



Does education enable underprivileged women to achieve real equality in property rights? A case study of inheritance rights of women in Turkey

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ABSTRACT

Laws promoting gender equality often fail to improve women's experiences. This failure is particularly acute for the experiences of socio-economically marginalized women. Understanding why legislated equality as prescribed in laws often does not lead to the equality of outcomes is an ongoing puzzle in the studies of gender and politics. Utilizing an intersectional approach, this paper argues that education can serve as a constitutive element for marginalized women to enable legislated equality as prescribed in laws to lead to real equality, the equality of outcomes. This article empirically investigates the influence of education by utilizing a unique dataset compiled by an internationally recognized NGO, Kamer, on a representative data of the marginalized women in the eastern city of Diyarbakir in Turkey. The study indicates that a higher level of education is significantly and positively associated with the likelihood of claiming to obtain equal inheritance. Therefore, mere legislation of gender-progressive laws is not sufficient to improve the experiences of women, and achieving gender equality may require improving the educational status of women. The current study also outlines the gains from intersectional research in studying marginalized women's experiences and advocates for the employment of an intersectional approach in more empirical studies.

"It (inheritance) divides, shares, and spreads property and power; then sometimes people get frightened at the speed of its progress; despairing of stopping its motion, men seek at least to put obstacles and difficulties in its way; there is an attempt to balance its action by measures of opposite tendency. But all in vain! It grinds up or smashes everything that stands in its way; with the continual rise and fall of its hammer strokes, everything is reduced to a fine, impalpable dust, and that dust is the foundation for democracy."

Alexis De Tocqueville (2003).

1. Introduction

Recent decades have witnessed the legislation of gender progressive property laws across the world (Agarwal, 1994; Deere & De Leal, 2014). However, these laws failed to significantly alter the resources allocated to women and to even protect their newly ascribed rights. The recent estimates indicate that only 1 to 2% of titled land worldwide belongs to women (Cherif, 2015). Land reforms in developing countries such as India, Columbia, Bolivia, Ghana, Kenya, Nigeria and Mexico, which were specifically aimed at improving women's property rights, failed to fulfill the goals of empowerment (Agarwal, 1994; Deere & León, 2003; Deere & De Leal, 2014; LeBeau et al., 2004; Reproductive Rights, 1997).

Inheritance constitutes one of the major venues through which women own wealth (Deere & León, 2003). Inheritance laws constitute a dimension of women's property rights that derive from family laws. Htun and Weldon (2015) define family law as "legal norms governing the formation and internal relations of ... social units (p:454) (Htun & Weldon, 2015)". Progressive family laws can improve the realities of women's experiences if they are accompanied by mechanisms that can enforce these laws (Htun & Weldon, 2010). These mechanisms can derive from both state structures and women's socio-economic determinants that make it easier for them to benefit from gender-egalitarian laws. In many cases the egalitarian legislations on family laws failed to produce the expected egalitarian outcomes, indicative of the insufficiency of the mechanisms. In Turkey, despite the fact that courts have mandated equal inheritance rights between men and women since 1926, only 20% of women own some form of property and 92% of property is owned by men, as women have rescinded their inheritance rights to their male relatives (O'Neil & Toktas, 2017; Toktas, O'Neil, et al., 2013). Overall, the gender-progressive reforms led to a bifurcation between the legislated equality as the equality of rights prescribed in laws, and real equality as the equality of outcomes (Deere & De Leal, 2014).

The bifurcation between legislated equality and the equality of outcomes can be even more acute among marginalized women, who

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often face additional barriers in protecting their rights. Can education of marginalized women function as a mechanism that can enable them to benefit from the legislated equality? This article attempts to answer this question through employing an intersectional approach on the constitutive factors of women's socio-economic conditions. For this purpose, this article utilizes an original and representative dataset of the socio-economic and inheritance status data regarding 1314 marginalized women in the eastern city of Diyarbakır in Turkey. To my knowledge this is the first study to employ an intersectional approach to understand the role of education in enabling women to benefit from the legislated equality among the marginalized women. In addition, to my knowledge this is also the first study that provides evidence on the linkage between education and women's ability to benefit from the legislated equality on a representative dataset. The results show that more educated women are more likely to report equal inheritance provision, a clause specified in the Civic Court in Turkey.

This study is structured as follows: in the next section I present the theoretical explanations for the relationship between women's education and their inheritance rights. In the third section I propose the theoretical framework on intersectionality as it relates to underprivileged women's relationship with gender-progressive laws. In the fourth section I present the inheritance distribution scheme in the Turkish context. In the fifth section I present my research design. The sixth section provides a statistical analysis.

2. Explanations for women's education and inheritance rights

In developing countries women tend to receive much less inheritance than men (Cox, 2003). A substantive portion of this variation can be explained by the competing framework between formal and informal institutions governing women's inheritance rights. Formal institutions employ official rules and channels, whereas informal institutions employ socially shared rules that are created, communicated, and enforced outside of officially sanctioned channels (Helmke & Levitsky, 2004). In cases where the officially sanctioned channels do not reflect the existing norms, the society can devise informal institutions that can be shaped by the existing norms. As such, if gender-progressive laws are implemented through elite intervention in patriarchal societies, patriarchal norms may continue to permeate through the rise of informal institutions.

Another explanatory factor for the gender gap in inheritance practices in the developing world is the ability of patriarchal cultural and family norms to permeate through the formal institutions to shape the parameters of family laws. In cases where the formal inheritance laws reflect the existing patriarchal norms, the family laws either allocate less amount of inheritance for women or do not allocate any inheritance at all.

The causes for the permeation of gender-discriminatory norms in both formal and informal institutions of inheritance distribution can be traced to their practicality as well as their relation to tradition and existing power configurations. Studies of Agarwal (1994) in South Asia and Lastarria-Cornhiel (1997) in Africa indicate that patrilineality, virilocality, exogamy and the logic of peasant production¹ contribute to gender inequality in inheritance distribution. Deere and León (2003) find that the cultural practice of viewing women as housewives regardless of their contribution to agriculture as well as gender biases in community and state programs contribute to the gender asset gap of land in Latin America. The cultural practice of relying on community chiefs, who tend to almost exclusively favor male heirs contributes to gender-discriminatory inheritance practices in African communities (Cooper, 2012; LeBeau et al., 2004). The practices of colonization that

increase the power of chiefs at the expense of the populace can further solidify the importance of community chiefs in inheritance distribution, contributing to the gender asset gap (Chiweza, 2005).

The influence of religious traditions on family and community norms can also lead women to receive less inheritance, as codified rules of religious practices may dictate that women receive less inheritance than men (Deere & Doss, 2006). This can either limit the presence of more gender egalitarian inheritance clauses or lead to societal pressure on women to comply with religious doctrines. For instance, Muslim women in Ghana wishing to obtain equal inheritance as stipulated in the formal law risk being excommunicated from the society as they can be accused of apostasy (Fenrich & Fenrich, 2001). In other instances, women may choose to follow religious dictates through their personal convictions (Toktas & O'Neil, 2015).

The fervor of nationalism, which accompanies traditionalist practices, can also lead to gender gaps in inheritance. Studying the property rights of women in Kosovo, Joireman (2015) finds that the resurgence of nationalism in Kosovo following the civil conflict between 1998 and 1999 led to the rise of practices associated with ethnic identity among Albanians, such as the practices of customary inheritance law that do not grant any inheritance to female heirs. Despite the presence of a codified inheritance law and the willingness of women to practice their legal inheritance rights, a substantive portion of women were not able to obtain any inheritance.

Overall, these factors indicate that women need to navigate strong patriarchal norms in order to expand and defend their inheritance rights. Thus, the family and community norms are very important in determining whether and how much women can inherit (Deere & Doss, 2006). They can set the parameters for not only the formal institutions of inheritance, but also make the informal institutions salient in cases where the formal institutions do not reflect the existing norms. Given that it is challenging to change the existing norms in the short run, the relevant question becomes how women can expand and defend their inheritance rights in patriarchal societies. One area through which women can make advances on their inheritance rights in patriarchal societies is education.

The aggregate level of women's education can improve women's inheritance rights by making the formal family laws more gender egalitarian. In a cross-national analysis, Cherif (2015) finds that increased levels of secondary education is positively and significantly associated with more egalitarian land and nationality rights. The author argues that states are more likely to pass egalitarian laws if women are better educated. Cherif (2010) indicates that in developing countries greater female enrollment in secondary education is associated with more gender-egalitarian inheritance laws, and this relationship is stronger among Muslim-majority countries. Similarly, in their cross-country analysis of family law, Htun and Weldon (2011) indicate that women's increasing education levels push countries towards reforming their family laws. This may be due to the fact that educated women are more likely to have group awareness and political engagement, and politicians may be more likely to cultivate relationships with more educated women (Cherif, 2015; Sapiro, 1981; Sapiro, 1983).

Education can also enable women to benefit from the formal family law to obtain their shares of inheritance. While in some cases this entails that women can receive equal inheritance as men, in other cases this entails that women can prevent land grabs and secure a certain portion of property as ascribed in the formal family law, albeit lower than the portion ascribed for men.

Deere and León (2003) indicate that rising legal literacy of women contributes to greater knowledge of national laws favoring equality of inheritance shares among genders in Latin America. According to Deere and De Leal (2014), women's rising literacy as well as their greater knowledge of family laws are among the main factors that influence whether women can break through the existing social norms to benefit from the egalitarian inheritance laws in Latin America. Cooper (2012)'s study indicates that women's awareness of their rights and laws in

¹ The logic of peasant production refers to the act where only one son is favored in inheritance partition while bearing the responsibility of providing old age security to the parents.

customary inheritance laws, enshrined in the constitutions of Ghana, Mozambique and Uganda, can prevent their relatives from grabbing their properties. [Chiweza \(2005\)](#) claims that in Malawi women's lack of knowledge regarding their inheritance rights and the process makes land grabbing by relatives possible. [Agarwal \(1994\)](#)'s research in South Asia indicates that women's basic literacy, knowledge of legal rights, access to support mechanisms outside of their family, and social legitimacy of their claims are the major factors that determine whether women can protect their rights. [LeBeau et al. \(2004\)](#)'s research on women's property and inheritance laws in Namibia indicates that while both civil and customary laws discriminate against women, more educated women become more aware of their inheritance rights within the civil code and legal instruments such as written wills, which prevent land grabs. [LACC \(2002\)](#)'s analysis indicates that in Nepal women's increased awareness about their rights and confidence can enable them to claim their legally enshrined inheritance rights. [Joireman \(2015\)](#) indicates that while in Kosovo a significant portion of women believe that women should inherit equal property as men, they are not able to benefit from the egalitarian inheritance laws stipulated in the Civic Code as they lack awareness of their rights. [Fenrich and Fenrich \(2001\)](#) indicate that while formal inheritance laws enable women to make claims on inheritance in Ghana, women often lack sources of information about their rights or access to legal counsel.

Overall, these studies indicate the presence of a linkage between women's education and their ability to benefit from more gender-egalitarian inheritance laws. While education serves to increase women's awareness to take their cases to legal courts, women rarely choose to bring their cases to court as they fear that this can lead to their exclusion from society and family. [Fenrich and Fenrich \(2001\)](#) indicate that even if women in Ghana have knowledge of their rights and resources to pursue their claims, women face substantive social pressure to not to seek legal recourse and they choose to resolve cases outside the legal system. [Richardson \(2004\)](#)'s study of women's inheritance rights in Botswana, Zambia and Ghana indicates that while formal intestate laws in these countries tend to be more gender egalitarian than customary laws, women are reluctant to apply to formal courts due to societal pressure. [Malik and Courtney \(2011\)](#)'s study indicates that while more educated women in Pakistan have greater awareness of their inheritance rights, potential social antagonism from their families discourages them from applying to courts. Thus, these women prefer to defend their inheritance rights within their families. [Agarwal \(1994\)](#) indicates that in many South Asian communities women are reluctant to pursue the legal route as this entails social stigmatization. [Toktas and O'Neil \(2015\)](#)'s study of the inheritance practices among twenty wealthy Islamist women in Turkey indicates that family dynamics play a substantive part in determining whether and how much the sampled women are able to inherit. While some voluntarily comply with the Islamic inheritance code or customs, other women objected to family demands that they receive less inheritance than male heirs. Yet, their objection mainly takes place within their families without the enrollment of the courts as they resist inter vivos transfers. In the case of Diyarbakır, Turkey, women considering to challenge their cases in courts often fear that persuading their claims will lead them to be cast off from their families and society ([Akkoc, 2017](#)). The cases of women persuading their property disputes through courts are rare, and those women who persuade claims come from powerful families and their court applications often involve inheritance cases associated with divorce. Yet, a much higher percentage of women than those who bring their cases to criminal courts manage to obtain their property shares ([Akkoc, 2017](#)).

Even though education can provide women with a greater ability to navigate through the court system, many women choose not to take their cases to court in order to avoid the social stigma. Thus, education appears to function primarily to raise women's awareness of their formal rights and become more self-assertive in making their claims within their families. As a result, women's education shapes their

inheritance claims mainly through the private sphere as it interacts with and challenges the existing familial and communal norms. This is particularly the case for the marginalized women. They are among the most vulnerable groups in the face of patriarchal societal and familial norms as they lack both financial resources and communal support to apply to official court systems. Overall, studying the dynamics between gender-progressive inheritance laws and education of marginalized women requires an interactive paradigm that can provide an understanding of the function of education within the private sphere. For this purpose, I introduce the theoretical framework of intersectionality in the next section.

3. Intersectionality and women's inheritance rights

The mainstream political science research has long been criticized for its ignorance of the experiences of marginalized women ([Celis, Kantola, Waylen, & Weldon, 2013](#); [Pateman & Phillips, 1987](#)). One argument is that this ignorance is due to the long-lasting demarcation within the literature of political science between the public and private spheres. The definition and the study of politics almost exclusively focus on the studies of public sphere, defined as the "positions of leadership in community decision-making and economic affairs (p:4) ([Celis et al., 2013](#))", whereas the private sphere is mostly ignored by the mainstream research. Yet, as [Huntington \(2006\)](#) emphasizes, the degree of institutionalization matters as much as the design of institutions. Thus, the gender-progressive family laws present emancipatory outcomes only if they can find application within the private spheres. Without understanding the applicability of these laws on the ground, the fundamental questions of politics, namely "who gets what, where, when and how ([Easton, 1953](#))" remain unanswered.

Realizing that the emancipatory laws do not alter the well-being of marginalized women, feminist scholars have focused on studying the private sphere to understand patriarchal dominance of men ([Ryan, 2007](#)). This emphasis entailed studying the institutions, politics and practices of power to understand the conceptual practices of power and how they shape experiences of women within the private sphere ([Harding & Norberg, 2005](#); [Vickers, 1997](#); [Htun & Weldon, 2010](#); [Hancock, 2007b](#)). The focus of this approach is on the inclusion of less powerful groups that are not addressed by traditional queries in political science. ([Bedolla, 2007](#); [Vargas & Wieringa, 1998](#); [Richie & Kanuha, 1993](#); [Hancock, 2007b](#)).

The theoretical foundation of the studies of power within both private and public spheres is constructed through an inter-actional understanding of change ([Emirbayer, 1997](#)). According to this understanding, the units derive their significance, meaning and identity through other units, thus they can "only exist in relation to one another and can never be treated as 'given' in isolation (p:287) ([Emirbayer, 1997](#)). Thus, identity categories are not separable as they interact with each other, and various race-sex groups have heterogeneity ([Simien, 2007](#)). This novel understanding of change would point out that as complex and intertwined factors shape women's relationships with gender-egalitarian family laws, simple categorical analyses would be unable to capture women's experiences in claiming their legal benefits. Both marginalization and emancipation are dynamic concepts that are attentive to the historical processes and contexts. Thus, the underprivileged status of women cannot be treated in defining women's ability to benefit from gender-progressive laws without referencing some other influential factors, such as women's socio-economic status. The understanding of the dynamic relationships among units, coupled with studying the nature of power with emphasis on the private sphere constitutes the main methodological and theoretical foundation of intersectional research ([Bedolla, 2007](#)). However, while plenty of studies focus on the theoretical foundations of intersectional paradigms, scholarly approaches rarely utilize intersectionality in empirical studies of women's experiences ([Fogg-Davis, 2003](#) and [Bedolla](#)). This lack of empirical studies that employ an intersectional paradigm arises due to

challenges associated with and the reluctance to conceptualize a variety of constitutive elements that lead to women's oppression. Another factor is that survey research rarely takes into account issues related to women's experiences within their private sphere, such as the realization of their property rights (Deere & Doss, 2006).

I argue that intersectional research paradigm is superior than other paradigms, such as racial or class theories, in helping us to understand the roles of constitutive elements that can help or hinder the underprivileged women in benefiting from the egalitarian family laws. While racial theories focus on the structural and institutional factors that lead to differentiation of experiences among women belonging to different racial groups with gender-progressive laws, class theories focus on the differentiation between socioeconomic classes. Thus, while racial and class theories can emphasize the experiences of racial and class-based groups within single dimensions, they are often unable to capture the heterogeneity within these groups as well as their multipolarity and hybridity. In contrast, the main premise of the intersectional research is that identity categories, socio-economic groups and sexuality are mutually constitutive (Simien, 2007; Collins, 2002; Crenshaw, 1989, 1991; Wing, 1997; Bedolla, 2007; Strolavitch, 2012). As such, the intersectional research approaches the social phenomenon with an understanding that a variety of dimensions could influence each other, and an individual privileged in one dimension can be marginalized in other dimensions. The intersectional paradigm emphasizes that the experiences of women with gender-progressive laws are uniform neither within, nor between socio-economic groups (Jordan-Zachery, 2007). Thus, the intersectionality approach can more comprehensively answer the questions related to distributive justice and government function (Hancock, 2007a).

The intersectional research can also explain some of the egalitarian outcomes in family law that are not conceptualized by Galanter's party capability theory, which focuses on the influences of resource distribution on litigation outcomes and emphasizes that individuals who lack access to the court process as well as individuals for whom the costs of litigation are too high and the benefits are too low abstain from litigation (Galanter, 1974). Those individuals who lack the resources often remain inactive in the face of injustice, or exit from the procedure of litigation, or resort to an unofficial litigation system (Galanter, 1974). While the party capability theory would suggest that individuals remaining outside of the litigation would settle for less and none, through focusing on the personal sphere intersectional approach would suggest that some women who can't access to courts and remain outside of litigation can still benefit from gender progressive laws through the constitutive elements of their socio-economic dynamics, such as education. Next, I propose my hypothesis on education and women's ability to benefit from gender-progressive laws.

3.1. Hypothesis

A variety of elements of education can enable the underprivileged women to benefit from the gender-progressive laws. These elements can be attributed to women's self-reliance and assertiveness that are associated with their awareness and self-confidence. Higher educational attainment is associated with an increased ability to deal with information (Campbell, 1980; Converse, 1964; Gordon & Segura, 1997). Individuals with greater ability of dealing with information would also have deeper levels of understanding of their rights and procedures of state institutions (Agarwal, 2002). Indeed, studies indicate that increasing levels of women's education is associated with greater awareness of their rights and higher levels of support for feminist ideas (King & Hill, 1997; Banaszak & Plutzer, 1993; Blaydes & Linzer, 2008; Boehnke, 2011; Agarwal, 1994; Deere & De Leal, 2014; Joireman, 2015; Toktas & O'Neil, 2015). The relatives of women, who in some cases are only mediators for women's access to legal information, may choose not to provide women with the information about their legal rights in order to benefit themselves (Agarwal, 1994; Cherif, 2015; Chiweza, 2005).

Education enables women to reconstruct their relationships vis-a-vis other family members (Banaszak & Plutzer, 1993). More educated women can bypass their relatives' mediation mechanisms to obtain the knowledge about their rights by themselves, as education provides the necessary skills to obtain information (Converse, 1964; Gordon & Segura, 1997; LeBeau et al., 2004). Having a greater level of awareness of their rights, these women might be more likely to achieve their rights within their own families. Thus, while those women may not have the financial resources to take cases up to courts, they can argue against their relatives in signing inter vivos transfers that work against their favor.

Self-reliant and self-assertive women may also be more likely to overcome the structural challenges associated with women's ability to claim their rights in state institutions. In different countries local officials are reported to dissuade women from taking their cases to court (Agarwal, 1994; Agarwal, 2002; Chiweza, 2005). In Turkey, women experience difficulties in state institutions, banks and real estate agencies in claiming their inheritance rights, which may be due to male involvement in the decision-making process (Toktas & O'Neil, 2015). Women who can understand the court procedures may be more likely to be self-reliant and be less likely to be discouraged by local authorities' attempts at dissuasion to follow through with their cases (Agarwal, 1994, 2002).

Overall, women's greater awareness of their rights and liberties derived from their educational status would entail that they would have self-reliance and self-assertion to resist signing inter vivos transfers within their families and follow through their cases in state institutions. This would constitute a particularly essential dynamic for underprivileged women, who may otherwise lack the financial means and support from families to apply to criminal courts. I argue that the factors that I list would increase the likelihood of more educated women claiming equal inheritance, and I propose the following hypothesis:

Hypothesis: Women with higher levels of education will be more likely to benefit from an equal inheritance distribution in their family than women with lower levels of education.

As I test my hypothesis on a survey of underprivileged women in the Eastern city of Diyarbakır, Turkey, in the next section I outline the characteristics of inheritance distribution frameworks in Turkey.

4. Inheritance distribution scheme in the Turkish context

Societies that experience conflict are often more likely to implement gender-progressive provisions than societies that do not experience a conflict (Tripp, 2016). The legislation of an egalitarian inheritance law in Turkey presents a case of gender-equality provision implemented through elite intervention following a conflict environment. Prior to the emancipation of modern Turkish Republic, the inheritance among the Muslim subjects of the Ottoman Empire was distributed according to the Shariah Law, which provided daughters only half the share of sons (Deere & Doss, 2006)². The modern Turkish Republic, established in 1923 following the Turkish War of Independence and the breakup of the Ottoman Empire, was built upon the concept of formalizing gender equality irrespective of religious doctrines (Arat, 2000; Heper, Öztürk-Tunçel, & Criss, 2018). While the Islamic courts that favored more inheritance to men than women were banned, the Swiss Civil Code, which

² During the Ottoman Empire, the main source for inheritance distribution among the Muslim subjects was the verse (Surah) Al Nisaa in Qur'an, which explicitly describes how inheritance should be distributed: "Allah instructs you concerning your children: for the male, what is equal to the share of two females. But if there are [only] daughters, two or more, for them is two thirds of one's estate. And if there is only one, for her is half. And for one's parents, to each one of them is a sixth of his estate if he left children. But if he had no children and the parents [alone] inherit from him, then for his mother is one third. And if he had brothers [or sisters], for his mother is a sixth, after any bequest he [may have] made or debt. Your parents or your children, you know not which of them are nearest to you in benefit. [These shares are] an obligation [imposed] by Allah. Indeed, Allah is ever Knowing and Wise. Surah al Nisaa 4:11."

equalized the level of inheritance between men and women, was adopted in 1926 through elite intervention without a mass political approval.

The current inheritance distribution mechanism in Turkey can be conceptualized through a competing framework between formal and informal institutions. According to the formal institution, Civic Code, after the death of a Turkish citizen, the legal inheritors as well as their inheritance shares are automatically identified through the population registration system based on records in the system (Toktas & O'Neil, 2015). The court provides one fourth of share to spouse if there are children³, and the remaining amount is divided among the surviving children (Toktas & O'Neil, 2015).

The will of testators has reach only over one-half of an estate, and the remaining portion is reserved for any legal inheritors. The will cannot have legal binding over the reserved portion of inheritors. Heirs can legally waive their reserved inheritance portions through paying an additional tax. If there is a dispute among the parties about the portions of inheritance divided, parties take their issues to the criminal court.

Gender scholars have emphasized the importance of gendered rules, norms and practices that shape the strategies and preferences of agencies in political institutions (Waylen, 1994). A variety of practices, such as inter vivos transfers, can circumscribe the legal inheritance distribution mechanism and hinder women from claiming their inheritance rights. Inter vivos are common in Turkey for two main reasons. First, the inheritance tax of legally transferring the property among heirs is often costlier than fees paid in conducting inter vivos transfers (O'Neil & Toktas, 2017). Second, the state registry system often does not hold any record of the currency holdings of deceased, such as gold or cash money, which heirs can divide among each other. The case studies conducted in Turkey indicated that inter vivos transfers mostly left women worse off, in some cases providing women half the inheritance provided to men based upon the Islamic code, and in others even lower amounts, or no inheritance at all (O'Neil & Toktas, 2017; Toktas et al., 2013; Uzun & Colak, 2010). Inter vivos transfers are effective means to reach outcomes in inheritance designated by the customs that do not grant any inheritance for women and the Islamic law, which are informal institutions that compete against the formal inheritance distribution scheme (Toktas & O'Neil, 2015). This is particularly the case for marginalized women in Turkey, as the informal gender-discriminatory inheritance practices based on Islamic law and customs operate in tandem with the formal secular law, making marginalized women vulnerable to acts of land grabbing (Toktas & O'Neil, 2015).

In the next section I present the research design and the research method.

5. Research design and method

I utilize a dataset formed by a Turkish NGO called “Kamer” in 2015 to test my hypotheses. Kamer was formed in 1997 by a group of women in Eastern Turkey to understand the root causes of violence towards women and find solutions to it (Arat & Altınay, 2015). The organization currently defines its duty as “identify local practices of the sexist system that harm women and children, to develop alternatives, and enable their implementation (KAMER, 2017).” Kamer obtained valuable recognition and awards from different countries, companies and NGOs⁴ Kamer volunteers document the socio-economic condition of women by conducting representative surveys among women residing in the most

underprivileged districts in selected cities. The volunteers ask questions about whether the surveyed women have awareness of and whether they benefit from their rights, whether they experience domestic violence, have decision-making powers within their families, and have stable incomes. The surveys also attempt to find out the most pressing problems of underprivileged women related to their households and districts. Kamer constitutes the only organization in Turkey that conducts representatively sampled surveys regarding whether women's constitutionally guaranteed rights are honored. As the goal of Kamer organization is eradicating the sexist system, Kamer and respondents establish contacts that they follow through in order to solve issues that lead to women's marginalization. For instance, if women claim to Kamer that they are unable to exercise their inheritance rights, Kamer refers them to a lawyers' association to pursue their claims within a legal framework. Thus, the surveys constitute reliable means through which Kamer assesses the experiences and socio-economic status of marginalized women in order to emancipate them.

This novel dataset, which to my knowledge has not been used in previous studies, is a part of Kamer's visits in 2015 to selected underprivileged districts in 22 cities that make up Eastern and Southeastern Turkey. The sample selection process consists of four stages.⁵ The interviews were conducted in the mornings. The sample was not weighted to take into account the non-responses. However, Ms. Nebahat Akkoç, the current president of Kamer, indicated to me that she thinks the non-responses are completely missing at random, such that they are independent of the dependent and independent variables that I utilize in the current study. Thus, there is no non-response bias that needs to be taken into account in this study. I only had access to interviews conducted in the city of Diyarbakır with women from some underprivileged districts⁶, Alıpınar, Celal Yılmaz, Savaş, Mevlana Halit, Şehşamil, Yeniköy, Beş Nisan, Kaynartepe, Muradiye, Yunus Emre, Şehitlik, Dabanoglu, Huzurevler. Diyarbakır presents an interesting case to test theories of intersectionality for multiple reasons. First, Diyarbakır has a large ethnically Kurdish population. Although the last census in Turkey that included questions on “mother tongue” was conducted in 1965, a population estimation study by Mutlu (1996) indicated that the proportion of Kurds in the population of Diyarbakır was 72.78% in 1990. Given that approximately three fourths of Diyarbakır speak Kurdish as a mother tongue language allows me to test my hypotheses among women who may experience marginalization due to the constitutive elements of their identity intersection between gender and ethnic minority status. Second, the socio-economic development is low in the Kurdish dominated Eastern regions, including Diyarbakır (Arat & Altınay, 2015). Thus, there is variation even among the basic socio-economic dynamics, such as literacy, among the women in the region, which enables me to test my hypotheses about the role of basic socio-economic dynamics on women's claims regarding their inheritance distribution. Moreover, the city of Diyarbakır has greatly suffered in the past decades from the ongoing conflict between Turkish state and the Kurdish insurgency group PKK. Kibris (2015) indicates that the casualties associated with the conflict between the PKK and Turkish state substantively depreciates student educational achievements. Thus, studying the relationship between women's educational attainment and inheritance rights practices in Diyarbakır can show the extent to which the negative consequences of conflict environment may continue to perpetuate within the social relations of women. The findings of this study are representative of the experiences of underprivileged women in Diyarbakır. However, since the primary sampling unit of Diyarbakır

³ Spouses still receive inheritance if there are no children, yet the amount that they receive is influenced by the survival of deceased person's second rank relatives, such as parents.

⁴ Some of the recognitions that Kamer obtained include United Nations Millennium Development Goals Torch, Legion d'Honneur Medal from French government in 2006, Ginetta Sagan Award from Amnesty International in 2004, Heroes of our time Award from Time magazine in 2003.

⁵ The first stage primary sampling unit is cities in Eastern and Southeastern Turkey. The second stage primary sampling unit is socio-economically disadvantaged districts within cities. These districts are chosen based on their human-development indexes that are obtained through the office of governorship. The third stage primary sampling unit is households within the identified districts. The fourth stage secondary sampling unit is all women that are above 13 years old age who live in these households.

⁶ The districts of Diyarbakır where the interviews were conducted are: Kayapınar

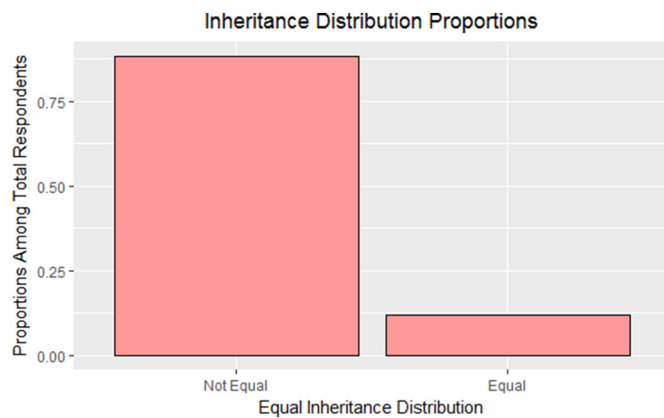


Fig. 1. Inheritance distribution proportions.

was purposefully chosen, the outcomes may not be representative of the experiences of marginalized women in Turkey. The same research model can be constructed and the same mechanisms can be applied for the experiences of underprivileged women across the world.

The dataset provides information about inheritance distribution and women's socio-economic status that may influence the inheritance distribution scheme. A total of 1314 respondents filled out the survey. For women's inheritance distribution, which is my dependent variable, I have utilized a question that asked, "Can women obtain any share from inheritance in your family?", which is a question on women's perception of inheritance distribution within their family. 69.12% (958) of respondents indicated that women cannot obtain any share of inheritance in their family, whereas 30.88% (428) of respondents indicated that women can obtain some share of inheritance from their family. The researchers then asked to the respondents who responded "Yes" to this question "How is inheritance distributed?", which is a question on the women's knowledge of inheritance distribution mechanism. A total of 367 respondents answered this question. Among those who responded, 156 picked "as equal between men and women (42.5% of the total who answered the question)", 129 respondents picked "2 shares to men and 1 share to women (35.15%)", 74 picked "3 shares to men and 1 share to women (20.16%)" and 8 respondents picked "Other (2.18%)". A total of 61 respondents did not answer to this question.

I coded "1" those who indicated that the inheritance is distributed equally, and "0" who indicated that women did not receive any inheritance, or women received less inheritance than men, or chose the "Other" option. I treated the cases where women received less inheritance than men as if women did not receive any inheritance at all, coding them all as "0". I have excluded the individuals who indicated that women received some inheritance but did not respond to the question of "How is inheritance distributed" from my dataset (Fig. 1).

A common issue among the intersectionality research is the utilization of pre-existing datasets, which can be highly convenient from a financial standpoint, yet their application to the theory might be delicate and they may require further explanations due to their pre-existing nature (Hancock, 2007b). In the case of the current study, the measurement for the dependent variable refers the respondents to measure the inheritance distribution scheme of their families rather than of their own. While one can argue that a question such as "Do you obtain any share of inheritance in your family?" would be more appropriate to test the hypotheses of this study⁷, I argue that the measurement for my

dependent variable is still appropriate for my analysis because women's average level of education in Eastern Turkey has increased over time. Therefore, if a woman has low levels of education, it is very likely that her mother also has even lower levels of education. If some of the respondents with higher levels of education would be referring to the inheritance distribution of their relatives such as mothers, this only offers a bias against my alternative hypothesis about education. As their mothers much likely have lower levels of education and thus lower likelihood of obtaining inheritance than their daughters. Given that on average the sampled population is young ($\bar{x} = 34$), it is unlikely that they would be referring to the inheritance distribution scheme of their daughters in responding to the question.

I lose some valuable information through the present coding mechanism, because some women may have chosen to follow the Islamic law despite having the access to mechanisms for benefiting from the current court mechanism. O'Neil and Toktas's (2017) analysis indicates that some wealthy conservative women in Turkey chose to settle in Islamic inheritance mechanism over the equal inheritance mechanism through their own will due to their religiosity. However, lacking a measurable indicator of individual religiosity, I had no other choice but to assume that these women settled on the Islamic inheritance mechanism because they could not benefit from the egalitarian inheritance laws⁸.

For testing the hypothesis, I utilize a question related to the education level of respondents from my dataset. The education variable ranges from 1 to 6, with 1 indicating "illiterate", 2 indicating "literate without the formal education", 3 indicating "primary school graduate", 4 indicating "secondary school graduate", 5 indicating "high school graduate and above". Because the number of respondents within the sample having a university graduate is low ($n = 34$), I merge those obtaining a high school diploma and above in a single unit (Fig. 2).

Next, I would like to capture the influence of other significant factors as identified in the literature. One of these factors is women's language abilities. The knowledge of the official language of the state institutions may increase women's ability to benefit from progressive family laws through a variety of mechanisms. First, women who know the official language of courts may have greater awareness of their rights. Second, women with language abilities might be more likely to complete the basic procedures of state institutions (Agarwal, 2002). The Turkish courts provide a unique dynamic between the language status and court accession. The modern Turkish republic mandated Turkish as the only official language of state institutions, and a policy of non-recognition of other languages was adopted, which included prohibition of using Kurdish in the courts (Heper, 2007). Consequently, non-Turkish speakers who were not able to learn Turkish have faced challenges in accessing the state services. Per the recent estimates, Kurds constitute the only sizable group in Turkey that has not fully embraced the Turkish language. About 16% of the citizens of Turkey are Kurdish, and 17% of Kurds do not know how to speak Turkish, constituting about 3% of the Turkish population (Heper, 2007; Agirdir, 2017).

In order to control for the influence of language abilities in shaping underprivileged women's ability to benefit from their inheritance rights, I refer to the data collection technique for this survey. The researchers of this study were instructed to conduct the survey in Turkish first, and refer to other languages if the respondents are not able to communicate in Turkish. Overall, 79.2% (867) of individuals completed the survey in Turkish, 20% (219) of individuals completed the survey in Kurdish, and 0.8% (9) in Zaza language, an Indo-European language spoken in small areas of the Eastern Turkey. I created a variable "Turkish" and I coded "1" the individuals who completed the survey in Turkish, and "0" the individuals who did not complete the

⁷ Ms. Nebahat Akkoç, the president of Kamer and the organizer of survey, indicated to me that they did not ask respondents to evaluate their inheritance schemes directly, because most underprivileged women are too fearful to detail their own conditions, which leads to biased responses. They rather asked women to evaluate inheritance distribution schemes within their own families, which provide much less biased responses.

⁸ The implications of this coding on the distribution of the main independent variable, education, are discussed in the statistical analysis section, which do not implicate any systematic bias in favor of the alternative hypothesis

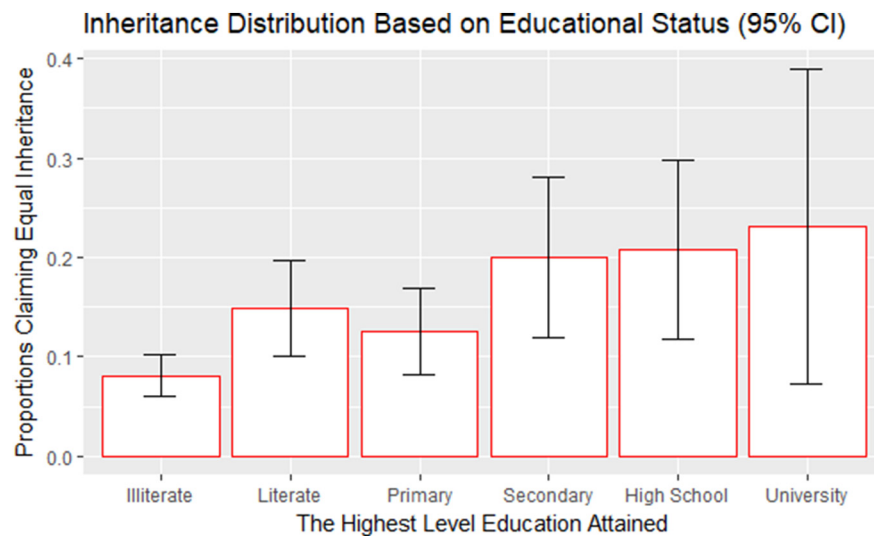


Fig. 2. Inheritance distribution based on educational status.

survey in Turkish.

Another potential socio-economic dynamic that has been identified to influence the protection of women's property rights is women's financial independence. The financial independence may enable women to secure their property rights more easily through increasing their self-reliance. Women without financial independence may need to rely on their immediate relatives for their financial protection, which may lead them to rescind their inheritance rights in favor of their immediate relatives when they are economically and socially vulnerable (Agarwal, 2002). In contrast, women with financial independence may not need any financial protection from their relatives, and therefore they might be more independent in pressing for their rights within the existing state apparatus or among family and kinship circles. I refer to the question that asks respondents whether they bring any income to their household, which provides a proximity for economic productivity. Individual responses were coded as "0" if the respondent did not bring any income to the household, and "1" if the respondent brought any income to the household.

I have also included some additional control variables that may influence the inheritance distribution mechanisms. I control for the family monthly income, which may directly influence the ability of women in receiving inheritance, as women may not be able to obtain any inheritance if the household income is too low. Thus, women with lower household incomes may face additional financial challenges in pursuing their inheritance claims. Monthly income is an interval variable ranging from "1" to "5", with "1" standing for "No household income" (6.3%), "2" standing for "Household income between 100TL and 500TL" (25.8%), "3" standing for "Household income between 500TL and 1000 Turkish Lira" (54.8%), "4" standing for "Household income between 1000 TL and 2000 TL" (12.1%), "5" standing for "Household income above 2000 TL" (1%).

I have also included a control variable that accounts for the mother tongue language of the respondents. In the dataset, 79.1% of respondents indicated their mother tongue as Kurdish, 3.8% as Turkish, 17% as Zaza, and 0.2% as Arabic. Agarwal (1994) indicates that in communities where women have never been able to obtain their shares of land, the voluntary attempts to acquire certain shares of property receive strong social disapproval. In that regard, the social disapproval could be more eminent among the respondents whose mothers did not speak Turkish due to socio-economic reasons. I coded respondents whose mother tongue is Turkish as "1", constituting 3.82% of the dataset, and respondents whose mother tongue is Turkish as "0", constituting 96.18% of the dataset.

6. Statistical analysis

The hypothesis proposed in this study is tested through a regression analysis. Conducting a regression analysis enables me to take into account the influences of different educational levels shaping underprivileged women's ability to benefit from gender progressive laws. The gender-politics scholars point out to the shortcomings of regression analysis in conceptualizing the intersectional paradigm due to the challenges associated with operationalizing fluid and contested processes (Bedolla, 2007). A regression analysis indeed may not be able to provide a complete mapping of how different elements of women's identities interact with each other as well as the context dependence of such elements. However, a regression analysis can help us to understand which properties of underprivileged women form constitutive elements to benefit them from gender-progressive family laws. This in turn can enable us to understand which socio-economic groups may have a higher likelihood of claiming their rights and which targeted groups may be more likely to succeed in benefiting from the emancipative laws.

I have utilized logit regression analysis as my dependent variable of interest is dichotomous (obtained equal inheritance or not) (Table 1).

Table 1
Logit regression results.

	Model 1	Model 2	Model 3	Model 4
Intercept	-2.21* (0.51)	-1.81* (0.51)	-2.14* (0.59)	-2.13* (0.59)
Educational status	0.18* (0.07)	0.21* (0.07)	0.19* (0.07)	0.19* (0.07)
Age	-0.02 (0.01)	-0.02 (0.01)	-0.02 (0.01)	-0.02 (0.01)
Monthly household income	0.14 (0.12)		0.13 (0.12)	0.13 (0.12)
Mother tongue	0.62 (0.35)			0.63 (0.35)
Turkish		-0.06 (0.24)	-0.05 (0.24)	-0.07 (0.24)
Bringing home additional income		-0.27 (0.39)		-0.29 (0.39)
N	1314	1306	1314	1305
AIC	938.48	940.32	941.71	939.65
BIC	1042.10	1043.82	1045.33	1084.52
log L	-449.24	-450.16	-450.86	-441.82

Standard errors in parentheses

* indicates significance at $p < 0.05$.

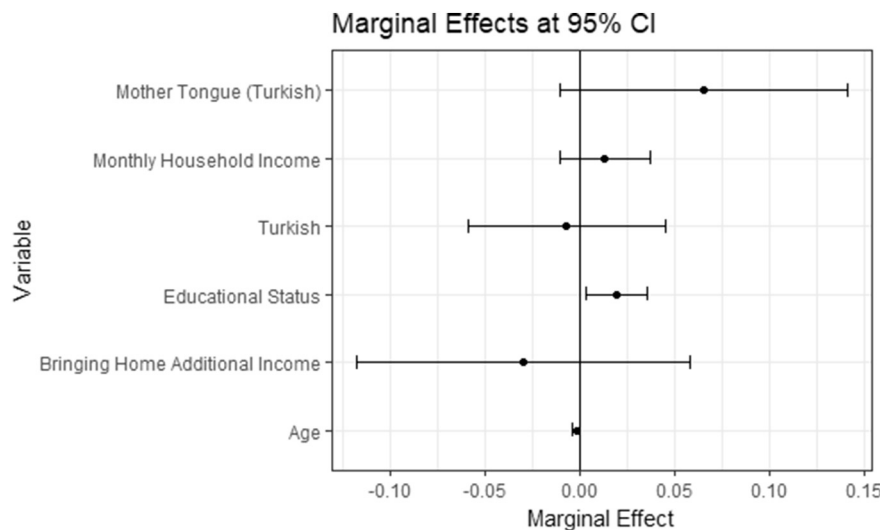


Fig. 3. Marginal effects.

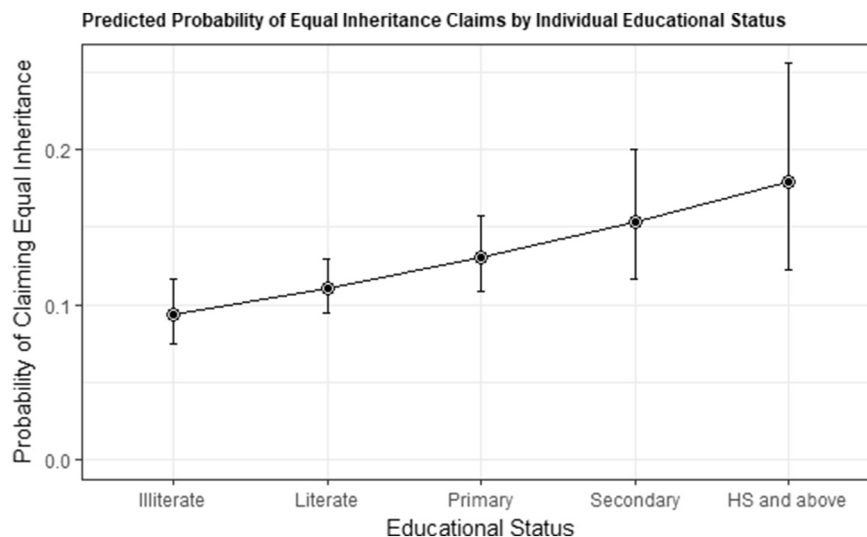


Fig. 4. Predicted probability of educational attainment.

The results for my analyses are below:⁹

As the results suggest, there is a statistically significant association between the educational status of a respondent and her claim of obtaining equal inheritance. The marginal effect of educational status variable is 1.8% and statistically significant at the 95% confidence interval, indicating that each unit of increase in the educational status of respondents is associated with 1.8% of increase in the likelihood of obtaining equal inheritance (Fig. 3). While the likelihood for obtaining equal inheritance is at 9.4% for an illiterate individual, it rises to 18% on average for an individual with a high school degree or higher. These results indicate the presence of statistically significant marginal effects of the early years of education for women to be able to obtain equal inheritance, as likelihood of obtaining equal inheritance becomes significant between illiterates and those holding secondary degrees (12.95%) at 90% confidence level (Fig. 4). There is no statistically

significant association between claiming to obtain equal inheritance and other independent variables, including the completing of the interview in Turkish, bringing home additional income and the mother tongue of respondents. Regression results that include more control variables associated with marriage dynamics can be found in the appendix part C).

The relationship between language of the respondents and their likelihood of claiming an equal inheritance does not appear to be statistically significant. However, an overwhelming 92% of those who did not speak Turkish had their highest level of educational attainment as primary education and below, whereas 38.5% of those who spoke Turkish had their highest level of educational attainment as high school and beyond. Thus while speaking the official language of the courts might be a necessary condition for accessing the state institutions, it is not sufficient, as women need other skillsets that can be obtained through education.

6.1. Robustness checks

In this section, I check the robustness of my regression results. The first check is related to the statistically significant results of education. I enter education as four dummy variables, with high school educational

⁹ The variance inflation factors, which can be found in the appendix, do not indicate any significant inflation in standard errors due to collinearity. The Pearson's correlation coefficient for "Educational Status" and "Turkish" is 0.26, for "Educational Status" and "Bringing Home Additional Income" is 0.17, and for between "Educational Status" and "Mother Tongue" is .14. Between all other independent variables the Pearson's correlation coefficient is below .10.

attainment and above as the reference category. Below I display the marginal effects, while the regression tables can be found in the appendix part D):

The marginal effects on categorical variables confirm the earlier findings on the predicted probabilities for different levels of educational attainment (Fig. 5). The likelihood of obtaining equal inheritance for someone with a high school degree or above is 8.5% higher than someone who is illiterate, and this difference is statistically significant at the 95% confidence level. The likelihood for someone with a high school degree or above to obtain equal inheritance is 5.4% higher than the likelihood of someone with a primary school degree. This difference is barely insignificant at the 90% confidence level. The differences on other groups, secondary education graduates and those with high school degrees or above, and literates without proper education and those with high school degrees or above do not appear as statistically significant.

A counterargument regarding the observed relationship on educa-

minimum monthly wage as determined by the Turkish Government was 1000,54 TL in 2015, and Turk-Is, a well-known Turkish union, defined 1385 TL as the hunger status of a family (Milliyet, 2015). The following graph displays the marginal effects (Fig. 6), while the regression tables can be found at the appendix part E).

The results point to the role education has as an enabling mechanism in protecting marginalized women's rights, even for women living in poverty. The marginal effect is slightly lower than the main model (1.3%), yet still statistically significant at the 95% confidence level. Among respondents with monthly income level of below 1000 TL, while the likelihood of an illiterate respondent obtaining equal inheritance is 9.53%, this likelihood increases to 19.68% for a respondent who is high school graduate or above. The difference of the likelihood of obtaining equal inheritance between these two groups of respondents is statistically significant at the 95% confidence level.

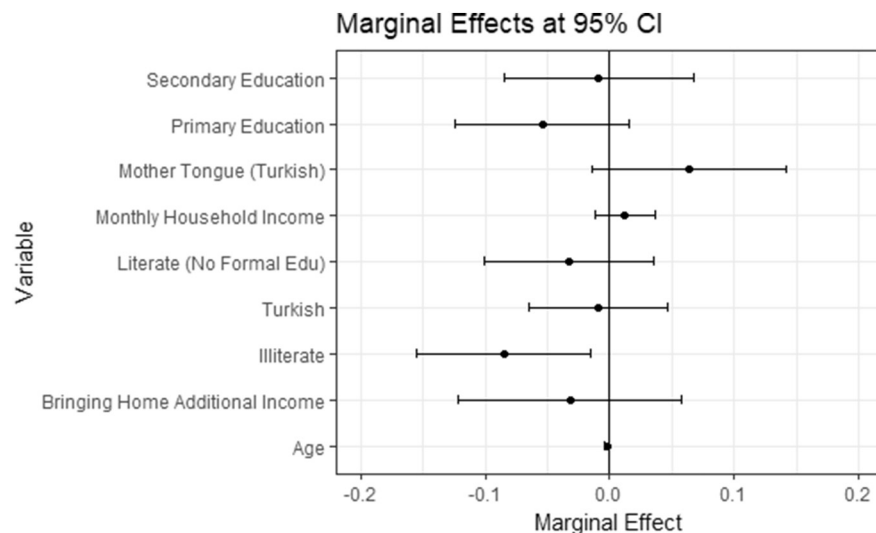


Fig. 5. Marginal effects for categorical variables on education.

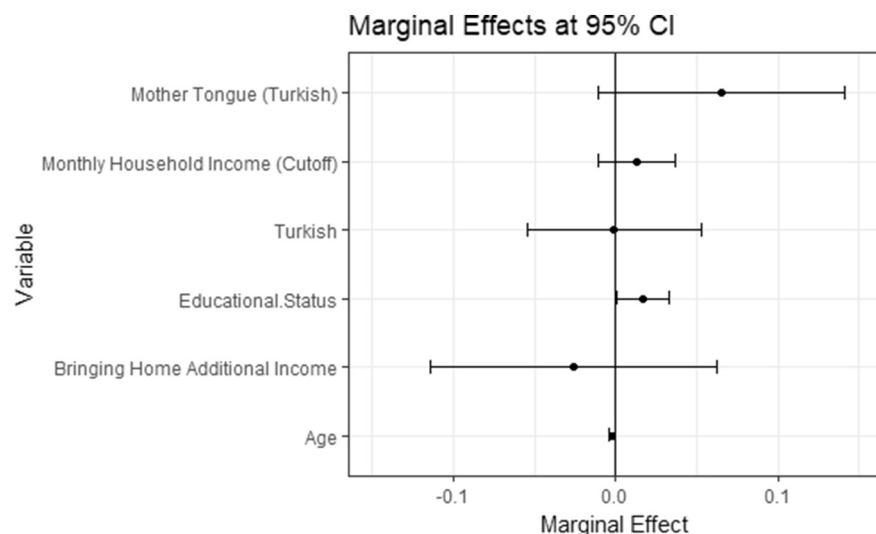


Fig. 6. Marginal effects for a restricted sample based on monthly income.

tion can be raised on the basis that women who do not have meaningful property would not be able to obtain inheritance. To account for this factor, I tested my hypotheses only among individuals whose monthly income status was below 1000 TL, constituting about 87% of the overall sample. The reasons for choosing 1000 TL as a cut-off point are that the

6.2. Mechanism

The results point out that there is an association between educational status and the likelihood of obtaining equal inheritance. How can we know that this association is due to functions of education and not

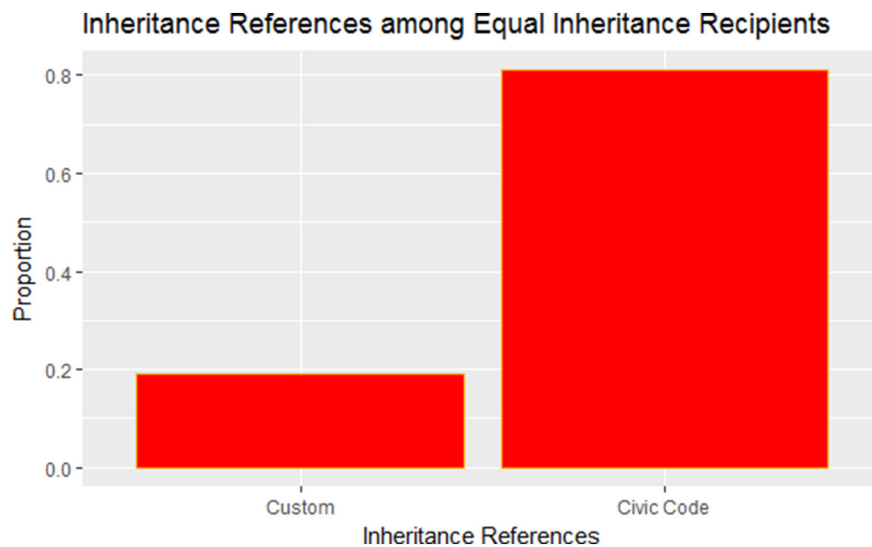


Fig. 7. Inheritance references among equal inheritance recipients.

due to some factors such as greater likelihood of the relatives of more educated women in providing the fair share because of their progressive views towards gender? The education from elementary through university is free in Turkey, and the completion of secondary education became mandatory in 1997. Hence, parents do not incur any direct costs in sending their children to schools, which suggests that it is not necessarily the children of progressive families who value education that can obtain schooling. Moreover, Kamer dataset enables me to account for whether respondents receiving inheritance are aware of the source of inheritance distribution. The researchers asked individuals who indicated receiving some inheritance whether they knew the basis of inheritance distribution mechanism by asking “What source is used as a base in distribution inheritance (in your family)”. The responses are depicted in the graph (Fig. 7) below:

Among those indicating that they received equal inheritance distribution, 80.7% (126) indicated that the inheritance distribution mechanism is the civic code, whereas 19.3% (30) indicated that the inheritance distribution mechanism is customs. It is meaningful that about four fifths of those obtaining equal inheritance were aware that the law was on their side, which points out to the role of awareness of women's legal rights in leading to an equal inheritance distribution.

The Islamic law is a prominent competing framework with the secular law in inheritance practices in Turkey. Whether education can enable women to switch from receiving inheritance according to Qur'an to the formal secular code becomes an important question, as one can argue that education enables women to obtain more secular values. As a result, more educated women may be more likely to demand and obtain inheritance according to the formal inheritance code rather than the Islamic code. As discussed in the research design and method section, the survey utilized in this study does not include a question that can capture the religion and religious values of the respondents. Yet, the survey enables me to examine that women's Islamic, customary and secular inheritance practices differ based on their levels of education. The following graph (Fig. 8) compares the secondary education rate completion of the respondents based on their types of inheritance practices.

An examination of the graph indicates that the educational attainment of women who obtain inheritance according to Islamic standards and according to the secular code does not substantively differ¹⁰. Accordingly, there is no statistically significant difference between the

proportion of respondents who receive inheritance based upon Islamic standards and secular inheritance code at the 95% confidence level. While the percentage of those respondents who receive equal inheritance is 26.28%, the percentage of respondents who receive inheritance according to Islamic standards is 24.03%¹¹. The available evidence does not indicate a secularizing influence of education on the inheritance practices of marginalized women. This could be due to the fact that the religious education is a mandatory component of the Turkish secondary education curriculum since the 1982 Constitution was implemented (Pak, 2004). Alternatively, education may have a secularizing component for higher levels of studies, such as university education and beyond. Yet, due to the low sample size of those with university education and above, this study is not able to capture this effect.

7. Conclusion

Overall, the results indicate that among the marginalized women in the city of Diyarbakır, Turkey, more education is associated with a higher likelihood of claiming an equal inheritance. This provides some optimism for improving the socio-economic status of women, as providing educational opportunities can be relatively easier than teaching a new language or providing financial independence. While these findings are specific to the lived experiences of marginalized women in Diyarbakır, Turkey, the research model can be applied and the mechanisms of education can be generalized to the lived experiences of women across the world.

The results regarding the control variables do not indicate any significant findings for their relationships with the likelihood of claiming to obtain an equal inheritance. Yet, this is far from concluding that such factors do not have any significant relationship with the likelihood of obtaining equal inheritance. The ability to speak the official language of the courts is likely to be not a sufficient condition of protecting women's rights as it does not necessarily lead to increases of women's awareness regarding their rights. The findings regarding the education hypothesis also lend some support for this argument, as the probability of obtaining an equal inheritance was strikingly low for illiterates. Regarding the financial independence hypothesis, the conservative bias of my dataset likely prevented a reasonable estimation for the proportion of

¹⁰ These findings on educational status confirm the claim in the research design and method section that the inclusion of those who receive inheritance according to Islamic standards as not received inheritance do not bias the results in favor of the alternative hypothesis.

¹¹ Comparisons based upon high school education and above as well as university education also do not indicate a statistically significant difference between those who obtain equal inheritance and inheritance according to the Islamic standards. A comparison based upon mean levels of education can be found in the appendix.

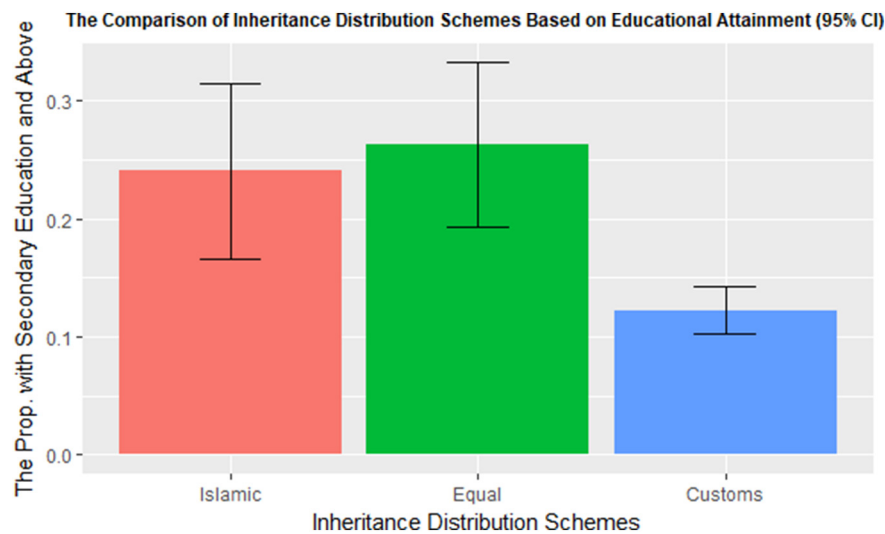


Fig. 8. The comparison of inheritance distribution schemes based on educational attainment.

financially independent women, as there is a large financial ability difference between bringing home any financial income and having financial independence.

The current research proposes new venues of research with an intersectional paradigm to understand the experiences of marginalized women. The gender-equality in property ownership continues the lag behind the gender-equality in legislation. Thus, scholars can focus on the private sphere of women through an intersectional approach to understand what causes the divergence between legislated equality and the equality of outcomes. Employing an intersectional approach can enable scholars to capture differences not only between, but also within socio-economic groups, providing a necessary framework to understand which target groups benefit from emancipatory rights and which fail to do so. Yet, the lack of available datasets hinders the ability of scholars in conducting research on women's marginalization. Many states, including Turkey, do not keep gender-differentiated information on court-applications, court cases and overall property ownership. In addition, questions about women's inheritance rights are merely asked in surveys, and the number of representative datasets on marginalized women is limited. In response to these, scholars can work on designing surveys that ask questions regarding women's inheritance and property rights. These questions can focus on both women's experiences with law, and their perceptions regarding the protection of their property rights.

Scholars can also cooperate with grassroots organizations that have knowledge and experience working with women living in underprivileged areas to conduct surveys that specifically target the underprivileged population. Future surveys on women's inheritance rights in Muslim-majority societies can include questionnaires in order to account for the value of religiosity on choosing the Islamic inheritance distribution scheme, enabling future empirical research to investigate the role of religiosity in shaping the individual choices of inheritance distribution. This can more effectively answer questions related to potential linkages between education, secularization of minds and benefiting from an equal inheritance distribution. Future research can also utilize focus groups, which can enable scholars to understand the complex factors influencing women's experiences with law and property. This approach can further shed light on the interactive constitutive

elements that may hinder or lead women to benefit from gender-progressive family laws.

Previous studies show that women's aggregate level of educational attainment is an essential component of the legislation of gender-progressive laws. The results from this study indicate that among the marginalized women the emancipatory influence of legislated equality is not uniform, as less educated women may be benefiting less from the outcomes of gender-progressive laws. Thus, highly educated women appear as both agents of emancipatory law change and the beneficiaries of gender-progressive laws, whereas lower educated women do not benefit as greatly as the changes in the legislated equality.

The results of this study point to the failure of a top-down modernization approach in improving the living standards of its targeted population, the most disadvantaged segments of the society. Certain steps can be taken to increase the ability of marginalized women to benefit from the gender-egalitarian laws. The educational status of the populace, particularly of the young adults from disadvantaged families can be improved. The content of civic education can be improved at the primary school level to place more emphasis on how women can benefit from their legal rights in family laws. Specific to Turkey, the public service broadcasting, which consists of a mandatory time-space in TV broadcasting, can be reserved for providing information on women's legal rights.

The current study also cautions regarding the optimism stemming from the gender-progressive clauses that are implemented through elite intervention. Although almost a hundred years have passed since the implementation of the modern Turkish civic code, a very significant portion of women in Turkey are still not beneficiaries of the egalitarian inheritance law. Future studies can investigate whether social approval in the implementation of gender-progressive laws through mass participation has any substantive influence on producing the equality of outcomes. The study also points out to the extent of damages that can be incurred through conflict environments.

The study also points out to the extent of damages that can be incurred through conflict environments. In addition to short-term damages such as the deterioration of student performance, conflict environments may contribute to the perpetuation of gender norms due to the inability of women to obtain and protect their rights.

Appendix A. Appendix

A) The comparison of the main independent variables based on inheritance distribution schemes

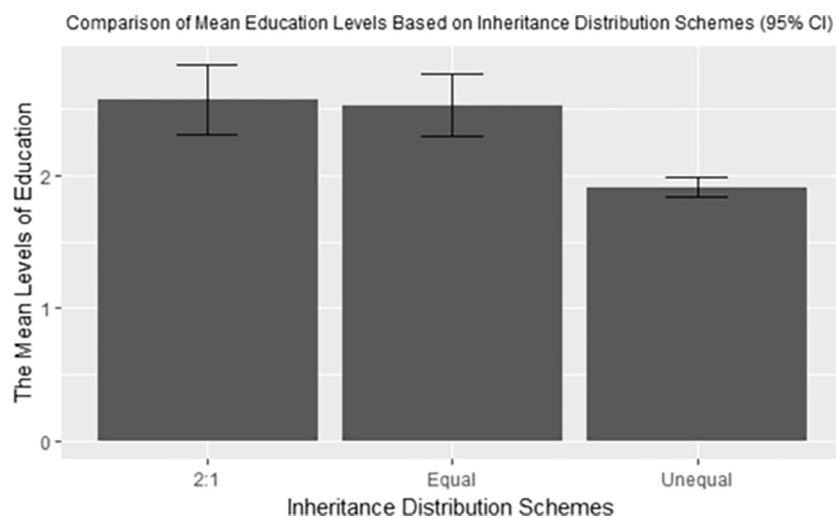


Fig. 9. Comparison by education.

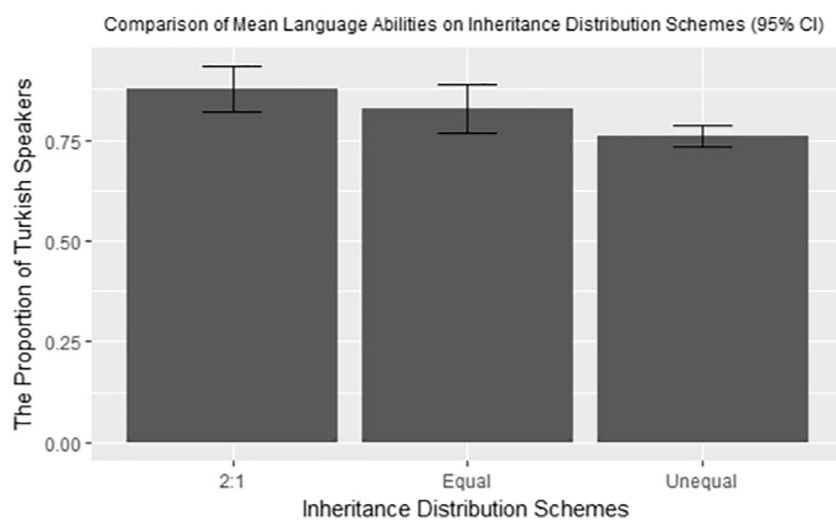


Fig. 10. Comparison by language.

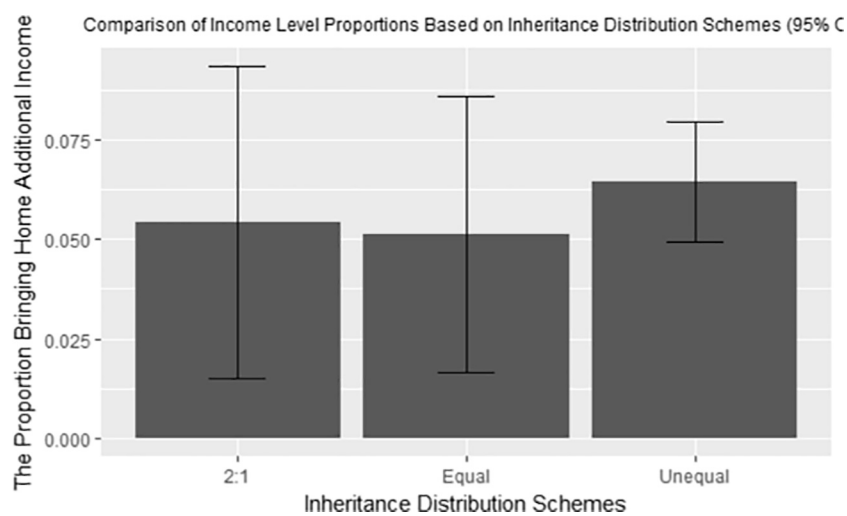


Fig. 11. Comparison by financial independence.

B) Variance inflation factors (VIF)

Table 2
Variance inflation factors.

Variable	VIF
Educational status	1.15
Turkish	1.08
Financial independence	1.04
Monthly income	1.04
Mother tongue	1.01

C) Regression analysis with more control variables

I conduct some additional tests with more control variables to check the robustness of my results. These control variables are: marriage status, the legal status of marriage among those who are married and how married responses got married. “Marriage status” is a binary variable that takes the value “1” if the respondent is married, and “0” otherwise. “The legal status of marriage refers” to whether married respondents are officially married according to the Civic Code (1) or whether they are not officially married according to the Civic Code (0). “How Married” refers to whether the respondent got married through arranged or forced marriage (0), or marriage through a personal conviction (1). The coefficients of the educational status variable across four different models remain statistically significant and positive after including these covariates in the analysis.

Table 3
Logit regression results with more control variables.

	Model 1	Model 2	Model 3	Model 4
Intercept	−2.23 ^{***} (0.59)	−1.95 ^{***} (0.59)	−2.25 ^{***} (0.50)	−2.09 ^{**} (0.75)
Bringing home additional income	−0.32 (0.39)			−0.62 (0.54)
Turkish	−0.02 (0.25)			−0.14 (0.31)
Educational status	0.14 [*] (0.07)	0.24 ^{**} (0.09)	0.14 [†] (0.07)	0.23 [*] (0.09)
Monthly household income	0.13 (0.12)		0.13 (0.12)	0.10 (0.14)
Mother tongue	0.63 [†] (0.35)		0.63 [†] (0.35)	0.61 (0.43)
Age	−0.02 [†] (0.01)	−0.03 [*] (0.01)	−0.02 [†] (0.01)	−0.03 [*] (0.01)
Marriage status	0.36 [†] (0.21)		0.35 [†] (0.21)	
Kind of marriage		−0.06 (0.36)		0.01 (0.37)
How married		0.64 ^{**} (0.22)		0.63 ^{**} (0.22)
N	1302	1041	1311	1035
AIC	937.60	654.99	936.72	658.32
BIC	1103.09	753.95	1061.01	836.24
log L	−436.80	−307.49	−444.36	−293.16

Standard errors in parentheses

† significant at $p < .10$;* $p < .05$;** $p < .01$;*** $p < .001$.

As the results suggest, the education variable remains significant even after including some marriage related control variables.

Table 4
Regression analysis with education entered as four dummy variables (Baseline: high school education and above).

	Model 1	Model 2	Model 3	Model 4
Intercept	−1.34 [*] (0.48)	−0.81 [*] (0.44)	−1.27 [*] (0.48)	−1.20 [*] (0.57)
Secondary	−0.08 (0.36)	−0.14 (0.35)	−0.11 (0.35)	−0.09 (0.36)

(continued on next page)

Table 4 (continued)

	Model 1	Model 2	Model 3	Model 4
Primary	−0.52 (0.32)	−0.57* (0.32)	−0.53* (0.32)	−0.53 (0.33)
Literate	−0.31 (0.32)	−0.36 (0.32)	−0.32 (0.32)	−0.32 (0.32)
Illiterate	−0.79* (0.32)	−0.93* (0.32)	−0.85* (0.32)	−0.83* (0.33)
Age	−0.02 (0.01)	−0.02 (0.01)	−0.02 (0.01)	−0.02 (0.01)
Monthly household income	0.12 (0.12)		0.12 (0.12)	0.11 (0.12)
Mother tongue (Turkish)	0.62* (0.35)			0.63* (0.35)
Turkish		−0.08 (0.25)		−0.08 (0.25)
Bringing home additional income		−0.29 (0.39)		−0.31 (0.39)
N	1314	1306	1315	1305
AIC	942.09	943.50	943.39	943.20
BIC	1107.87	1109.09	1088.47	1150.16
log L	−439.04	−439.75	−443.70	−431.60

Standard errors in parentheses

* indicates significance at $p < 0.1$.

I check the robustness of my results on respondents who indicated that their monthly household income was below the minimum wage (1000TL).

Table 5

Regression results for individuals whose income levels were below 1000 TL.

	Model 1	Model 2	Model 3	Model 4
Intercept	− 2.87*** (0.35)	− 2.16*** (0.59)	− 2.90*** (0.35)	− 2.16*** (0.59)
Bringing home additional income	− 0.29 (0.39)			− 0.25 (0.39)
Educational status	0.24*** (0.06)	0.16* (0.07)	0.24*** (0.06)	0.17* (0.07)
Monthly income (after cutoff)	0.11 (0.12)	0.13 (0.12)	0.12 (0.12)	0.13 (0.12)
Mother tongue (Turkish)	0.63† (0.35)	0.63† (0.35)	0.63† (0.35)	0.63† (0.35)
Age		−0.02† (0.01)		− 0.02† (0.01)
Turkish		−0.02 (0.25)		−0.01 (0.25)
N	1296	1303	1304	1295
AIC	931.02	931.76	931.73	931.25
BIC	1034.36	1055.89	1014.50	1075.90
log L	−445.51	−441.88	−449.86	−437.62

Standard errors in parentheses

† significant at $p < .10$; * $p < .05$; ** $p < .01$; *** $p < .001$.

As the results suggest, controlling for other covariates, the positive relationship between education and claiming equal inheritance persists even for women living in household with incomes below the minimum wage.

Appendix B. Supplementary data

Supplementary data to this article can be found online at <https://doi.org/10.1016/j.wsif.2018.05.013>.

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