigmatic social change, and divorce, which enters into the act of instrumentally rational action, a person acts by first considering the suitability between the means used and the goals to be achieved.

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