

Review

Intergenerational Wealth Transfer and Inheritance Law: A Genealogical Perspective on Family Property and Financial Regulation

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Abstract

Intergenerational wealth transfer represents a central mechanism through which genealogical bonds, family continuity, and economic stability are maintained across generations. This article examines inheritance law and financial regulation from a genealogical perspective, focusing on the role of family property as both a legal institution and a socio-economic structure rooted in kinship and lineage. By integrating approaches from genealogy, legal studies, and financial analysis, the study explores how inheritance frameworks shape intergenerational relations, preserve family identity, and influence patterns of economic inequality. The article analyzes inheritance law as a key instrument through which genealogical continuity is institutionalized, highlighting the ways in which legal norms regulate the transmission of assets, rights, and obligations within families. Particular attention is given to the interaction between financial regulation and family-based wealth, demonstrating how legal structures affect long-term economic sustainability and social cohesion. The study adopts a qualitative and theoretical methodology, supported by comparative references to selected legal traditions, in order to illustrate how inheritance systems reflect broader cultural, historical, and genealogical values. By situating inheritance and wealth transfer within the broader framework of genealogical relations, this article contributes to interdisciplinary discussions on family, law, and the economy. It argues that inheritance law should be understood not merely as a financial or legal mechanism, but as a genealogical process that shapes intergenerational bonds, social structures, and economic outcomes over time.

Keywords: genealogy; inheritance law; intergenerational wealth transfer; family property; financial regulation; economic inequality



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1. Introduction

Intergenerational wealth transfer constitutes one of the most enduring mechanisms through which genealogical bonds are maintained and reproduced across time. Within families, the transmission of property, assets, and financial resources is not merely an economic process, but a deeply genealogical phenomenon that reinforces kinship ties, generational continuity, and social identity. In this study, genealogy is approached as a framework that encompasses diverse family forms, including nuclear, extended, blended, and separated families.

In this sense, inheritance represents a key intersection between genealogy, law, and financial regulation.

Inheritance law plays a fundamental role in institutionalizing genealogical relations by legally structuring the transfer of wealth between generations (Parisi and Smith 2017). Through legal norms governing succession, family property is preserved, redistributed, or transformed in ways that reflect broader cultural, historical, and social values.

While genealogical principles are universal, the legal examples discussed in later sections are primarily based on Kosovan inheritance law.

Financial regulation further shapes these processes by influencing how assets are managed, protected, and sustained over time. Together, these legal and financial frameworks contribute to the long-term economic stability—or instability—of family units.

This article adopts a genealogical perspective to examine inheritance law and intergenerational wealth transfer as interconnected legal and socio-economic processes. By situating family property within broader genealogical relations, the study aims to demonstrate how legal structures governing inheritance shape intergenerational relations, economic inequality, and family continuity. Rather than treating inheritance solely as a financial or juridical mechanism, the article conceptualizes it as a genealogical institution with significant implications for social and economic organization.

By integrating insights from genealogy, legal studies, and financial analysis, this study contributes to interdisciplinary scholarship on family, law, and the economy. It offers a framework for understanding inheritance law as a central element in the reproduction of genealogical bonds and the transmission of economic resources across generations.

In addition, contemporary transformations such as demographic ageing, declining birth rates, and increased mobility have significantly altered traditional patterns of wealth transmission within families. These changes challenge established legal frameworks of inheritance, raising questions about their capacity to adapt to evolving genealogical structures. As families become smaller, more geographically dispersed, and increasingly diverse in form, the mechanisms through which wealth is transferred acquire new legal and financial complexities.

Moreover, the growing financialization of assets—including real estate, financial instruments, and pension-related wealth—has intensified the role of financial regulation in shaping intergenerational transfers. The interaction between inheritance law and financial systems determines not only the distribution of family wealth but also the long-term resilience of genealogical ties (Bahtiri and Vlahna 2026). Such intergenerational transfers may also contribute to social and economic inequalities, highlighting broader societal implications.

Legal uncertainties, fragmented ownership, and inadequate regulatory protections may weaken intergenerational solidarity and disrupt the continuity of family property across generations.

From a genealogical standpoint, inheritance practices serve as narratives through which families articulate continuity, belonging, and responsibility toward future generations. Legal norms governing succession thus function as cultural instruments that encode values related to kinship, obligation, and intergenerational justice. Examining inheritance law through this lens allows for a deeper understanding of how economic resources are embedded within genealogical relations rather than existing as purely abstract financial assets. This genealogical lens provides the foundation for examining how inheritance laws and financial regulations shape these intergenerational relations, as explored in the following sections.

Finally, this study positions inheritance law within broader debates on social inequality and economic stratification (Bahtiri and Vlahna 2026). While intergenerational wealth transfer can provide security and stability for family units, it may also contribute to the reproduction of economic disparities across generations. A genealogical approach

enables a critical assessment of how legal and financial frameworks mediate between family continuity and broader societal concerns, highlighting the need for legal structures that balance genealogical preservation with principles of fairness and social cohesion.

2. Methodology

This study adopts a qualitative and interdisciplinary research methodology grounded in a genealogical approach to legal and financial analysis. Rather than relying on empirical data collection, the research is based on a systematic review and critical interpretation of existing academic literature, legal texts, and theoretical frameworks relevant to genealogy, inheritance law, and intergenerational wealth transfer.

The methodological framework integrates three complementary analytical dimensions. First, a genealogical analysis is employed to conceptualize inheritance as a process embedded in kinship relations, lineage continuity, and family structures across generations. This approach allows the study to situate legal and financial mechanisms within broader social and historical contexts, emphasizing the role of genealogy in shaping economic relations.

Second, a legal–doctrinal analysis is applied to examine the principles and normative foundations of inheritance law and related financial regulations. This involves the interpretation of legal doctrines, statutory frameworks, and scholarly legal commentary in order to identify how legal systems structure the transmission of family property and regulate intergenerational financial relations. The focus is placed on the conceptual functions of inheritance law rather than on specific national case law, enabling a broader and more transferable analytical perspective.

Third, a comparative and interpretive perspective is used to contextualize inheritance practices across different legal and cultural traditions. Selected examples from European and regional legal frameworks are referenced to illustrate variations in inheritance regimes and their implications for family property and genealogical continuity. This comparative dimension does not aim at exhaustive legal comparison but serves to highlight common patterns and structural differences relevant to genealogical analysis.

The study employs thematic analysis to synthesize insights from genealogy studies, legal theory, and financial scholarship. Key themes such as intergenerational continuity, family property, legal regulation, and economic inequality are identified and examined across the reviewed literature. Through this integrative methodology, the research seeks to demonstrate how inheritance law functions as a genealogical institution that mediates between family relations, legal norms, and economic outcomes.

3. Genealogy, Family, and Intergenerational Relations

Genealogy offers a foundational framework for understanding how family relations are structured and reproduced over time through lineage and descent. Classical anthropological and historical scholarship has emphasized that genealogy is not merely a record of biological ancestry but a social system that organizes kinship, inheritance, and belonging within families and communities (Goody 2012). Through genealogical relations, individuals are positioned within intergenerational networks that connect past, present, and future members of a family.

The family represents the primary social institution through which genealogical relations are maintained. While traditionally focused on nuclear or extended families, genealogical analysis also considers modern family forms, including blended and separated households. Kinship systems define roles, responsibilities, and rights among family members, shaping intergenerational interactions and the transmission of resources (Fortes [1969] 2013). These systems are reinforced through legal recognition and cultural practices

that stabilize family structures across generations. As a result, genealogy functions as a bridge between private family life and broader social organization.

Intergenerational relations play a central role in sustaining family continuity. Scholars have shown that the transmission of material resources, such as property and wealth, is closely linked to the transmission of social status, values, and identity (Bourdieu 1990). From this perspective, intergenerational wealth transfer cannot be separated from genealogical relations, as both are embedded within enduring family structures that reproduce social positions over time.

Sociological research on intergenerational solidarity further highlights the importance of genealogical bonds in maintaining cooperation and mutual support within families. Roberts et al. (1991) emphasize that intergenerational relations involve long-term commitments that extend beyond economic exchange, encompassing emotional, normative, and functional dimensions. These bonds contribute to social stability by providing informal systems of support and continuity within changing social environments.

Moreover, historical studies demonstrate that genealogical thinking has played a key role in shaping legal and economic institutions, particularly in relation to inheritance and succession (Sabean et al. 2007). By embedding genealogical principles into legal frameworks, societies formalize intergenerational relations and regulate the transfer of rights and obligations within families. This institutionalization underscores the enduring relevance of genealogy in structuring family relations and economic life.

By conceptualizing family and intergenerational relations through a genealogical lens, this section establishes a theoretical foundation for analyzing inheritance as both a legal and social process. Understanding genealogy as a relational structure enables a more nuanced examination of how family continuity is maintained through intergenerational transfers, a theme developed further in the subsequent sections. These genealogical relations not only structure family continuity but also intersect with broader social and economic inequalities, which will be explored in the following sections.

3.1. *The Family as a Genealogical Institution*

The family functions as a fundamental genealogical institution through which lineage, descent, and kinship are formally and informally organized. This study also considers contemporary family forms, including blended, separated, and non-traditional households, acknowledging the diversity of genealogical arrangements in modern society. Anthropological scholarship has long emphasized that family structures are not merely biological units but socially constructed systems that regulate belonging, authority, and continuity across generations (Fortes [1969] 2013; Rubin et al. 2024). Through these structures, genealogy becomes institutionalized within everyday social life.

From a genealogical perspective, the family provides the primary framework for defining legitimate descent and transmission. Legal and cultural norms governing marriage, parenthood, and succession establish the boundaries of genealogical membership and determine how rights and obligations are distributed within families (Goody 2012). These norms transform biological relationships into socially recognized genealogical ties, reinforcing the family's institutional role.

Historically, families have operated as economic units in which property, labor, and resources are collectively managed and transmitted across generations. These economic functions of families also have broader social implications, influencing patterns of inequality and access to wealth across generations. Bourdieu (1990) argues that the family plays a central role in the reproduction of social and economic capital, functioning as an institutional mechanism through which accumulated resources are preserved and transferred. In this sense, genealogy underpins not only family identity but also economic continuity.

The institutional character of the family is further reinforced through legal systems that formalize genealogical relations. Inheritance law, in particular, codifies family structures by determining succession rules and legitimizing claims based on descent (Ajefu et al. 2024; Sabeau et al. 2007). Through such legal frameworks, genealogical ties acquire juridical force, stabilizing family relations over time (Powell 2024).

Understanding the family as a genealogical institution allows for a deeper analysis of how intergenerational relations are structured and maintained. It highlights the ways in which families serve as enduring sites for the transmission of both material resources and social values, linking individual lives to broader historical and institutional contexts.

Furthermore, the family as a genealogical institution adapts to social change while maintaining continuity. Changes in household composition, marriage patterns, and demographic trends influence how families reproduce their lineage and manage resources (Roberts et al. 1991). Despite these changes, the family remains the principal site for transmitting values, social roles, and economic resources, illustrating its dual function as a flexible yet enduring institution.

Finally, understanding the family in genealogical terms allows scholars to link micro-level family dynamics with broader social and historical processes. It highlights the interplay between cultural norms, legal frameworks, and economic practices that shape intergenerational continuity. By doing so, the concept of the family as an institution situates genealogy at the intersection of social, economic, and legal analysis, providing a comprehensive framework for examining inheritance and wealth transfer in subsequent sections of this study.

3.2. The Role of Generations in the Preservation of Wealth

Intergenerational relations are central to the preservation and transmission of family wealth, both material and symbolic. Each generation functions not only as a recipient of inherited resources but also as a custodian responsible for managing and passing these resources to future descendants. The ability of families to maintain wealth across generations is closely linked to the alignment between genealogical structures, legal frameworks, and financial practices (Peci and Gashi 2024).

Inheritance practices serve as key mechanisms through which wealth is preserved within genealogical lines (Bourdieu 1990). These practices are embedded within cultural norms, legal regulations, and family strategies that determine how property, land, or financial assets are allocated among descendants (Goody 2012). The intergenerational transfer of wealth reinforces family identity and provides continuity, ensuring that resources accumulated by previous generations continue to support the social and economic position of the lineage. These processes, however, can also contribute to broader patterns of social inequality, as accumulated wealth may reinforce advantages for some lineages over others.

Sociological research emphasizes that intergenerational wealth transmission extends beyond purely economic dimensions. Intergenerational solidarity involves long-term commitments encompassing emotional support, normative obligations, and practical assistance (Roberts et al. 1991). This study acknowledges that these relations can take diverse forms in contemporary families, including blended or separated households, which may affect how wealth is managed and transmitted. Wealth transfer, therefore, operates within a broader relational context, where financial resources, family values, and social expectations are interconnected.

Historical studies also demonstrate that legal and institutional structures play a crucial role in enabling or constraining intergenerational wealth preservation (Peci and Gashi 2024). For example, European inheritance laws codified rules of succession to protect family estates and ensure continuity across generations (Sabeau et al. 2007). Such frameworks reinforce

genealogical bonds by formalizing the responsibilities of each generation in managing and transmitting resources.

While legal and institutional frameworks set the formal rules, families themselves develop practical strategies to navigate these frameworks and preserve their wealth across generations. These practical strategies complement the legal frameworks, allowing families to actively manage and preserve their wealth across generations.

Families adapt to demographic and social changes, such as reduced family size, geographic mobility, and evolving household structures, by developing strategies to preserve economic capital, including joint ownership, trusts, or carefully structured succession plans.

These adaptations illustrate the dynamic interplay between genealogy, law, and financial management in safeguarding family resources. Intergenerational wealth transfer is not merely an economic process but also deeply genealogical and social, as advantages tend to persist across multiple generations, linking family identity, social values, and material resources over time (Pfeffer and Killewald 2017; Beckert 2008).

3.3. Genealogical Bonds and Social Stability

Genealogical bonds extend beyond the immediate family to influence broader social structures and contribute to community stability. These bonds, established through kinship, descent, and intergenerational obligations, function as networks of mutual support that organize social relations over time (Sabeau et al. 2007). By structuring responsibilities, inheritance, and caregiving, genealogical ties reinforce social cohesion within and across families.

Intergenerational relationships embedded in genealogical networks provide mechanisms for economic and social support. Roberts et al. (1991) highlight that such bonds include not only financial assistance but also emotional support and the transmission of values and social norms. Families with strong genealogical ties are better equipped to cope with social and economic challenges, ensuring stability and continuity across generations.

Historically, the institutionalization of genealogical bonds through legal frameworks has helped societies formalize responsibilities and rights among family members. In the context of Kosovo, inheritance and family laws similarly formalize genealogical responsibilities, reflecting both local traditions and broader legal norms. Inheritance laws, marital property regulations, and lineage-based rights establish a predictable system of obligations, reducing conflict and promoting long-term family and community stability (Goody 2012; Pistor 2019). These legal and cultural mechanisms link private genealogical structures to wider social order.

Genealogical bonds also influence social stratification and economic continuity. The intergenerational transfer of wealth, knowledge, and status helps maintain both family and social positions, reinforcing societal hierarchies while simultaneously providing a framework for social stability (Bourdieu 1990). Families with strong genealogical continuity can mitigate the impact of economic shocks on individual members and support collective resilience. However, these processes can also reproduce social and economic inequalities, as some families accumulate and preserve advantages across generations, affecting broader societal equity.

Moreover, demographic and societal changes—such as smaller family size, geographic mobility, and diverse household forms—affect the strength and functioning of genealogical networks. Despite these changes, the persistence of genealogical bonds illustrates their enduring role in maintaining social cohesion, linking private family strategies to public stability.

In conclusion, genealogical bonds are a key mechanism through which families contribute to social stability. By connecting generations, organizing the transmission of re-

sources, and reinforcing cultural and legal norms, these ties sustain both family continuity and wider societal order. Understanding the social role of genealogical bonds provides a critical foundation for analyzing inheritance, wealth transfer, and intergenerational relations in subsequent sections of this study.

4. Inheritance Law as a Genealogical Institution

Inheritance law represents a formal mechanism through which genealogical continuity is institutionalized. In the Kosovo context, inheritance law similarly formalizes familial responsibilities and rights, reflecting both local traditions and codified legal norms. It regulates the distribution of family property and codifies responsibilities and rights across generations, thus reinforcing the structure of kinship and lineage (Sabeau 1976). By embedding legal norms into family relations, inheritance law transforms genealogical bonds into enforceable obligations, linking private family life to broader social and economic systems.

4.1. Basic Principles of Inheritance Law

The basic principles of inheritance law establish who is entitled to receive property upon the death of a family member and under what conditions. These principles often include rules of succession, testamentary freedom, and protections for certain family members such as spouses and children (Collins 2003). In many legal systems, inheritance law balances the preservation of family wealth with principles of fairness, ensuring that intergenerational transfers are both socially legitimate and economically sustainable.

Inheritance rules vary across legal traditions but commonly share the objective of maintaining continuity within families. For example, European civil law historically emphasized primogeniture or equal division among children, reflecting both economic and genealogical concerns (Goody 2012). By establishing predictable outcomes, inheritance law reduces potential conflicts within families and provides a framework for long-term wealth preservation (Vlahna et al. 2025).

4.2. Inheritance as an Intergenerational Legal Mechanism

Inheritance functions as an intergenerational legal mechanism, ensuring that property, wealth, and responsibilities are transmitted according to socially recognized genealogical norms. Legal frameworks formalize the transfer of resources from one generation to the next, reinforcing familial cohesion and continuity (Bourdieu 1990). Beyond economic considerations, inheritance law encodes values, obligations, and expectations, linking material transfers to the maintenance of family identity. However, these legal mechanisms may also contribute to the reproduction of social and economic inequalities, as certain families are able to consolidate wealth and influence across generations.

Through the legal recognition of genealogical relations, inheritance law also structures the exercise of power and authority within families. It defines legitimate heirs, allocates decision-making rights, and delineates the responsibilities of executors and guardians. In doing so, inheritance law functions as both a social and legal instrument that stabilizes intergenerational relations (Sabeau et al. 2007).

4.3. Family and Property in Historical Perspective

This historical perspective sets the stage for analyzing contemporary inheritance practices and their implications for genealogical continuity and social stability in subsequent sections. Historically, inheritance practices have evolved alongside changes in family structures, property systems, and legal institutions. In early modern Europe, for instance, inheritance norms were closely linked to agrarian economies and the preservation of estates within patrilineal lines (Sabeau 1976). Such historical patterns demonstrate how legal

mechanisms adapt to economic and demographic conditions, reinforcing genealogical continuity while also reflecting broader societal priorities.

Over time, shifts in family composition, economic diversification, and the emergence of modern financial systems have transformed inheritance practices. Contemporary legal systems increasingly accommodate diverse family forms, blended households, and nontraditional heirs, highlighting the dynamic interaction between genealogical norms, law, and economic structures (Collins 2003). Understanding inheritance in historical perspective thus provides critical insight into the ways genealogical institutions mediate between family, law, and society.

5. Financial Regulation and Family Property

Financial regulation constitutes a central pillar in preserving family wealth and sustaining genealogical continuity. By defining property rights, taxation rules, and fiduciary responsibilities, regulatory systems shape how families manage, protect, and transmit resources across generations. These regulations not only secure economic assets but also reinforce social and cultural norms embedded in genealogical bonds (Bourdieu 1990).

Historically, the legal and financial frameworks governing family property have played a decisive role in maintaining intergenerational continuity. Inheritance laws, property rights, and fiscal obligations have structured the ways in which wealth is allocated among heirs, ensuring that families retain both economic resources and social standing over time (Goody 2012). In many societies, these regulations were deliberately designed to prevent fragmentation of estates, protect family interests, and reinforce lineage-based hierarchies, illustrating the intrinsic connection between law, finance, and genealogy.

In contemporary contexts, financial regulation continues to be a decisive factor in intergenerational wealth management. Taxation policies, fiduciary duties, and estate planning instruments such as trusts and family offices provide mechanisms to preserve wealth while adhering to legal obligations (Collins 2003; Piketty 2014). These tools are not merely technical; they embody cultural and social expectations about the responsibilities of one generation to the next, linking material assets with genealogical identity.

Moreover, financial regulation interacts with broader social and economic structures, influencing the stability and resilience of families. Effective regulation can mitigate disputes over inheritance, prevent the dissipation of resources, and ensure that family wealth continues to serve both economic and genealogical functions. Nevertheless, such regulations may also unintentionally reinforce existing inequalities by privileging families with greater access to legal and financial expertise, potentially widening social and economic disparities. In this way, financial rules operate as both protective and enabling mechanisms: they safeguard property while allowing families to adapt to changing demographic, legal, and economic environments.

Understanding financial regulation as central to family property management highlights the dual role of law: as a mechanism for enforcing economic continuity and as a framework that formalizes genealogical obligations. By establishing predictable rules for ownership, succession, and fiduciary accountability, regulatory systems integrate material wealth with social and cultural continuity, demonstrating that family property is both an economic and a genealogical institution.

Modern financial regulation provides a framework for accountability and transparency in financial management, offering principles that can inform private family wealth governance (Law No. 03/L-048 on Public Financial Management and Accountability 2008). In the Kosovo context, financial regulations similarly establish clear fiduciary responsibilities and mechanisms for estate management, reflecting both legal standards and local practices.

Although primarily designed for public sector governance, principles from public financial management law can offer insights into accountability mechanisms that may also influence familial financial strategies (*Law No. 03/L-048 on Public Financial Management and Accountability* 2008). This discussion of financial regulation complements the analysis of inheritance law, highlighting how legal and financial systems together shape intergenerational wealth transfer and the preservation of genealogical continuity.

5.1. Interaction Between Financial Law and Family Property

Financial law interacts with family property by establishing clear ownership rights, regulating intergenerational transfers, and providing mechanisms to prevent disputes. Legal frameworks define who may claim, manage, or dispose of property, thereby formalizing the responsibilities of heirs and reinforcing genealogical continuity (*Law No. 2004/26 Law of Kosovo* 2006; *Law No. 03/L-154 on Property and Property and Other Real Rights* 2009). In the Kosovo context, similar regulations define ownership rights, inheritance procedures, and fiduciary responsibilities, providing a local framework for managing family wealth across generations.

Tools such as trusts, wills, and joint ownership agreements allow families to organize wealth strategically. Trusts, for instance, have been used historically in both Europe and the United States to safeguard family estates, protect assets from fragmentation, and ensure that property is transferred according to the family's long-term objectives (Sabean 1976). Wills codify the distribution of assets and prevent potential disputes among heirs, while joint ownership agreements facilitate shared responsibility and control over valuable property, particularly in blended or extended family households.

Tax regulations significantly influence family property management. Inheritance taxes, capital gains rules, and gift taxes create financial incentives that shape intergenerational wealth transfer strategies. Families often employ careful planning, such as lifetime gifts, charitable contributions, or the establishment of family trusts, to minimize tax liabilities while preserving the integrity of family assets (Piketty 2014). However, such strategies may inadvertently favor wealthier families, potentially reinforcing economic inequalities and limiting access for less affluent households.

These strategies demonstrate how law and finance are intertwined in maintaining both economic and genealogical continuity.

Historically, legal mechanisms have adapted to social and economic contexts to preserve family wealth. In medieval and early modern Europe, primogeniture laws and entailed estates were used to prevent the division of property among multiple heirs, ensuring that family wealth and social status remained concentrated within a genealogical line (Goody 2012). Modern legal instruments, including family offices and corporate structures, extend these principles to contemporary contexts, allowing families to manage complex financial portfolios while maintaining intergenerational continuity (*Law No. 2004/26 Law of Kosovo* 2006; *Law No. 03/L-154 on Property and Property and Other Real Rights* 2009). This discussion links financial regulation directly to inheritance law and genealogical structures, emphasizing how legal and financial frameworks jointly sustain family continuity and intergenerational wealth transfer.

In sum, the interaction between financial law and family property illustrates that legal and regulatory frameworks are not merely technical tools—they are central instruments through which families preserve economic resources, reinforce genealogical bonds, and ensure the long-term stability of wealth across generations.

5.2. Legal Protection of Intergenerational Wealth

Legal protection of intergenerational wealth is essential for maintaining family stability, preserving genealogical continuity, and safeguarding economic resources across generations. Laws regulating inheritance, estate planning, fiduciary responsibilities, and property rights formalize the responsibilities of heirs, trustees, and guardians, ensuring that family assets are transferred predictably and securely (Collins 2003).

Historically, societies have developed diverse legal mechanisms to protect family wealth. In medieval and early modern Europe, primogeniture and entailed estates were used to prevent the division of land and property, maintaining both economic strength and social status within a genealogical line (Sabeau 1976). Such legal frameworks ensured that wealth remained concentrated, family estates intact, and intergenerational responsibilities clearly defined.

Modern legal systems continue to protect family assets through instruments such as trusts, family foundations, life insurance policies, and corporate structures. Trusts, for example, allow families to specify conditions for the management and distribution of assets over multiple generations, preventing misuse or premature dispersion of property (Collins 2003). Similarly, family offices—professional entities managing the financial affairs of wealthy families—formalize governance, succession planning, and legal compliance, linking financial management directly with genealogical continuity.

Legal protection also interacts with taxation and regulatory frameworks. Inheritance taxes, estate duties, and capital gains rules create both challenges and incentives for families to preserve wealth. Families often adopt strategies such as lifetime gifting, charitable trusts, and structured succession plans to comply with the law while maximizing asset retention across generations (Piketty 2014). These mechanisms demonstrate how law provides both a protective and a strategic function, ensuring that intergenerational wealth serves familial, social, and economic goals.

Importantly, legal protection of family wealth is not limited to material assets. Intellectual property, family businesses, and cultural heritage can also be safeguarded legally, ensuring that both tangible and intangible family resources support genealogical continuity (Bourdieu 1990). By embedding these protections within a legal framework, families reinforce social norms, values, and responsibilities across generations, highlighting the inseparable link between law, wealth, and genealogy.

In conclusion, legal protection of intergenerational wealth ensures that family property is preserved, transmitted, and managed according to both economic and genealogical priorities. Through historical precedents and contemporary legal instruments, law functions as a central mechanism by which families safeguard their assets, maintain continuity, and reinforce the stability of genealogical and social bonds (Law No. 2004/26 Law of Kosovo 2006; Law No. 03/L-154 on Property and Property and Other Real Rights 2009). Specifically in Kosovo, inheritance and property laws provide mechanisms for formalizing succession, protecting family estates, and ensuring legal compliance in intergenerational wealth transfer.

5.3. Financial Management of Inheritance

Effective financial management of inheritance is essential to ensure that intergenerational transfers of wealth contribute to long-term family stability, social continuity, and the preservation of genealogical identity. While legal instruments such as wills, trusts, and estate planning provide the formal framework for inheritance, practical financial strategies determine whether these assets are preserved, grown, or dissipated over time (Bourdieu 1990; Collins 2003).

Families employ a range of financial management tools to safeguard inherited wealth. Historically, landed estates in Europe were managed with strict oversight to maintain the

economic viability of the property across generations. Estate managers, stewards, and family councils monitored agricultural production, tenancy agreements, and investment of surplus capital to ensure continuity of wealth (Sabeau 1976). These practices illustrate how financial management has always been inseparable from genealogical considerations.

In contemporary contexts, families utilize modern financial instruments such as diversified investment portfolios, family offices, insurance policies, and corporate structures to manage inheritance efficiently. Family offices, in particular, coordinate legal, tax, and investment strategies for wealthy households, ensuring that wealth is not only protected but also strategically allocated to support both current needs and future generations (Collins 2003; Piketty 2014). Such management aligns material resources with genealogical responsibilities, reinforcing the family's social and economic position over time.

Financial literacy and governance within families are critical for sustainable inheritance management. Families that establish formal governance structures, such as family constitutions or advisory boards, facilitate decision-making, educate younger generations on asset management, and promote intergenerational accountability. However, these practices may inadvertently privilege wealthier families, potentially reinforcing socio-economic inequalities and limiting access to intergenerational wealth for less affluent households. This structured approach prevents conflicts, mitigates risks, and ensures that inherited wealth serves its intended purpose: to support family continuity and social cohesion.

Furthermore, financial management interacts closely with regulatory frameworks. Compliance with taxation, fiduciary, and reporting requirements ensures that assets are legally protected and reduces the likelihood of disputes among heirs. Strategic planning, such as lifetime gifting or charitable foundations, allows families to optimize asset retention while fulfilling legal and social obligations (Piketty 2014).

In conclusion, financial management of inheritance is a crucial complement to legal protections. By combining strategic planning, regulatory compliance, and intergenerational governance, families can maintain wealth across generations, reinforcing genealogical continuity, social stability, and the long-term viability of family property. This highlights the inseparable relationship between law, finance, and genealogy in sustaining family institutions. Overall, legal protections and financial management together demonstrate how law, finance, and genealogical principles are intertwined, ensuring that family property is preserved and transferred in ways that sustain both economic resources and social continuity.

6. Discussion: A Genealogical Perspective on Law and the Economy

The discussion of inheritance law and family wealth from a genealogical perspective highlights the complex interplay between legal structures, cultural norms, and economic continuity. Inheritance is not merely a financial mechanism; it functions as a cultural and social institution that shapes family identity, transmits social values, and maintains intergenerational obligations (Bourdieu 1990).

Legal frameworks governing inheritance reflect societal expectations about family roles, responsibilities, and hierarchies. They formalize who is entitled to receive assets, under what conditions, and with what obligations, embedding cultural and genealogical norms within the structure of law. By codifying these rules, societies reinforce family cohesion and ensure continuity across generations, linking material wealth with social and cultural identity.

Furthermore, inheritance law interacts directly with economic structures, influencing the distribution of wealth, family strategies for property management, and the long-term sustainability of resources. Families must navigate both legal obligations and financial considerations to preserve their assets, which in turn reinforces genealogical continuity and social stability (Collins 2003; Piketty 2014).

By analyzing inheritance through a genealogical lens, we see that it is not only about transferring property but also about transmitting values, knowledge, social networks, and cultural capital. This multidimensional perspective allows us to understand inheritance as a central mechanism through which families maintain identity, social cohesion, and intergenerational continuity over time.

6.1. *Inheritance Law as a Cultural Structure*

Inheritance law functions not only as a legal framework but also as a reflection of cultural values, social norms, and family identity. By codifying the roles and responsibilities of heirs, trustees, and guardians, legal systems formalize genealogical obligations and embed cultural expectations within the structure of family wealth management (Collins 2003).

Historically, inheritance laws were deeply intertwined with social hierarchies and cultural practices. For example, primogeniture in medieval Europe ensured that estates remained intact under the eldest male heir, reinforcing both social status and family lineage (Sabeau 1976). Similarly, entailed estates legally restricted the division or sale of family property, preserving long-term wealth and cultural identity across generations. These legal mechanisms demonstrate how law can shape not only economic outcomes but also the continuity of genealogical and social structures.

In modern societies, inheritance law continues to perform cultural and social functions. Legal instruments such as wills, trusts, and family foundations allow families to regulate succession, define responsibilities, and maintain cohesion. In the Kosovo context, recent reforms in inheritance and family law provide mechanisms to formalize succession, protect family property, and integrate both legal and cultural norms in intergenerational wealth transfer. These mechanisms are particularly important for complex family structures, blended families, or transnational contexts, where legal clarity ensures that cultural and familial expectations are upheld (Collins 2003).

Moreover, inheritance law reflects and reinforces cultural norms beyond economics. It formalizes expectations regarding care, responsibility, and social obligations, ensuring that family wealth supports the education, welfare, and social positioning of descendants. In this sense, law operates not merely as a technical tool but as a cultural structure that integrates material, social, and symbolic dimensions of family life.

By understanding inheritance law as a cultural structure, we can see that legal systems do more than distribute property—they actively shape the continuity of genealogical identity, family cohesion, and intergenerational responsibility, linking material wealth with the enduring values and social capital of the family (Bourdieu 1990).

6.2. *Inheritance Beyond Financial Aspects*

Inheritance extends beyond the mere transfer of financial assets to encompass intangible elements such as family traditions, social networks, knowledge, and cultural identity. These non-material aspects are central to sustaining genealogical continuity, shaping intergenerational relationships, and reinforcing social cohesion (Bourdieu 1990).

Legal frameworks increasingly recognize the importance of non-financial inheritance, including intellectual property, family businesses, and cultural heritage. By formalizing the transmission of these assets, law ensures that families can preserve both material wealth and the social and symbolic capital that defines their identity (Collins 2003). For example, succession planning for family-owned enterprises often integrates governance rules, mentoring of younger generations, and protections for legacy knowledge, combining financial management with the transmission of expertise and social networks.

Cultural practices embedded in inheritance also strengthen family bonds. Oral histories, rituals, and naming conventions reinforce genealogical identity and a sense of

belonging, while legal recognition of these practices helps prevent disputes and ensures continuity across generations (Sabeau 1976). In this sense, inheritance is a multidimensional process, linking material resources with values, social expectations, and family memory.

Furthermore, inheritance carries social responsibilities. Families are expected to care for younger or dependent members, educate heirs, and contribute to the welfare of the broader community. However, these practices may also reinforce socio-economic inequalities, as families with greater wealth and resources can more effectively maintain intergenerational advantages, while less affluent households may face barriers to sustaining continuity. By integrating these obligations into legal and financial planning, inheritance becomes a mechanism that aligns economic, social, and cultural continuity, demonstrating the inseparable connection between wealth, law, and genealogy.

In conclusion, understanding inheritance beyond its financial aspects highlights that wealth transfer is not merely an economic transaction but a holistic process that preserves genealogical identity, social cohesion, and cultural capital. Legal and financial instruments thus function as tools that formalize both tangible and intangible inheritance, reinforcing the family's long-term stability and intergenerational responsibility. By integrating legal, financial, and genealogical perspectives, this discussion underscores how inheritance serves not only as a mechanism for wealth transfer but also as a central institution linking family identity, social cohesion, and intergenerational responsibility, consistent with the analyses in Sections 3–5.

7. Conclusions

This study explored the complex relationship between inheritance law, family wealth management, and genealogical continuity. By examining the legal, financial, and cultural dimensions of inheritance, we have highlighted how families use both formal and informal mechanisms to preserve assets, transmit social and cultural capital, and maintain intergenerational bonds.

Inheritance law functions not only as a legal framework but also as a cultural structure that formalizes family responsibilities, shapes intergenerational roles, and reflects societal norms and expectations (Collins 2003; Goody 2012). Financial mechanisms, such as trusts, wills, and family offices, complement legal instruments by ensuring that assets are managed strategically and preserved across generations (Piketty 2014). At the same time, inheritance carries non-material significance, including traditions, knowledge, and social networks, which are crucial for maintaining genealogical identity and family cohesion (Bourdieu 1990; Sabeau 1976).

By analyzing both tangible and intangible inheritance, this study demonstrates that wealth transfer is a multidimensional process. Families do not merely transfer property—they transmit values, education, social responsibilities, and cultural capital. Legal and financial tools serve as instruments to formalize these transfers, reduce disputes, and ensure that the family continues to function as a stable social and economic unit over time.

This comprehensive perspective illustrates the inseparable connection between law, finance, and genealogy. It shows that effective inheritance management supports not only economic stability but also the preservation of family identity, social cohesion, and intergenerational continuity, highlighting the broader significance of inheritance as a central institution in both historical and contemporary contexts.

7.1. Key Findings

The key findings of this study are as follows:

1. Legal frameworks are central to intergenerational wealth transfer: Inheritance laws, trusts, wills, and family offices provide formal structures that protect family assets and ensure continuity across generations (Collins 2003; Piketty 2014).
2. Family property management is both financial and genealogical: Effective financial strategies, combined with legal compliance, maintain family wealth while reinforcing social identity, cultural values, and family cohesion (Bourdieu 1990).
3. Inheritance extends beyond material wealth: Non-financial elements such as family traditions, intellectual property, social networks, and cultural knowledge are crucial for sustaining genealogical identity and social cohesion (Goody 2012).

7.2. Contribution to Genealogical Studies

This research contributes to genealogical studies by emphasizing the interconnection between law, finance, and genealogy. It demonstrates that inheritance is not merely a legal or economic act but a multidimensional institution that shapes family identity, cultural continuity, and social stability. The study provides a framework for understanding how legal and financial mechanisms operate to preserve genealogical bonds over time.

7.3. Suggestions for Future Research

We suggest that future research explore the following fields:

1. Comparative studies across cultures: Future research could investigate how different legal systems and cultural practices affect intergenerational wealth transfer and genealogical continuity.
2. Impact of modern financial instruments: The role of family offices, corporate structures, and digital assets in preserving wealth and genealogy warrants further investigation.
3. Interdisciplinary approaches: Integrating insights from sociology, anthropology, law, and finance could provide a more comprehensive understanding of inheritance as both an economic and genealogical institution.

In conclusion, inheritance is a complex, multidimensional process that integrates legal, financial, and cultural dimensions to sustain family wealth, genealogical identity, and social cohesion. By examining inheritance from a genealogical perspective, this study highlights the central role of law and finance in maintaining intergenerational continuity, offering valuable insights for both scholars and practitioners in the fields of genealogy, law, and economics.

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