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ARAŞTIRMA MAKALELERİ / RESEARCH ARTICLES

ARAŞTIRMA MAKALESİ / RESEARCH ARTICLE

THE POST-2008 PRONATALIST RHETORIC IN TÜRKİYE: THERE IS NO ROBUST CAUSAL EFFECT ON ACTUAL FERTILITY!

TÜRKİYE'DE 2008-SONRASI DOĞUM-YANLISI SÖYLEM: GERÇEKLEŞEN DOĞURGANLIK ÜZERİNDE SAĞLAM NEDENSEL ETKİ YOK!

M. AYKUT ATTAR*

ABSTRACT

On March 8, 2008, President Recep Tayyip Erdoğan, who was the prime minister at the time, said that women in Türkiye should have at least three children. Since then, a pronatalist rhetoric has been sustained in Türkiye. Today, there is a large multidisciplinary social science literature on the post-2008 pronatalist rhetoric, but no study has investigated the causal effects of the rhetoric on actual fertility. To fill this gap in the literature, this paper investigates whether the post-2008 pronatalism in Türkiye did create any robust causal effect on actual fertility (the period Total Fertility Rate). The paper uses the synthetic control method to identify the causal effect associated with the post-2008 pronatalism. An inspection of population policies across the globe identifies 26 countries as potential donors for the synthetic Türkiye, and the predictor variables for actual fertility are GDP per capita, infant mortality rate, population density, and the share of young population (15 to 24 ages). Using the state-of-the-art methodological principles of the synthetic control method, the paper demonstrates that the post-2008 pronatalist rhetoric in Türkiye did not create any robust causal effect on actual fertility. From the viewpoint of optimal population policy, this paper underlines that the rhetoric only, i.e., without generous programs creating sufficiently strong incentives, would not even boost period fertility outcomes.

KEYWORDS: pronatalism, population policy, causal inference, synthetic control

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ÖZET

8 Mart 2008'de, o zaman başbakan olan Cumhurbaşkanı Recep Tayyip Erdoğan, Türkiye'deki kadınların en az üç çocuk doğurmaları gerektiğini söyledi. Türkiye'de, o günden bu yana, bir doğum-yanlısı retorik sürdürüldü. Bugün, bu 2008-sonrası doğum-yanlısı retorik hakkında geniş bir çok-disiplinli sosyal bilim literatürü bulunuyor, ancak hiçbir çalışma retoriğin gerçekleşen doğurganlık üzerindeki nedensel etkilerini araştırmadı. Literatürdeki bu boşluğu doldurmak için, bu makale Türkiye'deki 2008-sonrası doğum-yanlısı retoriğin gerçekleşen doğurganlık (dönemsel Toplam Doğurganlık Hızı) üzerinde sağlam bir nedensel etki yaratıp yaratmadığını araştırıyor. Makale, 2008-sonrası doğum-yanlılığının nedensel etkisini belirlemek için sentetik kontrol yöntemi kullanıyor. Dünya genelindeki nüfus politikalarının bir incelemesi sentetik Türkiye için 26 aday ülke belirliyor ve kişi başına GSYH, bebek ölüm oranı, nüfus yoğunluğu ve genç nüfus (15-24 yaş) oranı, gerçekleşen doğurganlığın açıklayıcı değişkenleri oluyorlar. Makale, sentetik kontrol yönteminin en gelişmiş metodolojik ilkelerini kullanarak, Türkiye'deki 2008-sonrası doğum-yanlısı retoriğin gerçekleşen doğurganlık üzerinde sağlam bir nedensel etki yaratmadığını gösteriyor. Bu makale, optimal nüfus politikası açısından, yeterince güçlü teşvikler yaratan cömert programlar olmadan sürdürülen retoriğin dönemsel doğurganlık çıktılarını bile yükseltmeyeceğinin altını çiziyor.

ANAHTAR KELİMELER: doğum-yanlılığı, nüfus politikası, nedensel çıkarsama, sentetik kontrol

INTRODUCTION

Demographic transition in Türkiye is at its final stage of low mortality and low fertility, and it continues with typical transitional patterns observed in many countries (Koç et al., 2010; Keskin & Koç, 2023). According to the latest official statistics published by the Turkish Statistical Institute (TurkStat) for the year 2023, total (period) fertility rate (TFR) is 1.51 children per woman, and infant mortality rate is 10 deaths per thousand live births (TurkStat, 2024). Official demographic statistics also show that the mean age of mother at first birth is 27 years, life expectancy at birth is around 78 years, and population growth rate is 1.1% per annum for the year 2023 (TurkStat, 2024).

Global demographic history shows us that demographic transitions may have political consequences. Governments and political leaders have responded to population levels and demographic changes across different times and regions—both in the past and present, and across the east and west (Attar, 2020; Bergsvik et al., 2021). The intellectual pursuit of an optimal (and policy-relevant) population level actually dates back to ancient Greek philosophers Platon and Aristotle (Mulhern, 1975). Various oppressive regimes of the 20th century, ranging from the Nazi Germany to Ceauescu's Romania, are associated with pronatalism, eugenics, and other illiberal forms of population policies.

The questions about pronatalist policies are ever more significant in the 21st century since high income societies of the Western world do not generally exhibit optimistic signs of a post-transitional return to replacement levels. Governments in some of these societies, especially in the Scandinavian countries, implement various programs that provide strong and continuous financial support to those parents that have a child under three years of age. Besides, these governments implement such programs without additionally promoting a nationalistic or religious discourse about more babies and large families. But there are also examples, both from the past and present, where a government's pronatalist ideals (and rhetoric) do not align well with its actual policy frameworks (Leeuw & van de Vall, 1984; Thévenon, 2011; Sobotka et al., 2019). Czechia, Hungary, Italy, Japan, Poland, Slovakia, and Spain have been listed as the OECD countries that provide a long maternity leave but limited cash benefits to new parents for the year 2011 (Thévenon, 2011). Since then, some of these countries such as Hungary, Japan, and Poland have implemented pronatalist policy reforms. Similar reforms have also been observed in countries such as Russia and Iran, and the 2015-2019 policy stance on fertility is "raising fertility" even in China (United Nations, 2021).

In a public address delivered in Uşak province on March 8, 2008, President Recep Tayyip Erdoğan, who was the prime minister at the time, said that women in Türkiye should have *at least three children* to keep the country's population young and thereby prevent the adverse economic effects of population aging (Çetik et al., 2008). Since then, Türkiye has been in a curious regime of *pronatalist rhetoric*. President Erdoğan keeps emphasizing the "problem" of low fertility and low population as well as increasing divorce rates in various occasions such as marriage ceremonies he attends as the guest of honor and the *Family Council* meetings of the *Ministry of Family and Social Services* (Ateş Dereli, 2023).

This is definitely a form of pronatalist *rhetoric* because the politician advancing the notion of at least three children for all women in the country is one of the most influential political leaders this country ever raised, dominating every single election with remarkable success in terms of vote shares except the most recent local elections. But Türkiye's pronatalism is also curious because there has not been a systematic and significant policy shift towards a formal, planned, actively-promoted, and generous pronatalist population policy or strategy. In fact, a regulation has been adopted in 2015, promising one-time baby bonuses for new mothers and mothers giving birth to new babies, but the bonuses indicated in that regulation were extremely modest (Attar, 2016). What is really needed in Türkiye from the perspective of permanently higher fertility is a set of policies that would create *sufficiently strong* incentives for working women with two children to have the third one (Greulich et al., 2016). Without significant policy changes in this direction, the current norm of two children per woman may be replaced by a new norm of one child in the future (Keskin & Çavlin, 2023).

One primal question is whether we should take the post-2008 pronatalist rhetoric as a serious object of scientific inquiry, given that there has not been an accompanying policy change. From the viewpoint of historiography, the post-2008 period is an entirely new era (Eryurt et al., 2013), and some could even argue that the post-2014 period, including the 2015 regulation mentioned above, truly represents a regime change (Can, 2023). Besides, Dildar's (2022) estimates show that, in Türkiye, a woman's religiosity is positively (and statistically significantly) associated with her acceptance of the pronatalist rhetoric in 2013 but, *crucially*, not in 2008. Contextualizing this religiosity-fertility link, Aksoy and Billari (2018) use a regression discontinuity design to show that higher district-level vote share of Erdoğan's neoconservative party in 2004 local elections is positively associated with higher nuptiality and fertility. There is also micro-level statistical evidence showing that religiosity increases, and female education decreases fertility in Türkiye, acting as distinct secularization and modernization channels respectively (Hatun & Warner, 2022).

These together imply another, more profound question: How would pronatalism affect a woman's ideal, intended, and actual fertility levels in a Muslim-majority country? This is a difficult question and requires an identification strategy on its own. What we know for sure from Abbasoğlu Özgören and Türkyılmaz (2023) is that, in Türkiye, recent decades have witnessed *an increase in ideal fertility but a decrease in intended fertility*. Hence, the recent rise of pronatalism in Türkiye is most likely to alter women's reproductive ideals without any significant effect on actual fertility outcomes. These, however, would not help us resolve the empirical question of *whether the post-2008 pronatalism did or did not affect actual fertility in Türkiye*. Even when we disregard political, cultural, and social repercussions in the context of gender equality and reproductive justice, the post-2008 pronatalism is an intriguing (perhaps peculiar) aspect of Turkish demography in the 21st century; we need to build a definitive, evidence-based position regarding its actual demographic impact.

The main objective of this paper is to present a formal analysis of the pronatalist rhetoric adopted in Türkiye since 2008. The focal point of this analysis is the investigation of whether there was any robust causal effect on period TFR in Türkiye; an identification task not attempted in previous studies on the post-2008 pronatalism. To properly attack this research question with some rigor, the paper builds on a research design that tries to estimate a counterfactual Türkiye scenario in which there is no switch to pronatalism. More specifically, the paper uses the Synthetic Control Method (SCM) of Abadie and Gardeazabal (2003) and Abadie et al. (2010) for the estimation of counterfactual TFR in Türkiye for the post-2008 period. Hence, the SCM is being applied with a fertility indicator as the outcome and with countries as the cross-section units. Recent examples of this approach can be found, for example, in Gietel-Basten et al. (2019) and Reich (2024).

The SCM implemented for Türkiye's pronatalism requires the inclusion of donor countries not having been subject to a pronatalist policy agenda or rhetoric. The donor countries satisfying this criterion are selected through the country-level information obtained from the World Population Policies Database. Implementation also requires a set of good predictor variables that would have explanatory power for TFR. Following de la Croix and Gobbi (2017), real GDP per capita, infant mortality rate, and population density are added as the predictors of TFR. The set of predictor variables also includes the share of the 15-24 population, motivated by the notion that the age distribution of the society should matter for actual fertility outcomes.

After estimating a baseline specification that shows the existence of some small but positive effect on TFR, the analysis implements various robustness checks by utilizing the cutting-edge methodological principles of the SCM (Abadie, 2021). The end result is that the post-2008 pronatalist rhetoric in Türkiye did not create a robust causal effect on fertility.

The next section reviews the related literature to clarify the contribution of this paper. The section following the literature review provides a brief discussion of Erdoğan's pronatalist rhetoric to offer background context. The paper then introduces methodology and data in a section followed by the presentation of econometric results. A concluding section discusses the main finding and some avenues for future research.

RELATED LITERATURE

President Erdoğan's post-2008 pronatalist rhetoric has stimulated scholarly literature with some delay in the early 2010s. This literature is now enlarging with opinion articles and research papers from various disciplines such as economics, sociology, political science, and social anthropology as well as demography.

One strand in this literature discusses the economic relevance and studies the effects of pronatalism in the Turkish case. Economists have argued that (i)

TFR being equal to three children per woman is basically impossible (Gürsel et al., 2010), (ii) the return to higher fertility would require remarkably faster capital accumulation (Açıkgöz, 2012), (iii) higher fertility levels without increased labor force participation in the long run would have adverse effects (Oyvat, 2012), and (iv) a fertility boom would not solve Türkiye's social security problems (Sayan, 2013). In two other studies, economists have constructed structural economic models to analyze higher fertility scenarios for Türkiye. With a model of endogenous technology and endogenous fertility, Attar's (2013) simulations have demonstrated that a permanent shift to high fertility would imply lower GDP per capita levels and higher dependency ratios associated with child population. Using the United Nations' high fertility projections for Türkiye as the pronatalist counterfactual, Georges and Seçkin's (2016) simulations have confirmed that social security problems would persist in the long run.

Another group of studies situates the rise of pronatalism within wider contexts characterized, for example, by the rise of pro-Islamist authoritarian politics, the growing prominence of patriarchal norms and traditional or religious values, and the erosion of reproductive justice (Kocamaner, 2018; Pehlivanlı Kadayıfçı et al., 2020; Kılıçtepe et al., 2022; Saluk, 2023). Arat's (2010) essay, focusing not only on pronatalism, underlines the paradoxical situation of increased religious freedoms accompanied with threats to gender equality. Üstek and Kök (2012) argue that *biopower* (*biopolitics*) is useful in making sense of Erdoğan's pronatalism, especially in relation with sentiments against abortion and Caesarean-section (C-section) practices and those in favor of In Vitro Fertilization (IVF). There are studies showing, by means of qualitative research designs, that pronatalism in Türkiye has been associated with increased difficulty to access safe abortion services (MacFarlane et al., 2016; Telli et al., 2019). Similarly, the C-section has been framed as an antinatalist procedure that eventually limits the number of children a woman can give birth to, especially after 2012 (Erten, 2015). The spread of IVF clinics and other assisted reproduction services across Türkiye and the governmental support for such changes have been associated with patriarchal pronatalism (Gürtin, 2016).

None of the studies cited above has attempted a causal analysis of Türkiye's post-2008 pronatalism on demographic outcomes. One plausible reason for such a lack of interest is that causal inference studies typically focus on *actual policies* that change a policy regime in a discrete way and perhaps unexpectedly (Bergsvik et al., 2021). Without such a regime change in the Turkish case, causal inference has not offered much potential for scientific significance. This, however, does not rule out the possibility that pronatalist rhetoric may have created distinct "psychic" effects on fertility *preferences* in Türkiye (Dildar, 2022), and, hence, plausibly on actual fertility outcomes. Even though we expect no significant effect as suggested by the evolution of indented fertility (Abbasoğlu Özgören & Türkyılmaz, 2023), the empirical question about any causal effect requires a definitive answer that clarifies whether *rhetoric without policy* could have been successful or not.

A method of inference that credibly isolates any potential causal effect of the pronatalist rhetoric from the effects of confounding, mediating, and collider variables is superior to some other modes of inference such as reduced-form regressions. This is especially important when the researcher is forced to use macro-level data since controlling for individual-level exogenous confounders such as age, sex, and marital status is irrelevant. Fortunately, the post-2008 pronatalist rhetoric in Türkiye is a unique example of 21st-century pronatalism since it emerged suddenly and created an unprecedented discontinuity, thereby providing an opportunity for the use of the SCM.

PRONATALIST RHETORIC IN TÜRKİYE AFTER 2008

Fertility decline is arguably the most significant component of a demographic transition, both as a cause and as a consequence of economic development in the long run (e.g., Galor, 2011). In Türkiye, long-term fertility decline started sometime in the mid-20th century, and it was actually a remarkable decline from around 6 to 7 children to the below-replacement levels. Official statistics show that TFR in Türkiye was exactly equal to the replacement level of 2.1 children per woman in 2009. Interestingly, Erdoğan's pronatalism was just on time, starting exactly when Turkish fertility was decreasing below the replacement level. The "three children" slogan, enigmatic at first glance, was also a meaningful one because the average number of children of Erdoğan's party's parliamentarians (MPs) elected in 2007 was exactly three (Yıldız & Koç, 2008).

In the 2000s during which TFR gradually approached its replacement level, Türkiye experienced remarkable political changes as well; the newly-established *Justice and Development Party* (AKP) won the 2002 elections in the aftermath of a devastating economic crisis (2001) and ended the long history of coalition governments. AKP and its "charismatic" leader Recep Tayyip Erdoğan rose to power with conservative and liberal principles and initially adopted a reformist agenda promising the end of poverty and corruption as well as the promotion of civil liberties. In the last two decades, AKP and Erdoğan exhibited unprecedented electoral success by obtaining the majority of votes in virtually all of the elections and referendums (except the latest local elections). In the meantime, Türkiye became an increasingly more authoritarian country under Erdoğan administrations, eventually transitioning to a presidential regime in 2017. Recep Tayyip Erdoğan was elected as the first president of the new regime in 2018 and reelected in 2023.

The rise of pronatalism in Türkiye should be viewed within the contexts of (i) a Muslim-majority society gradually moving to a less democratic (more authoritarian) political structure with a dominant party that kept winning the elections, (ii) growing economic hardship and instability and persistent policy failures and confusions, not adequately addressing the structural problems of the society and the economy as a whole, especially after mid-2010s, and (iii) Erdoğan's remarkable success in sustaining the legitimization of his governments' *not-really-successful policies* in almost all domains.

The Global Financial Crisis of 2008 was a turning point in this regard, marking the end of the so-called golden years of AKP governments. Türkiye recovered from the global economic downturn faster than many other countries, but the economy eventually entered a period of less impressive performance, with the central bank gradually losing its independence for sound monetary policy (Gürkaynak et al., 2022). On the political front, Erdoğan and the AKP governments shifted away from the democratic and liberal reforms that marked the early 2000s, particularly concerning the European Union accession. Erdoğan and his party instead turned towards a more centralized and authoritarian political stance (Öniş, 2015). The Gezi Park events in the summer of 2013 escalated into nationwide protests against the AKP government, and this was perhaps the last large-scale bottom-up political warning signal in Türkiye. Since 2013, Erdoğan administrations faced and survived other devastating crises and challenging processes including the inflow of millions of irregular refugees, a coup attempt that left many dead and injured, a serious conflict with the United States over a detained pastor, the COVID-19 pandemic, the "glorious" return of very high inflation as a result of economic policy failures, and the February 2023 earthquakes (Esen & Gümüşçü, 2023; Aydın-Düzgit et al., 2023).

Korkut and Eslen-Ziya (2016) offer the term *discursive governance* to describe the post-2008 pronatalism in Türkiye. As discussed above, this is a type of pronatalism characterized with almost no serious change in actual policies concerning fertility but constant efforts by the government to control the public with pronatalist and normative ideas, *rhetoric without policy* in short. Erdoğan and other figures sharing his rhetoric have indeed used various legitimization strategies to promote higher fertility and larger families (i) as rationalized responses to population aging, (ii) as social-cultural demarcation devices between responsible women who have many children versus the other women, (iii) as weapons of national security protecting the future of Türkiye, and, last but not least, (iv) as normative obligations to sustain Islamic morality (Akkan, 2018; Dildar, 2022; Saluk, 2023).

METHODOLOGY AND DATA

This paper uses the SCM to properly investigate whether pronatalist rhetoric had any causal effect on actual fertility in Türkiye. Here, the main text introduces the method without going into technical details, and the interested reader can find a brief technical discussion in Appendix A.

Developed by Abadie and Gardeazabal (2003) and Abadie et al. (2010), the SCM is applied in contexts where one among many units is treated with a particular event at a particular time. Abadie and L'Hour (2021: 1817) summarize the essence of the SCM by underlining that

"[a] *synthetic control estimator compares the outcome of a treated unit to the outcome of a weighted average of untreated units that best resembles the characteristics of the treated unit before the intervention.*"

In our case, Türkiye is treated with pronatalist rhetoric after the year 2008. SCM constructs a *synthetic control* for an outcome variable to approximate what would have happened to the treated unit in the absence of the treatment (in the post-intervention period). The synthetic control acts as a *counterfactual*, representing the hypothetical scenario of no intervention. Hence, it becomes feasible for the researcher to compare actual post-treatment outcomes with this counterfactual to estimate the treatment effect. The outcome variable in our case is TFR.

Constructing a synthetic control requires predictor variables. Predictors are the variables explaining the outcome variable and are used to ensure that the synthetic control closely mirrors the treated unit's characteristics before the intervention. In our case, there are four predictor variables that have explanatory power for the evolution of TFR:

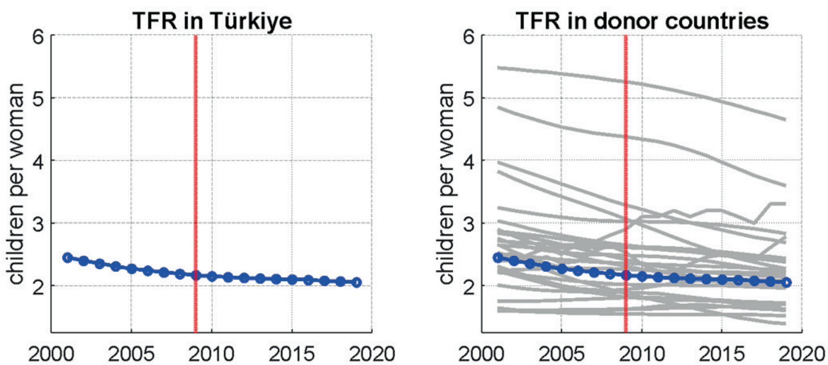
- Real GDP per capita (in natural logarithm)
- Infant mortality rate
- Population density
- 15-24 population share

The first three of these variables are statistically significant predictors of fertility outcomes for a large number of developing countries as demonstrated by de la Croix and Gobbi (2017). These authors also show that mean age and its square are also significant, implying that the age distribution of a society would have explanatory power for fertility outcomes. In our case, the sample of donor countries that experienced (fast) fertility declines return a small, negative, but significant correlation between the 15-24 population share and TFR (*p value* = 0.0432). Additionally, the common approach in the literature, starting with the classic paper of Abadie et al. (2010) and recently reiterated by Abadie (2021), suggests that a few (but not too many) pre-intervention values of the outcome variable should be added as potential predictors. Hence, the TFR values of 2001, 2004, and 2007 are added to the set of predictors for satisfactory pre-intervention matching. For both the outcome variable and the predictor variables, World Bank's World Development Indicators is the main data source (World Bank, 2024).

Table 1: Donor countries for TFR in Türkiye

Argentina Bolivia Botswana Brazil China Chile Central African Republic Cuba Ecuador	El Salvador Iraq Kyrgyzstan Libya Lebanon Malaysia Myanmar Panama Saudi Arabia	South Africa Sri Lanka Suriname Thailand Trinidad & Tobago United Arab Emirates Uzbekistan Uruguay

Figure 1: TFR in Türkiye and in the donor countries



Note: TFR indicator is the annual period fertility rate for all countries. The straight blue line with circles shows the annual TFR series for Türkiye in both panels. Straight gray lines in the right panel show the TFR levels in the full set of donor countries. The list of donor countries is given in Table 1.

Data Source: World Bank (2024).

SCM also requires a set of potential control units for the construction of the synthetic control. These donor units are the ones that did not receive the treatment. By choosing the optimal weights for each donor unit, the SCM estimator is designed to replicate the pre-intervention trajectory of the treated unit as closely as possible for the post-intervention period. In our case, donor countries should be the ones not being influenced by a pronatalist agenda or rhetoric. A detailed inspection of the World Population Policies Database (2005-2015) identifies 26 potential donor countries listed in Table 1.

Figure 1 pictures the evolution of TFR in Türkiye and in these donor countries for the 2001-2019 period. The sample for the analysis is restricted to the 2001-2019 period for two reasons: First, the pronatalist intervention in Türkiye almost equally divides the sample into pre- and post-intervention samples where T_0=2008 is the last period of the pre-intervention sample and T_0+1=2009 is the first period of the post-intervention sample. Second, and perhaps more importantly, there have been one big global shock (the pandemic) and one big domestic shock (the prolonged economic crisis) after 2019, and these shocks might have affected fertility behavior in ways that we may not uncover adequately.

RESULTS

Synthetic versus Actual Türkiye: The Baseline Estimate

The baseline estimation procedure starts with the optimal selection of donor countries depending on the explanatory power of predictor variables for the full panel. Table 2 lists the optimally-selected donor countries, and Figure 2 shows the evolution of TFR in these. The matching results for predictor variables are presented in Table 3.

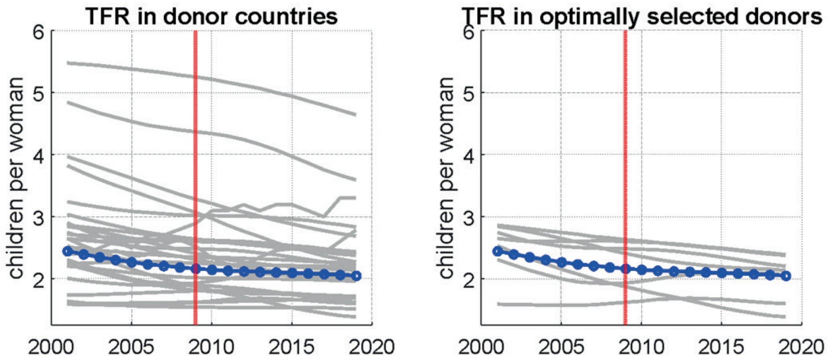
Table 2: Selected donor countries for TFR in Türkiye

Selected Donors	Weights
Cuba	20.0 %
United Arab Emirates	19.0 %
Suriname	16.0 %
Libya	13.7 %
South Africa	12.3 %
Lebanon	9.9 %
Myanmar	9.1 %

Table 3: Treated-Synthetic match for predictor variables

Predictor Variables	Treated	Synthetic
TFR in 2001	2.213	2.213
TFR in 2004	2.310	2.309
TFR in 2007	2.451	2.451
Real GDP per capita (natural log.)	8.901	8.903
15-24 population share	25.504	26.246
Population density	87.558	89.955
Infant mortality rate	23.362	21.630

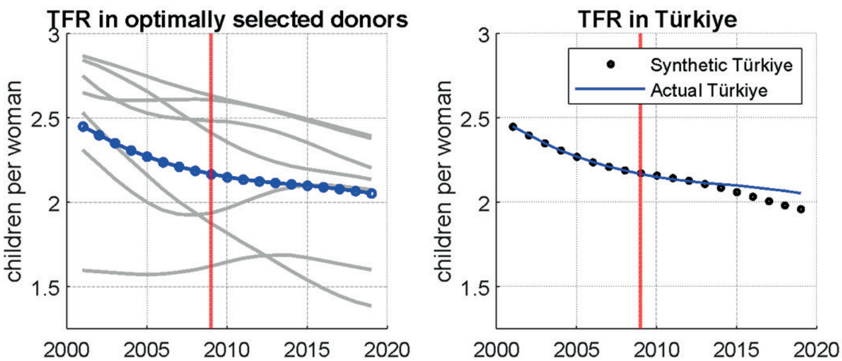
Figure 2: TFR in Türkiye and in the optimally-selected donor countries



Note: TFR indicator is the annual period fertility rate for all countries. The straight blue line with circles shows the annual TFR series for Türkiye in both panels. Straight gray lines in the left panel (respectively, in the right panel) show the TFR levels in the full set of donor countries (respectively, in the optimally selected donor countries). The list of optimally selected donor countries is given in Table 2.

Data Source: World Bank (2024).

Figure 3: TFR in Synthetic and Actual Türkiye



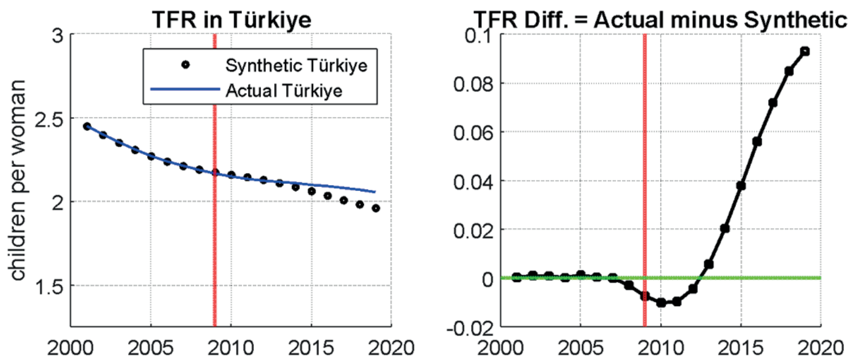
Note: TFR indicator is the annual period fertility rate for all countries. The straight blue line with circles in the left panel shows the annual TFR series for Türkiye. Straight gray lines in the left panel show the TFR levels in the optimally selected donor countries. In the right panel, black circles show the synthetic Türkiye and the straight blue line shows the actual Türkiye.

Data Source: World Bank (2024) and the SCM results.

Throughout the sample period, TFR in Türkiye lies within the range defined by the maximum and minimum levels of TFR in the optimally-selected donor countries. Specifically, the baseline estimation excludes all of the donor countries that record a TFR larger than 3 children in 2001, but some lower fertility countries are also excluded as they turn out to be not really informative in the construction of synthetic Türkiye. Figure 3 pictures the evolution of TFR in actual Türkiye and synthetic Türkiye.

The baseline estimate is formally defined as the TFR difference between Actual Türkiye and Synthetic Türkiye, as derived in the technical appendix. Figure 4 pictures these actual and synthetic figures as well as their difference as the treatment effect for each year in the post-intervention sample. *Interpreted naively*, estimated treatment effects show that pronatalism created a small but positive effect on TFR in Türkiye. The largest effect, according to the baseline estimates, is recorded for the end of the sample in 2019, and it is slightly higher than 0.09 children per woman. For the first couple of years after the intervention, the estimated effect is actually negative and is about 0.01 children per woman in absolute value.

Figure 4: TFR Difference between Actual and Synthetic Türkiye



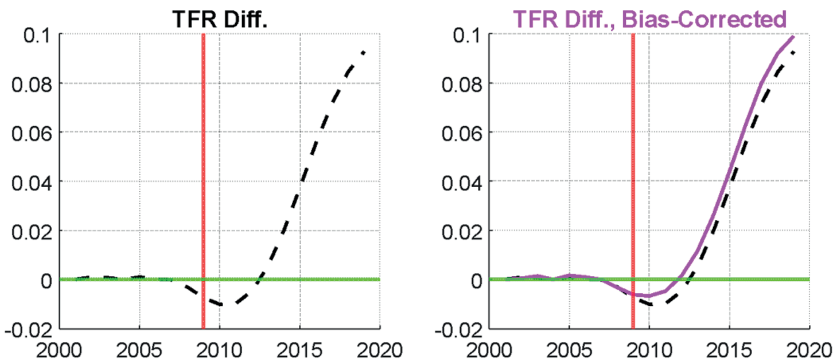
Note: TFR indicator is the annual period fertility rate for all countries. In the left panel, black circles show the synthetic Türkiye, and the straight blue line shows the actual Türkiye. The right panel shows the (baseline) effect associated with the pronatalist rhetoric.

Data Source: World Bank (2024) and the SCM results.

TFR Difference: Baseline *versus* Bias-Corrected Estimates

The first procedure one needs to apply after the baseline estimation is to correct for any potential bias associated with the inexact matching on the predictor variables. Our baseline estimates are generally satisfactory in terms of matching on the predictors as shown above in Table 3. The bias-corrected effect is thus very close to the baseline estimate, but it is slightly larger for the entire post-intervention period. Figure 5 presents the baseline and the bias-corrected TFR differences.

Figure 5: TFR Differences: Baseline versus Bias-Corrected



Note: TFR difference is the treatment effect for Türkiye. In the left panel, black dashed line represents the baseline treatment effect. In the right panel, the magenta solid line represents the bias-corrected treatment effect.

Data Source: SCM results.

The remainder of the analysis takes the bias-corrected TFR difference as the causal effect and investigates whether this bias-corrected effect is robust or not.

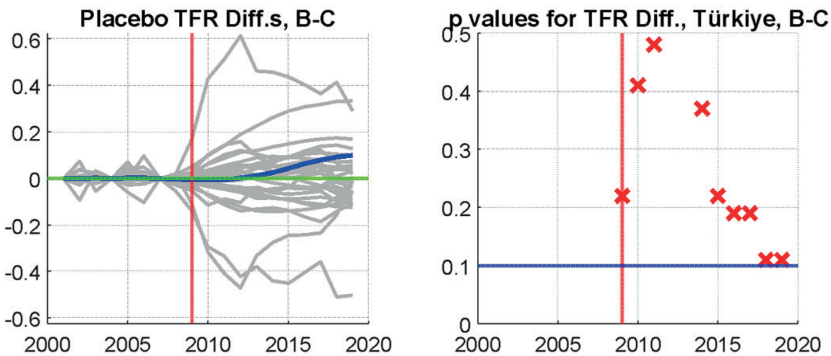
TFR Difference: Bias-Corrected Placebo Estimates

Imagine running the bias-corrected estimation described above for all other countries in the donor pool, separately for each country. What do we expect from such an exercise? Since the countries in the donor pool (other than Türkiye) have not witnessed a shift to pronatalist rhetoric or policy, any treatment effect found for these countries should be attributed to some factor other than pronatalism. This is exactly the sense in which these effects are called *placebo effects*.

In practice, the SCM uses such placebo estimates for statistical inference. That is, for each time period in the post-intervention sample, the estimated placebo effects for units other than the treated one are used to create a *probability* (*p*) *value* for the null hypothesis that the effect is equal to zero for the treated unit.

Figure 6 pictures the estimated bias-corrected placebo estimates (left panel) and the associated *p values* (right panel). Without even calculating the *p values*, it is visible from the left panel that placebo effects estimated for several countries are larger than the effect estimated for Türkiye for each year. There are also countries for which placebo estimates are negative. Not surprisingly, the estimated *p values* are *all* greater than 10% for the entire 2010-2019 period. Hence, the bias-corrected estimate for Türkiye does not pass the placebo test. Formally, the null hypothesis that pronatalist rhetoric has no effect on TFR in Türkiye cannot be rejected at 10% level of statistical significance.

Figure 6: Placebo Estimates



Note: Placebo TFR difference is the bias-corrected treatment effect estimated for Türkiye as well as for other 26 countries. The left panel shows these bias-corrected estimates where solid blue line is the effect estimated for Türkiye. In the right panel, red crosses show the calculated *p values* for each year for the null hypothesis that the treatment effect (for Türkiye) is zero.

Data Source: SCM results.

"Leave-One-Out" Estimates

Another procedure that facilitates robustness check is to re-estimate the bias-corrected effect for Türkiye by eliminating each one of the donor countries from the donor pool. The purpose of this "Leave-One-Out" procedure is to identify whether any country in the donor pool disproportionately influences the effect estimated for Türkiye.

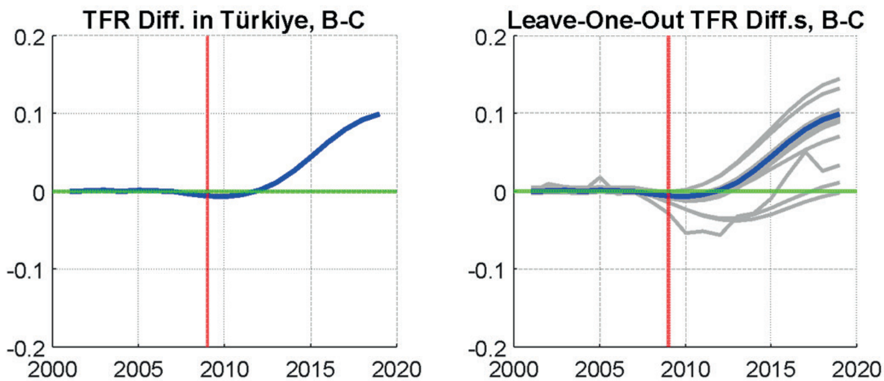
Recalling that the baseline and bias-corrected estimation have 26 countries other than Türkiye, the "Leave-One-Out" procedure is implemented for 26 times. In each of these implementations, a bias-corrected estimate for Türkiye is obtained. Figure 7 presents these 26 alternative estimates for Türkiye in the right panel.

Clearly, if the bias-corrected estimate for Türkiye was robust, the alternative estimates would all be very close to the blue line that represents this effect.

This, however, is true for 20 countries in the sample, and six estimates among the 26 "Leave-One-Out" estimates are significantly different from the bias-corrected estimate. More specifically, some of the "Leave-One-Out" estimates are negative for some years, indicating that the causal effect can be vastly sensitive to the selection of countries.

There is another useful way to interpret these "Leave-One-Out" findings. Imagine that, for some reason, we did not include in our original donor pool the six countries for which we receive divergent estimates. We would have then observed that the included 20 "Leave-One-Out" estimates are sufficiently close to the original bias-corrected estimate, thereby implying the *incorrect inference* that the estimated effect is robust.

Figure 7: "Leave-One-Out" Estimates



Note: The left panel shows the bias-corrected estimate for Türkiye (solid blue line). The right panel shows 26 "Leave-One-Out" estimates (solid gray lines) as well as the estimate for Türkiye (solid blue line). 20 out of 26 "Leave-One-Out" estimates nearly overlap with the estimated effect for Türkiye.

Data Source: SCM results.

DISCUSSION AND CONCLUSION

Economic demography is an exceptionally solid science: Fertility decreased in all societies that exhibited typical patterns of modernization in a sufficiently long run. These patterns include growing living standards, secularization, industrialization, human capital accumulation, and urbanization as well as the sustained expansion of market opportunities for female labor. There is virtually no society benefiting from the blessings of economic modernization but trapping itself into a regime of high fertility. Investing into intangible things such as technological knowledge and productive skills, instead of creating more and more babies, is perhaps one of the biggest achievements of humanity.

A large literature, with micro-founded structural models, micro-level data on demographic and economic outcomes, and credible research designs, shows that only well-articulated and generous family policies might boost fertility. The key is to endow the urbanized, educated, working people with clear, stable, and strong incentives so that they choose to transit from zero to one child, from one to two, and from two to three if this is also desired. This is simply a depiction of the required balance between *decent work* and *happy family*. Deep historical forces that create the material conditions of low fertility (female emancipation, the rise of education, urbanization, etc.) also raise economic as well as socio-cultural "barriers" against sustaining fertility at the replacement level. Optimal population policy remains a controversial (and perhaps a dismal) endeavor because there is no simple recipe that supports the "decent work-happy family" balance for large segments of the society that evolves under the pressure of the material conditions of low fertility. The pronatalist policy successes recorded so far are limited to a few countries, but increases in period fertility rates do not actually guarantee that policies would also have a permanent effect by altering completed fertility levels in the long run.

Population policy controversies in Türkiye are not there yet! Pronatalist ideals are not supported with explicit and generous family policies, similar to the ones observed in Scandinavian countries for example. One reason is the limited fiscal capacities of the Turkish governments. Another is that Türkiye already has large reserves of young and unemployed people, despite continuing fertility decline. One could also add other complexities such as irregular refugees and their future in Türkiye.

The result presented in this paper is astonishingly simple: The post-2008 pronatalist rhetoric did not create an effect on actual fertility in Türkiye, by the year 2019. To many observers trained in economic demography, this is not a surprising finding at all: No serious pronatalist population policy action, no incentives for more children.

One obvious possibility for future research is to formulate a research design that exploits individual-level variation in actual fertility for estimating the pre-2008 and post-2008 reduced-form fertility models with legitimately merged cross-sections. This would allow the econometrician to infer whether pronatalism significantly altered the effect of a particular explanatory variable "X" on actual fertility. Another possibility is a discrete-choice model of fertility and other endogenous variables such as schooling. With such a theoretical model suitably taken to the data, simulation-based econometric estimates using the pre-2008 and post-2008 micro-data samples would again shed light on the effects of pronatalism. Sufficiently detailed discrete-choice models could also be used for simulating alternative population policies. For example, it would be nice to know under what conditions a college-educated married woman at the age of 32 who already has a child at the age of 4 would give birth to her second child.

APPENDIX A: THE SYNTHETIC CONTROL ESTIMATOR IN A NUTSHELL

This appendix briefly introduces the SCM estimator by closely following Abadie's (2021) framework and notation.

Let there be $J+1$ units indexed by j. In our case, these units are the countries in the donor pool and Türkiye ($j=1$). Assume that we observe an outcome variable Y (in our case, TFR) and a vector of predictor variables X for all $J+1$ countries for the periods from $t=1$ to $t=T$ with

$$t \in \{1,2,\ldots,T_0,T_0+1,\ldots,T\}.$$

Here, T_0 denotes the period of intervention, and it divides the sample into two: the pre-intervention sample $\{1,2,\ldots,T_0\}$ and the post-intervention sample $\{T_0+1,\ldots,T\}$. In our case, T_0 is the year 2008.

With h indexing the predictor variables as in $h \in \{1,2,\ldots,k\}$, the estimator looks for the optimal weights $W^*=(W_2^*,W_3^*,\ldots,W_{J+1})$ on countries to minimize a distance defined as in

$$\left(\sum_{h=1}^{k} v_h\left(X_{h1}-w_2X_{h2}-w_3X_{h3}-\cdots-w_{J+1}X_{hJ+1}\right)^2\right)^{1/2}$$

by using the data from the pre-intervention sample. In this distance minimization task, weights are restricted to be nonnegative and sum to unity, and the vector $V=(v_1,v_2,\ldots,v_k)$ of nonnegative constants is taken as given. These are the terms that specify how relatively important a predictor variable is in the construction of the synthetic control. Clearly, then, any weight vector W depends on V as in $W=W(V)$.

To find a unique W, one needs to have a strategy to find a unique V. While there are different possible ways to do so, the common approach is to minimize the mean squared prediction error (MSPE) for the outcome variable by using the pre-intervention sample. This reads

$$\sum_{t=1}^{T_0} \left(Y_{1t}-w_2(V)Y_{2t}-w_3(V)Y_{3t}-\cdots-w_{J+1}(V)Y_{J+1t}\right)^2$$

Then, we have $W^* = W(V^*)$, and the optimal weights can now be used to compute the synthetic control for the outcome variable for the post-intervention sample. For a generic post-intervention period *t*, this is defined as in

$$\hat{Y}_{1t}^{N} = \sum_{j=2}^{J+1} w_j^{*} Y_{jt}.$$

We thus have the estimated treatment effect for t given as in

$$\hat{\tau}_{1t} = Y_{1t} - \hat{Y}_{1t}^{N}.$$

This completes the brief discussion for the synthetic control estimator, and the reader can refer to Abadie (2021) for technical details related with inference, bias correction, robustness, etc.

NOTES

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ARAŞTIRMA MAKALESİ / RESEARCH ARTICLE

A FEMINIST CRITIQUE OF DEMOGRAPHIC INDICATORS WITHIN THE SDGs FRAMEWORK IN TÜRKİYE

TÜRKİYE'DE SÜRDÜRÜLEBİLİR KALKINMA AMAÇLARI ÇERÇEVESİNDE DEMOGRAFİK GÖSTERGELERİN FEMİNİST ELEŞTİRİSİ

ASLIHAN KABADAYI*

ABSTRACT

This study aims to evaluate selected demographic indicators from a feminist demography perspective within the framework of the Sustainable Development Goals (SDGs) in Türkiye. Feminist demography advocates that demographic indicators should be analyzed in a more comprehensive manner as an approach that examines gender inequality and structural inequalities faced by women. The study questions the extent to which indicators such as maternal mortality ratio, under-five mortality rate, neonatal mortality rate, adolescent fertility rate and the proportion of women aged 20-24 years old who were married before the age of 18 reflect women's life experiences and gender based inequality. These indicators should not only measure fluctuations in health and fertility but also provide insight into women's access to rights and the social challenges they encounter. The study suggests analyzing these data from a feminist demography perspective to better highlight the effects of social structures and power dynamics. The study concludes that it is needed a framework that better reflects the gender dimension of the SDGs and highlights the importance of policies on women's reproductive sexual health rights, fertility decisions, and economic independence.

KEYWORDS: Feminist demography, gender equality, Sustainable Development Goals (SDGs), Türkiye.

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ÖZET

Bu çalışmanın amacı, Türkiye'de Sürdürülebilir Kalkınma Amaçları (SKA) çerçevesinde seçilmiş demografik göstergeleri, feminist demografi perspektifinden değerlendirmektir. Feminist demografi, demografik göstergelerin kadınların karşılaştığı toplumsal cinsiyet eşitsizliği ve yapısal eşitsizliklerin yol açtığı durumları daha kapsamlı bir biçimde analiz etmesi gerektiğini savunmaktadır. Çalışma anne ölüm oranı, beş yaş altı ölüm hızı, neonatal ölüm hızı, adölesan doğurganlık hızı ve 20-24 yaş grubunda olup 18 yaşından önce evlenmiş kadınların oranı göstergelerinin, kadınların yaşam deneyimlerini ve toplumsal cinsiyet eşitsizliğini ne ölçüde yansıttığını sorgulamaktadır. Bu göstergelerin, sağlık ve doğurganlığın ötesine geçerek kadınların haklara erişimini ve karşılaştıkları toplumsal engelleri yansıtması gerektiği düşünülmektedir. Çalışma, feminist demografi perspektifinden bu verilerin analiz edilmesini önererek SKA kapsamında toplumsal cinsiyet boyutunun daha iyi yansıtılması ve kadınların cinsel sağlık ve üreme sağlığı hakları, doğurganlık kararları ve ekonomik bağımsızlığına ilişkin politikaların önemini vurgulayan bir çerçeveye ihtiyaç duyulduğu sonucuna varmaktadır.

ANAHTAR KELİMELER: Feminist demografi, toplumsal cinsiyet eşitliği, Sürdürülebilir Kalkınma Amaçları (SKA), Türkiye.

INTRODUCTION

The 2030 Agenda for Sustainable Development, adopted by the United Nations in 2015, outlines a global plan to promote peace, prosperity, and sustainability. Central to this agenda are the 17 Sustainable Development Goals (SDGs), designed to address global challenges like poverty, inequality, health, and education (UN, 2023). SDG 5, focused on achieving gender equality and empowering all women and girls, is essential for the realization of all other SDGs. Gender equality influences the success of other goals, as empowering women and girls enhances development outcomes across various domains. To this end, SDG 5 specifically targets gender equality and the empowerment of all women and girls, stressing the importance of ending all forms of discrimination, violence, and harmful practices such as child marriage and female genital mutilation. Additionally, it advocates for equal opportunities for women's participation in decision-making processes at all levels of political, economic, and public life.

SDG 5 calls for reforms to ensure women have equal access to economic resources, property, financial services, and social protection, while emphasizing that equal responsibility between men and women in caregiving and domestic work is crucial for achieving gender equality. It emphasizes the importance of shared caregiving responsibilities between men and women to achieve gender equality, as well as universal access to sexual and reproductive health and rights, and women's control over their sexual and reproductive decisions. Achieving gender equality under SDG 5 is not only a human rights issue but also critical for global development, as empowering women can accelerate progress in education, health, and economic development. To achieve this, urgent action is needed, including eliminating discriminatory laws, enforcing legal protections, and implementing policies that promote gender equality. By addressing these issues, SDG 5 can foster societal and economic change, supporting the success of all other SDGs.

The process towards achieving gender equality within the framework of SDGs has been carried out with significant contributions not only from UN and UN Women but also from various civil society organizations around the world. Feminist organizations advocating women's rights and gender equality paved the way for many non-governmental organizations to participate in this process.

This study evaluates selected gender equality indicators and their data within the SDG framework, using a feminist demography perspective. In this context, what is meant by gender-sensitive data and indicators and why gender indicators are needed is first explained. Then, as an analysis approach, feminist demography is defined and some selected demographic indicators and related data within the scope of SDGs is evaluated within the scope of feminist demography. These indicators should ideally be analyzed within the scope of intersecting inequalities, such as migration, disability, and race/ethnic structure. However, the lack of data on these breakdowns has made this analysis impossible in the current study, highlighting the need for further research in this area.

Feminist demography

Feminism is a movement that advocates for equal rights and opportunities for women and men. The women's movement, which emerged from the 18th and 19th centuries, aimed for women to gain a stronger position in the public sphere and aimed to eliminate gender inequality. This movement fought on issues such as women's suffrage, the right to education, and equality in business life. The feminist movement has had significant effects on the concept of gender. The first-wave feminist movement fought for fundamental rights such as women's suffrage and ensured greater representation of women in the public sphere. The second wave feminist movement, on the other hand, questioned and changed the status and roles of women in areas such as state administration, business life and education (Nalbant, 2019, pp. 165-186).

Feminists argue that demographic research is crucial for feminism, highlighting its political impact on feminist causes. Demographic research provides important insights into gender and population dynamics, addressing issues like reproductive rights, gender inequality, and women's empowerment. Feminists recognize the importance of demographic studies in shaping and informing policy. Demographic studies support feminist arguments, highlight challenges faced by women in different subpopulations, and promote gender equality in healthcare, education, and the workforce. On the other hand, feminists should work to transform, as they have in other disciplines, demographic research practices and then utilize demographic methods to fight the various manifestations of gender inequality. Moreover, feminists emphasize the importance of a gender-sensitive demography approach. They contend that demographic analysis should look deeper into the social structures and power dynamics that influence demographic processes rather than just focusing on gender as a single variable (Williams, 2010, pp. 198-208).

In a feminist perspective, gender indicators not only measure differences between men and women but also examine the reasons behind these differences. These indicators reveal the fact that women may face problems such as being economically at risk of poverty, unemployment, low wages, gender-based discrimination and violence. In the feminist perspective, while gender indicators are used to measure the differences between men and women, the reasons for these differences are also examined. These reasons include cultural, social and economic factors, and these factors are believed to create systemic inequalities that prevent women and men from enjoying equal rights.

In this study, the focus will be on how selected demographic SDG indicators address gender as a social structure and highlight gaps in gender data.

Gender and gender sensitive data

Gender inequalities are associated with gender-based discrimination and disadvantages faced by women. These inequalities prevent women from having equal rights and opportunities in economic, social, political and cultural fields. Women may face problems such as under-representation, scarcity of leadership positions, salary inequality, violence and sexual harassment. Therefore, gender equality highlights the need for societies and cultures to fully support women, protect their rights and freedoms, challenge gender roles and expectations, and promote gender equality. Achieving gender equality is an important step for women to realize their potential and to ensure full participation in society.

The feminist perspective focuses on gender indicators that reflect the different experiences of men and women. In this context, the main objective in examining gender indicators is to reveal the differing experiences of women and men in terms of equality, justice, and human rights.

Gender-sensitive data aims to address inequalities and discrimination in society, empower marginalized groups, and uncover hidden disparities by considering the social and cultural dimensions of gender. While gender-disaggregated data is essential for gender-sensitive analysis, not all gender-sensitive data must be disaggregated by gender. For example, maternal mortality statistics, although not explicitly disaggregated, are considered gender-sensitive as they reflect women's unique experiences and the health risks associated with motherhood. Such data provides a comprehensive framework for understanding the inequalities women face in society and serves as a crucial tool for evaluating the impact of gender-based policies and interventions (Yüksel-Kaptanoğlu, Arslan & Akyıldırım, 2021, pp. 18-20).

A variety of methods can be used to evaluate and monitor gender-sensitive data. Performance-based and rights-based monitoring methods can provide an effective approach to assessing gender equality and progress towards achieving gender equality or gender mainstreaming.

Performance-based monitoring approach is used to evaluate the effectiveness of policies and programs. It can be used to monitor progress and measure results against set targets and indicators. For example; the some indicators of "Gender Equality" goal, which is one of the SDGs, such as women's labor force participation rate, women's political representation, and gender pay inequality can be accepted as performance-based indicators. These indicators track progress in gender equality using actual data. These indicators can be useful in assessing the impact of policies and programs and inform policy makers. However, performance-based monitoring tools also have some limitations. The process of choosing indicators and gathering data may be biased, which could result in a partial reflection of societal change.

Rights-based monitoring approach, on the other hand, are based on international standards accepted in the field of gender equality and aim to protect the rights of individuals. This approach evaluate progress on gender equality by monitoring issues such as women's right of access, equal participation, equal treatment and prevention of violence. Rights-based monitoring tools set norms based on legal frameworks and encourage policy makers and practitioners to comply with these norms. Therefore, gender sensitive data can play an important role in rights-based monitoring processes and contribute to the achievement of gender equality and the protection of women's human rights. Monitoring in the rights-based approach, unlike the others, is multi-actor and civil society actors are an indispensable part of this process (Yüksel-Kaptanoğlu, Arslan & Akyıldırım, 2021, p. 24).

Sustainable development means that individuals and societies have fundamental rights such as the protection of human rights, equality, access to justice, participation, freedom and dignity. Therefore, sustainable development indicators should be compatible with rights-based monitoring indicators and reflect a human rights perspective. For instance, the indicators used to measure the "Equality" objective are related to rights-based monitoring indicators like gender equality and the decline of social and economic inequalities. These indicators are important criteria for achieving the sustainable development goal of a society where the rights of individuals are respected, opportunities are equally distributed and discrimination is reduced.

While gender-sensitive data aims to provide a comprehensive perspective on inequalities, the gender data gap underscores the persistent lack of adequate and reliable data to fully capture these disparities. Bridging this gap requires integrating qualitative and quantitative methods to ensure a more inclusive understanding of gender dynamics.

In this study, the framework adopted for monitoring gender equality is a combine both rights-based and performance-based approaches. It is thought that multiple monitoring tools and methods can be used together. This study will assess whether selected demographic SDG indicators are gender-sensitive and will analyze them through the lenses of both rights-based and performance-based monitoring approaches.

Demographic SDG indicators

The SDGs are a complex agenda that integrates the social, economic, and environmental dimensions of development. SDGs are designed to address the most pressing global challenges, including poverty, inequality, and climate change. A critical aspect of the SDGs is the set of indicators used to measure progress towards their achievement. These indicators provide a quantitative basis for tracking performance and identifying areas where targeted action is needed, ensuring that no one is left behind. Each SDG is accompanied by specific indicators that allow for monitoring at global, national, and local levels (United Nations, 2015). While some indicators are directly linked to specific targets, others aim to capture broader aspects of development. For instance, SDG 5 on Gender Equality includes indicators that assess the prevalence of violence against women, the proportion of women in decision-making roles, and access to reproductive health services. These indicators not only facilitate the tracking of progress but also provide crucial data to inform evidence-based policies, helping to accelerate the achievement of the SDGs.

Since its establishment, the UN has made significant strides in promoting gender equality and empowering women, adopting key agreements like the 1979 Convention on the Elimination of All Forms of Discrimination Against Women (CEDAW) and the 1995 Beijing Declaration and Platform for Action, which set international standards for gender equality and women's rights. The UN's efforts include advancing gender equality in political, economic, and social spheres, as well as preventing violence against women. To further these goals, the UN established UN Women in 2010 to address gender equality challenges and coordinate efforts across development, human rights, humanitarian aid, and peace and security fields. UN Women not only advocates for policy at the international level but also works with countries to implement projects, ensuring progress toward gender equality (Akın & Türkel, 2020, pp. 8-9; UN Women, 2023).

The UN uses CEDAW and other human rights mechanisms to advance accountability and commitment to the Sustainable Development Goals (SDGs). This is primarily because the two approaches have complementary strengths. Human rights mechanisms add an accountability dimension that is missing from the SDG framework, enabling monitoring and evaluation of implementation from a feminist and human rights perspective. At the same time, the SDGs' concrete and time-bound targets, indicators and timetable add a more concrete timeframe to the implementation of human rights treaties and conventions. This integration creates a synergy that strengthens both the protection of human rights and the achievement of SDG targets (SDGs and UN Human Rights Mechanisms, 2021).

The SDGs consist of 17 goals, 169 targets, and 248 indicators. After the adoption of Agenda 2030, Türkiye assigned the responsibility of tracking 218 indicators to relevant institutions. Firstly, in 2019, Türkiye published its SDG Indicators Set, comprising 83 indicators. While the ratio of indicators produced was higher for SDGs 3, 7, 9, further work was needed for indicators on SDGs 1, 2, 12, 13 and 14 indicators (TurkStat, 2019). The Turkish Statistical Institute (TurkStat) follows up on the international process for determining the global SDG indicators. TurkStat takes on the central role of tracking progress on Agenda 2030. According to the portal on the TurkStat web site, it is reported that the number of indicators currently published is 163 (65.7%), the number of exploring data is 46 (18.5%), the number of non-statistical indicators is 37 (14.9%) and the number of irrelevant indicators to the country is 2 (0.8%) (TurkStat, 2024).

This study discusses selected demographic indicators from the TurkStat SDG portal. These indicators were chosen for their ability to reflect core issues in the pursuit of SDGs 3 and 5, as they allow for an analysis of how demographic factors influence public health and gender equality. Furthermore, these indicators are essential for assessing the effectiveness of policies and interventions aimed at improving health outcomes and advancing gender equality, both of which are key to achieving sustainable development. It is thought that the selected indicators provide a comprehensive view of critical aspects of public health and gender equality. The study focuses on maternal and child mortality rates, adolescent fertility, and early marriage indicators to contribute to understanding the intersection between demographic trends, health outcomes, and gender inequalities.

Table 1. Selected Demographic SDG Indicators

Goal	Target	Indicator
Goal 3: Ensure healthy lives and promote well-being for all at all ages	**3.1.** By 2030, reduce the global maternal mortality ratio to less than 70 per 100,000 live births	**3.1.1.** Maternal mortality ratio
	3.2. By 2030, end preventable deaths of newborns and children under 5 years of age, with all countries aiming to reduce neonatal mortality to at least as low as 12 per 1,000 live births and under-5 mortality to at least as low as 25 per 1,000 live births	**3.2.1.** Under-five mortality rate
		3.2.2. Neonatal mortality rate
	3.7. By 2030, ensure universal access to sexual and reproductive health-care services, including for family planning, information and education, and the integration of reproductive health into national strategies and programmes	**3.7.2.** Adolescent fertility rate per 1000 women in 15-19 age group
Goal 5: Achieve gender equality and empower all women and girls	**5.3.** Eliminate all harmful practices, such as child, early and forced marriage and female genital mutilation	**5.3.1.** Proportion of women aged 20-24 years old who were married before age 18

Source: TurkStat, SDG Portal, 2024

RESULTS

Ensure healthy lives and promote well-being for all at all ages (Goal 3)

Maternal mortality ratio

The goal is to reduce the global maternal mortality rate to under 70 per 100,000 live births by 2030. This indicator is defined as the number of maternal deaths per 100 000 live births in a year. Maternal death refers to the death of a woman during pregnancy or within 42 days after pregnancy ends, due to pregnancy-related complications. It is comparable over time and at counrty level (TurkStat, 2024).

Maternal mortality in Türkiye, while lower compared to developing countries, remains a significant public health issue. According to the National Maternal Mortality Study conducted in 2005, the maternal mortality rate in Türkiye was estimated at 28.5 per 100,000 live births. The study emphasized significant gaps in the collection and reporting of maternal mortality data, particularly highlighting that the MERNİS (Central Population Administration System) database does not include information on the location of death. This highlights the need for improvements in the existing registration systems and for more meticulous reporting to ensure more accurate and reliable data on maternal deaths. Furthermore, to prevent maternal mortality, it is crucial to enhance the accessibility and quality of healthcare services at all levels. In this context, ensuring equal access to health rights for women is a critical step in improving maternal health (HUIPS, 2006).

In Türkiye, the maternal mortality ratio is monitored through performance-based monitoring. However, it should be considered that it is a rights-based monitoring indicator in terms of women's equal access to health rights. Within the framework of the 12th Development Plan of Türkiye, the maternal mortality rate is targeted to be 12.6 per 100,000 live births in 2023 and 12.0 per 100,000 live births in 2028 (Strategic Planning and Budget Directorate, 2023).

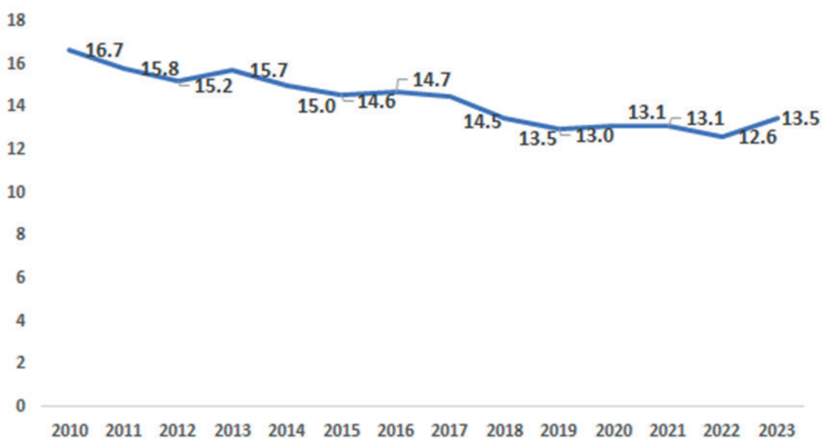
The general health status of women is closely related to their status in society. The result of a pregnancy and the resulting maternal mortality are under the direct influence of conditions such as environmental factors, the economic situation of the woman, her place and role in society. A woman's status is often defined by factors such as her income level, economic independence, employment status, education, health and fertility, role and value in the family and society. In addition, the status of women is also affected by the way society perceives women's roles and the value they place on these roles. In regions with high maternal mortality, women's social status is low, and their needs are often ignored. Gender discrimination contributes to maternal mortality and this fact cannot be ignored. Since the sources about maternal mortality and their causes are generally obtained from hospital records, only biomedical and clinical causes are focused on, while socio-cultural causes can be ignored (Akın & Mıhçıokur, 2003).

Maternal mortality rates in Türkiye display significant regional differences, with a pronounced gap between rural and urban areas. These disparities highlight the need for urgent action, particularly for vulnerable groups, to prevent further widening of existing inequalities. The tracking and reporting system for maternal deaths, while a positive development, must be continuously monitored to ensure its effectiveness. Additionally, interventions addressing these regional differences should be implemented without delay, focusing on reducing the inequality in access to quality maternal healthcare. A comprehensive approach to women's health, involving multidisciplinary teams, is essential to bridge these gaps and ensure equitable healthcare access for all women, regardless of their geographic location (Akın & Türkçelik, 2018, p. 41).

As previously mentioned, the goal is to reduce the global maternal mortality rate to under 70 per 100,000 live births by 2030. Türkiye is among the most successful countries in exceeding the 2030 global target for maternal mortality. The share of direct maternal deaths within total maternal mortality continues to decline. However, despite the achievements of the past 35 years, further efforts are required to achieve the Nairobi Summit's commitment to "zero preventable maternal deaths." While the journey becomes increasingly challenging as the goal approaches, success demands unwavering determination (HUIPS, 2020).

Focusing on the socio-cultural causes behind maternal mortality and addressing this situation in various contexts is an issue of interest to feminist demographics. If we examine the maternal mortality indicator for Türkiye within the scope of the SDGs, it is seen that there is only one data set for Türkiye as a whole. The Graph 1 shows that while the maternal mortality rate was 16.7 per 100,000 live births in 2010, it was 13.5 per 100,000 live births in 2023 in Türkiye. The maternal mortality ratio demonstrates fluctuations over the years between 2010 and 2023. After an initial decline from 16.7 in 2010 to 15.2 in 2012, the ratio increased slightly to 15.7 in 2013 before resuming its downward trend. A notable decrease is observed from 2014 (15.0) to 2018 (13.5), followed by a consistent reduction, reaching the lowest point of 12.6 in 2022. However, a slight reversal occurred in 2023, with the ratio rising to 13.5.

Graph 1: Maternal Mortality Ratio for Türkiye, 2010-2023

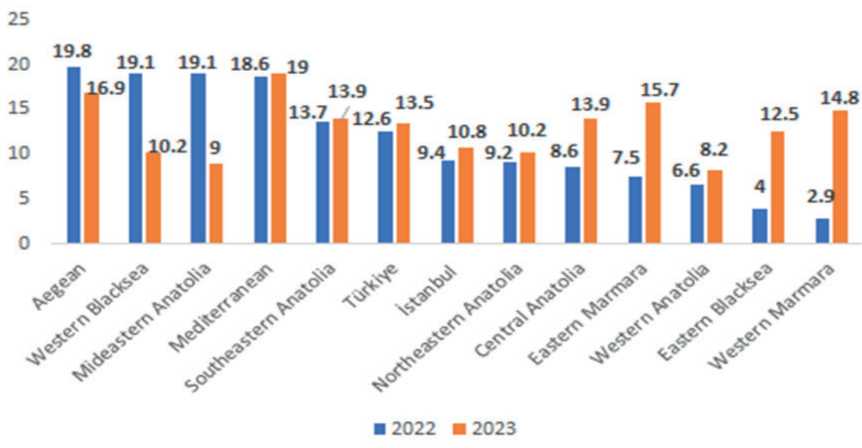


Source: TurkStat, SDG Portal, 2024

General Directorate of Public Health, Health Statistics Yearbook, 2022, 2023

Maternal mortality varies significantly across different regions in Türkiye, as demonstrated by the data for 2022 and 2023. The national maternal mortality ratio increased slightly from 12.6 per 100,000 live births in 2022 to 13.5 in 2023. Regionally, the Aegean Region had the highest ratio in 2022, with 19.8 per 100,000 live births, which decreased to 16.9 in 2023. Conversely, the Mediterranean Region saw an increase from 18.6 in 2022 to 19 in 2023, making it the highest regional ratio in that year. Notable changes were also observed in regions like Western Blacksea and Mideastern Anatolia, where significant reductions occurred, while Western Marmara and Eastern Marmara experienced considerable increases. Monitoring maternal mortality at the regional level within the framework of the SDGs is crucial to understanding the relationship between women's status, health outcomes, and social structures. The Ministry of Health's detailed regional statistics highlight these disparities, emphasizing the importance of incorporating disaggregated data into SDG indicators to address local inequalities and inform targeted, equitable policy interventions.

Graph 2: Maternal Mortality Ratios by NUTS-1 Regions in Türkiye, 2022-2023



Source: General Directorate of Public Health, Health Statistics Yearbook, 2022, 2023

Maternal mortality ratio is an indicator that is aimed to be reduced in development plans and Ministry of Health strategy documents. As mentioned before, within the framework of Türkiye's 12th Development Plan, the maternal mortality rate was targeted to be 12.6 per 100,000 live births in 2023 and 12.0 per 100,000 live births in 2028; however, Türkiye did not achieve this target in 2023, with only 6 regions reporting rates below 12.6 per 100,000 live births at the regional level.

On the other hand, 6 regions, including the Aegean, Mediterranean, Southeastern Anatolia, Central Anatolia, Eastern Marmara and Western Marmara exceeded this target. This highlights the need for more tailored strategies and policies for these regions to address disparities effectively. Setting a national target is crucial for monitoring progress, but ignoring regional inequalities risks overlooking significant challenges that disproportionately affect certain areas. Policies aligned with these goals should emphasize addressing regional disparities, ensuring that women's health outcomes in underperforming regions are prioritized. Moreover, achieving equity requires accounting for structural inequalities in education, employment, and societal roles, and these must be tackled alongside efforts to reduce maternal mortality on a regional level.

Under-five mortality rate and neonatal mortality rate

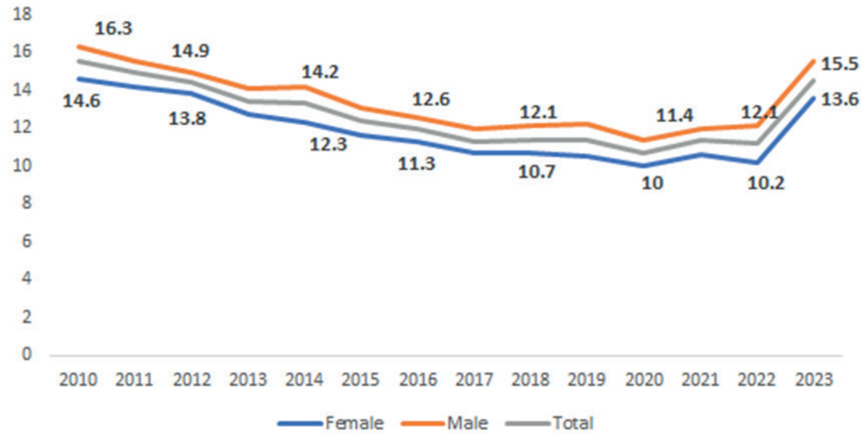
By 2030, the global target is to eliminate preventable deaths of newborns and children under the age of five. This goal includes achieving neonatal mortality rates of no more than 12 per 1,000 live births and under-five mortality rates of no more than 25 per 1,000 live births across all countries. The under-five mortality rate is defined as the number of deaths of children under five years of age per 1,000 live births in a given year. Similarly, the neonatal mortality rate refers to the number of newborns dying within the first 27 days of life per 1,000 live births. Both indicators are critical for assessing child health outcomes and are methodologically comparable over time and across countries, enabling robust analyses of trends and disparities at the national level (TurkStat, 2024).

Both under-five and neonatal mortality rates are monitored through performance-based monitoring. There is still a high number of infant and child deaths worldwide. Because it is known that most of these deaths can be prevented with relatively low-cost interventions, improving child health is accepted by international societies as an indispensable indicator of development. For many countries around the world, raising healthy born and healthy children is among the priority issues. For this reason, these indicators should also be evaluated as a rights-based monitoring indicators. Under-five mortality rate and neonatal mortality rate are multidimensional structure. This structure encompasses health policies and reforms in social, demographic and economic contexts. Maternal and child health policies are very important for these indicators. The indicators of under-five mortality rate and neonatal mortality rate are indicators that needs to be addressed within the framework of changes in population strucure, economy, education and gender.

In Türkiye, under-five and neonatal mortality rates are monitored at the provincial level and disaggregated by gender. However, the absence of data at more localized levels (e.g., district-level) or for marginalized communities (e.g., rural areas, refugees) limits a comprehensive understanding of inequalities. Monitoring under-five and neonatal mortality rates at the regional level is crucial for addressing disparities in maternal and child health outcomes in Türkiye. Regional data can highlight inequalities in access to healthcare services, maternal education, and socio-economic conditions, particularly for marginalized communities such as rural populations or refugees. To effectively address these disparities, data collection should also consider factors like maternal employment, education, and regional healthcare infrastructure. Aligning policies with international best practices and implementing rights-based approaches, such as gender-sensitive training for healthcare providers, can help Türkiye achieve equitable outcomes in maternal and child health. Awareness campaigns promoting shared parenting roles can further contribute to this goal.

Feminist theory seeks to improve society by empowering women through education, employment, and active societal involvement. On the other hand, feminist theory also emphasizes the importance of understanding how gender intersects with other social categories, such as class, ethnicity, and socioeconomic status, to shape lived experiences and opportunities. Women's education, employment, and societal roles not only directly influence their own empowerment but also have cascading effects on their children's access to health services, good nutrition, and healthy growth. Feminist theory positively impacts child health by promoting women's empowerment and equal rights, which in turn enhances children's access to essential health services, proper nutrition, and overall well-being. By addressing these interconnected issues, feminist theory highlights how systemic inequalities - such as poverty, discrimination, and restricted access to resources - affect both women and their children. For this reason, feminist demography goes beyond analyzing gender as a singular variable and instead focuses on the broader social structures, power dynamics, and systemic inequalities that affect critical indicators like under-five and neonatal mortality rates. This approach allows for a deeper understanding of how gender-based inequalities operate in different contexts and provides a foundation for more inclusive, intersectional policies that promote gender equality and improve public health outcomes.

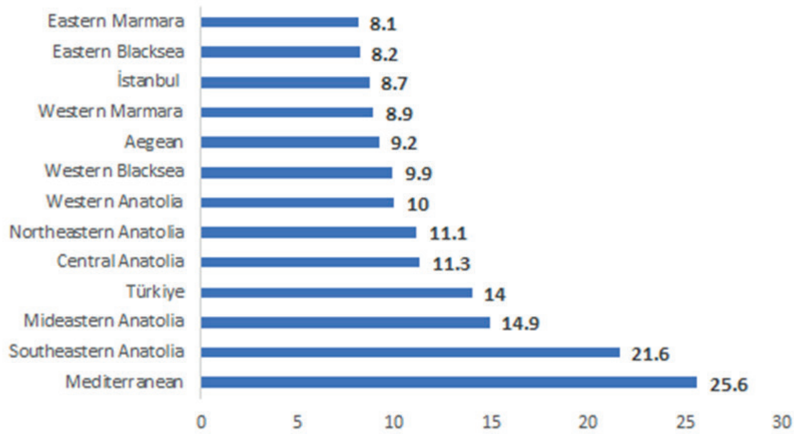
Graph 3: Under-five mortality rate in Türkiye, 2010-2023



Source: TurkStat, Death and Causes of Death Statistics, 2023

According to Graph 3, Türkiye's under-five mortality rate significantly declined from 15.5 per thousand in 2010 to 11.2 per thousand in 2022. However, in 2023, the rate increased to 14.5 per thousand, marking a notable rise after years of decline. When examined by gender, it is evident that the mortality rate for boys consistently exceeds that of girls throughout the years. For instance, in 2023, the under-five mortality rate for boys was 15.5 per thousand, compared to 13.6 per thousand for girls. This trend aligns with global patterns, where boys generally have a higher probability of dying before age five than girls due to biological and physiological factors (UN IGME, 2018). The persistence of a gender gap in Türkiye, as well as the recent increase in overall rates, suggests the need for further investigation into the contributing factors, such as healthcare access, biological resilience, and cultural practices.

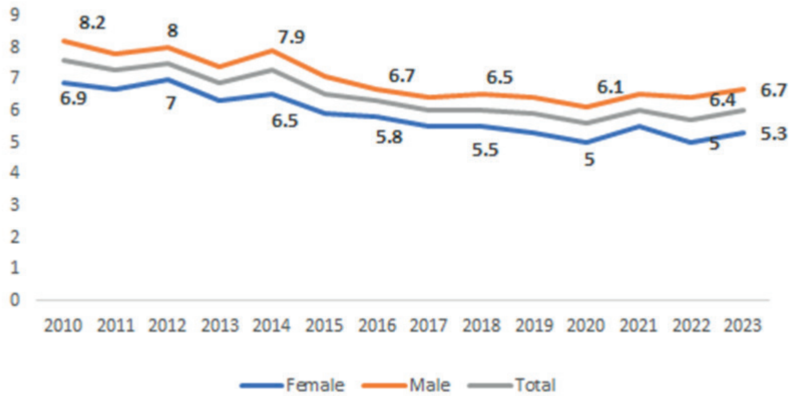
Graph 4: Under-five mortality rate by NUTS-1 Regions in Türkiye, 2023



Source: General Directorate of Public Health, Health Statistics Yearbook, 2023

The under-five mortality rates reveal significant regional disparities in Türkiye, with the highest rates observed in the Mediterranean Region (25.6 per 1,000 live births), followed by Southeastern Anatolia (21.6) and Mideastern Anatolia (14.9), while the lowest rates are in Eastern Marmara (8.1), Eastern Black Sea (8.2), and İstanbul (8.7). These disparities may be influenced by variations in women's education levels, access to prenatal care, and rates of institutional deliveries across regions. The elevated mortality rates in regions such as the Mediterranean and Southeastern Anatolia highlight the need for targeted interventions to address underlying socio-economic and healthcare access-related challenges. Further research is necessary to explore how these factors interact and contribute to the observed inequalities, as well as to assess the potential impact of policy measures designed to reduce regional disparities and improve child health outcomes nationwide.

Graph 5: Neonatal mortality rate in Türkiye, 2010-2023



Source: TurkStat, Death and Causes of Death Statistics, 2023

Graph 5 shows that while the neonatal mortality rate was 7.6 per thousand in 2010, it decreased to 6 per thousand in 2023. Notably, the mortality rate for boys is consistently higher than that of girls. However, this indicator lacks a regional breakdown, which is crucial for a comprehensive understanding. The lack of regional monitoring fails to account for important socio-economic disparities among women across regions. To align with the principles of the Sustainable Development Goals (SDGs), it is essential to incorporate regional analyses into this indicator. This would allow policymakers to address region-specific challenges and reduce inequalities in neonatal health outcomes. In this context, it is also important to consider the infant mortality trends. Recent data shows the infant mortality rate rose from 9.2 per thousand in 2022 to 10.0 per thousand in 2023, with infant deaths increasing slightly from 9,555 to 9,575 (TurkStat, 2023). This unexpected increase may be partially attributed to the devastating earthquake that occurred in 2023, which severely impacted healthcare infrastructure and access in affected regions. Furthermore, this trend underscores the importance of the 12th Development Plan's goal to reduce the infant mortality rate to 8.5 per thousand in 2028 by improving the quality of health services and ensuring financial sustainability. Achieving these objectives requires a nuanced regional approach that addresses socio-economic disparities and ensures disaster preparedness and recovery capabilities.

Demographic studies can help identify high-risk infants and children by analyzing biodemographic factors and fertility behaviors. It can lead to strategies to reduce the risk of infant and child mortality, such as encouraging longer birth intervals ((HUIPS, 2019). Providing women with equality in areas such as education, health care and job opportunities, as well as biodemographic factors, can contribute to reducing infant and child mortality. Educated and labor force women often have access to better health care and better care for their families. This can help reduce infant and child mortality. At the same time, it is important for women to be able to make informed decisions about their sexual and reproductive health, to have access to birth control methods, and to be able to choose to become mothers whenever they want. As a result, infant and child mortality may be reduced by reducing the risks of unwanted pregnancies and miscarriages. Health awareness of women can increase their access to prenatal and postnatal care and support the healthy growth and development of infants. Finally, reducing infant and child mortality is closely tied to social structure and gender equality. This issue requires a focus on educating women, raising awareness, and improving healthcare services before and after birth.

Adolescent fertility rate per 1 000 women in 15-19 age group

By 2030, it is aimed to ensure universal access to sexual and reproductive health-care services, including for family planning, information and education, and the integration of reproductive health into national strategies and programmes. This indicator is defined as the average number of live births per 1 000 women in the 15-19 age group. This indicator is comparable over time and at counrty level (TurkStat, 2023).

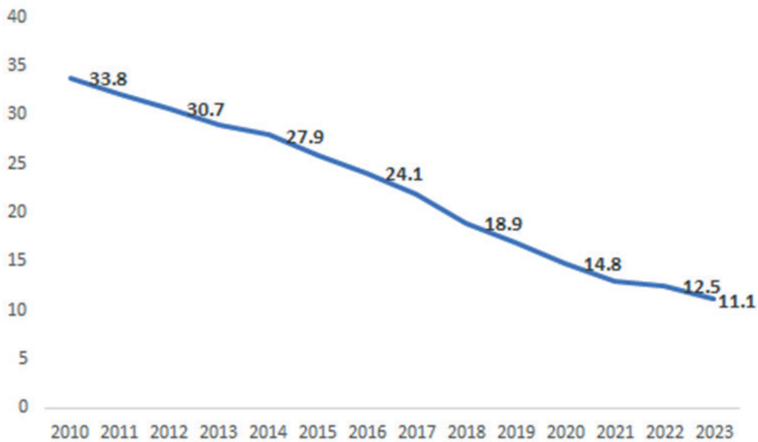
The adolescent fertility rate is evaluated using performance-based monitoring. However, childhood, early and forced marriages and the resulting adolescent fertility are a violation of rights that adversely affect the physical and mental development of girls and bring the risk of maternal mortality and various health problems due to pregnancy/birth before their physical development is completed. Thus, it should be seen as a rights-based indicator.

Adolescence is a period of significant changes in sexual and reproductive health. Feminism supports young girls to be informed about their sexual and reproductive health and to make their own decisions about their bodies and sexuality. This enables adolescents to make informed decisions about fertility and access sexual health services. Feminism also increases the freedom of young girls to plan their own futures and choose their lifestyles by focusing on their education, professional development and social participation. This, in turn, can influence young women's fertility decisions. For example, young women with educational and career goals can make more informed and controlled decisions about fertility planning (Şen, 2018, pp. 69-71).

According to Graph 6, it is seen that while the adolescent fertility rate was 33.8 per thousand in 2010, this rate decreased to 11.1 per thousand in 2023.

In other words, the number of live births was 11.1 per thousand women in 15-19 age group in 2023. The decreasing adolescent fertility rate in Türkiye should be analyzed through a feminist demography lens, considering factors such as education, socioeconomic status, access to sexual health services, and early marriage.

Graph 6: Adolescent fertility in Türkiye, 2010-2023



Source: TurkStat, Birth Statistics, 2023

It is crucial to focus on gender equality, responsible sexual behavior, and the need for training during this developmental stage of adolescence. Overlooked by most platforms and programs, adolescents must have access to sexual and reproductive health services. Additionally, young men should be educated about women's health and share responsibility for contraception use. Since sexual health is also defined as a part of reproductive health, problems related to family planning, sexually transmitted diseases, HIV prevention, sexuality, gender relations and adolescents should be addressed from the perspective of feminist demography.

Achieve gender equality and empower all women and girls (Goals 5)

Proportion of women aged 20-24 years old who were married before age 18

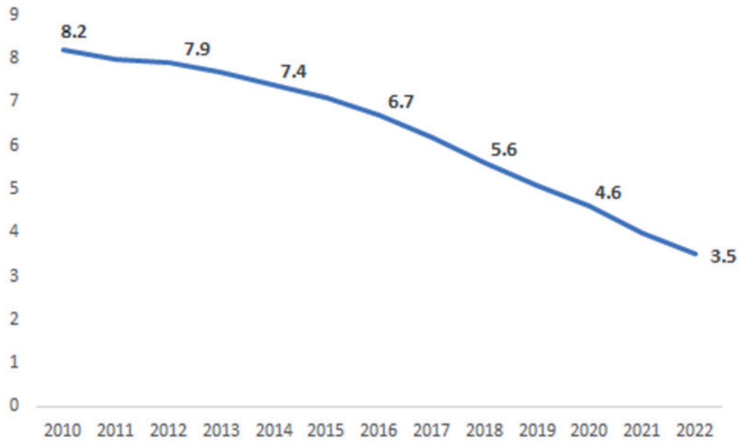
This indicator aims to eliminate harmful practices like child, early, and forced marriage, and female genital mutilation. It is calculated by dividing number of women who were married before age 18 and now in the 20-24 age group to the total women population in the same age group. Data is derived from administrative registers and includes only formal marriages. It is comparable over time. Since it serves as a proxy indicator for the 'Proportion of women aged 20–24 years who were married or in a union before age 15 and before age 18', it differs slightly from global metadata (TurkStat, 2023).

This indicator is evaluated using a performance-based monitoring approach. However, it should be taken into account that child marriage is a rights-based monitoring indicator, as it is a violation of child and human rights. Marriage marks adulthood, and the legal age for marriage is defined by law. However, in some societies, social norms may override legal regulations, leading to an early end to childhood for some children. Due to their immaturity and the fact that they marry before completing their social and physiological development, children in this paradoxical situation face numerous social and economic constraints. Marriage at an early age, when these children should be in school, limits their right to education.

Early marriages violate children's rights and create problems in education, poverty, and the economy. Early marriages restrict children's access to education, have a negative impact on their ability to participate in the workforce at a later age, and hinder their social development. It is one of the forms of discrimination against girls. These marriages, which both men and women are exposed to, are an example of gender-based violence and serve as a sign of gender inequality. Early marriages continue their existence with established traditions in societies. Early marriage, which is a multidimensional issue, is defined as a form of discrimination and a public health problem, an internationally accepted crime, as well as an obstacle to sustainable development and one of the forms of gender-based violence (Yüksel-Kaptanoğlu, Ergöçmen & Keskin, 2020, pp. 13-15).

According to the Turkish Civil Code, persons who have reached the age of 18 can marry without the consent of anyone. Persons aged 17 can marry with the consent of their parents. Persons aged 16 may marry in extraordinary circumstances (decision of a judge). According to the provisions of our country's civil law, no one under the age of 16 can marry under any circumstances. This indicator, obtained from the Marriage Statistics compiled by TurkStat, covers official marriages before the age of 18 within the legal framework defined by the Turkish Civil Code. Informal marriages (religious wedding ceremony) or people living with a partner before the age of 18 are not included in this indicator. This indicator is therefore not comparable at the global level. Beyond comparability, the unknown proportion of women who were married or had a sexual relationship before the age of 18 in a society is a major obstacle to the empowerment of girls and women.

Graph 7: Proportion of women who were married before age 18 in Türkiye (%), 2010-2022



Source: TurkStat, SDG Portal, 2024

According to Graph 7, the proportion of women in the 20-24 age group who were married before the age of 18 was 8.2% in 2010, decreasing to 3.5% in 2022. It would be more accurate to evaluate this indicator together with other official statistics. For instance, based on the findings of the 2018 Turkish Demographic and Health Survey (HUIPS, 2019), it was determined that 14.7% of individuals aged 20-24 years old were married before the age of 18. Furthermore, among this group, 2.0% were married before the age of 15. These statistics highlight the concerning prevalence of early marriages in Türkiye, indicating that a significant proportion of individuals enter into marriage at a young age, potentially before they have reached the legal age of adulthood.

According to the 2021 Family Structure Survey conducted by TurkStat every 5 years, 15% of individuals reported getting married before the age of 18. While 4.4% of men reported marrying before age 18, the proportion among women is significantly higher at 24.2%. Given that these figures represent Türkiye as a whole, regional disparities, particularly for women, are likely to be even more pronounced. Another finding from the same survey reveals that while 98.6% of married individuals had civil wedding ceremonies, 90% also had religious wedding ceremonies. Accordingly, it should be taken into account that religious wedding cerenomy is a common practice in Turkish society, and that the proportion of women with religious wedding may be high apart from civil wedding cerenomy (TurkStat, 2021).

These additional statistics examined show that when evaluating this SDG indicator, examining only formal marriages will cause a scope error. While the rate of women in the 20-24 age group who stated that they got married before the age of 18 in official marriages in 2018 was 5.6%, this rate was 14.7% according to the TDHS results. Due to its methodology, this indicator, which is based solely on official marriages, can be viewed as an indicator that overshadows gender inequality in terms of feminist demography. It is important to calculate early marriages in a way that considers the entire society and make the results public. This is because early marriages prevent girls and women from exercising many of their rights, including the right to participate in education and the workforce, the right to sexual and reproductive health, and the right to live without violence, leaving them in a position of social and economic weakness.

Early marriages reinforce gender inequalities that prevent women from exercising many of their rights, such as the right to education and employment, sexual and reproductive health rights, and the right to live without violence. For this reason, it should be handled by considering its social and economic causes and effects. Additionally, since there are regional differences in the status of women in Türkiye, this indicator needs to be evaluated at the regional level or the rural-urban divide. It is recommended to add the ratio of men to this indicator and to assess the situation of boys in early marriages in light of the fact that early marriage is a problem not only for girls but also for boys.

CONCLUSION

Monitoring gender equality using demographic indicators involves assessing how well gender equality goals are being achieved and evaluating the impact of related policies and programs. The rights-based approach to monitoring gender equality requires states to meet their obligations to protect and promote gender equality, including the adoption of laws and policies that promote gender equality and eliminate discriminatory practices and attitudes.

In our country, women continue to face significant challenges in exercising bodily autonomy due to restrictive cultural norms, legal barriers, and societal expectations. Very few women make their own informed decisions regarding sexual relations, contraceptive use and reproductive health care. The extent to which laws prevent or enable access to relevant health care and information is critical to this decision-making ability. Restrictive laws and limited access to reproductive health services make it harder for women to control their own bodies. For example, strict rules about abortion or the lack of medical abortion pills prevent women from ending unwanted pregnancies safely. Limited access to birth control methods in healthcare facilities or cultural pressures also make it difficult for many women to prevent pregnancies. These barriers affect women the most, especially those in disadvantaged groups. Removing these obstacles is important to protect women's health and support their equality in society. Women and girls should have the laws and regulations needed to guarantee full and equal access to sexual and reproductive health and rights. In this context, the SDGs can serve as a tool to accelerate progress in fulfilling human rights obligations.

The feminist perspective examines gender indicators by emphasizing the differing experiences of men and women. The primary objective is to highlight disparities in equality, justice, and human rights between women and men. Feminist theory can also contribute to the prevention of discrimination based on gender roles by raising awareness about gender equality. Educating individuals about gender equality is a vital step toward fostering a more equitable society.

In 2023, Türkiye's maternal mortality ratio was 13.5 per 100,000 live births. Reducing maternal mortality is a key objective in development plans and Ministry of Health strategies. However, efforts must extend beyond improving access to antenatal and postnatal care to achieve this goal. It is crucial to address the broader issues related to women's reproductive decisions, particularly among those living in rural areas, with lower education levels, and lacking economic independence. Women should be empowered to make informed choices about their fertility by improving access to contraception and ensuring safe options for reproductive health decisions. Moreover, it is important to recognize the connection between maternal mortality rates and gender-based discrimination, including factors such as education level, employment status, societal roles, and women's value within society. Adopting a gender perspective, policymakers should focus on eliminating these disparities and monitoring progress in reducing maternal mortality rates.

Although preventable infant and child mortality rates have declined over the years, they remain high. Promoting gender equality in areas such as education, healthcare, and employment opportunities for women can significantly contribute to the reduction of infant and child mortality. Women who receive education and participate in the workforce often have better access to healthcare services and are better equipped to care for their families. Empowering women not only improves individual autonomy but also leads to better health outcomes, economic growth, and more inclusive societies. This improved access to healthcare can help decrease the rates of infant and child mortality. Additionally, it is crucial to empower women to make informed decisions regarding their sexual and reproductive health. This includes providing access to contraception methods and supporting their ability to choose when to become mothers. Minimizing the risks of unwanted pregnancies and promoting healthier pregnancies will further reduce infant and child mortality rates. Enhancing women's health awareness can also improve their access to prenatal and postnatal care, thereby promoting the healthy growth and development of infants. In conclusion, addressing infant and child mortality requires a comprehensive approach that addresses both social structures and gender dynamics. This entails raising awareness among women, providing them with education, and delivering necessary healthcare services before and after childbirth. By adopting such measures, significant progress can be made in reducing infant and child mortality rates.

It is thought that the marriage rate and adolescent fertility rate in the 16-17 age group are still at a high level in our country. By monitoring feminist demographic indicators such as early marriage and adolescent fertility, strategies including education for women and girls, empowerment, legal reforms, and social change can help reduce these rates. Education serves as a cornerstone for achieving gender equality, as it equips individuals with the knowledge and tools to challenge discriminatory norms and practices.

The effectiveness of ignoring or trivializing women's needs, of drafting laws and policies that directly affect women without considering women, should be openly questioned. Thus, producing and monitoring feminist demographic indicators is essential. In conclusion, achieving gender equality and reducing maternal and infant mortality requires a multi-faceted approach that involves education, healthcare access, and societal change.

NOTES

1- The opinions expressed in this study are entirely those of the author and do not reflect the views of the Turkish Statistical Institute.

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ARAŞTIRMA MAKALESİ / RESEARCH ARTICLE

TÜRKİYE'DE MESLEKİ HOMOGAMİ VE EĞİTİM HOMOGAMİSİ: 2002 VE 2021 YILLARI KARŞILAŞTIRMASI

OCCUPATIONAL AND EDUCATIONAL HOMOGAMY IN TÜRKİYE: COMPARISON BETWEEN 2002 AND 2021

HATİCE ECEM AHISHALI*
CANER ÖZDEMİR**

ÖZET

Bu çalışmanın amacı Türkiye'deki mesleki homogami ve eğitim homogamisi düzeyini ölçmek ve yaş, gelir, yaşanılan yer, eğitim durumu ve mesleğin homogamiye etkisini incelemektir. Bu amaçla, TÜİK tarafından toplanan Hanehalkı İşgücü Anketi 2002 ve 2021 verileri kullanılarak evli çiftlerin homogami düzeyleri ölçülmüş, homogami düzeylerini etkileyen faktörler lojistik regresyon modelleri ile test edilmiştir. Mesleki homogami olasılığının tarım ve profesyonel meslek çalışanlarında, yüksek eğitim seviyesine sahip bireylerde ve genç kuşaklarda daha yüksek olduğu görülmüştür. Eğitim homogamisi ise özellikle; profesyonel meslek çalışanlarında, eğitim seviyesinin çok yüksek veya çok düşük olduğu bireylerde, genç kuşaklarda sıklıkla görülmektedir. Bu sonuçlar hem mesleki homogami hem de eğitim homogamisinde eğitim ve meslek durumuna göre bir kutuplaşmaya işaret etmektedir. Eğitim seviyeleri ve mesleki statü dağılımının uçlarında ve genç yaş grupları arasında homogami düzeyleri yüksektir. Eğitim ve meslek statülerinin kuşaklararası aktarımıyla bu kutuplaşma toplumsal eşitsizliklerin derinleşmesine katkı sağlama potansiyeli taşımaktadır.

ANAHTAR SÖZCÜKLER: Homogami, Toplumsal Eşitsizlikler, Mesleki Homogami, Eğitim Homogamisi.

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ABSTRACT

This study aims to measure the level of occupational and educational homogamy in Turkey and to examine the effects of age, income, place of residence, educational status and occupation on homogamy. For this purpose, the homogamy levels of married couples are measured using the Household Labour Force Survey 2002 and 2021 data collected by TURKSTAT. The factors affecting homogamy levels are tested with logistic regression models. It is observed that the probability of occupational homogamy is higher among agricultural and professional workers, individuals with higher education levels and younger age groups. Educational homogamy, on the other hand, is especially common among professional workers, individuals with very high or very low education levels and younger age groups. These results indicate a polarisation in both occupational homogamy and educational homogamy according to education and occupational status. Homogamy levels are high at both ends of the distribution of education levels and occupational status and among younger age groups. With the intergenerational transmission of educational and occupational status, this polarisation has the potential to contribute to the deepening of existing social inequalities.

KEYWORDS: Homogamy, Social Inequalities, Occupational Homogamy, Educational Homogamy

GİRİŞ

Bu çalışmanın amacı Türkiye'deki mesleki homogami ve eğitim homogamisi düzeyini ölçmek ve homogamik eşleşme davranışının toplumsal eşitsizlikler üzerindeki potansiyel etkilerini tartışmaya açmaktır. Homogami bireylerin bir özellik çevresinde benzerlik göstermesi durumudur. Bu özellik; sosyal, ekonomik, eğitimsel veya mesleki olabilir (Mäenpää, 2015a). Bu araştırmada bireylerin evlilik ilişkilerindeki homogamik eşleşme davranışları incelenmektedir. Eşleşme davranışının gelir eşitsizliği üzerindeki etkileri, literatürde aile dinamikleri/yapıları, çiftlerin gelir seviyeleri, kadın istihdamı gibi çok geniş bir alanda incelenmektedir (Bouchet-Valat, 2017; Esping-Andersen, 2007). Homogami, çiftler sahip oldukları kaynakları paylaştıkları için, bireylerin kaynaklara ulaşımını ve bu kaynakların ailelere dağıtımını etkilemektedir. Ebeveynler çocuklarını etkilemekte ve homogami gelecek nesillerin özelliklerini belirlemektedir (Schwartz, 2013). Dolayısıyla homogami doğrudan veya dolaylı şekillerde toplumsal eşitsizliklerin temelini etkilemektedir. Literatür incelendiğinde homogaminin eşitsizlik ve diğer faktörler üzerindeki etkilerine dair çalışmalar genellikle İskandinav ülkelerinde (Birkelund ve Heldal, 2003; Mäenpää ve Jalovaara, 2014; Roikonen ve Häkkinen, 2019), Amerika Birleşik Devletleri'nde (Huang, Li, Liu, ve Zhang, 2009; Kalmijn, 1991; Lewis ve Oppenheimer, 2000) ve Uzak Doğu ülkelerinde

(Borkotoky ve Gupta, 2016; Qian ve Qian, 2017) yoğunlaşmaktadır. Türkiye'de homogami üzerine yapılan çalışmalar incelendiğinde, homogaminin cinsiyet eşitsizlikleri üzerine etkisi (Mercan, 2012) ve eğitim homogamisinin gelir eşitsizlikleri üzerine etkisi (Acar, 2022) gibi konular araştırılmıştır. Ancak homogaminin toplumsal tabakalaşma ve eşitsizliklerin yeniden üretilmesindeki rolü üzerinde durulmamıştır. Bu çalışma bireylerin partner seçimlerinin toplumsal eşitsizliklerin sürdürülmesine etkisini tartışmaya açmayı hedeflemektedir.

Homogami

Bireyler için eşlerinin kim olacağı çok önemlidir ve eşleşme şekilleri rastgele bir düzenden oldukça uzaktır. Eş seçimi yaparken bireylerin kendi kişiliklerine uygun romantik partner seçmeleri olağandır. Bireyler seçimlerinde belirli kriterlere sahip olabilirler. Bireylerin sahip oldukları kriterlere göre seçim yapmaları sınıflandırıcı eşleşmedir (*assortative mating*). Sınıflandırıcı eşleşme kavramı farklı anlamlarda kullanılabilmektedir. Bazı durumlarda yapılan bir tercihi ifade eden bu kavram bazı durumlarda ise çiftleşme şekillerini ifade etmektedir. Biyoloji açısından bakıldığında benzer fenotiplere sahip bireylerin çiftleşmeleri homotipik bir çiftleşme olurken, farklı fenotiplere sahip bireylerin çiftleşmeleri heterotipik bir çiftleşmeyi işaret etmektedir (Burley, 1983). Sınıflandırıcı eşleşmelerde bireylerin tercihleri kendilerine benzeyen kişileri eş olarak seçmek yönünde olabilir. Bu durumda pozitif sınıflandırıcı eşleşme gerçekleşmiş olur. Bireylerin eş seçimi sırasında kendilerinden farklı özelliklere sahip kişileri eş olarak tercih etmeleri durumunda ise negatif sınıflandırıcı eşleşme olmaktadır (Figueredo ve diğerleri, 2006). Sınıflandırıcı eşleşmenin pozitif olduğu durumlar homogami kavramı ile açıklanmaktadır. Bazı araştırmalarda sınıflandırıcı eşleşme kavramı ile doğrudan pozitif sınıflandırıcı eşleşme yani homogami işaret edilmektedir (Shafer ve Qian, 2010). Sosyolojide genellikle homogami kavramı tercih edilmektedir. Bu araştırmada sınıflandırıcı eşleşme kavramı sosyolojik bir bakış açısıyla inceleneceği için "homogami" kavramı tercih edilmektedir.

Bireylerin sahip oldukları zevkler ve hobiler yaşam biçimlerine göre şekillenmektedir. Bazı zevkler/hobiler vardır ki yalnızca o kişinin sahip olduğu sınıfa aittir ve bu zevkler/hobiler zaman içerisinde ailesinden bireye aktarılır, öğrenilemez ve öğretilemezdir (Mäenpää, 2015b). Bourdieu'ya (2015) göre bu zevkler insanlar arasında "çöpçatanlık" görevi görürler ve benzer zevklere, hobilere, özelliklere sahip olan bireyleri bir araya getirirler. Benzer özelliklere sahip bireylerin bir arada olması ve ilişki kurması kaçınılmazdır. Bireyler farklı yaşam tarzlarına karşı her zaman anlayışlı olamayabilir. Bireylerin farklı yaşam tarzlarına karşı olan bu anlayışsızlığı sınıflar arasındaki farkların güçlü nedenlerinden biridir ve toplumda görülen homogamik ilişkiler bunun göstergesidir (Bourdieu, 2015). Gelir eşitsizliklerinin arttığı toplumlarda farklı gelir grupları arasında artan oranlarda konut ayrımı görülmektedir (Schwartz, 2013). Farklı ekonomik gruplar arasındaki fiziksel uzaklığın artması da homogami ile ilişkilidir. Potansiyel partnerlerle dolu bir havuzu düşündüğümüzde bu havuzda öncelikli olarak bize fiziksel ve sosyal açıdan yakın olan kişiler bulunurdu (Günaydın, Selçuk ve Hazan, 2013). Evli çiftler din, dil, ırk, meslek, eğitim ve sosyo-ekonomik statü gibi birçok farklı demografik özellik açısından benzerdir (Kalmijn, 1991). Günümüzde gelişmiş ülkelerde bireylerin partner seçimlerinin doğrudan salt bir irade ile yapıldığı düşünülse de partner seçimi sosyal normlardan ve toplumsal baskılardan arınmış değildir (Mäenpää, 2015b).

Bireylerin partner seçimlerinde belirli kriterlere sahip olmaları olağandır. Öncelikle potansiyel eş adayının fiziksel ve ardından da sosyal anlamda bireye yakın olması gereklidir. Bireylerin partner seçimleri literatürde farklı şekillerde açıklanmakla birlikte bunlar şu şekilde özetlenebilir: İçgüdüsel seçim (Jung), bireylerin ebeveynlerine benzer bireyleri partner seçmesine dayanan psikanaliz görüşü (Freud), bireylerin kendilerine benzer özelliklere sahip bireylere yönelmesi, bireylerin kendilerinde olmayan özellikleri taşıyan bireyleri potansiyel eş adayı olarak görmesi (Değişim Teorisi), karşıtların birbirini çekmesi (Eckland, 1968). Bireylerin eşlerini seçerken dikkat ettikleri faktörler homogamik ilişkilerin ortaya çıkmasında rol oynamaktadır. Bu faktörlerin nedenleri ile ilgili iki farklı hipotez vardır. İlk olarak bireylerin kendilerine benzer özelliklere sahip partnerler araması anlamına gelen "eşleştirme hipotezi"; ikinci olarak ise bireylerin partnerlerinde çeşitli özelliklere odaklanırken bunun sonucunda kendisinden düşük bir seviyede partnerle birlikte olmaması üzerine kurulmuş "yarışma hipotezi"dir (DiMaggio ve Mohr, 1985; Kalmijn, 1994; Schwartz, 2013). Bu hipotezler şu şekillerde açıklanabilir: Her birey kendi refah seviyesini üst düzeye çıkaracak bir partner arayışındadır, bu refah seviyesi hanede sahip olunan mallar üzerinden ölçülür. Diğer şekilde ise evlilik piyasasının bir denge içerisinde olduğu varsayılır ve bireyler kendilerine benzer özelliklere sahip bireylerle bir araya gelirler ve herhangi bir değişim gerçekleştirmezler (Becker, 1974). Evliliğin, statüler arasında dikey geçiş aracı olarak kullanılma fonksiyonu onu bireylerin kendilerine benzer seviyelere sahip bireylerle bir araya gelmeleri durumu olan homogaminin yanında kendilerinden yüksek seviyelerde bireylerle bir araya gelmelerine (hipergami) ve kendilerinden düşük seviyelerde bireylerle bir araya gelmelerine (hipogami) neden olmaktadır (Davis, 1941). Literatürde "Değişim Teorisi" olarak adlandırılan bu durumda bireyler kendilerinde olmayan özellikleri partnerlerinde bulmaya çalışarak tamamlanmak üzere ilişki kurarlar (Merton, 1941). Bireylerin partnerleri ile farklılaştığı veya benzeştiği özellikler o ilişkinin türünü belirlemektedir. Örneğin bireylerin, kendilerinden yüksek eğitim seviyesine sahip bir partneri seçmesi bu ilişkinin eğitim hipergamisi; partnerinin benzer eğitim seviyesine sahip olması ise bu ilişkinin eğitim homogamisi olmasına neden olmaktadır.

Benzer bireylerin eşleşmesi olan homogami, partner seçimlerini kısıtlamaktadır. Bunu yaş, ırk, eğitim, din, ebeveynlerin sosyo-ekonomik durumu üzerinden gerçekleştirmektedir (Park, 1990). Günümüzde bireylerin daha ileri yaşlarda evlenmeyi tercih ettikleri görülmektedir. Türkiye'de, erkeklerde evlilik yaşı 2001 ve 2023 yılları arasında 26'dan 28,3'e yükselirken; kadınlarda 22,7'den 25,7'ye yükselmiştir (TÜİK, 2021; TÜİK, 2023). Bireylerin evlenme yaşı arttıkça partnerlerinde aradıkları özelliklerin daha çok sosyo-ekonomik ve sosyo-kültürel kriterler ile ilgili olduğu görülmektedir (Kalmijn, 1994). Evlilik yaşının artması daha yüksek kariyere sahip olmak ile ilişkilendirilmekte olup, bireylerin ilişkiye başladıkları zamandaki eğitim seviyeleri ne kadar yüksekse homogamik ilişki içerisinde olma ihtimalleri de o kadar yüksektir (Oppenheimer, 1988; Park, 1990). Bireylerin eğitim seviyeleri ve bu anlamdaki başarıları, kuracakları homogamik ilişkiler üzerinde artan bir etkiye sahip olmakta ve sosyal kökenin yerini almaya başlamaktadır (Arum, Roksa ve Budig, 2008). Sosyal sınıfların eğitim ile olan ilişkisi yadsınamaz ancak ilişkilerde sosyal köken halen çok büyük bir öneme sahiptir. Bu anlamda homogamik eşleşmelerin birçok farklı sınıfta gerçekleştiği ve sınıflar arasındaki farklılıkların nesiller boyunca devam etmesine katkı sağladığı bilinmektedir (Becker, 1974). Partnerlerin istihdam, mesleki sınıf ve sosyal köken açısından homogamik ilişkiler içerisinde olmaları gelir eşitsizliklerini artırıcı yönde etki etmektedir (Esping-Andersen, 2007; Ravazzini, Kuhn ve Suter, 2017). Günümüzde giderek artan eşitsizlikler sosyal yaşamın birçok farklı alanına dağılmış durumdadır. Bireylerin romantik ilişkilerde partner olarak seçtiği kişiler, arkadaş çevreleri, oturdukları mahalleler, çocuklarını gönderdikleri okullar ve günün büyük bir kısmını geçirdikleri işyerleri gibi birçok alanda bu eşitsizlikleri gözlemlemek mümkündür. İlişkilerin bu denli iç içe geçmiş durumda olması bireylerin partner seçimlerinin eşitsizliğin yeniden üretimindeki rolünün büyüklüğüne dikkat çekmektedir (Hu, 2016; Mijs ve Roe, 2021). Bireylerin partnerlerinde aradıkları faktörlerin toplumsal normlardan arınmamış olması, fiziksel ve coğrafi yakınlığın, çeşitli demografik özelliklerin partner seçiminde öne çıkan etkenler olması gibi nedenlerden ötürü homogami artmakta ve gelir eşitsizliklerine katkı sağlamaya kısır bir döngü içerisinde devam etmektedir. Homogaminin gelir eşitsizliklerine olan etkisi incelendiğinde bireylerin eş seçiminde vermiş olduğu kararların, dikkat ettiği faktörlerin/özelliklerin gelecek popülasyonları şekillendirmede etkisi olduğu söylenebilir.

Literatürde homogaminin birçok farklı türü olmakla birlikte sosyal homogami (van Leeuwen ve Maas, 2019), eğitim homogamisi (Bouchet-Valat, 2018) ve mesleki homogami (Smits, Ultee ve Lammers, 1999) en popüler türleridir. Bu araştırmada verilerin ulaşılabilirliği ve ölçülebilirliği nedeniyle homogami alt türlerinden yalnızca mesleki homogami ve eğitim homogamisi incelenecektir. Bu incelemeler "Türkiye'deki eğitim homogamisi ve mesleki homogami düzeylerini belirlemek", "zaman içerisinde homogami düzeyinin değişimini gözlemlemek" ve "mesleki homogami ve eğitim homogamisini etkileyen sosyo-demografik faktörleri incelemek" amaçlarıyla yapılacaktır. Bu amaçlar kapsamında "Türkiye'de homogami çeşitleri arasında en çok hangi homogami çeşidi görülmektedir?", "Hipergamik evliliklerde cinsiyete göre eğitim ve meslek farklılıkları var mıdır?", "Homogamide yıllar arasında değişim var mıdır?", "Homogami en çok hangi eğitim seviyelerinde görülmektedir?", "Homogami en çok hangi meslek grupları arasında görülmektedir?", "Homogami düzeyini etkileyen faktörler nelerdir?", "Türkiye'nin hangi bölgelerinde homogami düzeyi daha fazladır?" araştırma soruları üzerinden incelemeler yapılmıştır. Bu soruları cevaplamak için betimsel istatistikler ve lojistik regresyon yöntemi kullanılmıştır. Bireyler ve partnerleri arasındaki homogamik ilişkilerin düzeylerini ve türlerini tespit etmek için veri kaynağı olarak TÜİK'in yapmış olduğu Hanehalkı İşgücü Anketi'nin 2002 ve 2021 verileri kullanılmıştır. Hanehalkı İşgücü Anketi'nde fert geliri ilk kez 2002 yılında doğrudan sorulduğu için başlangıç verisi olarak 2002 yılı tercih edilmiştir. Çalışmaya başlandığında en güncel veri olan 2021 verileri de güncel durumu tespit etmek için kullanılmıştır. 2002 yılı verisinde 64.847 çifte ait veri kullanılırken bu sayı 2021 yılı verisinde 148.896'dır. Bu çalışmada toplamda 213.743 çiftin verisi analiz edilmiştir.

ARAŞTIRMANIN ARKA PLANI

Mesleki Homogami

Meslekler, bireylerin toplumun geri kalanından ayrışmaları için onlara çeşitli statü kaynakları sunmaktadır. Bazı mesleklere girişin belirli bir eğitim düzeyini gerektirmesi, çeşitli mesleklerin bir cinsiyet ile bağlantılı olması, bazı mesleklerin eğitimlerinin uzun yıllar sürmesi dolayısıyla maddi imkanlara ihtiyaç duyulması gibi birçok faktör, meslekler tarafından sağlanan statü kaynaklarına örnek olarak gösterilebilir. Bazı mesleklerin, daha mesleğe atılacak ilk adımda sınıfsal bir farklılık yaratması, o mesleğin kapanmasına yol açmaktadır (Bourdieu, 2015). Mesleklerin kendi içlerinde kapanması ve tabakalara ayrılması, bireylerin sahip olduğu meslekler içerisinde ilişki kurmalarına ve homogamik ilişkilere yönelmelerine neden olmaktadır. Bireylerin partner seçimlerindeki kriterlerinin sosyo-ekonomik düzeyle yakından ilişkili olması, partnerlerin mesleklerini de eş seçiminde önemli bir faktör olarak ortaya çıkarmaktadır (Popenoe, 1937). Mesleğin ve mesleki başarının bireylerin kişilikleri ile bağlantılı görülmesi, mesleğin partner seçimindeki önemini kaçınılmaz kılmaktadır (Gelissen ve De Graaf, 2006). Bireylerin evlilik yaşı arttıkça işyerlerinde geçirdikleri süreler artmakta ve bireyler evlenecekleri kişinin mesleğine daha fazla önem vermektedirler (Kalmijn, 1994). Avrupa Birliğine bağlı 8 ülkede yapılan araştırmaya göre, bireylerin büyük bir kısmı partnerleri ile benzer meslek gruplarında yer almaktadır (Smits ve diğerleri, 1999).

1970 ve 1980 yıllarının nüfus verileri kullanılarak yapılan bir çalışma Birleşik Devletler'de artan oranlarda mesleki homogami olduğunu göstermektedir (Kalmijn, 1994). Mesleki homogami özellikle üniversite mezunu (Han ve Qian, 2021) ve profesyonel meslekler (Schwartz, Wang ve Mare, 2021) arasında görülmektedir. Partnerlerin mesleklerindeki konumları ve başarı seviyeleri eşlerini de etkilemektedir (Verbakel ve de Graaf, 2008). Partnerlerin mesleklerinin eşleri üzerindeki etkisi, eğitim seviyesinden bağımsız değildir. Bireylerin meslekleri eğitim seviyeleri ile yakından ilişkilidir ve eğitim homogamisi ve mesleki homogaminin ilişkili olması beklenir. Yüksek eğitimli çiftlerin daha fazla istihdam edilmesi (Verbakel, Luijkx ve de Graaf, 2008) onları aile kurduklarında da daha avantajlı duruma getirmektedir. Mesleki homogaminin dağılımın özellikle en üst ve en alt kısımlarında konumlanması (Schumacher ve Lorenzetti, 2005) gelir eşitsizliklerini artırabilmektedir. Mesleki homogami özellikle tarım ve profesyonel meslekler gibi her iki cinsiyetin de temsiliyetinin yüksek olduğu, potansiyel eş havuzunun kalabalık olduğu mesleklerde görülmektedir (Kalmijn, 1994). Profesyonel mesleklerden, eğitim seviyeleri yüksek bireylerin kendi aralarında ilişkiler kurması, mesleki homogami, gelir eşitsizliklerinin artmasında küçük de olsa pay sahibidir (Schwartz ve diğerleri, 2021).

Eğitim Homogamisi

Bireylerin, kendi eğitim seviyelerine benzer eğitim seviyelerine sahip olan partnerler tercih etmeleri ve ilişki kurmaları anlamına gelen eğitim homogamisi, birçok modern toplumda gözlemlenmektedir ve bir çeşit sosyal kapanma davranışıdır (Smits, 2003). Finlandiya'da yapılan bir çalışma eğitim seviyelerinin benzer olmasının, bireylerin yakın ilişkilerinde devamlılık açısından sosyal kökenlerinden daha önemli olduğunu ortaya koymuştur (Mäenpää ve Jalovaara, 2014). Bilinmektedir ki bireyler partner seçimlerini yaparken birçok farklı özelliğe dikkat etmektedir (Bernasco, de Graaf ve Ultee, 1998). Eğitim çoğu alanda bir statü göstergesi haline gelmektedir ve bu durum bireylerin eş seçimlerini de etkileyen faktörlerden biri olmaktadır. Bir kişinin eğitim seviyesinin bireyin kendisininkine benzer olması o kişiyi potansiyel partnerler arasında öne geçiren bir özellik olmaktadır (Ford, 2019). Bireyler arasındaki eğitim seviyesi farklılıkları kendini birçok farklı alanda göstermektedir. Bunlardan biri coğrafi konumdur. Türkiye'de ADNKS verileri incelenerek yapılmış bir çalışmada görülmüştür ki eğitim seviyesi birbirlerine yakın olan bireyler fiziksel olarak yakın alanlarda ikamet etmektedirler (Friedman, Kurtuluş ve Koç, 2022). Giriş bölümünde de vurgulandığı gibi eş seçiminde coğrafi yakınlık da etkilidir. Bu anlamda bireylerin eş seçimlerinin eğitimsel anlamda homogamik bir ilişkiye yol açmaları her zaman kişinin iradesine bağlı olmayabilir. Türkiye'de bireyler partnerleri ile genellikle okul, dershane, kurs gibi eğitim içerikli kurumlarda tanışmaktadır (T.C. Aile, Çalışma ve Sosyal Hizmetler Bakanlığı, 2019). Partnerlerin bunun gibi ortamlarda tanışıp evlenmeleri, eğitim seviyelerinin benzer olmasını kaçınılmaz kılarken homogamik ilişkileri artırıcı yönde etki edebilir. Bunun yanında kişinin kendi iradesiyle bu şekilde tercih ettiği durumlar da olabilmektedir. Türkiye'de bireylerin eğitimde geçirdiği zamanın artması ile ilk evlilik yaşları da artmakta ve bireylerin evliliği erteleme nedenlerinin başında eğitim gelmektedir (TÜİK, 2022; T.C. Aile, Çalışma ve Sosyal Hizmetler Bakanlığı, 2019). Bireyler evliliği öteledikçe evlilikle ilgili beklentileri ve partnerlerinde aradıkları özellikler değişiklik göstermektedir (Kalmijn, 1994). Bu özellikler daha çok sosyo-kültürel ve sosyo-ekonomik faktörleri içermekle birlikte eğitim seviyesi de çok önemli bir yere sahip olmaktadır. Bireyler kendi iradeleriyle, benzer eğitim seviyelerine sahip kişileri tercih etme eğilimi gösterebilmektedir. Türkiye'de 2002-2018 yılları arasındaki veriler incelendiğinde her yaş grubunun bir önceki yaş grubundan daha eğitimli olduğu görülmektedir (Işık, 2022). Bu durum toplumda eğitime giderek daha fazla önem verildiği anlamına gelmektedir. Eğitim seviyelerindeki nesiller arasındaki bu artış eğitim homogamisini de artırmaktadır (Seong, 2014).

Eğitimsel anlamda homogamik bir ilişki kurulması için, aynı eğitim seviyesine sahip yeteri kadar partner olmalıdır. Bu anlamda eğitim seviyesi en az erkekler kadar yüksek olan kadınların varlığı, potansiyel eş havuzundaki kişi sayısını artırıcı yönde bir etkide bulunacak, homogami olasılığını yükseltecektir. Hindistan'da yapılan bir çalışmada kadın okuryazarlığının en yüksek olduğu bölgeler eğitim homogamisinin de en yüksek olduğu bölgeler olarak belirlenmiştir (Borkotoky ve Gupta, 2016). Çeşitli farklı ülkelerde yapılmış kohort çalışmalarında ortaya çıkan sonuçlar da bu verileri destekler niteliktedir. Finlandiya (Mäenpää, 2015b), Fransa/Macaristan/Portekiz/Amerika (Naszodi ve Mendonca, 2022), Güney Kore/Japonya (Seong ve Sato, 2015), İngiltere (Andres, 2022), Sahra altı ülkeler (Pesando, 2021) gibi birçok farklı bölgede ve zaman aralığında yapılmış olan kohort çalışmalarına göre eğitim homogamisi yıllar içerisinde artış göstermektedir. Bu durum toplumda eğitim seviyelerinin artması ile ilişkilendirilebilir. Türkiye'de 25 yaş ve üzeri bireylerde lise sonrası eğitim oranı 2008 yılında %9,8 iken, 2023 yılına gelindiğinde bu oran %24,6 olmuştur (TÜİK, 2023).

Eğitim alanında kadın erkek eşitliğinin artması devam etmekle birlikte, eğitimin bazı alanlarında kadınların sayısı erkekleri geçmektedir. Neredeyse bütün OECD ülkelerinde, yükseköğretimdeki kadınların sayısı erkekleri geçmektedir (Chudnovskaya ve Kashyap, 2020). Bu durum bireylerin benzer eğitim seviyelerine sahip olduğu homogamik ilişkilere, daha fazla potansiyel partner sağlamakla birlikte, kadınların erkeklerden daha yüksek eğitim seviyesine sahip olduğu hipergamik ilişkileri de artırabilmektedir. Örneğin Finlandiya'da yapılmış bir araştırmada görülmektedir ki kadınlar eğitim seviyesi kendilerinden düşük erkeklerle hipergamik ilişkiler kurmaya giderek daha fazla eğilim göstermektedir (Mäenpää ve Jalovaara, 2014). Finlandiya'ya benzer şekilde Türkiye'de de kadınların erkeklerden daha yüksek eğitim seviyelerine sahip olduğu hipergamik ilişkilerin evlilikler arasındaki oranı artmaktadır (Işık, 2022).

Birçok çalışmada kohortlar arasında eğitim homogamisinin artış gösterdiği sonucuna (Andres, 2022; Mare, 1991; Naszodi ve Mendonca, 2022; Seong ve Sato, 2015) ulaşılmış olsa da literatürde farklı sonuçlar da bulunmaktadır. Finlandiya'da kohortlar arası yapılmış bir çalışmada homogami, literatüre benzer şekilde düşük eğitimli bireyler arasında artış gösterirken literatürün genelinden farklı bir şekilde yüksek eğitimli bireyler arasında bir düşüş göstermektedir (Mäenpää ve Jalovaara, 2015). Bu durum Fin toplumunun açıklığı ile ilişkilendirilebilir. Çin'de yapılan bir çalışmada ise Finlandiya'dan farklı şekilde yüksek eğitim seviyesine sahip kişilerde homogami görülme ihtimali daha yüksektir (Huo ve Chen, 2022). Bu örnekle açıklanabilir ki ülkelerin toplumsal yapıları eğitim homogamisinin bireyler arasındaki yaygınlığını etkileyebilmektedir. Eğitim homogamisinin coğrafi yakınlık ile doğrudan ilişkisi, bireylerin yaşadığı ülkeye, bölgeye, bölgenin toplumsal ve fiziksel yapısına göre de değişim gösterebilmektedir. Türkiye'de de özellikle yüksek gelir sınıfları arasında eşler arasındaki eğitim seviyesi farkları azalmaktadır (Işık, 2022).

Finlandiya, Türkiye ve Çin ile benzer olarak Sahra altı Afrika ülkelerinde eğitim homogamisi, özellikle kırsal alanlarda ve düşük eğitim seviyelerinde yoğunlaşmaktadır (Pesando, 2021). Bu durum Türkiye'deki çalışmada (Friedman ve diğerleri, 2022) gösterildiği gibi bireylerin eğitim seviyelerine göre coğrafi olarak ayrım göstermesi ile açıklanabilir. Sahra altı ülkelerde de Çin'de olduğu gibi kentsel alanlarda yüksek eğitim seviyelerine sahip bireyler arasında eğitim homogamisi artış göstermektedir (Pesando, 2021). Ancak bu artış kırsal bölgelerde düşük eğitim seviyelerinde görülen kadar yüksek bir artış değildir. Artış seviyelerindeki bu farklar kentsel bölgelerde daha farklı eğitim seviyelerine sahip bireylerin temsiliyetleri ile açıklanabilir. Eğitim homogamisindeki artış her ne kadar kohortlar arasında yüksek görülse de 21 Avrupa ülkesinin verileri kullanılarak yapılan bir simülasyon çalışmasına göre, bu artış gelir eşitsizliklerini sınırlı olarak etkilemektedir (Boertien ve Permanyer, 2019).

YÖNTEM

Türkiye'deki eğitim homogamisi ve mesleki homogami düzeylerini tespit etmek ve çeşitli sosyo-ekonomik değişkenlerin homogami üzerindeki etkisini incelemek için betimsel istatistiklere ve lojistik regresyon yöntemine başvurulmuştur. Bu inceleme ve analizler için TÜİK (Türkiye İstatistik Kurumu) tarafından toplanan Hanehalkı İşgücü Anketi (HİA) 2002 ve 2021 yılları verileri kullanılmıştır. HİA'da fert geliri ilk kez 2002 yılında doğrudan sorulduğundan başlangıç yılı olarak tercih edilmiştir. Çalışmaya başlandığındaki en güncel veri 2021 yılına ait olduğu için karşılaştırma bu iki yıl arasında yapılmıştır. 2002 yılı verisinde 64.847 evli çifte ulaşılırken bu sayı 2021'de 148.896'dır. Yapılan analizlerde bağımlı değişkenler mesleki homogami ve eğitim homogamisi olarak belirlenmiştir. Bağımlı değişkenlerin değişimlerini gözlemlemek için kullanılan bağımsız değişkenler ise yaş, eğitim seviyesi, gelir, yaşanılan bölge, meslek şeklindedir.

Lojistik regresyon analizindeki bazı bağımsız değişkenler çeşitli nedenlerle kategorik değişkenler olarak modellere dahil edilmiştir. Yaş değişkeni, 2002 verisinde yaş grupları olarak toplandığı için analizlerde kategorik bir değişken olarak kullanılmıştır. Analizler öncesinde, serbestlik derecesini azaltmak adına toplamda 14 adet olan yaş kategorileri daha geniş aralıklarda birleştirilerek 5 kategoriye düşürülmüştür. Ancak 2021 verisinde sayısal bir değer olarak girilen yaş değişkeni, ham verideki haliyle modellerde kullanılmıştır.

Her iki yılda da eğitim seviyesi ve meslek değişkenlerinin kategorileri yeniden düzenlenerek yine kategori sayıları düşürülmüş ve özdeş kategoriler kullanılmıştır. Eğitim seviyesi değişkeni anketlerde her iki yılda da farklı kodlanmış olup 2002 yılında 7 kategori, 2021 yılında 8 kategori şeklinde izlenmektedir. Ancak bu kategorilerin özellikle yükseköğrenim seviyelerinde farklı şekilde kategorize edilmesinden dolayı yeniden düzenlenmesine ihtiyaç duyulmuş olup her iki yıl için de 5 kategori haline getirilmiştir. Meslek değişkeni 2002 yılında ISCO88 (tek basamaklı 9 kategori) mesleki kodlarına göre toplanırken 2021 yılında ISCO08 (iki basamaklı 40 kategori) meslek kodları kullanılmıştır. Hem bu iki yılı benzer kategorilere yerleştirmek hem de serbestlik derecesini artırmamak için kategori sayısı benzer meslek gruplarını bir araya toplayacak şekilde beşe indirilmiştir. Bu birleştirme sırasında da birleştirilen kategoriler arasındaki betimsel istatistikler açısından benzerlikler dikkate alınmıştır.

Bölge değişkeni 2002 yılı ham verisindeki haliyle Kır/Kent olarak kullanılmıştır. 2021 yılı ham verisinde ise bölge değişkeni İstatistiki Bölge Birimleri Sınıflandırması Düzey 1 (12 sınıf) olarak bulunmaktadır. Yapılan analizlerde bazı bölgelerin birbirlerine yakın sonuçlar vermiş olması nedeniyle ve serbestlik derecesinin artmaması için coğrafi olarak yakın olan ve betimsel istatistikleri ve lojistik regresyon modelindeki etkileri birbirine benzer olan kategoriler birleştirilmiştir. Bunun sonucunda 2021 yılı verilerinde bölge değişkeni 4 kategoriye düşürülmüştür.

Gelir değişkeni 2002 yılında, Türk lirasından altı sıfır atılmadan önce toplandığı için gelir değişkeni bir milyara bölünmüştür. 2021 yılı gelir verisi ise bine bölünerek modellere alınmıştır.

Kullanılan veri setinin büyüklüğü ve uygulanan istatistiki yöntemlere rağmen bu çalışmada çeşitli metodolojik sınırlamalar bulunmaktadır. HİA verisi 2002 yılında 300.689 fert, 2021 yılında 635.159 fertten toplanan Türkiye temsili örneklemlerden derlenmiştir. Ancak, bu çalışmanın amacı doğrultusunda aynı hanede yaşayan evli çiftler verinin içerisinden filtrelenmiştir. Dolayısıyla yapılan filtreleme sonucunda örneklemlerin temsiliyet kabiliyeti değişmiş olacağından yıllar arası karşılaştırmaların yapılmasında temkinli olunmalıdır.

Yıllar arasında tam bir karşılaştırmanın yapılmasını değişkenlerin farklı şekillerde toplanmış olması da engellemektedir. Tüm bağımsız değişkenlerin yukarıda açıklandığı gibi farklı şekillerde ölçülmüş olması iki veri setinin birleştirilerek havuzlu veri olarak tek bir modelde analiz yapılmasını da imkânsız hale getirmektedir.

BULGULAR

TÜİK Hanehalkı İşgücü Anketi'nin 2002 ve 2021 yılları verileri mesleki homogami ve eğitim homogamisi oranlarını ve bu oranları etkileyen değişkenleri incelemek amacıyla betimsel istatistikler hesaplanmış ve lojistik regresyon analizi yapılmıştır. Hanehalkı temsilcisi olarak kodlanan bireylerin cinsiyetleri incelendiğinde 2002 yılında %99,6'sı 2021 yılında %95,1'i erkektir. Bu anlamda sonuçlar incelenirken bu dağılım dikkate alınmalıdır. Frekans tabloları ve betimsel istatistikler Tablo 1'de verilmiştir.

Tablo 1: Frekans ve Betimsel İstatistikler Tablosu

Betimsel İstatistik	Kategoriler	Gözlem sayısı		Yüzde	
		2002	2021	2002	2021
Eğitim Homogamisi	-	34238	72427	%52,8 (%52,4-%53,2)	%48,6 (%48,4-%48,9)
Mesleki Homogami	-	6924	18431	10,7% (%10,4-%10,9)	%12,4 (%12,2-%12,6)
Yaşanılan Bölge	Kır	49277	-	%24,0 (%23,7-%24,3)	-
	Kent	15570	-	%75,9 (%75,7-%76,3)	-
	Marmara	-	34663	-	%23,3 (%23,1-%23,5)
	Ege/Akdeniz	-	51312	-	%34,5 (%34,2-%34,7)
	İç Anadolu/Karadeniz	-	32843	-	%22,1 (%21,9-%22,3)
	Doğu/Güneydoğu Anadolu	-	30078		%20,2 (%20,0-%20,4)
Eğitim Seviyesi	İlkokuldan az	6423	10674	%9,9 (%9,7-%10,1)	%7,2 (%7,0-%7,3)
	İlkokul mezunu	34243	59442	%52,8 (%52,4-%53,2)	%39,9 (%39,7-%40,2)
	İlköğretim/ortaokul	7100	21474	%10,9 (%10,7-%11,2)	%14,4 (%14,2-%14,6)
	Lise mezunu	10513	28693	%16,2 (%15,9-%16,5)	%19,3 (%19,1-%19,5)
	Yüksekokul veya daha yüksek	6568	21613	%10,1 (%9,9-%10,4)	%19,2 (%19,0-%19,4)
Gelir (Bin TL)	Ortalama	64847	62096	0,1733 (0,1692-0,1775)	4,2519 (4,2286-4,2752)
Meslek	Yönetici/Müdür	6759	6831	%15,2 (%14,8-%15,5)	%7,0 (%6,8-%7,1)
	Profesyonel Meslek	5663	15116	%12,7 (%12,4-%13,0)	%15,4 (%15,2-%15,7)
	Hizmet Sektörü Çalışanı	6964	20864	%15,6 (%15,3-%16,0)	%21,3 (%21,1-%21,6)
	Tekniker	7367	26332	%16,5 (%16,2-%16,9)	%26,9 (%26,6-%27,2)
	Vasıfsız İşçi	12974	10523	%29,1 (%28,7-%29,5)	%10,8 (% 10,6-%10,9)
	Tarım	4833	18256	%10,8 (%10,6-%11,1)	%18,6 (%18,4-%18,9)
Yaş Aralığı	18-29	6117	6841	%9,4 (%9,2-%9,7)	%4,5 (%4,4-%4,6)
	30-39	17909	29515	%27,6 (%27,3-%28,0)	%19,8 (%19,6-%20,0)
	40-49	17354	37384	%26,8 (%26,4-%27,1)	%25,4 (%25,2-%25,6)
	50-59	12000	33644	%18,5 (%18,2-%18,8)	%22,6 (%22,4-%22,8)
	60+	11467	41262	%17,7 (%17,4-%18,0)	%27,7 (%27,5-%27,9)
Hanehalkı Temsilcisinin Cinsiyeti	Erkek	64556	141570	%99,6 (%99,5-%99,6)	%95,1 (%95,0-%95,2)
	Kadın	291	7326	%0,04 (%0,04-%0,05)	%4,9 (%4,8-%5,0)

Kaynak: Yazarlar tarafından oluşturulmuştur.
%95 güven aralıkları parantez içinde verilmiştir.

2002 yılı verisinde mesleki homogaminin bağımlı değişken olduğu lojistik regresyon modeli sonuçları Tablo 2'de verilmiştir. Sonuçlar incelendiğinde, gelir dışındaki bağımsız değişkenlerin mesleki homogami üzerinde anlamlı etkisi olduğu görülmektedir. Yaş değişkeninin kategorileri kendi aralarında incelendiğinde, genç yaş gruplarında referans kategori olan 60+ ve üzeri kategoriye göre mesleki homogami olasılığı daha yüksektir.

Eğitim seviyesi değişkeninde tüm daha düşük eğitim seviyelerinin referans grup olan yüksekokul ve daha yüksek kategorisine göre mesleki homogami olasılığının daha düşük olduğu görülmektedir. Bu anlamda yüksek eğitimli olmanın mesleki homogami olasılığını arttırdığı söylenebilir.

Meslek bağımsız değişkeni incelendiğinde tüm meslek kategorilerinin mesleki homogami üzerinde anlamlı bir etkisi olduğu görülmektedir. Bunun yanında en yüksek mesleki homogami olasılığı referans kategori olan tarım çalışanlarındadır. Söylenebilir ki tarım çalışanları, -eğitim, yaş, bölge ve gelir değişkenleri kontrol edildiğinde- en yüksek mesleki homogami olasılığına sahiptir.

Bölge bağımsız değişkeni için de kentte yaşayanların mesleki homogami olasılıklarının kırda yaşayanlara göre istatistiksel olarak anlamlı düzeyde daha düşük olduğu söylenebilir.

Tablo 2: Mesleki Homogamiyi Etkileyen Faktörlere Dair Lojistik Regresyon Modeli Sonuçları, 2002

Değişkenler		B	S.E.	Wald	df	Sig.	Exp(B)
Yaş Grubu[a]	18-29	,204	,078	6,846	1	,009	1,226
	30-39	,212	,062	11,750	1	,001	1,236
	40-49	,093	,060	2,386	1	,122	1,098
	50-59	,050	,060	,687	1	,407	1,051
Eğitim Seviyesi[b]	İlkokuldan az	-1,446	,091	254,559	1	,000	,235
	İlkokul mezunu	-1,462	,073	400,447	1	,000	,232
	İlköğretim/ortaokul	-1,823	,093	385,452	1	,000	,162
	Lise mezunu	-1,301	,068	361,781	1	,000	,272
Meslek[c]	Yönetici/müdür	-4,937	,118	1744,897	1	,000	,007
	Profesyonel Meslek	-2,599	,078	1114,767	1	,000	,074
	Hizmet sektörü çalışanı	-3,357	,075	2001,282	1	0,000	,035
	Tekniker	-3,450	,063	3041,040	1	0,000	,032
	Vasıfsız işçi	-2,892	,070	1708,360	1	0,000	,055
Bölge[d]	Kent	-,516	,044	135,916	1	,000	,597
Gelir	Milyar (TL)	-,002	,026	,004	1	,948	,998
Sabit		1,952	,088	488,250	1	,000	7,041

Kaynak: Yazarlar tarafından oluşturulmuştur
Bağımlı Değişken: Mesleki homogami. Referans Kategoriler: [a] 60+, [b]Yüksekokul veya daha yüksek, [c] Tarım çalışanı, [d] Kır
n: 44560, -2 Log likelihood: 25022,425, Nagelkerke R Square: 0,451

2021 yılı verilerinde bağımsız değişkenlerin etkileri incelendiğinde modeldeki tüm bağımsız değişkenlerin mesleki homogami üzerinde anlamlı etkisi olduğu görülmektedir. Tablo 3'e bakıldığında yaştaki her bir yıllık artışın homogami olasılığını %1 oranında düşürdüğünü söylemek mümkündür. Böylelikle genç kuşaklarda homogaminin daha yüksek olduğu söylenebilir.

Eğitim seviyesi bağımsız değişkeni incelendiğinde eğitim seviyelerindeki kategorilerin katsayılarının negatif yönlü olduğu, yani referans kategori olan yüksekokul mezunu veya daha yüksek kategorisinden daha düşük mesleki homogami olasılıklarına sahip olduğu görülmektedir. 2002 yılı verilerinde olduğu gibi 2021 yılı verilerinde de en yüksek eğitim düzeyinde mesleki homogami olasılığının en fazla olduğu söylenebilir.

Bölge bağımsız değişkeninde de Marmara, Ege/Akdeniz ve İç Anadolu/Karadeniz bölgelerinde yaşayanların referans grup olan Doğu/Güneydoğu'da yaşayanlara göre mesleki homogami olasılıklarının daha yüksek olduğu görülmektedir. Bu bölgeler arasında en yüksek mesleki homogami olasılığının Marmara bölgesinde olduğu görülmektedir. Gelişmişlik seviyeleri düşünüldüğünde en gelişmiş bölge olan Marmara'da en yüksek homogami olasılığının, referans kategori olan ve gelişmişlik düzeyi diğer bölgelerle kıyaslandığında düşük olan Doğu/Güneydoğu Anadolu bölgesinde en düşük homogaminin görülmesi mesleki homogami olasılığının sosyo-ekonomik olarak gelişmiş bölgelerde daha yüksek olduğuna işaret etmektedir. Bu durum 2002 yılında tarımın mesleki anlamda daha yaygın olması, kadınların çalışma hayatında, özellikle profesyonel mesleklerde temsiliyetlerinin daha az olmaları ile ilişkilendirilebilir. Kadınların çalışma hayatında artan istihdamı, profesyonel mesleklerdeki potansiyel eş adaylarını artırıcı yönde etkide bulunurken, toplumda tarımla uğraşan insan sayısındaki azalma da aynı şekilde potansiyel eş adayı sayısını azaltmaktadır. Toplumdaki bu değişimler 2002'den 2021 yılına gelindiğinde mesleki homogami olasılığının profesyonel mesleklerde tarımla ilgili mesleklerden daha yükseğe çıkmasını açıklayabilir.

Meslek grubu bağımsız değişkenine baktığımızda ise hizmet sektörü çalışanı ve vasıfsız işçi kategorilerinin mesleki homogami olasılıklarının referans kategori olan tarım çalışanlarına göre istatistiksel olarak anlamlı fark göstermediği görülmektedir. Profesyonel mesleklerde çalışanların referans kategori olan tarım işçilerinden hem de diğer meslek kategorilerinden daha yüksek mesleki homogami olasılığına sahip olduğu söylenebilir. Yönetici/müdür ve tekniker kategorilerindeki mesleklerde çalışanların ise mesleki homogami içinde olmaları olasılığı 2002 yılında olduğu gibi tarım çalışanlarına göre daha düşüktür. Meslek değişkeni üzerinde cinsiyetlerin mesleki temsillerinin de önemli bir etken olduğu göz önüne alınmalıdır. Homogami oranlarının yüksek olduğu meslek gruplarında kadınların temsiliyetinin de yüksek olduğu söylenebilir. Yönetici/müdür kategorisindekilerin mesleki homogami olasılıklarının tarım çalışanlarına göre daha düşük olması da cinsiyet değişkeni ile açıklanabilir. Kadınların yönetici gruplarında erkekler kadar istihdam edilmemesi mesleki homogaminin bu kategoride düşük olmasını açıklayabilir.

Gelir mesleki homogami ilişkisi incelendiğinde de anlamlı bir etki görülmektedir. Gelir etkisi incelendiğinde olasılık değerinin (odds ratio) 1,024 olduğu ve bu anlamda gelir bin TL arttığında homogami olasılığının %2,4 oranında arttığı görülmektedir. Yani, gelir arttıkça homogami artmaktadır.

Tablo 3: Mesleki Homogamiyi Etkileyen Faktörlere Dair Lojistik Regresyon Modeli Sonuçları, 2021

Değişkenler		B	S.E.	Wald	df	Sig.	Exp(B)
Yaş		-,010	,001	53,140	1	,000	,990
Eğitim Seviyesi[a]	İlkokuldan az	-,902	,111	65,560	1	,000	,406
	İlkokul mezunu	-,612	,046	180,380	1	,000	,542
	İlköğretim/ortaokul	-,855	,050	293,564	1	,000	,425
	Lise mezunu	-,844	,037	515,799	1	,000	,430
Bölge[b]	Marmara	,710	,040	314,283	1	,000	2,035
	Ege/Akdeniz	,596	,039	238,865	1	,000	1,814
	İç Anadolu/Karadeniz	,433	,043	100,759	1	,000	1,542
Meslek[c]	Yönetici/müdür	-1,414	,140	102,045	1	,000	,243
	Profesyonel meslek	,723	,119	36,789	1	,000	2,062
	Hizmet sektörü çalışanı	-,088	,118	,559	1	,455	,916
	Tekniker	-,678	,117	33,423	1	,000	,508
	Vasıfsız işçi	,047	,118	,160	1	,689	1,048
Gelir (Bin TL)		,024	,004	30,438	1	,000	1,024
Sabit		-1,569	,135	135,171	1	,000	,208

Kaynak: Yazarlar tarafından oluşturulmuştur.
Bağımlı Değişken: Mesleki homogami. Referans Kategoriler: [a] Yüksekokul veya daha yüksek, [b] Doğu/Güneydoğu Anadolu, [c] Tarım çalışanı
n: 62096, -2 Log likelihood: 43461,175 Nagelkerke R Square: 0,153

2002 yılı verisinde eğitim homogamisinin bağımlı değişken olduğu lojistik regresyon modeli sonuçları Tablo 4'te verilmiştir. Eğitim homogamisini etkileyen faktörler incelendiğinde, tüm değişkenlerin eğitim homogamisi üzerinde anlamlı etkisi olduğu görülmektedir. Bağımsız değişkenlerin etkilerine baktığımızda ilk olarak yaş değişkeninin, alt kategorileri kendi aralarında karşılaştırılmıştır. Bu anlamda genç yaş kategorilerinde, referans kategori olan 60+ kategorisine göre eğitim homogamisi olasılığı daha yüksektir.

Eğitim seviyesi değişkeninde ilköğretim/ortaokul ve lise mezunu gruplarının referans kategori olan yüksekokul mezunu veya daha yüksek eğitim seviyelerine göre daha düşük eğitim homogamisine sahip olduğu görülmektedir. Bunun yanında en düşük eğitim seviyesi kategorileri olan ilkokuldan az ve ilkokul mezunu kategorilerinde referans kategori olan yüksekokul mezunu veya daha yüksek kategorisine göre daha fazla eğitim homogamisi görülmektedir. Özellikle ilkokuldan az eğitimliler için olasılık değerinin yüksekliği dikkat çekmektedir.

Bölge bağımsız değişkeninde kır referans kategorisine göre kent değişkeninde daha fazla eğitim homogamisi görülmektedir. 2002 bölge verilerinde eğitim homogamisi kırsal alanlarda yaşayan bireylerde kentsel alanlarda yaşayan bireylere göre düşüktür.

Meslek grubu bağımsız değişkenine baktığımızda ise vasıfsız işçi olarak çalışanların eğitim homogamisi olasılıklarının tarım çalışanlarına göre daha düşük olduğu görülmektedir. Ancak yöneticilerin/müdürlerin ve profesyonel mesleklerde çalışanların eğitim homogamisi olasılığı tarım çalışanlarına göre daha yüksektir. Hizmet sektörü çalışanlarının ve teknikerlerin ise eğitim homogamisi olasılıklarının tarım çalışanlarına göre istatistiksel olarak anlamlı fark göstermemektedir.

Gelirin eğitim homogamisi üzerindeki etkisi incelendiğinde pozitif ve anlamlı bir etki görülmektedir. Bireylerin geliri arttıkça eğitim homogamisi ihtimalleri de artış göstermektedir. Gelir her 1 milyar TL arttığında eğitim homogamisi ihtimalinin %18 oranında artış gösterdiği görülmektedir.

Tablo 4: Eğitim Homogamisini Etkileyen Faktörlere Dair Lojistik Regresyon Modeli Sonuçları, 2002

Değişkenler		B	S.E.	Wald	df	Sig.	Exp(B)
Yaş Grubu[a]	18-29	1,007	,056	317,803	1	,000	2,737
	30-39	,792	,049	256,120	1	,000	2,208
	40-49	,582	,049	140,662	1	,000	1,789
	50-59	,249	,051	24,005	1	,000	1,282
Eğitim Seviyesi[b]	İlkokuldan az	3,244	,074	1925,631	1	,000	25,646
	İlkokul mezunu	1,664	,044	1457,359	1	,000	5,282
	İlköğretim/ortaokul	-1,187	,055	60,347	1	,000	,305
	Lise mezunu	-,281	,042	45,245	1	,000	,755

Meslek[c]	Yönetici/müdür	,175	,046	14,306	1	,000	1,191
	Profesyonel meslek	,299	,054	31,007	1	,000	1,348
	Hizmet sektörü çalışanı	-,082	,048	2,915	1	,088	,922
	Tekniker	,018	,042	,174	1	,677	1,018
	Vasıfsız işçi	-,340	,048	49,633	1	,000	,712
Bölge[d]	Kent	,242	,031	60,881	1	,000	1,273
Gelir	Milyar (TL)	,160	,028	33,668	1	,000	1,174
Sabit		-1,628	,063	661,928	1	,000	,196

Kaynak: Yazarlar tarafından oluşturulmuştur
Bağımlı Değişken: Eğitim homogamisi. Referans Kategoriler: [a]60+, [b]Yüksekokul veya daha yüksek, [c]Tarım çalışanı, [d]Kır
n: 44560, -2 Log likelihood: 50992,072, Nagelkerke R Square: 0,284

2021 yılı verisinde eğitim homogamisinin bağımlı değişken olduğu lojistik regresyon modeli sonuçları Tablo 5'te verilmiştir Bağımsız değişkenlerin etkileri incelendiğinde modeldeki tüm bağımsız değişkenlerin eğitim homogamisi üzerinde anlamlı etkisi olduğu görülmektedir. Bağımsız değişkenlerin etkilerine baktığımızda ilk olarak yaş değişkeninin eğitim homogamisi üzerinde negatif bir etkisi olduğunu söylemek mümkündür. Yaştaki her bir artış için eğitim homogamisi yaklaşık olarak %3 oranında düşmektedir.

Eğitim seviyesi değişkeninde ilköğretim/ortaokul ve lise mezunu gruplarının referans kategori olan yüksekokul mezunu veya daha yüksek eğitim seviyelerine göre daha düşük eğitim homogamisi olasılığına sahip olduğu görülmektedir. Bunun yanında en düşük eğitim seviyesi kategorileri olan ilkokuldan az ve ilkokul mezunu kategorilerinde referans kategori olan yüksekokul mezunu veya daha yüksek kategorisine göre daha fazla eğitim homogamisi görülmektedir. Eğitim homogamisi üzerinde en yüksek etkiye sahip olan ilkokuldan az eğitim seviyesine sahip olmanın referans kategori olan yüksekokul ve üzeri eğitim seviyesine sahip olmakla kıyaslandığında eğitim homogamisini %200 oranında; ilkokul mezunu olmanın ise yaklaşık olarak %100'e yakın bir oranda arttırdığını söylemek mümkündür. Özetle, eğitim seviyelerinin uç noktalarında daha fazla eğitim homogamisi görüldüğü söylenebilir.

Bölge bağımsız değişkeninde de Marmara, Ege/Akdeniz ve İç Anadolu/Karadeniz bölgelerinde yaşayanların referans grup olan Doğu/Güneydoğu'da yaşayanlara göre eğitim homogamisi olasılıklarının daha yüksek olduğu görülmektedir.

Meslek grubu bağımsız değişkenine baktığımızda ise yönetici/müdür ve profesyonel meslek gruplarının referans kategori olan tarım çalışanı kategorisine göre eğitim homogamisi oranının daha yüksek hizmet sektörü, tekniker veya vasıfsız işçi olarak çalışanların eğitim homogamisi olasılıklarının tarım çalışanlarına göre daha düşük olduğu söylenebilir. Meslek grupları incelendiğinde mesleklerin eğitim, gelir ve statü anlamında bir sıralaması olduğu düşünülürse meslek sıralamalarının her iki ucunda da eğitim homogamisinin diğer meslek gruplarına göre daha yüksek olduğu söylenebilir. Mesleklerin statü sıralamaları düşünüldüğünde yüksek statülü ve düşük statülü mesleklerde kapanmanın -eğitim düzeyi ve gelir değişkenleri kontrol edildiğinde bile- daha yüksek olduğunu söylemek mümkündür.

Gelirin eğitim homogamisi üzerindeki etkisi incelendiğinde de pozitif ve anlamlı bir etki görülmektedir. Bireylerin geliri arttıkça eğitim homogamisi ihtimalleri de artış göstermektedir. Gelir her 1000 TL arttığında eğitim homogamisi olasılığı %5,6 oranında artmaktadır.

Tablo 5: Eğitim Homogamisini Etkileyen Faktörlere Dair Lojistik Regresyon Modeli Sonuçları, 2021

Değişkenler		B	S.E.	Wald	df	Sig.	Exp(B)
Yaş		-,028	,001	815,011	1	,000	,972
Eğitim Seviyesi[a]	İlkokuldan az	1,101	,061	326,781	1	,000	3,008
	İlkokul mezunu	,689	,031	490,485	1	,000	1,992
	İlköğretim/ortaokul	-,719	,032	498,778	1	,000	,487
	Lise mezunu	-,881	,026	1107,558	1	,000	,415
Bölge[b]	Marmara	,685	,026	693,216	1	,000	1,984
	Akdeniz	,659	,025	717,064	1	,000	1,932
	Anadolu/Karadeniz	,568	,028	422,429	1	,000	1,765
Meslek[c]	Yönetici/müdür	,228	,082	7,802	1	,005	1,256
	Profesyonel meslek	,253	,076	11,027	1	,001	1,288
	Hizmet sektörü çalışanı	-,187	,074	6,439	1	,011	,830
	Tekniker	-,266	,072	13,567	1	,000	,766
	Vasıfsız işçi	-,253	,074	11,636	1	,001	,776
Gelir	Bin (TL)	,054	,004	185,914	1	,000	1,056
Sabit		,627	,087	51,653	1	,000	1,873

Kaynak: Yazarlar tarafından oluşturulmuştur
Bağımlı Değişken: Eğitim homogamisi. Referans Kategoriler: a Yüksekokul veya daha yüksek, b Doğu Anadolu, c Tarım Çalışanı
n:62096, -2 Log likelihood: 78921,656, Nagelkerke R Square: ,145

TARTIŞMA VE SONUÇ

Bu araştırmada TÜİK Hanehalkı İşgücü Araştırması 2002 ve 2021 yılları verileri kullanılarak mesleki homogami ve eğitim homogamisi incelenmiştir.

Türkiye'de daha önce homogami üzerine, Mercan (2012) ve Acar (2002) tarafından sırasıyla, "homogaminin gelir eşitsizliklerine etkisi" ve "eğitim homogamisinin gelir eşitsizliği üzerindeki etkisi" konularında çalışmalar yapılmıştır. Mesleki homogami ve eğitim homogamisinin eşitsizliğin yeniden üretimindeki rolü ve yıllar içerisindeki değişimi üzerinde ise durulmamıştır. Bu çalışmada ise her iki homogami türünde zaman içerisindeki değişim ve homogamiyi etkileyen faktörler değerlendirilmiş, homogomi ile ilişkili olan değişkenler üzerinden homogaminin toplumsal eşitsizlikler üzerindeki etkisi anlaşılmak istenmiştir.

Mesleki Homogami

Mesleki homogami, 2002 yılında %10,7 oranında görülürken 2021 yılında bu oran %12,4'e yükselmiştir. Yıllar içerisinde görülen bu artış literatürde başka ülkelerde yapılmış çeşitli çalışmalarla da desteklenmektedir (Hayes, 1993; Kalmijn, 1994; Smits ve diğerleri, 1999). Ancak, bu çalışmada kullanılan veri setlerindeki değişkenlerin yıllar arasındaki değişimleri ve örneklemlerdeki potansiyel seçilim yanlılığı dikkate alınarak bu sayısal değişimin yorumlanması konusunda temkinli olunmasında fayda vardır.

Mesleki homogaminin diğer değişkenler ile ilişkileri incelendiğinde ilk olarak yaş değişkeninin mesleki homogaminin yıllar içerisindeki artışını desteklediği görülmektedir. Yıllara ait yaş bağımsız değişkeninin, mesleki homogami ile ilişkisi incelendiğinde genç yaş gruplarında mesleki homogami olasılıklarının ileri yaş gruplarına göre daha yüksek olduğu görülmektedir. Bu durum mesleki homogaminin genç kuşaklar arasında daha yüksek olduğunu göstermektedir. Bu da 2002-2021 yılları arasındaki muhtemel mesleki homogami artışına dair başka bir ipucu sunmaktadır. Yukarıda belirtildiği üzere bu sonuçlar, literatürde Kalmijn'in (1994) Amerika Birleşik Devletleri'nde yaptığı ve Hayes'in (1993) İrlanda'da yaptığı çalışmalar ile de benzeşmektedir. Öyle ki her iki çalışmada da genç kohortlardaki mesleki homogami oranlarında artış gözlemlendiği belirtilmiştir.

Yaşanılan bölge bağımsız değişkeninin, mesleki homogami bağımlı değişkeni ile ilişkisi incelendiğinde 2002 yılında kırsal bölgede yaşamanın mesleki homogami olasılığı üzerinde daha fazla etkisi olduğu görülürken, 2021 yılında kırsal bölgelerin daha fazla temsil edildiği kategori olan Doğu/Güneydoğu Anadolu kategorisinde mesleki homogami olasılığının diğer tüm kategorilere göre daha düşük olduğu görülmüştür. 2002'den 2021'e gidildiğinde yıllar arasında mesleki homogami olasılığı yüksekliğinin, kırsal ve gelişmişlik seviyesi kıyasla daha düşük olduğu bölgelerden, kentsel ve gelişmişlik seviyesi daha yüksek bölgelere kaydığını söylemek mümkündür.

Mesleki homogami ve eğitim seviyesinin ilişkisi incelendiğinde, eğitim seviyesi arttıkça mesleki homogami olasılığının hem 2002 hem de 2021 verilerinde arttığı gözlemlenmiştir. 2021 yılında gelir arttıkça mesleki homogami olasılığının da arttığı görülürken bu durum 2002 yılı için söylenemememektedir. Bu durum 2002 yılındaki gelir verilerinin çok sağlıklı toplanamaması ile de ilgili olabilir. 2002 yılında gelir verisi olmayan kişiler "0" şeklinde kodlanarak hesaplamaya dahil edilmiştir. 2021 yılı gelir verisinde ise, geliri olmayan bireylerin gelirleri eksik veri olarak kodlanmış olup ortalamaya dahil edilmemiştir.

Meslek bağımsız değişkeninin mesleki homogami ile ilişkisi incelendiğinde, 2002 yılında tüm diğer meslek kategorilerinin mesleki homogami olasılıkları tarım çalışanlarına göre daha düşük iken; 2021 yılında ise profesyonel meslek gruplarında çalışanların mesleki homogami olasılıklarının en yüksek olduğu, tarım işçilerinin diğer meslek gruplarına göre yine daha çok mesleki homogami olasılığına sahip olduğu görülmüştür. Bu veriler ışığında Türkiye'de mesleki homogami olasılığının tarım çalışanları ve profesyonel meslek çalışanları arasında daha yaygın olduğunu söylemek mümkündür. Bu durum potansiyel eş adaylarının, özellikle kadınların, bu mesleklerdeki temsiliyetleri ile ilişkili olabilir. Öyle ki tarımsal bölgelerde kadınlar aile işçisi olarak tarımsal işlerde çalışmaktadır. Bununla birlikte kadınların eğitim seviyelerinin erkeklerinkine yaklaşması ile, profesyonel mesleklerdeki temsiliyetleri de artmıştır. Örneğin her iki yılda da yönetici/müdür ve teknikerler mesleki homogami olasılıkları en düşük meslek gruplarındandır. Bu iki durum da kadınların bu mesleklerde erkeklere kıyasla daha az temsil edilmesi ve dolayısıyla da potansiyel eş adaylarının az sayıda olması ile ilişkilendirilebilir. Benzer sonuçlar farklı yıllarda farklı ülkelerde yapılmış çalışmalarda da görülmüştür (Hayes, 1993; Kalmijn, 1994; Smits ve diğerleri, 1999). Kadınların profesyonel meslekler, hizmet sektörü gibi farklı alanlarda temsiliyetlerinin artması mesleki homogaminin artması üzerinde doğrudan bir etkiye sahip olmaktadır. Ve bu doğrudan etki dolaylı olarak mesleki kapanmayı artırıcı yönde bir etki yaratmaktadır. Ayrıca Türkiye'de yapılan çeşitli toplumsal tabakalaşma çalışmalarında (Kaya, 2008; Bahçe, Günaydın ve Köse, 2011; Özdemir, 2020) gösterilen mesleki kutuplaşmanın mesleki homogami anlamında da kendisini gösterdiği ve mesleki homogaminin artmasının ilerleyen dönemlerde toplumsal eşitsizliklerin artması yönünde etkisi olabileceği söylenebilir.

Eğitim Homogamisi

Literatürde birçok ülkede eğitim homogamisinin yakın ilişkiler bazında arttığı görülmektedir (Mare, 1991; Naszodi ve Mendonca, 2022; Pesando, 2021; Seong ve Sato, 2015). Türkiye verisinin de benzer sonuçları vermesi beklenmiştir. Türkiye'de 2002 yılında eşler arasında eğitim homogamisi %52,8 iken 2021 yılına gelindiğinde ise bu oran %48,6'ya gerilemiştir. Ancak, yukarıda değinilen yöntemsel sınırlılıklar dolayısıyla bu değişimin yorumlanması konusunda da temkinli olunmalıdır. Literatürde, ülkelerin eğitim homogamisi düzeylerini karşılaştıran 55 ülke ile yapılan bir çalışmaya göre, bu ülkelerden 49'unda eğitim homogamisinde düşüş gözlemlenmektedir (Smits, 2003). Türkiye verisi ile benzer sonuçlara sahip olan böyle bir çalışmanın literatürde bulunması, bu konuda literatürde farklı bulguların olduğuna işaret etmektedir.

Ülkelerin eğitim homogamisi frekanslarındaki dalgalanmalar o ülkelerin eğitim seviyelerindeki değişimler ile ilgili olabilir. Bu anlamda Türkiye'de 2002'den 2021'e gidildiğinde alt eğitim düzeylerinde düşüş görülürken, üst düzeylerde ise yükseliş söz konusu olmaktadır. Örneğin Hanehalkı İşgücü Araştırması verisinde en düşük eğitim seviyesi olarak belirlenen "ilkokuldan az" eğitim seviyesi 2002 yılında %9,9'luk bir orana sahipken, 2021 yılında bu oran %7,2'ye gerilemiştir. En yüksek eğitim seviyesi olan "yüksekokul ve üzeri" eğitim seviyesi ise 2002 yılında %10,1 iken 2021 yılında bu oran %18,5'e çıkmıştır. En yüksek eğitim homogamisi "ilkokuldan az" eğitim seviyesinde görülürken, onu "yüksekokul ve üzeri" eğitim seviyesi takip etmektedir. Başka bir deyişle, mesleki homogamide olduğu gibi eğitim homogamisi için de uç kategorilerde bir yoğunlaşmadan söz edilebilir. Eğitim homogamisinin, eğitim seviyelerinin uç noktalarında daha fazla temsil edilmesi durumu literatürde başka ülkelerde (Çin, Güney Kore ve Sahraaltı ülkeleri) yapılan çalışmalarla da desteklenmektedir (Huo ve Chen, 2022; Seong, 2014; Pesando, 2021).

2021 ve 2002 yıllarında yaş ve eğitim homogamisi arasında negatif korelasyon olduğu görülmektedir. Eğitim homogamisinin genç nesil arasında her iki yılda da daha fazla görüldüğü söylenebilir. Literatürde bu sonuçları destekleyen başka ülkelerde yapılmış çalışmalar da bulunmaktadır (Andres, 2022; Seong, 2014; Naszodi ve Mendonca, 2022; Pesando, 2021).

Yaşanılan bölgeler incelendiğinde eğitim homogamisinin 2002 yılında kentsel yaşam bölgelerinde daha fazla olduğu görülmektedir. 2021 yılı yaşanılan bölge değişkeninin, eğitim homogamisi üzerindeki etkisi incelendiğinde, eğitim homogamisinin kırsal bölgelerin çoğunlukta olduğu, referans kategori olan Doğu/Güneydoğu Anadolu kategorisinde daha az olduğu görülmektedir. Literatürde bu sonuçlar ile farklı sonuçlar veren araştırmalar vardır. Örneğin Sahra altı ülkeler üzerinde yapılan bir çalışmaya göre eğitim homogamisi özellikle okuma- yazma oranının düşük olduğu kırsal bölgelerde şehirlere göre daha fazladır (Pesando, 2021). 2002-2021 yılı Türkiye verisinde kentsel bölgelerde eğitim homogamisi, kırsal olarak nitelendirilebilecek bölgelere göre daha yüksektir. Literatürde özellikle kentsel bölgelerde eğitim homogamisinde düşüş olduğunu gösteren Finlandiya'da yapılmış bir çalışma mevcuttur (Mäenpää ve Jalovaara, 2015). Bu çalışmaya göre Pesando (2021) ile benzer olarak kırsal bölgelerde homogami artmaktadır. Bu farklılıklar ülkeler arasındaki farklılıklara işaret etmektedir. Örneğin bu sonuç Türkiye'de özellikle kırsal bölgelerde kadınların eğitim seviyesinin erkeklere göre daha düşük kalması ve erkek bireylerin kendi eğitim seviyelerine sahip potansiyel eş adaylarının sayısının az olması ile ilgili olabilir. Türkiye'de kentsel bölgelerde kadınların, eskiye göre eğitim seviyelerini artırarak özellikle genç yaş gruplarında erkeklerin eğitim seviyelerine neredeyse yetiştiği düşünüldüğünde benzer eğitim seviyelerine sahip potansiyel eşlerin sayısı da artmaktadır. Bu da kentsel bölgelerde eğitim homogamisinin artışını açıklamaktadır. Örneğin Sahra altı ülkelerde kırsal bölgelerde eğitime ulaşım her iki cins için de eşit derecede zor olduğu için o bölgelerde okuma yazma oranları genel anlamda düşüktür. Bu da özellikle düşük eğitim seviyelerinde eğitim homogamisinde artışa neden olmaktadır. Finlandiya'da ise tamamen farklı bir senaryo mevcuttur. Farklı ortalama eğitim seviyelerinin uzun süredir yüksek olduğu bu ülkede, özellikle kentsel bölgelerde eğitim homogamisi gittikçe azalmakta ve kırsal bölgelerde düşük oranlarda eğitim homogamisi temsiliyeti görülmektedir.

Eğitim homogamisinin eğitim seviyelerine göre değişimi incelendiğinde özellikle düşük ve çok yüksek eğitim seviyelerinde daha fazla eğitim homogamisi gözlemlenmektedir. Eğitim seviyesi spektrumunun uç kısımlarında daha fazla eğitim homogamisi gözlemlendiği söylenebilir. Bu durum literatürdeki farklı ülkelerde yapılan çalışmalarda da desteklenmektedir (Huo ve Chen, 2022; Mäenpää ve Jalovaara, 2015; Seong, 2014; Pesando, 2021).

Gelir ve eğitim homogamisi ilişkisi incelendiğinde bu ilişkinin pozitif yönde anlamlı bir ilişki olduğu görülmektedir. 2002 yılında gelirdeki her 1 milyar TL artış eğitim homogamisi ihtimalini %18 oranında artırırken, 2021 yılındaki her bin TL'lik (2005 yılında Türk lirasındaki 6 tane 0 atılmıştır) artış eğitim homogamisini %5,6 oranında artırmıştır.

Meslek değişkeni ve eğitim homogamisi ilişkisi incelenirken meslek değişkeni kendi içerisinde kategorik olarak ayrılmış olup "tarım çalışanı" referans kategori olarak seçilmiştir. Meslek değişkenini referans kategori olan tarım çalışanı kategorisine göre değerlendirdiğimizde, en yüksek eğitim homogamisi olasılığının, profesyonel meslekler arasında görüldüğünü söylemek mümkündür. Bunun yanında en düşük eğitim homogamisi olasılığı, vasıfsız işçiler ve teknikerler arasında görülmektedir.

Eğitimsel yeniden üretim ile eğitimsel homogami arasında güçlü bir pozitif korelasyon bulunmaktadır. Sınıf ve eğitim yapısı katı bir nitelik taşımakta, sosyal sınıflar arasındaki engeller ve farklılıklar oldukça belirgin düzeyde seyretmektedir. Bu engellerin bir nesilden diğerine aşılması genellikle zor bir süreçtir. Çoğu birey, ebeveynleriyle aynı sosyal sınıfta yer almakta ve benzer bir eğitim düzeyine sahip olmaktadır. Aynı şekilde, eş seçiminde de genellikle benzer eğitim seviyesine ve aynı sosyal sınıfa mensup bireyleri tercih etmektedirler. Mikro düzeyde ele alındığında, eğitimsel yeniden üretim ile eğitimsel homogami arasındaki bu pozitif bağ, esasen bireyin normları, değerleri ve 'habitus'u (Bourdieu, 1989) ile aile kökeninin eğitim sürecini şekillendirdiğini ve eş seçimi üzerinde belirleyici bir rol oynadığını göstermektedir. Bireyin eğitimsel yeniden üretimi, farklı bir eğitim seviyesine sahip potansiyel bir eşle tanışma olanaklarını sınırlamaktadır (Kalmijn, 1991, 1998; Mare, 1991). Sadece bireyin değerleri değil, aynı zamanda yapısal olarak şekillenen fırsatları da eğitimsel homogamik bir evlilik yapma olasılığını büyük ölçüde artırmaktadır (Katrák, Fučík ve Luijkx, 2012).

Homogami ve Toplumsal Eşitsizliklerin Yeniden Üretimi

Bireyin içine doğduğu aile yapısı, ebeveynlerinin kim olduğu hayatının ilerleyen dönemlerinde etkileyici bir rol oynamaktadır. Bireyin, ebeveyni ile aynı sınıftan olma ihtimali yüksektir (Flemmen, Toft, Andersen, Hansen, ve Ljunggren, 2017). Bireylerin kendi kurdukları aileler ile geleceğin popülasyonunu oluşturduğu göz önüne alındığında, toplumun çekirdeğini oluşturan ailenin, toplumu şekillendiririrken oynadığı rolün etkisinin büyüklüğü anlaşılmaktadır. Ailenin bu büyük önemi, bireyin partner tercihlerini de önemli kılmaktadır. Partnerlerin sosyo-ekonomik özellikleri, eğitim seviyeleri, yaşları, yaşadıkları bölgeler ve meslekleri oluşturdukları aileyi şekillendiren faktörlerdendir. Bu faktörler bireylerin aileleri içerisinde verdikleri kararları da etkilemektedir. Örneğin aile büyüklüğü ele alınırsa, Türkiye'de son yıllarda tek çocuklu hanelerin sayısı artış gösterirken, geniş ailelerin sayısında bir düşüş görülmektedir (TÜİK, 2022). Geniş aileler ekonomik olarak en kırılgan haneleri oluşturmaktadır ve Türkiye'deki yoksulların büyük bir kısmı 18 yaş altındadır (Işık, 2022). Bunun birçok farklı nedeni olabilir. Gelir seviyesi düşük bireylerin doğurganlık oranları, yüksek gelir seviyesine sahip bireylere göre daha yüksektir. Böylece bu ailelerin çocukları 18 yaş altındaki yoksulların büyük bir kısmını oluşturuyor olabilir. Doğurganlık, eğitim seviyesi ile ilişkilidir. Bu anlamda, eğitim seviyesi yüksek bireylerde doğurganlık oranları, eğitim seviyesi düşük bireylere göre daha azdır. Eğitim seviyesi ile gelir düzeyi arasında bir korelasyon vardır. Türkiye'de en yüksek gelir seviyesi yükseköğrenim mezunlarına aittir (TÜİK, 2022). Eğitim seviyesi yüksek bireyler, yine eğitim seviyesi yüksek bireylerle partner olduklarında hem eğitimi hem de gelir seviyesi yüksek bir aile kurmuş olacaklardır. Eğitim seviyesi yüksek bireylerin daha geç evlendiği ve daha az doğum yaptığı göz önüne alındığında, çocuklarına bırakacakları miras da bölünmeyecektir. Gelir ve eğitim seviyesi düşük olan ailelerde ise bu durum tam tersi şeklinde gerçekleşecek ve miras daha fazla kişiye bölünecektir. Bu çocukların ebeveynleri ile benzer bir sınıftan olma ihtimalleri de artacaktır. Bu anlamda, eğitim seviyesi yüksek bireyler, eğitim seviyesi kendilerine benzer bireyler ile homogamik ilişkiler içerisinde olduklarında dolaylı veya doğrudan yollarla toplumsal eşitsizliklerin sürdürülmesi desteklenecektir. Çiftler kaynaklarını paylaşırlar, yüksek kazançlı bireylerin yüksek kazançlı bireylerle, düşük kazançlı bireylerin düşük kazançlı bireylerle evlendiği toplumlar düşük kazançlı çiftler için dezavantajlı olmaktadır (Schwartz, 2013). Bu çiftler çocuk sahibi olduklarında ise bu eşitsizlikler katlanarak devam etmektedir. Düşük kazançlı bir çiftin çocuğu ve yüksek kazançlı bir çiftin çocuğu benzer şartlara ve olanaklara sahip olmayacaktır. Ebeveynlerin çocuklarına sunduğu yaşam, çocuğun geleceği üzerinde büyük bir role sahiptir. Ebeveynlerin homogamik ilişkilere sahip olduğu durumlarda, demografik özelliklere göre konumsal ayrımın sonucu çocuklar kendilerine benzer tabakalardan bireylerle arkadaşlık kuracak, bu tabakanın normları üzerinden bir sosyal yaşam kuracaktır. Çocuğun üzerinde çok erken yaşlardan itibaren etki kurmaya başlayan bu homogamik ilişkiler, çocuk yetişkin olduğunda seçeceği romantik partneri de etkileyecektir (Mare, 2016). Böylelikle eşitsizliğin yeniden üretimi bir kısır döngü içerisinde sürdürülmektedir.

Bu çalışmanın sonuçları bu kapsamda değerlendirildiğinde gerek eğitim homogamisinin gerekse meslekli homogaminin toplumsal dağılımın uç noktalarında yoğunlaşmış olmasının toplumsal eşitsizlikleri artırıcı bir etkiye yol açacağı söylenebilir. Yani en yüksek ve en düşük mesleki statü gruplarının; en yüksek ve en düşük eğitimli grupların daha fazla kendi içerisinde evlenme eğiliminde olmaları toplumsal eşitsizliklerin yeniden üretimini artırmaktadır. Ayrıca her ne kadar yıllar arasında sağlıklı bir karşılaştırma yapmanın önünde çeşitli yöntemsel engeller bulunsa da incelenen her iki zaman diliminde de genç yaş gruplarında her iki homogami türünün de daha yaygın olması da bu eşitsizliklerin yeniden üretiminin artma eğilimine dair ipuçları sunmaktadır.

Ancak, bu konuda daha kesin sonuçlara ulaşmak bu konuda yapılacak ad-hoc araştırmaların sayısının artmasıyla mümkündür. TÜİK'in HİA verileri pek çok açıdan zengin bir kaynak olsa da değişken tanımlarının yıllar içerisindeki değişimi, ebeveyn eğitim ve meslek durumlarına dair bilgilerin toplanmamış olması, örneklem tasarımının çalışma evreni içerisindeki evli çiftleri temsil edecek yeterlikte olmaması gibi eksiklikler homogami-tabakalaşma ilişkisine dair net çıkarımlar yapmayı güçleştirmektedir. Bu araştırma ile söz konusu ilişkiye dair bir tartışma açılması hedeflenmiştir. Bu anlamda, bu çalışmanın ileride yapılacak araştırmalar için bir ilk adım olması umulmaktadır.

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ARAŞTIRMA MAKALESİ / RESEARCH ARTICLE

WOMEN'S EMPOWERMENT IN THE CONTEXT OF HOUSEHOLD COMPOSITION: A CRITICAL APPROACH TO MEASUREMENT OF SINGLE-PARENT WOMEN'S EMPOWERMENT[1,2]

HANEHALKI KOMPOZİSYONU BAĞLAMINDA KADINLARIN GÜÇLENMESİ: TEK EBEVEYN OLAN KADINLARIN GÜÇLENMESİNİN ÖLÇÜMÜNE ELEŞTİREL BİR YAKLAŞIM

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ABSTRACT

The main objective of this study is to analyze how women's empowerment varies by household composition, focusing on single-parent and married women. This study also aims to discuss how empowerment can be measured, which components are critical when analyzing women's empowerment, especially according to the household composition variable, and to address limitations. The factors behind this issue are addressed from a feminist perspective using a mixed method approach. The 2018 TDHS data were used to answer the research question, the variable of women's empowerment was created through factor analysis using a polychoric correlation matrix, and multinomial logistic regression was used to determine the relationships between women's empowerment and explanatory variables. Following the quantitative analysis, in-depth interviews were conducted with 18 women to discuss their life experiences, coping strategies, and perceptions of empowerment and self-image. The quantitative analysis, in which married women with dependent children were taken as the reference category, revealed that the level of empowerment of single-parent women with dependent children was particularly high. Single-

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parent women's entry into the world of work, family support and critical inequalities have been addressed. For married women, the unequal sharing of household chores and limited autonomy in decision-making were identified as obstacles to their empowerment. On the other hand, it was also discussed that issues that empower women can actually create burdens. This study, which also emphasizes the limitations of the quantitative measurement of women's empowerment, provides a perspective for the creation of a deeper and feasible approach and surveys on this subject, too.

KEY WORDS: Measurement of women's empowerment, household composition, single-parent women, mixed-method approach.

ÖZET

Bu çalışmanın temel amacı, tek ebeveyn ve evli kadınlara odaklanarak, kadınların güçlenmesinin hane halkı kompozisyonuna göre nasıl değiştiğini analiz etmektir. Öte yandan bu çalışma, güçlenmenin nasıl ölçülebileceğini, özellikle hane halkı kompozisyonu değişkenine göre kadınların güçlenmesini analiz ederken hangi bileşenlerin kritik olduğunu ve bileşenlerin sınırlılıklarını tartışmayı da amaçlamaktadır. Çalışma, bu konuları karma yöntem yaklaşımı kullanarak feminist perspektif ile ele almaktadır. Araştırma sorusunu yanıtlamak için 2018 TNSA verileri kullanılmış, kadınların güçlenmesi değişkeni polikorik korelasyon matrisi kullanılarak faktör analizi yoluyla oluşturulmuş ve kadınların güçlenmesi ile açıklayıcı değişkenler arasındaki ilişkileri belirlemek için multinomial lojistik regresyon kullanılmıştır. Nicel analizin ardından 18 kadınla derinlemesine görüşmeler yapılarak yaşam deneyimleri, baş etme stratejileri, güçlenme algıları ve benlik imajları tartışılmıştır. Evli ve bakmakla yükümlü olduğu çocuğu bulunan kadınların referans kategori olarak alındığı nicel analiz, tek ebeveyn olan ve bakmakla yükümlü olduğu çocuğu olan kadınların güçlenme düzeyinin yüksek olduğunu ortaya koymuştur. Tek ebeveyn olan kadınların işgücü piyasasına girişleri, aile desteği ve kritik eşitsizlikleri de tartışılmıştır. Evli kadınlar için ev işlerinin eşitsiz paylaşımı ve karar alma süreçlerinde sınırlı özerklik, güçlenmelerinin önündeki engeller olarak tanımlanmıştır. Öte yandan, kadınları güçlendiren konuların aslında yük yaratabileceği de ele alınmıştır. Kadınların güçlenmesinin nicel ölçümünün sınırlılıklarına da vurgu yapan bu çalışma, daha derin ve uygulanabilir bir yaklaşımın oluşturulması ve bu konudaki araştırmalar için bir perspektif de sunmaktadır.

ANAHTAR KELİMELER: Kadının güçlenmesinin ölçümü, hanehalkı kompozisyonu, tek ebeveyn kadınlar, karma yöntem yaklaşımı

INTRODUCTION

The conceptualization and measurement of women's empowerment remain complex and contentious in the literature. For liberal feminists, empowering women involves expanding and promoting their options both inside and outside of the household (Rowland-Serdar and Schwartz-Shea, 1991). In the 1960s, development debates undervalued women, viewing them as tools for development (Toksöz, 2011). Since the 1970s, despite global development efforts, feminist scholars have highlighted women's stagnant status and examined inequality through the lenses of class, culture, ethnicity, and politics. Although the term "empowerment" is not used, this issue has been addressed by Marxist feminist theorists in the context of liberation, by focusing on women's oppression in their role within the nuclear family in class societies (Hochschild, 1997). While structural factors influencing women's status are widely studied, the literature focus on the fact that women's empowerment must be examined multidimensionally (Jain, 2023, Bayissa et al., 2018; Akadlı Ergöçmen, 1997; Calvès, 2009; Crenshaw, 1989; Hooks, 1984; Rathgeber, 1990). In its broadest sense, empowerment-which will be conceptualized in the Conceptual Framework Section- is the ability of women to make decisions about their lives, recognize their resources, and participate as political actors in solidarity with other women (Ewerling et al., 2017).

Without a doubt, understanding and analysing the drivers of empowerment is crucial for fostering empowerment. Most demographic studies analyze women's status in terms of education, employment, and decision-making participation (Upadhyay et al., 2014). On the other hand, the analysis of causative linkages between aspects of women's empowerment,population dynamics and socioeconomic development has been a greater emphasis of demographers in recent years (e.g. Bageant et al., 2024; Desai et al., 2022; Céline et al.,2021; Ewerling et al. 2020;). It is also discussed how important it is to include qualitative data collection since it helps put theories of change into context, guides the design of research and interventions, and makes it easier to comprehend results that show causality (Committee on Population, 2024).

The household, which is one of the focal points of demographic studies, should be considered not only as a category but also as one of the factors affecting women's empowerment. Both intra-household dynamics, lifecourse experiences affecting household composition and policies developed according to household type are closely related to women's empowerment. Many studies underline that single-parent households are at risk of vulnerability (e.g.; Kader, 2020; Koç, 2018; Pendy and Zhan, 2004). Therefore, we argue that it is worth to concentrate on household composition and intra-household dynamics in empowerment discussion, which served as the basis for this article. Studies on single-parent households, which are generally seen as "broken families", mostly focus on the difficulties experienced in these households, household welfare, and the psychosocial status of the child growing up in the households. There are limited number of studies that focus on the position and experiences of women in single-parent households. Discussions on welfare policies emphasize the rising prevalence of single-parent households and the poverty risks faced by female-headed households. While the literature often focuses on household conditions; intra-household dynamics play a critical role in shaping women's empowerment, making their life trajectories and biographies essential for comprehensive analysis.

Recent familialist social policies in Turkey have made single-parent women even more vulnerable by preventing them from "enjoying" the freedom to make their own choices. Single-parent women are not only economically disadvantaged but also socially deprived as Kader (2020) argues. However, as seen in many studies, it can be observed that women have developed new tools to struggle with both the patriarchal system and the economic difficulties by using different "bargaining" methods (Kandiyoti, 1988). One of the most important motivations behind this study is to address the determinants of women's empowerment from different aspects by aiming to reveal this mechanism from a critical perspective.

The main objective of this study is to discuss how empowerment can be measured, and which components are critical when analysing women's empowerment, specifically household composition variable with a focus of single-parent women-household. The study also aims to address the limitations of such quantitative measurement of empowerment.

CONCEPTUAL FRAMEWORK

Measurement of Women's Empowerment

Given the discussion and gaps in definitions of women's empowerment and actions taken to advocate women's empowerment, it is inevitable to think about how difficult it is to measure the level of empowerment, with scientific criteria. It would not be wrong to say that these challenges are not only due to the complexity of the historical definition of women's empowerment and the diversity of actions taken to achieve it but also associated with lack of data, outdated data, difficulties in accessing data sources, lack of data quality, low sample size, and ignoring the women's experience and personal biographies (CEİD, 2021; Alloatti, 2019; Laszlo, 2020).

Although efforts have been made to measure quantitatively on the axis of certain indicators, it would be quite appropriate to resort to qualitative methods reflecting women's participation if one has an empowerment perspective that focuses on women as "subjects". Keeping in mind the difficulty of this issue, the importance of measuring the level of women's empowerment with specific and scientific indicators should be emphasized. In the report of the CEİD —one of the rights and advocacy-based civil society organizations in Turkey— it is mentioned that indicator-based measurement of women's empowerment is crucial and it provides a roadmap for civil organizations, local governments, and the public sector in both identifications of existing gaps in gender inequality and developing policies to contributing women's empowerment (Sancar et al., 2021).

In their article, Céline et al. (2021) review the methodologies of existing indices designed in the last 5 years in the literature and identify the dimensions and indicators common to their measurement. It presents the gaps and challenges in measuring women's empowerment. They review around 30,000 publications, and 170 of them are examined in the final step. Their research summarized the following 7 domains of women's empowerment. Within the scope of these domains, they review 38 surveys. Half of them were designed within the field of humanitarian action. They explore that earlier studies concentrate on dimensions related to health such as fertility, family planning, and maternity/health. Contraceptive use has been associated with a high level of women's empowerment. More recently, literature on measuring women's empowerment mainly centers upon sociocultural domains: 81% of the studies on the measurement of women's empowerment include sociocultural domains such as early and child marriage, the experience of violence, awareness of violence, opinion on gender equality and women's right, and attitudes towards sexuality. Health, economic participation, and justice follow sociocultural dimensions. Each of these dimensions is covered by 40% of the related studies. Economic dimensions include ownership and control over ownership, access to employment, types of employment, paid/unpaid work, formal/informal work, source of income, child labor, economic violence, and economic leadership. Health-based indicators include access and barriers to health services, survivorship, health perception, the decision on health, reproductive health, abortion, awareness, and communication on sexuality, ad reporting violence to health personnel. The human development domain involves indicators related to literacy, education, knowledge and skills, access to information and aid, change in gender attitudes, and self-esteem. Human development indicators seem closely linked to sociocultural ones. 15% of the studies involve psychological domains and indicators such as access to support, self-esteem, feelings about the future, etc. Analysis by Céline et al. (2021) indicates that leadership and justice are covered in only 9% of the studies. They include indicators of community engagement and political participation of women, access to the justice system, and so on.

As aforementioned, Kabeer (1999) presents a comprehensive understanding of women's empowerment by resources, agency, and achievement, which was borrowed by many scholars and institutions. From this perspective, World Bank (2022) identifies dimensions and indicators to measure women's empowerment. In addition, several steps have been taken to monitor women's empowerment and gender inequalities. United Nations developed Gender Development Index (GDI) and The Gender Inequality Index (GII). Overall, women's participation in the job market, political empowerment, educational attainment, and health are considered in the calculation of the index. The OECD's index covers a wide range of indicators on traditional norms and values, violence, basic needs, health, property ownership, decision-making, and legal rights.

One of the empowerment index models in the literature is developed by Phan (2016), he uses Demographic Health Survey data for the measurement of women's empowerment. Accordingly, women's empowerment could be measured by taking into account these four elements: "Women's labor force participation"; "Women's household decision-making"; "Women's use of contraception"; and "Women's education". They are formed by several dimensions of women's empowerment at a subjective level. The first part of the components includes the following points: "the engagement of women into the cash economy"; "their occupational status"; "the continuity of employment throughout the year"; and "types of their earnings". The second one includes "decision-making on health"; "household spending"; and "visiting people". Concerning the use of contraception, "Met need"; "access to family planning messages on media"; and "knowledge of contraception" constitute the third element. Lastly, a component of women's education includes "women's literacy" and "completion of a level of education". These components are ranked according to the level of women's empowerment.

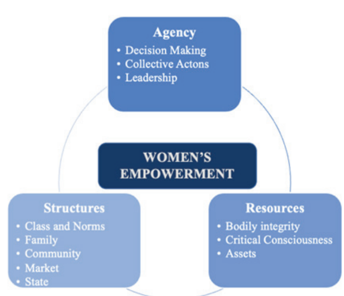
Ewerling et al. (2017) also developed an index for the measurement of women's empowerment which is based on the DHS data and includes the following modules: "Woman's participation in household decisions"; "Employment and earnings"; "Control over resources"; "Opinion on wife-beating"; "Personal ownership of a house or land". They first selected 23 components for the analyses; after the evaluation, some of the indicators were excluded. In the last step, they decided on 15 components for the index and implement factor analysis. The factors which they grouped , are analyzed as (a) Social independence; (b) Attitude to Violence, and (c) Decision Making.

After 3 years, in 2020, they developed and adopted this method for analysis for global monitoring after the expert meeting held in 2018 to improve the index. A list of recommendations was raised by the experts (Ewerling et al., 2020). The first one is the removal of the woman's working status variable from the index because it was found controversial. Experts suggest that working status itself does not address high empowerment, and paid/unpaid work, working conditions, and forced work should be considered. Therefore, Ewerling and her colleagues removed this variable. The second improvement was held in the indicators related to a person who decides on individual health issues and household expenditures. They are equally weighted joint decisions and woman's deciding alone. Thirdly, experts recommended adding indicators on decisions on women's reproductive health and access to technology. Finally, they also suggested that women who do not have a partner also should be covered in the analysis of empowerment. The last two recommendations have not been added to this index yet however they stated that they are working on the index for future research.

Based on these improvements, factor loading was employed for each country and then they were combined. After the validation with global indexes, the index developed by them was evaluated as international standards and better results to monitor women's empowerment, which also become a guideline during designing the methodology of this study.

The conceptual framework of the study is drawn upon Ewerling (2017), Calvès (2009), Kabeer (1999), Batliwala (1993), and Sen (1997)'s conceptualization of empowerment. When women's power is considered as control over assets, intellectual resources, and ideology, then "empowerment" is described as a woman's investigating and attempting to control her own capacity to determine her own needs, expectations, and resources, including economic, social, and intellectual resources, which all of them are also shaped by class, ethnicity, norms, and values. Women's empowerment relates not just to individual empowerment, but also to women acting together with other women. The figure below summarizes the conceptualization of women's empowerment in the work of Ewerling and her colleagues (2017).

Figure 1. Determinants of Women's Empowerment



Source: Ewerling et al. (2017)

Accordingly, women's over-resources and agency manifestations are shaped and influenced by institutional systems like class, ethnicity, family, community, market, and state. Women's resources are sources of power and material and immaterial capital that they can utilize individually or collectively to exert their agency. Women's assets (financial and productive assets; knowledge and skills; time; social capital) and critical consciousness are examples of resources. Purposive action, goal-pursuit, voice and influence, and decision-making without violence or retaliation are all examples of agency. It is central to empowerment and it involves group action, leadership, and decision-making.

Women's empowerment is multifaceted so measurement should incorporate variables that represent these dimensions. Considering the limitation based on the survey data, which will be covered in greater depth in the methods section; Ewerling's conceptualization of empowerment guides the discussion.

LITERATURE REVIEW

Overview of Single-Parent Households

There is an important point that many authors emphasize: women's empowerment is measured by indicators such as wealth, participation in work and decision-making, and so on, however, women's life course and the passages they go through have a significant impact on all these dimensions. For this reason, some scholars have argued that important transitions in women's lives, such as marriage, divorce, or loss of a spouse, directly or indirectly play a decisive role in women's empowerment. Walby (1990) is one of the authors who emphasize the household type. She recommends analyzing the presence and absence of a spouse in the household and investigating the role of the spouse. In the same way, in her article, Chant (2006) critically addresses the feminization of poverty and examines the definition of poverty. Women's feminization of poverty is usually associated with the increasing proportion of women-headed single-parent households. She added that poverty does not only mean the absence of income, but it should also be analyzed by the concepts of women's decision-making capacity, and deprivation. When women's poverty is considered in this context, it should also be analyzed as a situation that affects women's ability to make important decisions that affect their lives.

As Chant (2006) underlined, together with the changes in the social, economic, and cultural settings of the countries, the demographic structures of households have gradually changed in almost all countries in the world. Today, a significant decrease is observed in the size of the household as well as a transformation in the types of households. In most countries, the share of the extended family type has dramatically decreased. It also brought about a transformation in the understanding and perception of the types of "traditional family". Depending on increasing divorce rates and changing cultural and social environments, single-parent families have also increased.

In the world, nearly 5-10% of all households are single-parent households among OECD countries (OECD,2011). The study by European Union (EU) Policy Department for Citizens' Rights and Constitutional Affairs Directorate (2020) indicated that between 2009 and 2019, the proportion of households with children headed by a single adult increased from 12% to 14%. The study underlined that single-parent households are gendered: only 3% of them are male-headed while 13% of them women-headed. %43 of the single-parent households is at risk of poverty, which is almost half of the two-parent households. Among EU-27 countries, a higher number of single-parent adults is observed in Estonia, Denmark, and Sweden by approximately 20%. According to OECD (2018), the highest number of single-parent households is observed in New Zealand at 40%.

According to TURKSTAT (2024), 10.6% of total households in Turkey include a single-parent and children. The gender structure of these families shows a similar trend with the globe: it was observed that 2.4% of total households consisted of households with a father and children and 8.2% of total households consisted of households with a mother and children.

Considering the structure of all single-parent families, a substantial share of all single-parent families consists of mother-headed ones. It may be expected that such a trend will show the same pattern in the future. As a result, most of the OECD countries take action to develop policies to provide well-being for both women and their families. Therefore, understanding the dynamics of mother-headed single-parent families becomes more and more important not only due to a considerable increase in these types of families but also growing concerns about women's equality and empowerment. Therefore, analyzing women's empowerment in the concept of household types constitute the main focus of this study. This section provides a conceptual definition of single-parent households, followed by a review of studies focusing on household types in terms of women's empowerment.

Definition of Single-parent Families

There are different factors affecting the composition of a family. Divorce, the passing away of the other spouse, or separation or adopting a child without marriage can lead to single-parent families. However, "a family composed of a mother and at least one child" is considered as the common criteria in the definition of a women-headed single-parent family". The age of children also shows a variety within the definitions. For example, in OECD (2011) family database, a mother-headed single-parent family is defined as "household with only a mother and at least one child under age 25". However, in Turkey, the Turkish Statistical Institute (TURKSTAT) (2018) defines this type of family as "families with sole parent and at least one child." The age of the child is not clearly defined but it may be understood that it refers to a dependent child. Lastly, in the Single Parent Study which is the official research conducted by the Republic of Turkey Ministry of Family, Labor and Social Services (MoFLSS) (2011), "households composed of a mother who lives with her dependent children under the age of 18, whose spouse either passed away or who lives apart from her spouse due to divorce or separation" is considered as a mother-headed single parent family.

Socio-Demographic Characteristics of Single-Parent Families

The status of single mothers has been studied as a significant issue in the literature due to both an increase in the number of women-headed single-parent households and the disadvantageous position of these types of households. It is seen that economic difficulties are more common in families where single parents are women due to reasons such as insufficient job opportunities and receiving low wages. The lack of nursery opportunities with affordable amounts prevents women from participating in the labor market. In addition, if childcare services are inadequate women have to work in low-paid jobs for meeting children's needs, which causes poverty in families, especially where women are single parents compared to men.

The poverty rate for single-person households in Türkiye increased from 12.8% in 2018 to 13.7% in 2023. Similarly, households consisting solely of couples experienced a dramatic rise in poverty rates, climbing from 7.2% to 16.6% during the same period. While the poverty rate for lone-parent households increased slightly from 17.1% to 19.1%, it remained relatively stable compared to other household types. In contrast, the poverty rate for nuclear families, although high, decreased from 26.9% to 25.7%, showing a slight improvement. When the employment rate is analyzed according to marital status, divorced women are the most employed with 39.4%. This is followed by never-married women with 31.9% and married women with 29.3%. The proportion of working women who have lost their husbands is low, only 6.7% of these women are employed (TURKSAT,2022). In addition, single-parent women may face difficulties in work life. For instance, they often have lower wages for the same job than men, they have to work in precarious and flexible jobs. Under these circumstances, being a single parent requires taking over multiple roles (MoFLSS, 2018).

In addition to macro-level analysis, other studies mostly concentrate on the welfare status of single-mother-headed households by emphasizing the poverty status of the households or psychological problems experienced by children or women in these household types (Brown et al.,1997; Franz et al., 2003; Van Den Berge & Duyulmus, 2015). On the other hand, the common point of view in the literature is the fact that singleparent households are more likely to be subject to poverty compared to twoparent households (Pendy & Zhan, 2004).

Considering the studies on single mothers in Turkey, Research on Family Structure in Turkey (RFST), is the most recent and comprehensive one. Family structure in Turkey is examined in the scope of Advance Statistical Analyses of RFST, which is the most recent report published in 2018. One chapter in this report focuses on single-parent households. In this study, Koç (2018) uses the method of logistic regression to assess the determinants of single-parent households. The research indicates that although there are significant improvements in the socioeconomic status of single-parent families in recent years, they are still vulnerable relative to other family types in terms of monthly income, spending, and saving. Also, according to the study, these families need social assistance or receive loan from either banks, or their relatives. Lastly, it is also observed that they have a lower level of happiness compared to other types of families.

In addition to RFST, the Republic of Turkey Prime Ministry General Directorate of Social Assistance (ASAGEM) (2012) conducted research on Single Parent Families to identify how single-parent family members experience becoming a single-parent family in terms of economic, psychological, social, legal and cultural factors. The study includes 473 participants and is based on qualitative and quantitative methods. Parents aged between 18-55 and children aged between 7-17 living with a single parent were involved in the study. One of the important findings of the study is the fact that women, as single parents, have difficulties in working life. Therefore, the ASAGEM proposes a list of suggestions. According to this report, both employment opportunities and access to childcare services should be improved with a well-established monitoring system. In addition to public services of the free nursery, there should also be available services supporting family members psychologically. Another finding addresses that since single-parent household members are exposed to some prejudices, therefore, there should be single-parent families becoming more visible in public campaigns, published works, or TV programs to raise public awareness. The study also highlights that single parents should be provided free legal advice on legal procedures such as divorce, property division, and so on. To further research, the study recommends two important conclusions. First of them is that women's every work experience since marriage should be analyzed well. Studies indicate that in the case of women who had no work experience or who have work experience in unskilled jobs, they mostly prefer to return to their parental family, which is identified as the most difficult experience for women with a low socio-economic status. In particular, women living in rural areas who do not receive alimony from ex-husbands are the most vulnerable.

Considering that the mother is the primary responsible parent for childcare, the lack of free daycare facilities and the fact that the mother has not worked in a skilled job since the first day of marriage are the biggest barriers for the mother to work after becoming a single parent. Therefore, women's socioeconomic status and ever work experience could be analyzed in detail in further studies.

Secondly, it is underlined that most of the studies focus on challenging experiences and the low socio-economic status of single-parent households. On the other hand, their study indicated that experiencing single parenting is more complex and multidimensional since there are positive feelings or experiences. Therefore, the study suggests further research may focus on the experience of single parents holistically.

On the other hand, Kader (2018) highlights that despite some single-parent women having positive feeling and experience such as freedom and autonomy after divorce, policies in Turkey does not support women during such positive expectations, Kader argues that rather the policies put them into a more disadvantaged position. In addition to Kader (2018), Unal (2018) also suggests that better labor policies are necessary for women's economic independence and provision of work-family balance because they have to maintain work and family life in the absence of a partner, and they also find it difficult to bear both the physical and financial burden of caring for their children.

There has been limited data on mother-headed single-parent families in Turkey. As mentioned before, the most comprehensive and detailed one is the Single Parent Study (2011) conducted by ASAGEM. Accordingly, in the study, policies on single-parent families –particularly on mother-headed- are presented in detail. Although there have been certain development, a comprehensive family policy in the European Union countries, such application has not yet been fully implemented in Turkey. Although there are family benefits and cash benefits, it is possible to say that these are insufficient and make families more dependent. Foundations affiliated with the ASAGEM also provide social support. However, for this assistance, there is a requirement to not receive regular-based income from social security institutions in any way. In this case, women who are single parent cannot benefit from these benefits.

As explained above, policies vary from country to country in accordance with the types of welfare regimes. When welfare regime policies are examined in the framework of the feminist-demographic approach, it could be said that welfare-state regime in most countries is gendered in their nature. Rather than providing freedom to women who are single parent, the welfare regime in Turkey reinforce inequality and patriarchal norms within the society. As mentioned in the breadwinner model, within the conservative policies, women are not encouraged to participate in the labor market, rather, they are forced to work in mostly informal sector or low-payment jobs (Ecevit, 2003). Another problem with single mothers' participation in the labor market refers to policies encouraging part-time jobs. At first, a part-time job seems beneficial to women, on the other hand, it refers to low-payment and low-status jobs. This situation is a reflection of the Breadwinner Model of the Welfare State regime which attributes to women's traditional role as a mother instead of an individual. Lastly, Turkey's welfare regime policies focus on social assistance rather than giving women autonomy.

Unal (2014) also mentioned that support provided by the General Directorate of Social Assistance to women whose husbands pass away has a significant impact on providing regular income however, this opportunity is not provided for divorced or separated women. The provision of services such as shelter, psychological and financial assistance, and support in finding a job for women who have been subjected to violence in women's guesthouses, regardless of their marital status, is considered to have positive effects on women and their children. However, it is not sufficient to provide these services only to survivors of domestic violence. Finally, although it is considered a good practice that children of single parents with insufficient economic power can benefit free of charge from a 5% quota of at least two children in private daycare centers, it is not sufficient. Therefore it should be increased, especially when the increasing trend of the single-mother household is considered.

Various policy suggestions for single-parent family members could be presented. Among the recommendations on legal procedures, the units where parents could receive free legal consultancy services on issues such as child support, property regime, and custody during the divorce period or after divorce should be made widespread. Another point emphasized in the study is to create priority employment policies for single parents and especially for mothers who are single parents. Another issue related to labor force participation is the free nursery and day nurseries where working single-parent mothers and fathers will leave their children during the working period. The study also suggests that single-parent families should benefit from the tax credit, family allowances, or child allowances. However, despite the risk of abuse of these incentives, the establishment of a control mechanism is important for such incentives to reach the right target audience. In other OECD countries, it is possible to argue that Nordic Model has been more successful in providing women to exist in the labor market as a result of the policies encouraging and enjoying women in both the public and private domains of social life.

METHODOLOGY

The study was designed and implemented using a mixed-method approach. The "Sequential Explanatory Design" is utilized in this study even though there are numerous varieties of mixed methods research (Creswell and Clark, 2015). The study is divided into two stages in line with the Sequential Explanatory Design. First, quantitative analysis is conducted. After the quantitative data has been evaluated, the qualitative data is collected and processed to explain and elaborate on the quantitative findings.

Quantitative Data and Data Analysis

Quantitative analysis is based on data from the 2018 Türkiye Demographic and Health Survey (TDHS), which is a representative study across Türkiye. It includes individual and household-level demographic indicators such as fertility, mortality, reproductive health, nutrition, as well as some indicators on women's empowerment. The survey was designed to be representative at the level of Türkiye as a whole, urban-rural regions, 5 demographic regions and NUTS 1 regions for some section. A weighted, multi-stage, stratified cluster sampling method was used for data collection, based on 754 clusters obtained from TURKSTAT. Approximately 100 households were selected from each cluster, and then 21 households were selected from each cluster through systematic random sampling. In this process, a total of 15,775 households were selected and 11,056 of these households were found eligible and interviews were completed. In the survey, women's questionnaire is implemented to women aged 15-49. It includes modules including women's socio-demographic characteristics, fertility, reproductive health, maternal and childcare, nutrition, migration, marriage history, labor force experiences and women's status. Interviews were completed with 7,346 eligible women. In this study, 5,484 (unweighted number: 5,141) ever-married women were included in the analysis by excluding never-married women.

The unit of analysis for this study is ever-married women, not households. The analyses focus on the distinctive characteristics and experiences of ever-married women in comparison with their different types of households. Therefore, the women in the dataset were grouped based on household types to enable the demonstration of this comparison as follows: (1) Married women without any children, (2) Married women with at least one dependent child, (3) Married women with independent children only, (4) Single (divorced/separated/widowed) parent women with at least one dependent child,

(5) Single parent women with independent children only and (6) Single (divorced/separated/widowed) women without any children. To investigate the main research question, the "women's empowerment" variable consisting of 3 categories (higher, middle, lower) was constructed through factor analysis using a polychoric correlation matrix (UCLA: Statistical Consulting Group, 2022), and descriptive and multivariate analyses were conducted. In the determination of "single-parent households with dependent children", OECD (2018)'s definition is used. Accordingly, single-parent household refers to families consisting of one parent and at least one resident child below the age of 25. This is because the age range between 18-24 corresponds to the period of university level of education and during university education of children, families may continue to economically support their children.

It is important to acknowledge that "being divorced" and "being widowed" have different theoretical underpinnings and underlying causes. Whether intentional or involuntary, divorce entails a decision-making process. These distinctions surely impact women's empowerment in different aspects. Due to the low number of observations, these two categories were considered together in the quantitative analysis. By acknowledging this gap as a limitation, this study takes into account their common experiences and the lack of a husband in the home. On the other hand, this element has been mentioned as one that is influencing the conversations.

Construction of the Empowerment Variable

Considering women's empowerment, as one of the phenomena which includes multiple dimensions, factor analysis was used to decide whether and how the information on these dimensions should be combined to measure empowerment. Appendix-1 presents the research matrix and details of the variables used in the factor analysis. Components of empowerment variable, including various variables ranging from education, employment, family's survival to views on social norms is presented in Appendix-1.

Firstly, the suitability of the sample for factor analysis was tested using A Kaiser-Meyer-Olkin (KMO) test (Kaiser, 1974; Bruin, 2006). Results greater than 0.5 means that the sample size is sufficient for factor analysis. KMO results indicate that the sample size is sufficient for factor analysis (KMO=0,75). To understand whether the variables are suitable for factorization. Bartlett's (1951) test of sphericity was applied. Since the test result is less than 0.05 (sig=.0), the null hypothesis of Bartlett's Test (hypothesis that there is no significant relationship between the variables) is rejected and we can accept that there is a significant relationship between the variables. Both test results are presented in Appendix 2. Additionally, correlation between the variables is presented in Appendix 3. Accordingly, results indicate that there are sufficient correlations between the variables and that there is a structure suitable for factor analysis.

The Eigenvalue was interpreted to determine which factor to retain. The significant factor or factors with eigenvalues greater than 1 are considered significant and retained in factor analysis. It indicates that the factors explain more common variance than unique variance (Shrestha, 2021). In terms of explanatory characteristics of the variance, which is greater than 1, only two factors were considered as "retained factors". Accordingly, 87.9% of the total variation is explained by these two factors (%63.3% by Factor 1 and 24.6% by Factor 2). Considering the higher explanatory characteristics of Factor-1, presented in the table below, this factor was used for the construction of the women's empowerment variable.

Table 1. Factor Analysis Results

Variables	Factor 1
Educational Attainment	0.49022
Educational Differences Between Spouses	0.01105
Age at First Cohabitation	0.01020
Having Formal Job	0.11055
Having Money to Spend Independently	0.12407
Ownership of House	0.04285
Ownership of Land	0.02296
Ownership of Car	0.07181
Opinion on Only Men's Decision Making	0.15165
Opinion on Gender Division of Labour	-0.09472
Opinion on Violence Exercised by Men	0.07525
Internet Use	0.13462
Respondent's Mother Alive	-0.00179
Respondent's Father Alive	0.02566

Factor 1 is likely to reflect a dimension related to educational level and partly economic independence. The high loading of the education variable suggests that it is the main determinant of this construct. Other variables such as gender-related views (such as opinions on the dominance of men in decision-making) and internet use make small but significant contributions to this dimension. It can be interpreted that the the factor is explained by educational attainment, on the other hand, other dimensions such as participation in employment and decision making. can also be affected by this variable.

The next step was to calculate the standardized f1 score. After Factor Analysis was conducted on Stata software, a standardized factor score was calculated (f1). The women's empowerment variable was constructed in cases where the standardized factor score (f1) was less than 0, the empowerment was coded as 1 (empowerment=1). When it was between 0 and 1, the empowerment was considered as 2 (moderate), and when it was higher than 1, it was coded as 3 (high).

Accordingly, above half of the women (52.1%) are observed in the low empowerment category. Similarly, 23.7% of them are in the middle empowerment category and 24.2% of them are observed in the high empowerment category.

Table 2. Distribution of Women by Empowerment Variable

	Number of Women (Unweighted)	Percentage of Women (Uneighted)	Percentage of Women (Weighted)
Low	2962	55.1%	52.1%
Middle	1241	23.1%	23.7%
High	1175	21.8%	24.2%
Total	5378	100%	100%

Qualitative Data Collection and Analysis

In the scope of the qualitative component, 18 semi-structured in-depth interviews were conducted with women from the following household categories in September 2022:

- Married women without any children
- Married women with at least one dependent child
- Married women with only independent children
- Single parent women with at least one dependent child
- Single parent women with only independent children
- Divorced/separated/widowed women without any children

This study was approved by the Hacettepe University Ethics Commission with decision no. E-85844849-300-00002485335 dated 17.11.2022.

Since the qualitative study aims to interpret and gain insight through women's experiences, large sampling was not used. Based on the categories above, it was decided to conduct 18 interviews by considering the saturation point.

From each category, 3 women were interviewed based on each socioeconomic status (SES) (high, middle, and lower). The Income and Living Conditions Survey of the TURKSTAT (TURKSTAT, 2022) was used to determine the reference points at the socioeconomic level. The distribution of annual household disposable income by 20 percent of the groups was ordered by household disposable income, according to the median income amounts. Accordingly, lower refers to annual household income below 41761,88 TL; middle refers to households with income 41761,88- 82594,01 TL, and higher refers to households with income 82594,01 and higher. TURKSTAT data was based on the 2021 year. Considering the economic fluctuations, the participant's income level in 2021 was considered. Participants were reached with a snowball and purposeful sampling, and their income statement was considered to identify their SES level. In particular, middle and low-SES single-parent women were reached through women's cooperatives and local civil society organizations (CSOs) working in the field of humanitarian aid in Ankara, Hatay and Gaziantep.

Qualitative findings were analyzed in MAXQDA within the identified themes related to empowerment. Quantitative and qualitative findings were interpreted and triangulated in line with the findings obtained from secondary analysis and literature review.

Adopting Mixed-method Approach

The main motivation for adopting a mixed-method approach is to understand the limitations of quantitative measurement of women's empowerment and to explain better which aspects need to be considered while discussing women's empowerment by household composition. Cornwall, A. (2014) emphasizes qualitative measurement techniques could present a broader understating of women's experiences and it would be beneficial in the analysis of biographic histories, and revealing cultural varieties among women. As feminist research methodology premises, conducting focus group discussions and in-depth interviews would be helpful to build on the non-hierarchical relationship and put women at the center of the research (Harding, 1986; Gilligan, 1982; Ackerly et al., 2019). Alloatti (2019) underlines that building a strong theoretical and conceptual framework is at the center of better measurement.

We particularly prefer to adopt Sequential Design since it is a very good ground for discussion to explain the results of the quantitative analysis. We tried to explain the results of the quantitative analysis with the experiences of women. Similarly, this study aimed to understand the reasons for the findings that were not consistent and controversial in the literature and to address these gaps with qualitative findings.

RESULTS AND DISCUSSION

Basic Characteristics of Women

Table 3 presents the basic characteristics of women by the empowerment levels. Accordingly, most of the women at higher empowerment levels are in the 30-34 age group (23.0%), reside in the West (55.3%), in urban areas (91.4%), and at higher wealth levels (57.0%).

Table 3. Basic Characteristics of Women (Weighted)

Level of Empowerment								
	Lower		Middle		Higher		Total	
Age								
15-19	28	1.1%	26	2.2%	5	0.4%	59	1.2%
20-24	152	5.8%	185	15.4%	81	6.6%	418	8.3%
25-29	252	9.6%	261	21.8%	238	19.5%	751	14.9%
30-34	421	16.0%	251	21.0%	281	23.0%	954	18.9%
35-39	588	22.4%	197	16.4%	252	20.6%	1036	20.5%
40-44	588	22.4%	173	14.5%	214	17.5%	975	19.3%
45-49	599	22.8%	103	8.6%	154	12.6%	856	17.0%
Region								
West	973	37.0%	574	48.1%	678	55.3%	2225	44.1%
South	390	14.8%	150	12.6%	98	8.0%	638	12.6%
Central	520	19.8%	253	21.2%	301	24.5%	1074	21.3%
North	126	4.8%	72	6.0%	68	5.6%	266	5.3%
East	619	23.5%	146	12.2%	81	6.6%	846	16.7%
Type of place of residence								
Urban	1834	69.8%	996	83.4%	1120	91.4%	3951	78.3%
Rural	794	30.2%	199	16.6%	105	8.6%	1098	21.7%
Wealth								
Poorest	687	26.1%	82	6.9%	16	1.3%	785	15.6%
Poorer	715	27.2%	198	16.5%	48	3.9%	961	19.0%
Middle	583	22.2%	284	23.8%	165	13.4%	1032	20.4%
Richer	459	17.5%	361	30.2%	298	24.3%	1118	22.1%
Richest	184	7.0%	269	22.5%	699	57.0%	1152	22.8%

When analyzing based on household composition, most women who are single parents with at least one living child under 25 falls into the higher empowerment category (42.7%), whereas more than half (51%) of married women with at least one living child under 25 are in the lower empowerment category. Comparing married and single-parent women with children over 25, both groups indicate low levels of empowerment, which could be associated with the age factor. Nevertheless, the percentage of single-parent women in the higher empowerment category is higher: 66.0% of single-parent women with children over 25 are categorized as having low empowerment, compared to 82.9% of married women with children over 25.

Table 4. Distribution of women by household composition and the levels of empowerment

	Levels of Empowerment							
	Lower		Middle		Higher		Total	
Women	n	%	n	%	n	%	n	%
Married without living children	93	27.3%	83	24.2%	165	48.4%	341	100.0%
Married with at least one living children under 25	2027	51.4%	994	25.2%	921	23.4%	3942	100.0%
Married with at least one living children over 25	393	82.9%	56	11.8%	25	5.3%	474	100.0%
Single mothers with at least one living children under 25	73	36.9%	40	20.4%	84	42.7%	198	100.0%
Single mothers with at least one living children over 25	31	66.0%	10	22.5%	5	11.5%	47	100.0%
Single women without children	11	24.0%	11	24.3%	24	51.7%	47	100.0%

Multinomial Logistic Regression (MLR) Results

Comparing the level of empowerment based on household composition, results indicates that single mothers with dependent children (p= .001), have much higher levels of empowerment than married women with at least one dependent child which is employed as the reference category. In addition, widowed/separated/divorced women without children (p = .002) had also significantly higher levels of empowerment than the reference group. It is followed by the married women without children (p,= .001), having significantly higher levels of empowerment compared to the reference group. Married women with independent children (p=.001), on the other hand, exhibit a significant decrease in empowerment levels.

Table 5. Distribution of Women by Empowerment Variable

Variables	Middle Level Empowerment		High Level Empowerment	
	Coef,	p-value	Coef,	p-value
15-19	17.55	.000	1.745	.442
20-24	15.482	.000	4.669	.000
25-29	11.746	.000	7.453	.000
30-34	4.394	.000	2.943	.000
35-39	2.171	.000	1.632	.016
40-44	1.673	.003	1.189	.359
45-49*	1	.	1	.
West	1.683	.000	1.913	.000
South	2.011	.000	2.356	.000
Central	1.321	.038	1.492	.014
North	2.586	.000	3.138	0
East*	1	.	1	.
Urban	.708	.004	.472	.000
Rural*	1	.	1	.
Poorest*	1	.	1	.
Poorer	2.814	.000	3.461	.000
Middle	6.845	.000	21.267	.000
Richer	14.654	.000	64.565	.000
Richest	35.348	.000	495.296	.000
Married women without any children	1.039	.854	3.366	.000
Married women with at least one dependent child*	1	.	1	.
Married with only independent children	.652	.01	.261	.000
Single parent women with at least one dependent child	2.186	.005	4.676	.000
Single mothers with only independent child	1.964	.037	1.943	.123
Widowed/separated/divorced women without any children	1.321	.606	4.433	.002
Constant	.018	.000	.006	.000

*Reference category

The MLR result reveals that wealth and age in particular have a significant relationship with empowerment. If we recall the components of the empowerment variable, participation in education and employment emerged as determining factors in the construction of the empowerment index. Therefore, the empowerment levels of women who are highly educated and participate in the formal labor force can be explained in this way. Qualitative findings also show that education and labor force participation are key factors in women's empowerment. The experience of being a single parent was observed to push women to make autonomous decisions and participate more in the labor force.

On the other hand, these results are not sufficient to explain the reproductive role of married and single-parent women and their experiences in household relations and labor force.

Although the difference in empowerment levels across household types were found statistically significant, it should be considered a surprising finding that single-parent women have a higher level of empowerment compared to married women with at least one depended children, and this should be approached with critical perspective. In fact, the main motivation of this study is to examine these differences not only quantitatively but also qualitatively. The findings will address how they are involved in the production and reproduction processes. Then, it will focus on participation in decision-making and household dynamics. Finally, the experiences of single-parent women and married women will be addressed in relation to inequalities encountered in the social sphere and patriarchal norms.

Women's Roles in Production and Reproduction

Although statistical results indicate that single mothers with dependent children have higher empowerment levels than married women with dependent children, qualitative analysis provide deeper context by revealing the complex dynamics of labor market participation for women, and the role of women in re-production process. During the quantitative analysis, the higher level of empowerment of this group is initially associated with participation in the labor market, considering the weight of the factor load. Participants often emphasized that divorce or the loss of a spouse is a challenging experience requiring a recovery process. However, qualitative findings indicate that both divorcee women and the women who lost their spouses frequently tend to invest in themselves financially and emotionally, focusing on future goals, particularly, and this is commonly associated with their labour force participation. Participation in the labor market does not on its own constitute women's empowerment, but it is an important component of women's empowerment as it influences women's choices and agency more broadly.

There are many studies that point to the paradoxical side of employment, such as the one on employment and women's empowerment over the last fifty years, which argues that it encourages women to reproduce their reproductive role. On the other hand, participation in the labor force has been shown to help low-educated women in developing nations escape domestic roles, negotiate with their families, and regain some degree of autonomy over their own lives (Him, 2020). Some of the single mothers involved in the in-depth interviews highlighted how financial independence contributes to their empowerment, not only economically but also socially and psychologically. As one divorced participant explained:

> *"I was left with nothing, I only had a job. But I worked, I worked hard, and I became stronger."(Single-parent woman with dependend children, 51, Middle SES)*

A single-parent woman who returned to work after the loss of her husband- despite the fact that her husband passed away when her children were younger- expressed this situation as follows:

> *"It took 1-2 years to recover after losing my husband. Of course, having children and family support are very important in this process. But what really brought me back to myself was working. I was taking care of my children at that time. After I lost my husband, I said I couldn't work anymore. Then, with the support of my relatives, I started working after 1 year. I am glad I worked, otherwise I would have loss my mind." (Single-parent women with independent children only, 56, Lower SES)*

Compared to single-parent mothers, it may be argued that reproductive roles combined with unequal gender dynamics and oppression in the household hinder the labor market participation of the married women with depended children . The inequalities in the division of labor within the household and the patriarchal norms that permeate the household decision-making mechanism, which will be discussed in detail in the following sections, reinforce this and hinder the economic independence of this group. According to TURKSTAT (2022), 39.4% of divorced women are employed, a rate higher than that of married women (29.3%). ILO (2024) statistics also highlights that for many single parents, entering the workforce is not optional, as they are the sole source of financial support for themselves and their children. This financial imperative often forces single mothers to deviate from traditional gender norms. Globally, single mothers with young children have a labor force participation rate of 71%, higher than women with young children living with spouse (56%).

Without doubt, childcare responsibilities significantly impact women's access to labor market. Married women often delay or forego employment particularly if their husbands are earning a steady income, or they may be more reluctant to seek support from their parental families. Participants who married, especially in low-income households or who married of their own free will or without their families' approval, stated that they do not prefer to receive their parental support, and preferred to take care of their children staying at home. According to the literature and interviews, middle-class women frequently have to put their caring responsibilities ahead of entering into labour market, particularly when domestic responsibilities are divided unequally. Married women with low incomes enter the labor out of financial needs. However, a lot of women encounter obstacles like criticism from their spouses, which makes balancing work and household duties more difficult.

On the other hand, qualitative analysis indicates that single-parent women often have to choose between entering the labor force and relying on family childcare support. Considering the limitations in the institutionalization of care, qualitative analysis indicates that participation in the labour market is associated with family support for the participants. It has been observed that these women receive family support in order to enter the labour market after divorce or loss of spouse. For single mothers, parental support often serves as a crucial resource including economic, emotional or childcare, providing both emotional and financial stability. Literature also address that family support significantly influences women's psychological well-being (Thomas et al., 2017). Grandparents play a vital role in childcare for single-parent families, filling gaps left by absent spouses and easing the burden on single mothers (Kavas & Hoşgör, 2018).

> *"For the first 10 years after we separated, my children mostly stayed with their grandmother. Without that support, I would have faced enormous difficulties." (Single parent woman with dependent children, 40, Lower SES)*

The decision to return home depends largely on the family's economic conditions and cultural norms. considering it can contribute to challenging dynamics of being single parent women, it can also perpetuate economic dependency and limit women's decision-making power. Literature also draws attention to the fact that women living with extended families are less likely to participate in working life: the labour market participation of women is 55% for women living in extended households.

The literature also underlined that cohort is associated with women's empowerment. The life course and experiences of women vary by age group. Age group affects both entering, staying in, and returning to the labor market, as well as the cultural values and perspectives internalized. Accordingly, when women leave work for childcare, they have difficulty in returning to the labor market. It is mentioned that married women with dependent children do not enter the labor market to take care of their children. According to Walby (1990), women who quit their jobs in this situation may have difficulty competing with younger women even if they decide to return to the labor market. However, especially younger divorced/deceased women may decide to enter the labor market earlier due to the loss of income. Women who make this decision are more advantaged. It should be noted that cohort shaped women's critical consciousness as well.

Special Focus on Divorced Women's Experiences

It is also useful to open a parenthesis that the difference between divorced and widowed women. Divorce is seen as choice; it is not a circumstance as loss of spouses. It should be considered that women may make this decision especially when they feel that they are economically empowered. For instance, divorced women have dramatically higher employment rates than women who have lost their husbands. Only 6.7% of these women are in the labour market (TURKSAT, 2022). Due to the low number of observations in the data, divorced single parent women and single parent women who lost their spouses could not be taken as two separate categories in quantitative analysis. While accepting this as limitation, qualitative analysis addresses that women who did not work while married also enter the labour market after divorce since women argue that returning to the parental home after divorce brings about additional challenges, such as social pressure in addition to reduced autonomy and increased dependence, therefore, they choose to enter into labour market after divorce.

Additionally, it can be argued that divorced and widowed women's experiences are common despite the fact that social assistance is offered to women who have lost their spouses. This is because, given the current socioeconomic conditions, the assistance is insufficient to combat poverty, and the lack of adequate institutional care will have a variety of restrictive effects regardless of whether the passing away of husband or divorce. Furthermore, one of the primary goals of the study is to examine the effects of a spouse's presence or absence in the household on women's empowerment; it is suitable to assess both of these variables jointly. For instance, in 2010, Boğaziçi University conducted the Research Project for the Development of a Cash Social Assistance Program for Widowed Women on behalf of Directorate General of Social Assistance and Solidarity. In its formation phase, the research project aimed only to understand the situation of women whose spouses had passed away and to develop a cash transfer program for them. However, during both the preliminary studies and the field work, they were understood that it would not be correct to exclude from the study divorced women who were at least as risk of vulnerability as the women whose spouses had passed away, because their marital status was different, they underlined that their living conditions were similar. Therefore, the scope of the research project was expanded.

On the other hand, perception of women participated in the qualitative interviews address that while divorced women are frequently subjected to prejudice widowed women have a more recognized place in society. Divorced women show resilience by overcoming social and economic obstacles in spite of these social expectations. For instance, a lot of people engage in social activities and make investments in their own development, both of which support their empowerment. Social participation in lower income group frequently takes the form of solidarity among women's organizations or cooperatives. These networks offer direction and emotional support, which increases empowerment even further.

Challenges affecting empowerment of single-parent women

While the empowering effect of participation in the labour market of single-parent women is emphasized, it would be an incomplete analysis to associate access to the workforce alone with empowerment. As Him (2022) argued, in a capitalist society, more and more women believe that having a job is essential to their survival and possibly to their empowerment. A growing number of women believe that flexible work arrangements are a sensible choice in a patriarchal culture. Therefore, it is inevitable to discuss the challenging nature of the process and conditions associated with labour market participation. Single-parent women may face difficulties in labour market. Lack of socialization of care, low-wage, flexible work or insecure work is most of the time may be the best option for them. For instance, they often have lower wages for the same job than men, they have to work in precarious and flexible jobs. Under these circumstances, being a single parent requires taking over multiple roles (MoFLSS, 2018)

While designing the women's empowerment variable, the component related to work was taken into account as "being employed full time with insurance". On the other hand, both the literature and qualitative research results reveal that this is not sufficient and that a detailed analysis and variables regarding their situation in the workforce are needed. For single-parent women with children, when we look deeply into the processes of labor force participation, we need to understand the challenging dynamics impact women's empowerment adversely- which is not explained by empowerment index but revealed in the literature and qualitative analysis: the dual labor burden (paid and unpaid) of single-parent women and the lack of institutionalization of care work make this group more vulnerable.

Kader (2018) highlights that despite some single-parent women having positive feeling and experience such as freedom and autonomy after divorce, policies in Turkey does not support women during such positive expectations, Kader argues, rather the policies make them a more disadvantaged position. In addition to Kader (2018), Unal (2018) also suggests that better labor policies are necessary for women's economic independence and provision of work-family balance because they have to maintain work and family life in the absence of a partner, and they also find it difficult to bear both the physical and financial burden of caring for their children.

Through more structural reading, Fraser's (2017) analysis can also provide a good framework for explaining the structural factors affecting empowerment. Fraser examines social reproduction historically and argues that contemporary financial capitalism encourages women's inclusion in the paid workforce and their withdrawal from social welfare by the state and corporations. By externalizing care work to families and communities, it has also diminished their capacity to do so. The result is a dual organization of social reproduction, commodified for those who can pay, privatized for those who cannot, and glossed over with the even more modern ideal of the "two-income family" amidst growing inequality. In addition to reducing public support and recruiting women for wages, financialized capitalism has lowered real wages, thus increasing the number of hours of paid work per household required to support a family and leading to a desperate struggle to outsource care work. 29 The regime imports migrant workers from poorer to richer countries to fill the "care gap." Typically, it is racialized and/or rural women from poor areas who undertake the reproductive and care work previously performed by more privileged women. But to do so, migrants must transfer their familial and social responsibilities to other, even poorer caregivers, who must do the same, and so on, in increasingly longer "global care chains." In short, even if women participate in the workforce, their role in social reproduction in two-income households continues to disempower other women in the upper class, and disadvantage women in the lower classes, who cannot afford care services, due to their paid and unpaid labor.

Other Determinants of Women's Empowerment: Household Socioeconomic Status, Household Dynamics and Decision Making

Socioeconomic status plays a critical role in women's empowerment. Quantitative analysis shows a strong positive relationship between wealth and empowerment, with women in the richest wealth category exhibiting substantially higher empowerment levels ($p=.001$). Wealth impacts life choices, as women struggling to meet basic needs are less likely to make empowering decisions (Kabeer, 2001). Interviews revealed that women from higher SES groups often have greater access to resources and support networks. In contrast, women from lower SES backgrounds face additional disadvantages, such as limited financial independence and restricted decision-making power. This dynamic is particularly evident in divorce cases, where lower SES women are more likely to return to their parental homes due to economic challenges.

Nevertheless, when gender, decision-making, and individual and collective conscious components were taken into account when discussing women's empowerment; SES itself was not adequate to explain women's empowerment. It is explained by the context of patriarchal family ideology. Aforementioned, it has been observed that even married women from higher SES do not enter the labor market due to their children and they are in an unequal position in terms of domestic responsibilities. For lower SES women, on the other hand, even being able to work after struggling with their husbands was defined as empowerment. This can be interpreted as a contributing factor for single women without children constituting the highest level of empowerment. Although the absence of childcare responsibilities and the absence of a man at home reduces women's household income, it puts them in a more advantageous position in terms of decision-making, entering the labor market, and accessing their own material and non-material resources.

The background of relatively higher empowerment levels of single-parent women with dependent children may be an answer to Walby's question: The absence of a husband at home may make a woman more empowered due to the removal of oppression. However, when the background of the strength of single parents with dependent children is analyzed, it is seen that these women force themselves to be strong, resist and struggle because the male figure is left the household. When they received the necessary social and psychological support after the loss of their husband or separation, they felt very strong.

In order to avoid the misleading conclusion that single-parent households make all decisions because there is no spouse or extended family member, questions about decision-making mechanisms in the household were not included in the empowerment index in the quantitative survey. On the other hand, qualitative research indicated that the decision-making power of the women participating in the research increased not only within the household but also in the public sphere:

> *"Before we divorced, we both had a right to make decisions. I used to make the final decision about the children. If something was to be bought, he used to buy it. After the separation, only I make the final decision, not anyone else, not my parents. I become more confident making decision in my social environment, working environment." (Single-parent woman with dependent children, 51, Middle SES)*

This certainly does not deny that every woman's experience is unique. It has also been observed that for single-parent women, the parental family is also involved in decisions both within the household and regarding the women themselves: while the burden of care in the family is shifting from the single parent woman to the mother as mentioned previously; the role of the spouse in decision-making is also shifting to the father:

"After I lost my husband, I started getting more support from my father. I consult him when I make important decisions." (Single-parent women with at least one dependent child, 38, Lower SES)

This very insight underlines how difficult it is to measure empowerment and how insufficient an analysis isolated from structural inequalities and gender norms would be. While it is acknowledged that class inequalities and reproduction have fundamental and unique negative effects on both single-parent women and married women, it is also worth to highlight how women see and define empowerment is an important part of discussion. This can be a driving force in making choices. Especially single-parent women's struggles and critical consciousness constitute an example of this situation. However, it should also be explained that empowerment does not mean taking on all roles. In fact, "being empowered" should not be understood as an oppressive term. The most important suggestion from the participant is the provision of accessible psychosocial mechanisms to help women for understanding their own resources and needs through psychosocial support and awareness-raising activities. Being in a part of a community empowers women. Through building collective consciousness and solidarity among women, women's empowerment shifts from an individual concept to a social and political one. Women's empowerment is not stable but a process (Kabeer, 2001), and it has been observed that when women come together with other women and share their experiences they feel more empowered. Cooperatives, women's solidarity groups, and workplace environments are particularly important for women's empowerment according to participants. In this context, participants underlined that women's support mechanisms and solidarity platforms should be increased and disseminated.

CONCLUSION

Primary aim in this study was to examine the quantitative factors that influence women's empowerment by analysing the status of women who are single parents. The study focused on single-parent women and used quantitative approaches to examine the elements influencing women's empowerment by breaking them down by household composition. In this case, 14 variables were used to build an empowerment variable. Participation in the labour market and education is the primary factor that constitute this variable. Women's material resources, including money and assets, as well as their educational attainment and media access, were considered. It was considered whether women had authority over them in addition to ownership. Women's views on gender were considered as they were expressed in norms, such as age at first marriage, educational attainment of spouses, and attitudes toward issues like domestic violence and division of labour in the household.

The quantitative analysis, in which married women with dependent children were taken as the reference category, revealed that the level of empowerment of single-parent women with dependent children was particularly high. We turned our analysis at this point, thinking that it was important to examine the roles of single-parent women and married women in production and reproduction under structural inequalities as well as their unique experiences. Considering the fact that that this study would be incomplete without addressing the limitations of quantitative data and especially the effects of structural factors and women's experiences on their level of empowerment, we aimed to explain and discuss the areas left by the quantitative data through in-depth interviews with 18 women as well as literature review.

Qualitative data analysis and literature review, single parent women face difficulties such as psychological, economic and social pressure after the divorce process or loss of a spouse. After the recovery period, which is not included in the quantitative component but is prominent in the qualitative data, women are forced to join the workforce. The main factor contributing to the empowerment of single parent women has been participation in the workforce and family support. They stated that participation in the workforce strengthens women socially and psychologically. It should be also noted that family support creates limitations in participation in decision-making for some women, on the other hand, empowerment is explained by this group of women with independence and autonomy in decision-making. Therefore, this empowerment can be made sustainable by providing psychosocial support services after divorce or loss of a spouse, socializing childcare services (e.g. free crèches) and securing flexible working conditions.

On the other hand, the participation of married women with children to care for is limited and their reproductive roles hinder their empowerment. In fact, the particular disadvantage of married women is that working life – which empowers single-parent women – creates a dual pressure, that is, exploitation in both the production process and the home. As Fraser points out in his analysis, financial capitalism has today made the ideal of the "dual-income household" widespread, leading to problems such as "time poverty", family/work balance and social exhaustion.

It is worth mentioning that the elements that empower these women do not empower other women. This study has presented a discussion focused on household categories. This is of course a cross-section. Especially in single-parent households, "family support" may empower single-parent women, while "family", where the only parent in the family is usually the woman's mother", may not empower her. Similarly, in the case of married women with children, in the dual-income household model, care work is privatized and again falls on women. Therefore, women's empowerment should be addressed by institutionalizing care, access to secure labor, and strengthening social support mechanisms, whether single-parent or married. Finally, this study is also a methodological attempt to measure women's empowerment. It has once again demonstrated that quantitative analysis needs to be contextualized.

As Williams (2010) states in her article, Doing Feminist Demography, demography discipline based on the positivist approach, which is highly criticized by feminism due to the positivist approach's emphasis on objectivism. On the other hand, the feminist approach considers knowledge production could not be separated from social reality constructed in line with the social relations of power, class, gender, or race. This article which aimed to approach demographic studies critically, has served as a learning process and a springboard for more research in this field by highlighting the shortcomings of quantitative measurement of women's empowerment and offering ideas for the creation of a more in-depth feasible approach.

APPENDIX-1. COMPONENTS OF WOMEN'S EMPOWERMENT VARIABLE

Empowerment concepts based on the conceptual framework	Dimension used in quantitative analysis	Domain used in quantitative analysis	DHS indicators	Response categories in DHS	Category used in Factor Analysis	Recoding logic
Resources	Education	Educational Attainment	CS- Educational attainment	0 No edu/prim inc; 1 primary; 2 secondary; 3 high and higher; 8 dont know	0 No edu/ prim inc; 1 primary; 2 secondary; 3 high and higher; 8 dont know	Code 0 if 0 and 1, Code 1 if 2, Code 2 if 3
Agency		Educational Differences between spouses	Husband's total years of education	Continuous	husbanded	ed-husbanded=ediff; Code 0 if edif<0, Code 1 edif >=0
			Education in single years	Continuous	ed	
Structure	Marriage	Age at first cohabitation	Age at first cohabitation	Continuous		Code 0 if <18, code 1 if 18-25, code 2 if >25
Resources	Economic Status	Labor force participation	Currently Working	0 No; 1 Yes	Work: 0 currently not working; 1 working without coverage; 2 working with coverage	Code 0 if 0, Code 1 if 1,Code 2 if 2
			Social Security	0 No; 1 Yes		
Resources/ Agency	Ownership and Control over Ownership	Money	Have money to spend by herself	0 No; 1 Yes	0 No; 1 Yes	Code 0 if 0, Code 1 if 1
Agency/ Structure		House	Owns a house alone or jointly	0 Doesnt; 1 alone only; 2 jointly only; 3 both alone and jointly	0 Doesn't own; 1 owns jointly; 2 owns alone but cannot sell; 3 owns alone and can sell	Code 0 if 0, Code 1 if 1,Code 2 if 2, Code3 if 3
Agency			Sell the house by her own	0 No, 1 Yes		
Resources		Land	Owns land alone or jointly	0 Doesnt; 1 alone only; 2 jointly only; 3 both alone and jointly	0 Doesn't own; 1 owns jointly; 2 owns alone but cannot sell; 3 owns alone and can sell	Code 0 if 0, Code 1 if 1,Code 2 if 2, Code3 if 3
Agency/ Structure			Sell the land by her own	0 No, 1 Yes		
Resources		Car	Owns car alone or jointly	0 Doesnt; 1 alone only; 2 jointly only; 3 both alone and jointly	0 Doesn't own; 1 owns jointly; 2 owns alone but cannot sell; 3 owns alone and can sell	Code 0 if 0, Code 1 if 1,Code 2 if 2, Code3 if 3
Agency/ Structure			Sell the car by her own	0 No, 1 Yes		

Agency/ Structure	Opinion on Gender Roles and Responsibilities	Opinion on only men's decision making	Opinion on: family decision by men	0 disagree; 1 agree; 8 dont know	0 disagree; 1 agree; 8 dont know	Code 0 if 1 or 8, Code 1 if 0
Agency/ Structure		Opinion on gender division of labour	Opinion on: husband should do housework	0 disagree; 1 agree; 8 dont know	0 disagree; 1 agree; 8 dont know	Code 0 if 0 or 8, Code 1 if 1
Agency/ Structure		Opinion on violence exercised by men	Beating justified if wife refuses to have sex with husband	0 No; 1 Yes; 8; dont know	0 No; 1 Yes; 8; dont know	Code 0 if 1 or 8,Code 1 if 0
Resources	Access to media	Internet	Use internet	0 No; 1;irregularly;2 regularly	0 No; 1;irregularly;2 regularly	Code 0 if 0; Code 1 if 1 or 2
Structure/ Resources	Family support	Respondent's mother alive or not	Mother alive	0 No; 1 Yes	0 Yes; 1 No	Code 0 If 0; Code 1 if 1
Structure/ Resources	Family support	Respondent's father alive or not	Father alive	0 No; 1 Yes	0 Yes; 1 No	Code 0 If 0; Code 1 if 1

APPENDIX-2. KMO and Bartlett's Test Results

KMO and Bartlett's Test		
Kaiser-Meyer-Olkin Measure of Sampling Adequacy.		0,750
Bartlett's Test of Sphericity	Approx. Chi-Square	7961,893
	df	91
	Sig.	0,000

APPENDIX-3. Correlation Matrix

		Female Education	Education Differences between Spouses	Age at First Marriage	Female Employment	money	House Ownership	Land Ownership	Car Ownership	Opinion on Decision Making	Opinion on Husband's Doing Housework	Opinion on Sexual Violence	Internet Use	Mother alive	Father alive
Correlation	Female Education	1,000	0,366	0,333	0,238	0,294	0,117	0,032	0,213	0,231	-0,292	0,117	0,476	0,166	0,171
	Education Differences between Spouses	0,366	1,000	0,090	0,142	0,083	0,023	0,047	0,070	0,103	-0,108	0,096	0,184	0,057	0,068
	Age at First Marriage	0,333	0,090	1,000	0,162	0,154	0,087	0,012	0,136	0,092	-0,117	0,028	0,179	0,030	0,029
	Female Employment	0,238	0,142	0,162	1,000	0,377	0,142	0,071	0,213	0,105	-0,161	0,049	0,158	0,009	0,004
	money	0,294	0,083	0,154	0,377	1,000	0,153	0,080	0,154	0,111	-0,191	0,058	0,245	0,045	0,029
	House Ownership	0,117	0,023	0,087	0,142	0,153	1,000	0,234	0,279	0,041	-0,054	-0,008	0,062	-0,042	-0,057
	Land Ownership	0,032	0,047	0,012	0,071	0,080	0,234	1,000	0,146	-0,002	-0,001	-0,006	0,016	-0,076	-0,094
	Car Ownership	0,213	0,070	0,136	0,213	0,154	0,279	0,146	1,000	0,089	-0,110	0,020	0,146	0,025	0,014
	Opinion on Decision Making	0,231	0,103	0,092	0,105	0,111	0,041	-0,002	0,089	1,000	-0,206	0,189	0,274	0,051	0,054
	Opinion on Husband's Doing Housework	-0,292	-0,108	-0,117	-0,161	-0,191	-0,054	-0,001	-0,110	-0,206	1,000	-0,083	-0,257	-0,052	-0,067
	Opinion on Sexual Violence	0,117	0,096	0,028	0,049	0,058	-0,008	-0,006	0,020	0,189	-0,083	1,000	0,142	0,010	0,066
	Internet Use	0,476	0,184	0,179	0,158	0,245	0,062	0,016	0,146	0,274	-0,257	0,142	1,000	0,123	0,126
	Mother alive	0,166	0,057	0,030	0,009	0,045	-0,042	-0,076	0,025	0,051	-0,052	0,010	0,123	1,000	0,230
	Father alive	0,171	0,068	0,029	0,004	0,029	-0,057	-0,094	0,014	0,054	-0,067	0,066	0,126	0,230	1,000

		Female Education	**Education Differences between Spouses**	**Age at First Marriage**	**Female Employment**	**money**	**House Ownership**	**Land Ownership**	**Car Ownership**	**Opinion on Decision Making**	**Opinion on Husband's Doing Housework**	**Opinion on Sexual Violence**	**Internet Use**	**Mother alive**	**Father alive**
Sig. (1-tailed)	Female Education		0,000	0,000	0,000	0,000	0,000	0,010	0,000	0,000	0,000	0,000	0,000	0,000	0,000
	Education Differences between Spouses	0,000		0,000	0,000	0,000	0,049	0,000	0,000	0,000	0,000	0,000	0,000	0,000	0,000
	Age at First Marriage	0,000	0,000		0,000	0,000	0,000	0,180	0,000	0,000	0,000	0,022	0,000	0,015	0,016
	Female Employment	0,000	0,000	0,000		0,000	0,000	0,000	0,000	0,000	0,000	0,000	0,000	0,254	0,379
	money	0,000	0,000	0,000	0,000		0,000	0,000	0,000	0,000	0,000	0,000	0,000	0,000	0,018
	House Ownership	0,000	0,049	0,000	0,000	0,000		0,000	0,000	0,001	0,000	0,285	0,000	0,001	0,000
	Land Ownership	0,010	0,000	0,180	0,000	0,000	0,000		0,000	0,450	0,469	0,323	0,128	0,000	0,000
	Car Ownership	0,000	0,000	0,000	0,000	0,000	0,000	0,000		0,000	0,000	0,070	0,000	0,032	0,157
	Opinion on Decision Making	0,000	0,000	0,000	0,000	0,000	0,001	0,450	0,000		0,000	0,000	0,000	0,000	0,000
	Opinion on Husband's Doing Housework	0,000	0,000	0,000	0,000	0,000	0,000	0,469	0,000	0,000		0,000	0,000	0,000	0,000
	Opinion on Sexual Violence	0,000	0,000	0,022	0,000	0,000	0,285	0,323	0,070	0,000	0,000		0,000	0,233	0,000
	Internet Use	0,000	0,000	0,000	0,000	0,000	0,000	0,128	0,000	0,000	0,000	0,000		0,000	0,000
	Mother alive	0,000	0,000	0,015	0,254	0,000	0,001	0,000	0,032	0,000	0,000	0,233	0,000		0,000
	Father alive	0,000	0,000	0,016	0,379	0,018	0,000	0,000	0,157	0,000	0,000	0,000	0,000	0,000	

NOTES

1- This study builds upon the MA thesis of Neriman Başak Altan submitted to Hacettepe University Institute of Population Studies, Department of Demography in 2023 under the supervision of Assoc. Prof. Dr. Ayşe Abbasoğlu Özgören.

2- The qualitative study of this research was approved by the Hacettepe University Ethics Commission with decision no. E-85844849-300-00002485335 dated 17.11.2022.

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ARAŞTIRMA MAKALESİ / RESEARCH ARTICLE

THE PATTERN OF RELIGIOUS MARRIAGE AND TRANSITION TO CIVIL MARRIAGE IN TÜRKİYE: EVIDENCE FROM TÜRKİYE DEMOGRAPHIC AND HEALTH SURVEYS BASED ON MARRIAGE COHORTS

TÜRKİYE'DE DİNİ NİKAH ÖRÜNTÜSÜ VE RESMİ NİKAHA GEÇİŞ: TÜRKİYE NÜFUS VE SAĞLIK ARAŞTIRMALARINDAN ELDE EDİLEN EVLİLİK KUŞAKLARINA DAYALI KANITLAR

FARUK KESKİN*
ZEHRA YAYLA ENFİYECİ**

ABSTRACT

This study examines the transition from religious to civil marriage in Türkiye, focusing on generational shifts in marriage practices. Using pooled data from the Türkiye Demographic and Health Surveys (TDHS) conducted between 1998 and 2018, the study employs life table analysis to explore the timing and likelihood of these transitions across different marriage cohorts. The findings reveal a consistent decline in the median transition time from religious to civil marriage over generations, with more recent cohorts transitioning more rapidly. Additionally, the study highlights the influence of socioeconomic factors, showing that women from poorer households, those whose mother tongue is Kurdish, and those with lower education levels are more likely to remain in religious-only marriages for longer periods. These patterns reflect broader transformation processes of marriages in Türkiye, where hybrid models blending traditional and modern elements are increasingly prevalent. By situating these trends within the hybrid model and forerunners theory, this research provides a nuanced understanding of the interaction with tradition in shaping marriage practices. The findings underscore the need for targeted policies to address socioeconomic and regional

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disparities, ensuring equitable access to the legal and social protections associated with civil marriage.

KEYWORDS: Religious Ceremony, Religious Marriage, Civil Ceremony, Marriage Cohorts, Marriage Ceremony

ÖZET

Bu çalışma, Türkiye'de dini nikahtan resmi nikaha geçiş incelemekte ve evliliklerdeki kuşaksal değişimlere odaklanılmaktadır. 1998 ile 2018 yılları arasında yürütülen Türkiye Nüfus ve Sağlık Araştırmalarından (TNSA) toplanan verileri kullanarak, çalışma farklı evlilik kuşaklarında bu geçişlerin zamanlamasını ve olasılığını keşfetmek için yaşam tablosu analizini kullanmaktadır. Bulgular, nesiller boyunca dini nikahtan resmi nikaha geçişin ortanca süresinde tutarlı bir düşüş olduğunu ve daha genç kuşakların daha hızlı geçiş yaptığını ortaya koymaktadır. Ayrıca, çalışma sosyoekonomik faktörlerin etkisini vurgulayarak, daha yoksul hanelerde yaşayan kadınların, ana dili Kürtçe olanların ve daha düşük eğitim düzeyine sahip olanların yalnızca dini nikahla daha uzun süre evli kaldıklarını göstermektedir. Bu bulgular, geleneksel ve modern unsurları harmanlayan melez modellerin giderek yaygınlaştığı yaklaşımla Türkiye'deki evliliklerin daha geniş çaplı dönüşüm süreçlerini yansıtmaktadır. Bu bulguları melez model ve öncüler teorisine yerleştiren bu çalışma, evlilik pratiklerini şekillendirmede gelenekle etkileşime dair ayrıntılı bir anlayış sağlamaktadır. Bulgular, sosyoekonomik ve bölgesel eşitsizlikleri ele almak, resmi nikahla ilişkili yasal ve sosyal haklara eşit erişimi sağlamak için hedefli politikalara olan ihtiyacı vurgulamaktadır.

ANAHTAR SÖZCÜKLER: Dini Nikah, İmam Nikahı, Resmi Nikah, Evlilik Kuşakları, Evlilik Töreni

INTRODUCTION

The institution of marriage, although it has taken different forms in developed societies, is among the social institutions that have continued to be prevalent in a resilient manner throughout the world. In many societies, there is a direct connection between the beginning of marriage and the establishment of the family. Marriage often functions as the cornerstone of family life, shaping not only personal relationships but also broader social and economic systems. In this sense, the change in the prevalence, timing, form of establishment, and continuity of marriage has a significant impact on the establishment and dissolution of the family, and therefore on family structures. Understanding these dynamics is essential for comprehending broader demographic, social, and economic transitions.

It is anticipated that significant changes will occur in the timing of marriage and fertility, as well as in the establishment and continuity of the family, in the modernization process that all societies experience, albeit at different times (Goode 1963, van de Kaa 1987, Lesthaeghe 1992). In this process, the age at first marriage is increasing, traditional practices regarding the establishment of marriage are decreasing, different cohabitation experiences are emerging, an increase is observed in the end of marriages with divorce, and new forms of unions, such as consensual unions or same-sex partnerships, are becoming more visible in certain contexts. Parallel to these developments, the age at first birth is increasing, the period during which women remain in the fertile period decreases, and the level of fertility decreases. Finally, depending on the timing and pattern of marriage and fertility, a transition is observed in family structures from extended families to nuclear families (Lesthaeghe, 2014). These trends, collectively termed the "Second Demographic Transition," highlight the interplay of cultural, economic, and institutional factors in reshaping family life.

It is possible to observe this transformation experienced by the institution of marriage through the changes experienced in the prevalence, timing, traditional practices regarding the establishment of marriage, and its continuity in Türkiye. In the last 10 years in Türkiye, the crude marriage rate (number of marriages per 1,000 people) decreased from 7.9 per thousand in 2013 to 6.6 per thousand in 2023, while the crude divorce rate (number of divorces per 1,000 people) increased from 1.6 per thousand in 2013 to 2 per thousand in 2023 (TurkStat 2024a). While the average age at first marriage among women was 22.7 in 2001, it reached an average of 25.7 in 2023 (TurkStat 2024a), and the fertility rate decreased rapidly and fell below replacement level (TurkStat 2024c). These changes align with global patterns observed in many middle-income countries transitioning through demographic and societal modernization. Despite these developments, when compared to OECD countries, it is seen that Türkiye is still among the countries where marriages are common, and divorces are rare (OECD 2022). For example, in many Western European countries, crude divorce rates exceed 3 per thousand, and the proportion of unmarried cohabiting couples continues to grow (Sánchez Gassen and Perelli-Harris, 2015; Eurostat, 2023). In 2023, it was observed that 59 percent of women aged 15-49 were still married in Türkiye, and only 6 percent were divorced, or their spouses had died (TurkStat, 2024b). While traditional practices such as marriages involving a bride price, arranged marriages, and consanguineous marriages persist in certain regions and social groups, they have significantly declined over time. According to the 2021 Türkiye Family Structure Survey (TFSS) results, the prevalence of arranged marriages without consent is lower among younger age groups, standing at approximately 4% (TurkStat, 2022). In this sense, it can be said that the institution of marriage in Türkiye is still a strong social institution and a process experienced throughout life. However, questions remain about the intersection of modern and traditional practices and how they coexist or conflict during this transformative period.

Although the civil code has ruled that the religious marriage performed before the civil marriage is not valid, it is seen that the religious marriage, which is socially accepted in Türkiye, still has an important place in the establishment of marriages. This duality reflects the tension between secular legal frameworks and deeply rooted cultural practices. Despite being a traditional marriage practice, the religious marriage continues to be performed together with the civil marriage. The resilience of religious marriage practices offers a lens to explore broader cultural continuities and adaptations in the context of modernization. However, studies on this sociodemographic phenomenon, which is considered specific to Türkiye, are quite limited. The first study examining the prevalence of religious marriage according to marriage generations was conducted by Civelek and Koç (2007). In some other studies, religious marriage has often been considered as a variable when analyzing demographic research without making a distinction between marriage generations (Koç and Koç 1998, Koç 2004, Tezcan and Coşkun 2004, Yüksel Kaptanoğlu et al. 2012). Apart from these, there are studies that reveal different implementations of religious marriage (Türkan and Atahan 2017) and the contribution of religious marriage to the maintenance of patriarchal gender relations (İlkkaracan and İlkkaracan 1998, İlkkaracan, 2001). These contributions underscore the need for more comprehensive analyses that account for generational, regional, and socioeconomic variations in religious marriage practices.

This study aims to explore the evolving dynamics of religious and civil marriage practices in Türkiye through three interrelated objectives. First, it examines how the prevalence of religious marriages has changed over time and across marriage cohorts. Second, it investigates the timing of transitions from religious to civil marriages, highlighting generational differences. Finally, it identifies the socio-demographic subpopulations that drive or resist these changes, focusing on factors such as education, wealth, urban-rural divides, and linguistic backgrounds. These objectives collectively provide a comprehensive understanding of the interplay between tradition and modernity in shaping Türkiye's marriage practices.

LITERATURE AND THEORETICAL FRAMEWORK

The establishment of marriage in Türkiye, and the rights and obligations of spouses, are determined according to the Turkish Civil Code adopted in 1926. In this code, the legal age of marriage was set as 18 for men and 17 for women

(Turkish Civil Code 1926). In 1938, due to policies aimed at increasing fertility, the age of marriage was lowered to 15 for women and 17 for men (Official Gazette of the Republic of Türkiye, 1938). The Turkish Civil Code establishes the age of majority as 18, while the minimum age for marriage is set at 17 for both men and women. Since the age of majority is defined as 18, minors under this age require the consent of their legal representative to marry. In other words, individuals can marry independently at 18, but those who are 17 need permission to do so (Turkish Civil Code 2001). Also in specific cases, with family permission and court approval in accordance with Article 124 of the Civil Code, can men and women marry at the age of 16 (Turkish Civil Code 2001). Although the age of majority aligns with global discussions on the importance of regulating marriage age to prevent child and early marriages, legal loopholes allow exceptions to become patterns.

The Turkish Civil Code states that the religious ceremony of marriage cannot be performed without showing the family certificate and the validity of the marriage does not depend on the religious ceremony being performed (Turkish Civil Code 2001). Although religious ceremony does not have any legal validity in Türkiye, it is quite common for couples to practice it together with civil ceremony. However, certain groups in Türkiye still marry exclusively through religious ceremonies, thereby forfeiting the legal rights and protections associated with civil marriage. The most recent amendment was made to Article 22 of the Population Services Law No. 5490 in 2017, granting provincial and district muftis the authority to perform civil marriages (Official Gazette of the Republic of Türkiye, 2017). This change sparked debates about the potential implications for secularism and the separation of religion and state, reflecting ongoing tensions in Turkish society regarding the role of religious institutions in civic life.

Demographic trends in Türkiye reflect a unique intersection of modern European and traditional Islamic values, with increasing age at first marriage, declining marriage rates, and slightly rising divorce rates, alongside persistent low tolerance for cohabitation, shaped by culturally conservative and neo-liberal policies (Engin, Hürman, & Harvey, 2020). On the other hand, studies on religious marriage in Türkiye are limited. Research on marriage processes primarily focuses on age at first marriage, marriage and fertility (Kırdar et al., 2018; Yüksel-Kaptanoğlu & Ergöçmen, 2014), changes in divorce rates, family structure, and gender roles within families (Caarls and de Valk, 2018; Acar, 2022; Cinar and Köse, 2018). In parallel with the sociodemographic heterogeneity in Türkiye, ethnicity-based findings come to the fore in marriage studies. Ertem and Koçtürk (2008) highlighted the persistence of patriarchal family structures and marriage-specific traditions, such as cradle-marriage and cousin marriage, in Diyarbakır. The study found that these traditions often delay or hinder women's education and personal development and are observed in poorer, less educated households. Hosseini and Erfani (2014) demonstrate that Kurds in Iran exhibit considerable resistance to modernization factors that promote uniform cultural norms regarding marriage. Additionally, studies by Koç, Hancıoğlu, and Çavlin (2008) and Gündüz-Hoşgör and Smits (2002) point to the role of ethnic endogamy among Kurds, which reflects strong traditional influences and resistance to modernization, further supporting the slower transition observed in this group.

Hosseini and Erfani (2014) also demonstrated that education plays a pivotal role in shaping attitudes towards consanguineous marriage, suggesting that it is a key modernization factor. Furthermore, Acar (2022) emphasised the importance of education on family formation and age at marriage of women. Kavas and Thornton (2020) discussed how exposure to Western values through education and urbanization drives shifts toward modern family practices, such as self-choice marriages, while traditional norms persist in varying degrees. Together, these studies provide robust evidence that socioeconomic and cultural characteristics significantly shape marriage behaviors, supporting the patterns identified in this study.

In their pioneering study, Civelek and Koç (2007) examined religious marriage prevalence, transitions from religious marriage to civil marriage, and average transition times across marriage cohorts using the 2003 Türkiye Demographic and Health Survey (TDHS) dataset. The results indicated that women whose mother tongue is Kurdish, living in eastern provinces, with low household welfare, no formal education, and lacking employment with social security, were less likely to transition from religious to civil marriage. Keskin et al.'s (2021) study on transitions to civil marriage using the 1993-2013 TDHS dataset also showed that recent cohorts' transition to civil marriage more quickly, and revealed that education, age at first marriage and place of residence are the main determinants of resistance to transition to civil marriage.

According to Yüksel-Kaptanoğlu et al. (2015), the practices of arranged marriages, religious-only marriages, and consanguineous marriages are all decreasing, while women at high risk of marriage tend to adopt or are compelled to accept more traditional characteristics in the establishment of their unions. This high risk is also related to the increased prevalence of child marriages. Ergöçmen et al. (2020) showed that in the order of civil and religious marriage ceremonies, religious marriage always took place first in marriages before the age of 18. According to the 2018-TNSA, 64% of women married before the age of 18 had a religious marriage ceremony first, while 7% had only a religious marriage ceremony. Therefore, in the 20-24 age group, 71% of marriages before the age of 18 were preceded by a religious marriage.

Traditional practices in the formation of marriages were correlated with early marriages as well as early mortality (Hancıoğlu and Ergöçmen 1992).

Tezcan and Coşkun (2004) analysed changes in age at first marriage and divorce rates in Türkiye using data from the 1978 Türkiye Fertility Survey and the 2003 TDHS. They found that women with lower education, residing in rural areas, entering marriage at younger ages, or in consanguineous unions were more likely to marry through religious ceremonies alone. Similar findings were noted in İlkkaracan's (1998) study, which analysed data from 599 women in Eastern and South-eastern Anatolia. The study found that the average age at first marriage was 20.4 years for women who first entered into a civil marriage and 17.9 years for those who first had a religious marriage. Women in this region who married through religious ceremonies tended to do so at significantly younger ages, highlighting the interplay between cultural norms and legal frameworks. Koç and Saraç (2019) provided further insights using TFSS data, revealing that the proportion of women with both civil and religious marriages increased from 87% to 97% over a decade, while the share of religious-only marriages fell from 3% to 1%. Their cohort analyses underscored a generational shift, with younger cohorts increasingly favouring civil-only marriages. These findings underscore the broader trend of declining traditional marriage practices, influenced by increased education, urbanization, and exposure to global cultural norms (Thornton et al., 2012). Acar (2022) disclosed that education plays a pioneering role in the family formation, especially in the age at marriage among women. In this study, it was revealed how higher educational attainment among women correlates with delayed marriage age, which signifies a shift toward more egalitarian gender roles and a change in marriage market expectations. This trend highlights education as a primary determinant of family formation processes, despite persistent sociopolitical pressures favoring traditional norms.

Most studies on religious marriage in Türkiye lack a robust theoretical framework to explain the decline in the prevalence of religious-only marriages. The transformations in marriage practices in Türkiye can be effectively analyzed using key demographic and sociological theories. Modernization theory posits that industrialization and economic development lead to shifts in family structures, weakening extended family ties and parental influence on marriage decisions while fostering nuclear family norms (Goode 1963). In the context of marriage, modernization weakens parental influence on marriage decisions, leading to an increase in marriages initiated by couples themselves. Additionally, rural-to-urban migration in search of better economic opportunities has disrupted extended family systems, favoring nuclear family structures and more individualistic lifestyles. Similarly, demographic transformation theory highlights the transition from high to low mortality and fertility rates, paralleling changes in marriage and family dynamics (Notestein, 1953). The second demographic transition extends these concepts by focusing on cultural shifts that accompany modernization, such as delayed marriages, increased cohabitation, and declining fertility rates (Van de Kaa, 1999). These changes reflect broader societal shifts toward individualism, gender equality, and women's rights, challenging traditional family models.

Diffusion theory and its related "forerunners framework" further illuminate the adoption of new practices (Rogers 1983, Livi-Bacci 1986). These theories suggest that social change often originates among elite or highly educated groups and gradually diffuses to other segments of society. In the Turkish context, this can be used to understand the adoption of civil marriage practices among certain subpopulations. Finally, developmental idealism theory emphasizes the interplay between modernization and cultural continuity (Thornton et al. 2012). It suggests that hybrid models, blending traditional and modern elements, emerge as societies navigate transitions. This is particularly evident in Türkiye, where dual marriage practices reflect the coexistence of religious and civil ceremonies, demonstrating a balance between modernization and cultural traditions. However, the process is not uniform; resistance to change among certain groups often results in the emergence of hybrid cultural models blending modern and traditional elements (Kavas and Thornton 2013; Kavas and Thornton 2020). For example, in marriage practices, this hybridity is evident in the persistence of traditional customs such as bride price alongside the growing adoption of civil ceremonies, as well as the continued disproportionate burden of household responsibilities on women even within modernizing societies (Cindoğlu et al. 2008; Kavas and Thornton 2013). Similarly, Beşpınar and Beşpınar (2017) state that in addition to the predominance of traditional forms, individual values and practices have become increasingly visible, and that there is a dual structure based on education, SES and region in terms of marriage patterns.

By situating Türkiye's marriage transitions within these theoretical frameworks, this study highlights the complex interplay of tradition, modernity, and socio-demographic diversity, addressing gaps in existing literature and providing a nuanced perspective on marriage practices in a rapidly modernizing society.

DATA SOURCE AND METHODOLOGY

This study utilized data from five surveys conducted every five years from 1998 to 2018, under the Türkiye Demographic and Health Survey (TDHS). These demographic surveys aimed to collect detailed information on fertility levels, infant and child mortality, maternal and child health, and family planning. The samples for these surveys were designed to be nationally representative, with results that could be analysed across urban and rural areas and five distinct geographical regions of Türkiye. Women aged 15–49 in households, who either lived in the household or stayed there the night before the interview, were considered eligible for inclusion in the survey.

Data were gathered from 8,576 women in the 1998 TDHS, 8,075 ever-married women in the 2003 TDHS, 7,405 ever-married women in the 2008 TDHS, 9,746 women in the 2013 TDHS, and 7,346 women in the 2018 TDHS. The surveys used a complex multi-stage, stratified, and cluster sampling approach to ensure the representativeness of the samples. In order for statistical inferences based on these data to be valid, the representativeness of the sample must be accounted for. To achieve this, sample weights were applied in all analyses to make the sample more representative of the target population. All analyses should use sample weights calculated for each individual interviewed (ICF International, 2012). These sample weights are calculated for each individual and are designed to extrapolate the sample to the broader population.

$$V005^{*} = \frac{V005\ \times (total\ female\ population\ 15-49\ in\ the\ country)}{total\ number\ of\ women\ 15-49\ interviewed\ in\ the\ survey}$$

When pooling datasets from different years, these standard weight variables were renormalized. This normalization was performed by multiplying the standard weight by the female population aged 15–49 in Türkiye on the date of the survey, as reported by the Address-Based Population Registration System (ABPRS) for the years 2008, 2013, and 2018. For 1998 and 2003, the female population was derived from the 1990 and 2000 general population censuses, using an assumption of exponential growth to estimate the population for those years.

In this study, data from all five surveys were pooled, and only women who were married through a religious ceremony and whose first marriage was still ongoing at the time of the survey were selected for first analysis. Women considered married through a religious ceremony in this study included those who were married solely through a religious ceremony, those who had both a religious and civil ceremony but performed religious one first, and those who had both ceremony on the same day, regardless of the order in which the ceremonies occurred. Women who had only a civil ceremony, or whose religious ceremony occurred at least one day after their civil ceremony, were excluded from the analysis. The final sample for descriptive analysis included 21,293 women who met these criteria (Table 1).

For the purpose of examining the transition to civil ceremony among these women, five marriage generations were created based on the date of their first marriage. The generations were grouped as follows: those married between 2009–2018, 1999–2008, 1989–1998, 1979–1988, and those married before 1978. The time after which women married through religious ceremonies transitioned to civil marriages was calculated separately for each marriage generation. To analyse the timing of this transition, the study employed life table survival analysis, a method commonly used for examining groups experiencing events with time-varying risks. One key advantage of survival analysis is its ability to include both those who experienced the event of interest and those who did not, allowing for a more comprehensive understanding of the transition process. In this study, the event of interest was the transition from a religious ceremony to a civil marriage. For the life table analysis, only those women who were initially married through a religious ceremony and who did not have a civil ceremony on the same day were selected. The main reason for this selection is that a significant proportion of women who had both religious and civil ceremony did so on the same day, which complicates the analysis of the transition over time. The life table analysis was thus conducted on a sample of 16,267 women who met these criteria (Table 1).

Table 1. Percentage distribution of variables used in the study according to analysis units

		Women who were married through a religious ceremony and in their first marriages		Women who were married through a religious ceremony and in their first marriages and did not have a civil ceremony on the same day		Women who were married through a religious ceremony and in their first marriages and did not have a civil ceremony on the same day and have been married for at least 24 months	
		Weighted percentage	Unweighted number	Weighted percent-age	Un-weighted number	Weighted percent-age	Un-weighted number
Marriage	2009-2018	10.7	1,838	10.9	1,409	6.9	1,035
Cohorts	1999-2008	26.9	5,601	27.6	4,376	25.2	3,793
	1989-1998	33.3	7,222	33.2	5,536	35.1	5,294
	1979-1988	19.9	4,540	18.9	3,336	22.1	3,330
	1978 and before	9.3	2,092	9.4	1,610	10.7	1,615
Mother Tongue	Turkish	74.6	14,898	67.9	10,323	63.5	9,571
	Kurdish	21.1	5,466	27.2	5,160	31.9	4,801
	Other	4.2	929	4.9	784	4.6	695
Brides Money*	No	79.3	16,089	74.9	11,589	70.9	10,680
	Yes	20.5	5,177	25.0	4,659	29.1	4,387
Consanguinity*	No	73.6	15,249	30.5	5,199	32.4	4,882

	Yes	26.3	6,030	69.4	11,058	67.6	10,185
Region	West	39.4	5,062	33.7	3,076	18.7	2,812
	South	12.1	2,837	12.7	2,189	13.5	2,037
	Central	20.8	3,887	20.4	2,842	17.7	2,662
	North	6.1	2,383	6.1	1,690	10.6	1,601
	East	21.4	7,124	27.0	6,470	39.5	5,955
Residence	Urban	74.9	15,206	73.7	11,441	70.0	10,540
	Rural	25.1	6,087	26.3	4,826	30.0	4,527
HH Wealth	Highest	21.7	3,803	17.0	2,276	13.9	2,087
	Fourth	20.9	4,062	19.8	2,918	17.8	2,676
	Middle	20.0	4,182	21.0	3,274	19.9	3,001
	Second	19.6	4,545	21.5	3,721	22.8	3,442
	Lowest	17.8	4,701	20.7	4,078	25.6	3,861
Total		**100.0**	**21,293**	**100.0**	**16,267**	**100.0**	**15,067**

*The weighted percentage sum of the categories of these variables does not add up to 100 due to a small number of missing observations.

The median transition time for women in each marriage cohort to civil marriage was calculated, providing a valuable measure of the timing of this transition. Among the women who experienced a transition to civil marriage, those with a transition period of 24 months or longer were classified as the "resistant group." This 24-month threshold was determined by calculating the difference between the median age at first birth and median age at first marriage for women aged 25–49 based on the TDHS data from 1998–2018. Literature suggests that couples are more likely to transition to civil marriage when a pregnancy occurs outside of marriage or after the birth of a child (Mills & Trovato, 2001; Garcia Pereiro et al., 2014). The TDHS data show that the age difference between first birth and first marriage was 1.8 years in 1998 and 2003, 1.5 years in 2008, and 1.9 years in 2013 and 2018. Given the generally sequential nature of fertility and marriage in Türkiye, the 24-month threshold was considered a reasonable marker for this transition.

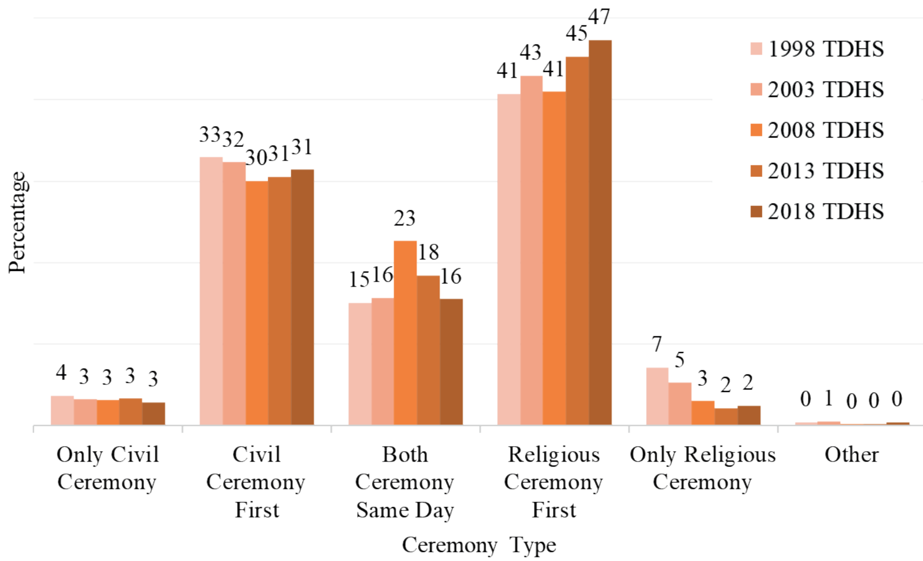
To further investigate the factors affecting the transition to civil marriage, logistic regression analysis was applied to the data of 15,067 women who had been married for at least 24 months. In this model, the dependent variable was whether the woman had transitioned to an civil marriage by the 24th month. Several independent variables were included to explore the factors influencing this transition: the woman's mother tongue, whether a bride price was paid, whether the woman was related to her spouse, the household wealth index, the woman's years of education, the woman's age at first marriage, and the marriage cohort. The household wealth was measured using an index based on the presence of durable consumer goods in the household and housing characteristics, which has been a widely used method for assessing income differences in various settings (Rutstein et al., 2000).

RESULTS

The figure below presents data on women in their first marriages based on marriage type and sequence, as reported in the 1998–2018 Türkiye Demographic and Health Surveys (Figure 1). Over the years, the proportion of women who married solely through civil ceremonies has remained relatively stable at around 3%. Approximately 30% of women in their first marriages initially had a civil marriage, followed by a religious marriage at least one day later. The percentage of women who held both ceremonies on the same day has declined over the past decade, with about one in six women now following this practice. In contrast, there has been an increase in the proportion of women who had both religious and civil ceremonies but began with a religious ceremony, postponing the civil marriage by at least one day. The survey findings indicate that nearly half of the women in their first marriages followed this sequence, having a religious ceremony first and a civil ceremony later. Meanwhile, the rate of women marrying solely through religious ceremonies has significantly decreased, dropping from 7% in 1998 to 2% over the past 20 years.

Table 2 outlines the demographic characteristics of women who were married through a religious ceremony and in their first marriages, categorized by marriage generations. The findings show a significant increase in educational attainment from older to younger generations. While women in the 1978 and earlier generation spent an average of 3.1 years in education, this figure rose to an average of 9 years for the 2009–2018 generation. Similarly, the age at first marriage has increased over time, with younger generations entering into marriage at older ages compared to their predecessors. Regarding linguistic demographics, women whose mother tongue is Turkish consistently outnumber those whose mother tongue is Kurdish or other languages in both older and younger generations. However, the proportion of women whose mother tongue is Kurdish or other languages has risen in the 2009–2018 generation compared to earlier generations. A noteworthy trend is observed in the practice of paying a bride price. This practice declined from the 1978 and earlier generation to the 1999–2008 generation but then showed an increase in the youngest generation (2009–2018). Similarly, the percentage of women in consanguineous marriages has decreased steadily from older to younger generations.

Figure 1. Changes in Types of Ceremony of 15-49 Women in Their First Marriage, 1998 - 2018 TDHS



Regional distribution patterns also shift across generations. The percentage of women in the Western and Eastern regions has increased over time, while the percentage in the Central and Northern regions has decreased. The proportion of women in the Southern region has remained relatively stable, around 12 percent, across all generations. Urbanization trends are evident in the data. The majority of women lived in urban areas, the proportion of women living in cities has risen in younger generations. In the 2009–2018 generation, 81 percent of women lived in urban areas. Finally, an examination of household wealth levels reveals no significant differences between generations, indicating relative consistency in this aspect across the observed time periods.

Table 2. Distribution of Women Who Were Married Through a Religious Ceremony and in Their First Marriages According to Demographic Characteristics

		2009-2018		1999-2008		1989-1998		1979-1988		1978 and before		All Cohorts	
		Mean	UW number	Mean	Unweig. number	Mean	Unweig. number	Mean	Unweig. number	Mean	Unweig. number	Mean	Unweig. number
Education in single years		9.0	1,838	7	5,601	5.6	7,222	4.6	4,540	3.1	2,092	5.9	21,293
Mean age at first marriage		22.0	1,838	20.9	5,601	19.5	7,222	18.3	4,540	16.6	2,092	19.6	21,293
		Weighted percentage	UW number	Weighted percentage	UW number	Weighted percentage	UW number	Weighted percentage	UW number	Weighted percentage	UW number	Weighted percentage	UW number
Mother Tongue	Turkish	67.3	1,180	73.7	3,824	75.7	5,116	77.5	3,302	75.5	1,476	74.6	14,898
	Kurdish	25.4	545	21.8	1,511	20.7	1,821	19.3	1,076	19.9	513	21.1	5,466
	Other	7.3	113	4.5	266	3.6	285	3.3	162	4.6	103	4.3	929
Brides Money*	No	80.9	1,434	84.9	4,507	81.5	5,672	76.6	3,309	59.3	1,167	79.3	16,089
	Yes	19.0	403	15	1,091	18.3	1,540	23.3	1,227	40.2	916	20.5	5,177
Consanguinity*	No	77.5	1,399	76	4,137	73.9	5,173	69.9	3,121	69.4	1,419	73.6	15,249
	Yes	22.5	439	23.9	1,457	26.1	2,045	30.1	1,417	30.6	672	26.3	6,030
Region	West	40.3	434	40.9	1,322	40.7	1,785	37	1,048	34.9	473	39.4	5,062
	South	12.0	220	12	694	12.2	988	12.2	623	12.6	312	12.1	2,837
	Central	17.3	297	20.1	1,02	20	1,261	23.8	908	23.8	401	20.8	3,887
	North	4.3	181	5	544	6.2	816	7.4	554	8.7	288	6.1	2,383
	East	26.2	706	22	2,021	21	2,372	19.6	1,407	20	618	21.4	7,124
Residence	Urban	80.7	1,350	78.9	4,132	74.9	5,173	70.6	3,145	66.3	1,406	74.9	15,206
	Rural	19.3	488	21.1	1,469	25.1	2,049	29.4	1,395	33.7	686	25.1	6,087
HH Wealth	Highest	21.8	321	21.4	935	21.4	1,300	23.2	887	19.9	360	21.7	3,803
	Fourth	20.6	315	19.5	998	22.1	1,431	20.8	899	21.5	419	20.9	4,062
	Middle	19.2	349	21	1,121	19.3	1,354	19.3	884	21.9	474	20	4,182
	Second	19.9	400	20.3	1,237	19.3	1,526	19.7	961	18.6	421	19.6	4,545
	Lowest	18.5	453	17.9	1,310	17.8	1,611	17.1	909	18.1	418	17.8	4,701
Total		**100.0**	**1,838**	**100**	**5,601**	**100**	**7,222**	**100**	**4,540**	**100**	**2,092**	**100**	**21,293**

*The weighted percentage sum of the categories of these variables does not add up to 100 due to a small number of missing observations.

Although the rate of women with religious marriages can be estimated from the research findings, these rates are based on information from women at various stages of their marriages, making it impossible to determine the details of how marriages that began with religious ceremonies transitioned to civil marriages. To capture the specifics of this transition, it is necessary to track marriages from their inception, focusing on marriage cohorts. An analysis of women who were married through a religious ceremony reveals that approximately half transitioned to civil marriage within the first month (Figure 2). The consistency of this rate over time, regardless of the marriage year, indicates a stable pattern in the transition from religious to civil marriages. However, differences in transition probabilities between marriage cohorts become apparent as the duration of marriage increases. Women who married more recently transitioned to civil marriages more quickly, whereas those from older marriage cohorts exhibited a slower progression. Notably, the transition rate to civil marriage accelerates across all marriage cohorts after the sixth month of marriage. Among more recent marriage cohorts, the rate of transition to civil marriage has increased, paralleling the rise in the proportion of women with civil marriages overall. By the end of the first year of marriage, 88 percent of women who married between 2009 and 2018 had transitioned to civil marriage, compared to 61 percent of women who married in 1978 or earlier. This highlights a significant generational shift in the timing and prevalence of transitioning to civil marriage.

Figure 2. Having both ceremonies among women who were married through a religious ceremony according to the months they spent in marriage and the marriage cohorts

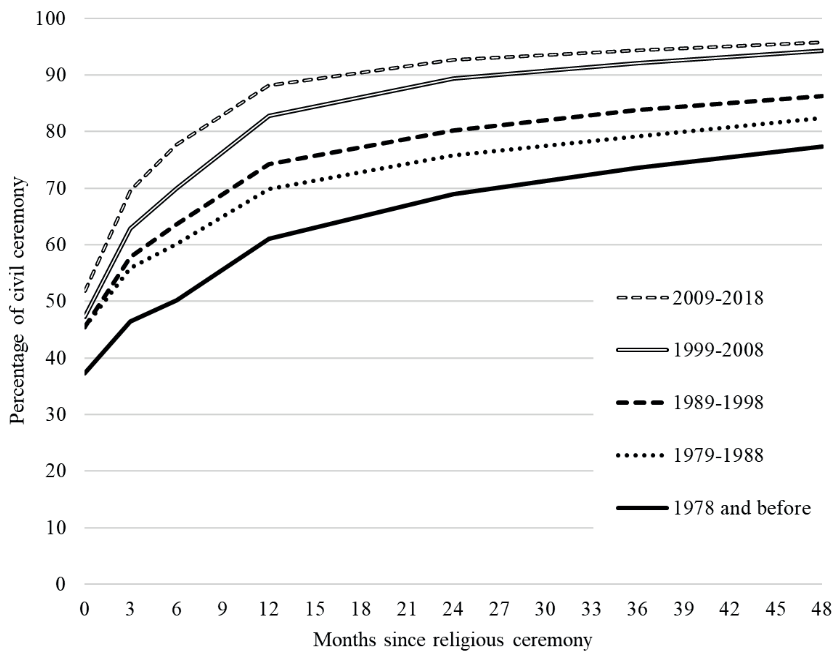
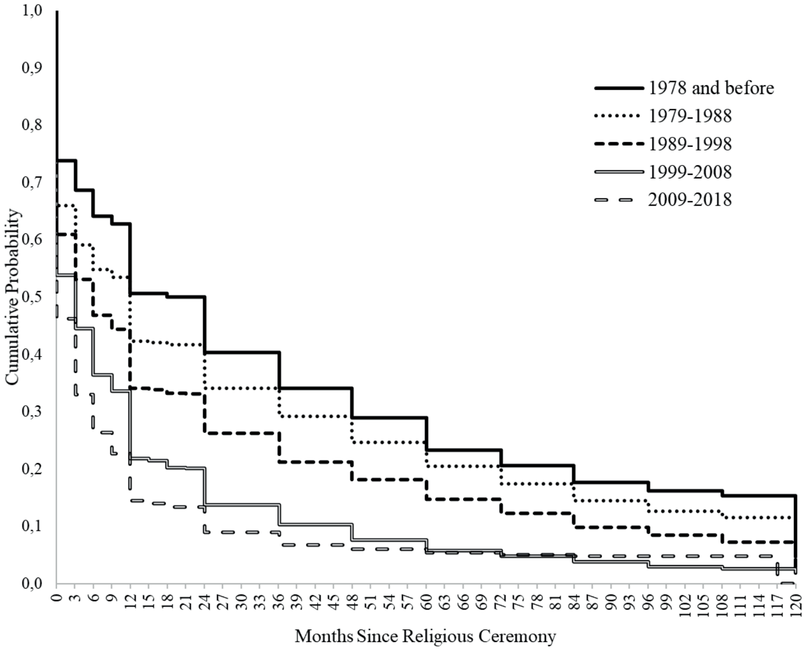


Figure 3 presents the results of the survival analysis conducted using the life table method for women who were married through a religious ceremony and in their first marriages and did not have a civil ceremony on the same day. The figure illustrates the probabilities of remaining in a religious-only marriage during the first 120 months following the start of the marriage. This analysis provides insights into the median transition time to civil ceremony. When examining the median transition times by marriage cohorts, it is evident that significant differences exist across generations. For the most recent cohort (2009–2018), the median transition time to civil marriage was 2.8 months, whereas for the oldest cohort (1978 and earlier), the median time was 24 months. This indicates that half of the women married in the 1978 and earlier cohort transitioned to civil marriage within two years, while the other half remained married solely through a religious ceremony for at least two years. For the 1999-2008 cohort, the median time is 4.2 months, for the 1989-1998 cohort, the median time is 7.5 months, for the 1979-1988 cohort the median time is 12.9 months. The findings reveal a marked decrease in the duration of religious-only marriages over time. However, even women who married between 2009 and 2018 lived in religious-only unions for an average of approximately three months. Additionally, Figure 3 highlights that older marriage cohorts were significantly more resistant to transitioning from religious-only marriages to civil marriages. This generational shift underscores the substantial decline in the prevalence and duration of religious-only marriages in recent years.

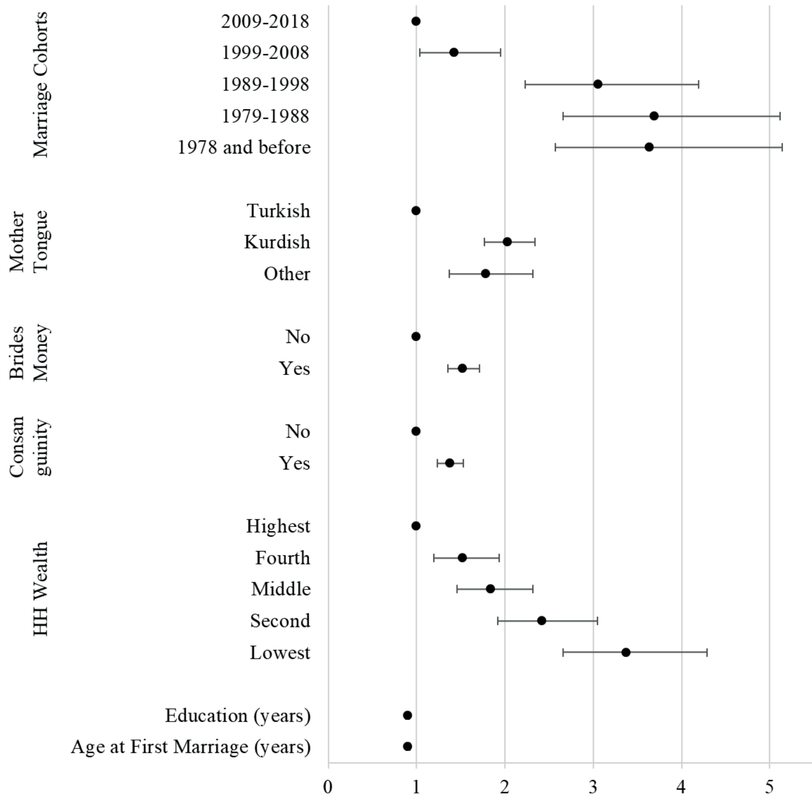
Figure 3. Cumulative probability of women* having civil marriage, according to duration of marriage and cohort



* This analysis is conducted with women who were married through a religious ceremony and in their first marriages and did not have a civil ceremony on the same day.

The results of the logistic regression analysis (Figure 3 and Supplementary Table 1) reveal the factors influencing the resilience of marriages that remain religious-only at the 24th month. The analysis indicates that the likelihood of continuing a religious-only marriage varies significantly by marriage cohort. Women in the 1999–2008 cohort are 1.4 times more likely to remain in a religious-only marriage compared to those in the most recent cohort (2009–2018). Similarly, women in the 1989–1998 cohort are three times more likely, and those in older cohorts are approximately 3.7 times more likely, to continue their marriages without transitioning to a civil marriage. When analyzed by mother tongue, it is notable that women whose mother tongue is Kurdish are approximately twice as likely to maintain religious-only marriages as women whose mother tongue is Turkish. This highlights the importance of linguistic and cultural factors in marriage practices.

Figure 4. Factors determining resistance to transition from religious marriage to civil marriage, logistic regression results*



*This analysis is conducted with women who were married through a religious ceremony and in their first marriages and did not have a civil ceremony on the same day and have been married for at least 24 months

In cases of consanguineous marriages, the probability of resisting the transition to civil marriage increases by 1.4 times. If a bride price is paid at the time of marriage, the probability rises by 1.5 times. Variables such as the arrangement of the marriage, the region of residence, and the urban-rural distinction were not found to be significant in the model and were therefore excluded. Household wealth also play a significant role. Compared to women in the highest wealth group, those in the high wealth group are 1.5 times more likely to remain in religious-only marriages, those in the medium wealth group are 1.8 times more likely, those in the low wealth group are 2.4 times more likely, and those in the lowest wealth group are 3.4 times more likely. This highlights the strong relationship between socioeconomic status and the persistence of religious-only marriages.

The findings also demonstrate that the time spent in education significantly reduces the likelihood of remaining in a religious-only marriage. For each additional year of education, the probability of being in the resistant group decreases by 10%. Similarly, an increase in the age at first marriage reduces the likelihood of remaining in a religious-only marriage by 10% per year.

CONCLUSION

Türkiye has undergone significant demographic and cultural shifts, reshaping marriage practices and family structures. Despite these changes, marriage remains a central social norm in Türkiye's family formation process, highlighting the limitations of explaining these dynamics solely through demographic transition theories. Sociocultural factors, including the role of families in spouse selection and the persistence of traditional norms, continue to shape attitudes toward marriage (Deniz, 2023; Demir, 2013). This study highlights a marked decline in the prevalence and duration of religious-only marriages, driven by generational and socioeconomic changes. Younger cohorts are transitioning to civil marriage more quickly, reflecting broader modernization trends and the increasing influence of education, urbanization, and economic development. However, as Hancıoğlu and Akadlı Ergöçmen (1992) emphasize, it should be kept in mind that all the attributes discussed pertain to the social processes involved in the formation of marital unions rather than the social dynamics of marital life itself.

Religious marriages have undergone significant transformation where the rate of marriages conducted solely through religious ceremonies has dropped considerably, reaching 3% in 2018. However, there has been an increase in the prevalence of dual marriage ceremonies, where both religious and civil marriages are performed together. This dual structure reflects a hybrid model described by Kavas and Thornton (2013), characterized by the coexistence of traditional and modern elements in marriage practices. Traditional rituals such as henna nights, weddings, and dowry presentations, rather than declining with modernization, have persisted and adapted by incorporating modern elements.

Generational differences further underscore these changes. Although the proportion of marriages initiated solely through religious ceremonies has decreased in more recent cohorts, a significant portion of younger generations still begin their marriages with a religious ceremony. The most notable shift is the reduction in the median transition period from religious to civil marriage. For older generations, this period was 24 months, while for more recent generations, it has declined to just 3 months. This demonstrates that while religious-only marriages have become less common and their duration has shortened, the practice of performing religious ceremonies alongside or following civil ceremonies has increased. These findings suggest that, despite the lack of legal recognition for religious marriages conducted prior to civil marriages, they are viewed as socially and culturally complementary to civil marriages. As Koçak (2010) emphasizes, religious ceremonies are seen as providing religious approval for the civil union in the presence of witnesses and an imam.

The study also reveals that socioeconomic characteristics significantly influence the transition from religious to civil marriage. Women from poorer households, those whose mother tongue is Kurdish, and those with lower levels of education are more likely to remain in religious-only marriages for longer periods compared to women who are more educated, wealthier, and whose mother tongue is Turkish. These findings align with previous research highlighting the role of ethnicity in shaping family formation practices. Studies such as those by Ertem and Koçtürk (2008) and Koç, Hancıoğlu, and Çavlin (2008) emphasize the persistence of patriarchal family structures and traditional practices, such as cousin and cradle marriages, among Kurdish households. These practices not only delay the transition to civil marriages but also reflect resistance to modernization and the deep entrenchment of traditional values. Furthermore, education plays a pivotal role in breaking these patterns, as demonstrated by Acar (2022) who noted that exposure to higher education facilitates shifts toward more egalitarian and modern family practices. Socio-economic inequalities also exacerbate this transition. Higher rates of poverty, lower levels of female education and stronger adherence to traditional norms in regions where these inequalities are more prevalent contribute to longer duration of religious marriages. As Yüksel-Kaptanoğlu et al. (2015) show, these structural factors are strongly associated with early marriages and traditional practices, perpetuating cycles of socio-economic and cultural conservatism.

While the study leverages a robust dataset from the Türkiye Demographic and Health Surveys (TDHS) spanning two decades, several potential biases and limitations should be acknowledged. The reliance on retrospective self-reports for marital events, such as the timing of religious and civil ceremonies, introduces the risk of recall bias. Respondents may not accurately remember the exact sequence or timing of events, particularly for marriages that occurred many years prior to the survey. Although the TDHS datasets are nationally representative, certain subpopulations, such as those in remote rural areas or with highly specific cultural practices, may be underrepresented. This could result in an incomplete depiction of marriage practices across all socio-demographic groups in Türkiye. The study combines data from five survey waves conducted between 1998 and 2018. While normalization techniques were applied to account for differences in sample weights, variations in survey design, question phrasing, and cultural context over time may have introduced inconsistencies. These differences could influence comparisons across cohorts, particularly for variables sensitive to social or cultural norms. Given the study's focus on women aged 15–49, the findings may not fully capture the marriage practices of other demographic groups, such as older women or men. Future research could address these gaps by including a broader population.

Overall, the modernization process in Türkiye has led to significant changes in marriage practices. The decreasing prevalence of religious-only marriages and the shorter durations of such unions among newer generations are consistent with theories such as the second demographic transition, developmental idealism, diffusion theory, the hybrid model, and the forerunner groups theory. The coexistence of modern and traditional elements in marriage practices positions the hybrid model as particularly relevant for Türkiye. Women who are more educated, wealthier, and whose mother tongue is Turkish serve as pioneers within traditional groups, transitioning from religious to civil marriages more swiftly and embodying the intersection of modernization and tradition in Türkiye's evolving family structure.

The findings of this study offer valuable insights for policymakers aiming to address marriage practices, promote gender equality, and reduce regional disparities in Türkiye. The significant generational decline in religious-only marriages and the shorter duration of such unions highlight the growing acceptance of civil ceremonies. This trend could be leveraged by promoting awareness campaigns that emphasize the legal protections and benefits of civil marriage. The study underscores the role of education in accelerating transitions from religious to civil marriages. Policies aimed at expanding access to education, particularly for women in rural and underdeveloped regions, could further reduce the prevalence of religious-only marriages. Additionally, integrating marriage-related topics into school curricula—such as legal rights, gender equality, and family planning—could empower younger generations to make informed decisions. The persistence of religious-only marriages among certain subpopulations, such as women from Kurdish-speaking households or low-income families, indicates the need for targeted interventions. Regional programs should address socioeconomic barriers by improving access to education and employment opportunities. By addressing these policy dimensions, Türkiye can continue its progress toward modernizing family structures while respecting cultural diversity and ensuring that all individuals benefit from the legal protections and social opportunities offered by civil marriage.

Supplementary Table 1. Factors determining resistance to transition from religious marriage to civil marriage, logistic regression results*

	Categories	Odds Ratio	CI (95%)	
Marriage cohorts	2009-2018 r	1.000		
	1999-2008	1.424	1.037	1.954
	1989-1998	3.057	2.229	4.192
	1979-1988	3.689	2.661	5.114
	1978 and before	3.637	2.573	5.140
Mother Tongue	Turkish r	1.000		
	Kurdish	2.034	1.768	2.340
	Other	1.782	1.368	2.321
Brides Money*	Yes	1.522	1.353	1.712
	No r	1.000		
Consanguinity*	Yes	1.377	1.237	1.532
	No r	1.000		
HH Wealth	Lowest	3.378	2.663	4.286
	Second	2.421	1.919	3.053
	Middle	1.842	1.462	2.320
	Fourth	1.521	1.193	1.939
	Highest r	1.000		
Education (years)	-	0.900	0.880	0.919
Age at first marriage (years)	-	0.906	0.889	0.923
Wald Chi-Square (14, p<0,001) **R^2 (Nagelkerke)**	1.702 0,313			
r Reference Category				
*This analysis is conducted with women who were married through a religious ceremony and in their first marriages and did not have a civil ceremony on the same day and have been married for at least 24 months				

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Kitaplar:

Barclay, G.W. (1958a). *Techniques of Population Analysis.* New York: John Wiley and Sons.

Makaleler:

Barrett, J.C. & Brass, W. (1974). Systematic and Change Components in Fertility Measurement. *Population Studies,* 28 (3), 473493.

Derlemeler:

Peacock, A.T. (1963). Theory of Population and Modern Economic Analysis. Population *Theory and Policy: Selected Readings* içinde, J.J. Spengler & O. D. Duncan (Ed.), New York: The Free Press of Glencoe.

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[11] Makaleler ulusal ve uluslararası geçerliliği olan akademik yayıncılığın temel etik ilkelerine uygun bir şekilde yazılmalıdır.

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[3] Articles should be between 7500-10000 words including bibliography.

[4] The articles should begin with abstracts no longer than 200 words and describe the study, written in both Turkish and English. Keywords no more than 5 words should be included after the abstracts in both Turkish and English The keywords must be among standard keywords.

[5] Tables and Figures in the text must be numbered by the order they are mentioned in the text.

[6] Footnotes should be avoided. Notes should be numbered throughout the text and be presented on a separate page titled "Notes".

[7] Appendices should be presented after the main text and before the references. They should be numbered using capital letters, as Appendix A, Appendix B, etc.

[8] Figures in the articles should be edited for black-white printing.

[9] References should be placed after the main text and be alphabetically ordered by authors' last names. For multiple works by the same author(s) within the same year, small letters "a", "b", "c", etc. should be added to the year of publication. The reference style should meet that of American Psychological Association (APA), 6th edition, as follows:

Books:

Barclay, G.W. (1958a). Techniques of Population Analysis. New York: John Wiley and Sons.

Articles:

Barrett, J.C. & Brass, W. (1974). Systematic and Change Components in Fertility Measurement. Population Studies, 28 (3), 473493.

Collective work:

Peacock, A.T. (1963). Theory of Population and Modern Economic Analysis. In J.J. Spengler & O. D. Duncan (Ed.), *Population Theory and Policy: Selected Readings,* New York: The Free Press of Glencoe.

In text citations should be given as the examples here: (Barclay, 1958a), (Barnett and Brass, 1974) or (Barclay, 1958a; Peacock, 1963). In the case of three to five authors, all last names should be written explicitly in the first citation, and "et al." should be used after the first author for the following citations; such as (Brass et al., 1980). If there are six or more authors, all uses should be "et al." followed by the first author.

[10] All articles submitted will be initially reviewed by the editorial board and then be sent to at least two referees for review. Decisions regarding the articles will be communicated to the authors. Revisions to the articles, when necessary, should be made and sent to the editor.

[11] Articles should be written in accordance with the basic ethical principles of academic publishing that have national and international validity.

[12] It will be examined by the necessary programs that the submitted work is the author's own and has not been plagiarized.

[13] "Author Contribution Rate Declaration" is mandatory for articles with more than one author.

[14] In cases where the thesis supervisor is not one of the authors of the articles produced from theses, the supervisor must fill out an "Authorship Waiver Form".

[15] For the articles that are decided to be published, the author/responsible author must fill in the "Copyright Transfer Form".

[16] One copy of the Turkish Journal of Population Studies will be sent to the author(s) free of charge.