

Mother Employment And The Role Of Care Services In Albania

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Abstract

Women employment and maintaining the balance between work and family life is a key issue in the modern society where adult worker families are replacing the traditional model of the working father and the housewife mother. Because of different expectations men and women are educated and oriented differently which impacts their economic status. We wanted to see how marriage influence their path to labor force participation In this article we explore women labor force participation and inactivity, with a special focus to married women and the effect that marriage has in labor status. Another issue we want to highlight is the relationship between inactivity and care services for children, disabled and elderly. We had used the data of Labor Force Survey in Albania 2007-2013. We have found a clear relation between women low rates of economic engagement and the care services availability and accessibility.

Keywords: Work, family, women, employment, care services

Introduction

For most individuals in advanced industrial societies paid work is probably the defining feature of their lives. It provides not only a livelihood but often determines the social standing and the sense of personal identity. People's employment opportunities affect their health longevity as well as their overall quality of life (May M. 2006) Employment and especially women employment is also a key indicator of society development, including economic growth and impacts demographic trends and social transformation to family formation and composition, fertility rates and many others.

According to the latest census (2011), 61% of women in Albania are working compared to 76.4% of men. They are mostly employed in the public institutions, care services, mostly employees and less self-employed compared to men.

Despite the continuous increase of women participation in the labor market, child rearing and family responsibilities, still remain her responsibility. In this way it is the real obstacles for the labor market participation for most of the women especially for mothers with young children.

Latest data show that the nuclear family has become the typical family of Albanian society. 80% of the families are composed of parents and children, including lone parents (INSTAT, UNFPA, UN Women 2014). This shift from traditional to nuclear families has led to adult worker family, where both men and women are expected to be in paid employment (Lewis, 2001 at Orloff 2010).

Working mothers still carry the dual burden of work and family responsibilities that often are in conflict. Keeping the balance is very important for their own well-being, children's and families. Social policies and services can help to keep the balance.

For some mothers the care role becomes a strong indicator in their labor market participation. From all inactive women, 49% are doing the housewife full time. (INSTAT, UNFPA, UN Women 2014). Different studies focus on the role care services play in women' labor force participation rate. We explore women labor force participation to see the impact of marriage for men and women. Another aim of this article is to evaluate the role of care services for married women employment decision making.

Methods

Our hypotheses is that marriage, because of traditional gender roles, is a factor which impacts women labor force participation and that social care services are important for supporting women labor force participation. We have done our analysis based on the data gathered from INSTAT (Albanian Public Institute of Statistic) through labor force survey (LFS) from 2007 to 2013. Labour Force Survey is household based survey. All individuals aged 15 years and over in the selected household are subject of labour force survey. We check for the data that support our main research questions: What is the difference of labor force participation between men and women and has marriage any impact in it? What is the role of care services in women decision to labor force participation. Using cross tabulation in SPSS with two layers: gender and marital status, we pointed out the relationship between marital status and gender.

Women employment in Albania past and present

In Albania, during communism {1945-90}, women have played an active role in the labor market. There was a public interest initiated from the state and supported through policies and services such as: free and accessible health care, educational reform and in particular, female education reform, equal employment and full employment policies followed by complementary policies to help mothers, such as a system of government sponsored nurseries and kindergartens, that created a more emancipated environment for women (Gjonca, Aassve, Mencarini, 2008 p.289) In 1989, 47% of the labor forces were women which represented 78% of women within work age. Sectors with the higher wages included education, health, culture sectors mainly were dominated by women (Pino S., 2007 p. 51). Even though there was a lot of public support, the traditional gender roles within the family remained the same especially in child and elderly care and domestic work. The mother had the heaviest burden, caring for family and being an active citizen in the public sphere; acting full time both roles. With the change of the system from centralized to free market economy from 1991, women's engagement in the public sphere dropped dramatically. Some of the most important industries in the country closed and unemployment was one of the main concerns for the policymakers. Women withdrawal from the labor market uncovered the one sided policies to women emancipation, focused more in pushing women to public sphere and doing less or nothing to relieve her role in the family especially care and domestic work.

Labor force participation 2007-2013

The data reflect a decrease on labour force participation rate through the years for both sexes, and a consistent gender gap through the period.

Labor force participation rate							
Age group	2007	2008	2009	2010	2011	2012	2013
Albania							
15-29	50.1	41.6	45.6	44.3	54.8	46.6	38.7
30-64	75.6	71.8	73.2	74.4	76.7	73.8	71.1
15-64	65.4	62.1	62.1	62.3	68.5	64.9	59.6
15+	58.0	53.3	55.1	55.2	60.3	57.3	52.4
Male							
15-29	57.1	48.2	52.5	51.6	62.2	54.1	47.9
30-64	86.5	84.1	87.2	86.3	85.2	84.2	82.9
15-64	74.7	72.4	73.5	72.3	76.4	73.4	70.2
15+	66.9	61.7	64.9	64.0	67.9	65.5	61.7
Gender Gap	15-29	14.0	12.5	12.7	14.2	15.3	17.8
	30-64	21.5	23.2	26.9	23.0	16.6	22.1
	15-64	18.5	19.5	21.7	19.4	15.6	20.1
	15+	17.4	16.1	18.7	17.1	14.9	17.7
Female							
15-29	43.2	35.6	39.8	37.4	47.0	37.7	30.1
30-64	64.9	60.9	60.3	63.3	68.6	64.4	60.7
15-64	56.2	52.9	51.8	52.9	60.8	56.4	50.1
15+	49.5	45.7	46.2	46.9	52.9	49.2	44.0

Table No.1 Source: Labor force survey 2007 – 2013, INSTAT

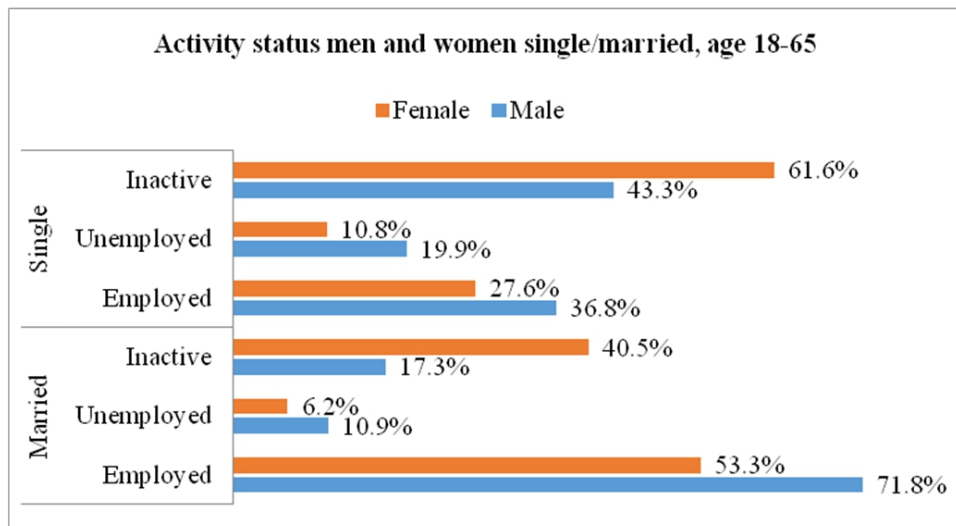
If we focus on age difference, we see that labor force participation increases with age for both sexes but older men's rates increase more than older women's rates.

With age employers gain more experience and are more stable but the gender gap increases.

Education and availability of the works in the market can help some how explain the difference in employment between men and women. Due to cultural factors. men and women still are educated in different areas but there is not a clear relation between employment market and education.

Data on education present a continuous positive shift toward women education, especially in higher education. In 2013, 65% of tertiary graduates were women and 35% were men (INSTAT, 2014). But unfortunately this is not reflected in the labor market. According to a study from UN Women on gender wage gap in 2011 in Albania, there is a clear distinction of women and men position in labor market related to wage, sector of employment and position in the workplace. Women are mainly employed in public sector occupations such as education, healthcare, public administration, technicians, clerks and services. Men on the other hand, are over three times more likely to be in legislators, senior officials and managers.

Marriage, child rearing and caring, are also a contributing factor to women labor force participation and inactivity.



Graph No1, Source:Labor force survey 2013

In the graph no.1 it is clear that the gender gap of inactivity increases with marriage, even though due to age and experience the gap should have been lower. The calculation is done only for the population between 18 – 65, excluding those being inactive because of compulsory education or retirement. We present the data only for 2013, but the gender gap is similar even for all other years.

Married women are about 20 % more inactive than married man and about 20% less employed. Meanwhile after marriage they are more passive than men in looking for employment about 2%.

Even in industrialized countries where women are supported to earn a wage outside the home, it is expected they to spend less time outside the family, especially when they have young children (Corrigall & Conrad, 2006). After marriage the majority of women may be taking time away from the labor market to either have children or to take care of their children. Meanwhile women with small children have much more difficulties for entering to the market not only because of their caring role but also for the lack of experience and sometimes adequate qualification.

The passive attitude in the labor market is also expressed through choosing jobs with fewer responsibilities. In her book "Lean In" Sheryl Sandberg(2013) has dedicated a full chapter to work force withdrawal of women and called it "*Don't leave before you leave*". She focused on the gender role divisions and the unconscious preparation of women for their caring role far before they have children or even before getting married. She states "*Women rarely make one big decision to leave the workforce. Instead, they make a lot of small decisions along the way, making accommodations*

and sacrifices that they believe will be required to have a family. Of all the ways women hold themselves back, perhaps the most pervasive is that they leave before they leave". (Pg 55). Further analysis in the chapter explains that gender roles take different shapes for different categories of women, but the responsibility of taking care of family and children is a challenge faced by almost all women, even among the most educated and the wealthiest as it is related to beliefs of what is the wrong or the right thing to do, which is different for men and women.

This under representation of women in the labor market is rooted in the gender division of labor in public and private spheres. Due to gendered division of care, where women are supposed to take the full responsibility of children care and often of the whole family, some of the women choose to leave the labor market or when it is possible to work part time. For mothers of children less than 7 years old the time spend on unpaid work stands between 8 to 9 hours per day, with very little difference for employed or unemployed mothers. For men having a child or being unemployed have no impact in their contribution in child care and domestic work. (Time use survey, INSTAT, 2012)

Women continue to be primary care givers for their children, therefore their discontinuity in the labor market extends for years and thus creating a gap which is carried over even when women return in the labor market and feeds the continuity of the gender gap. Women may not recover their returns in the labor market as a result of their lower and discontinued experience, they will have lower positions and also lower wages. (UN Women, Miluka J. 2011).

Women and especially mothers seem to suffer in both private and public domains. While in the private domain there seem to be little change in the division of care between partners, in the public domain the gender structured labor market face them with stereotypes and social pressures.

The role of care services in mother's labor force participation

Analysts frequently identify family-related policies (social benefits and fiscal measures, leave policies, formal care for children and the elderly) and work organisation measures as ways to help with workers reach the balance (Davies, R. 2013). Hobson B. (2011) found that a significant proportion of workers with young children would choose to work somewhat less even if it meant a reduction in hourly pay. Moreover, for women, the gap between preferred hours and jobs in the market is determined by forces outside the market, most notably care/reconciliation policies.(Hobson, 2011) Studies from around the world indicate that family care responsibilities and lack of childcare options severely constrain women's choices in employment (Kring, Kawar, 2009). Spending on and enrolment in childcare and

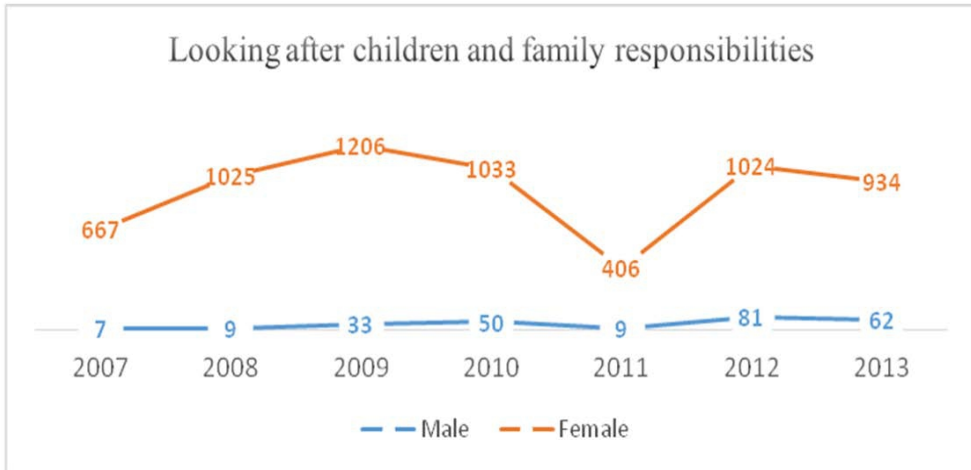
preschool education does to some extent reflect maternal employment rates (Bradshaw & Finch, 2010). In 2001 the expenditures for the pre school composed 5.9% of the education budget and in 2013 it dropped to 4.6%. Approximately 60% (3 - 6 years) of children in preschool age attend preprimary education compared to 76% to European countries.¹² The table below presents the professional status of men and women for all the period of the study. The percentage of women being an unpaid family worker (dealing with housework, raising children or supporting family activities or businesses without payment) throughout the period stands on average 40% toward 16% of men.

Years	Gender	Employee	Self-employed with employees	Self-employed without employees (own-account worker or free-lancer)	Unpaid family worker
2007	Male	36.4%	3.5%	46.8%	13.3%
	Female	26.2%	.5%	25.6%	47.6%
2008	Male	44.5%	2.7%	37.3%	15.6%
	Female	32.4%	.6%	16.8%	50.2%
2009	Male	72.7%	1.0%	20.5%	5.7%
	Female	72.1%	.4%	7.2%	20.2%
2010	Male	47.8%	2.4%	36.2%	13.6%
	Female	37.2%	.5%	18.7%	43.7%
2011	Male	21.5%	1.2%	20.6%	13.1%
	Female	13.5%	.4%	9.9%	22.6%
2012	Male	34.5%	1.7%	30.5%	25.7%
	Female	22.6%	.7%	15.2%	49.2%
2013	Male	37.8%	2.2%	31.6%	28.3%
	Female	29.8%	.7%	17.5%	52.0%

Table No. 2.

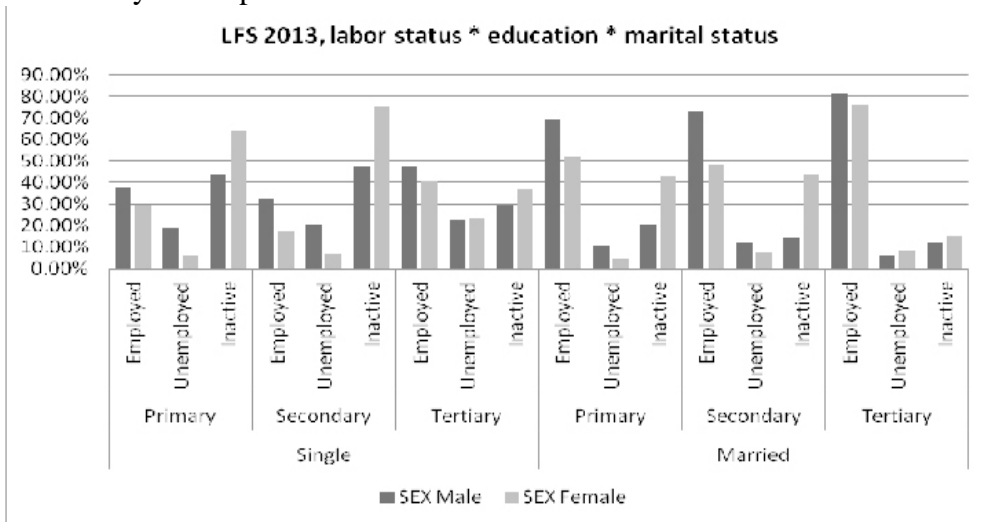
Those being inactive are asked about the reasons of their inactivity and about 25% of married women are not working because they were looking after children or have other family responsibilities. In the graph nr 2 we present the data about this question for all the years.

¹² Strategy of pre-university education 2014-2020, pg 14.



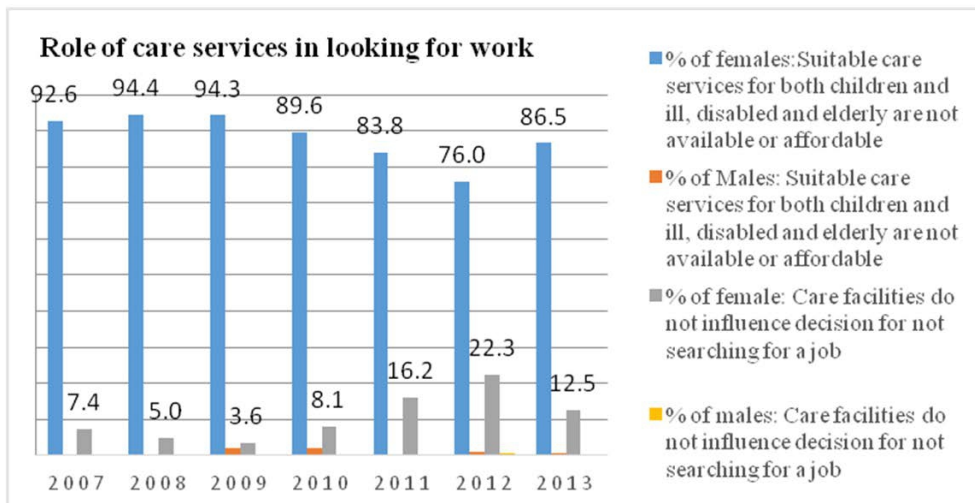
Graph No. 2

We controlled also for the levels of education, Graph No.3, and the result is that non working mothers had mostly primary or secondary education, which also reflects the national levels of education. Looking after children is not an issue for men, as can be seen the number of men is statistically not important.



Graph No.3

Only those presented in the table above are asked about the impact that care services for children, disabled and elderly had in their decision to search for employment (Graph No. 4). The data show that the vast majority of the mothers estimate that suitable care services are not available nor affordable, and there are small differences through the years.



Graph No. 4

In an evaluation report prepared from the High State Control on the quality of the child care services in 2013 in Tirana, some of the key concerns included low capacity, few services than requests, crowded groups, low number of educators per children and psycho social staff. Other concerns related to the quality of the conditions and food. According to the report the need for services could not be covered with the actual public and private care services offered. In other regions, especially the small cities and rural areas, these issues are even sharper. There are villages that have no services at all. Another issue is that most of these services have fixed schedule, so parents working in shifts, long hours or in the weekend need other support and arrangements to accomplish their caring needs. The fixed schedule is a concern for working parents having children in elementary school as well. Small children spend 4 to 6 hours in the school and there are no after school public programs to support the families. Most of parents are choosing private schools mostly to fill this time gap. Care services for elderly and disabled are fewer even in Tirana. Most of the services for this categories are offered from NGOs, but most of them are periodical and cover only a small part of the population needs. It must be mentioned that recently several improvements have occurred. some of the Municipalities have opened day care centers mostly for elderly and disabled, but this is in the very first steps.

Conclusion

The data show that gender is a key indicator to women labor force participation and inactivity. With age the gender gap of labor force participation and inactivity increases. Marriage makes this relation even stronger, the gender gap of labor force participation and inactivity, between

married men and women is higher than between single. This gap becomes deeper for those with primary and secondary education.

Among inactive married men and women, that are not working because are taking care of children more than 90% are married women, through all the years of the study (2007-2008). The majority of married women state that suitable care services are not available nor affordable and this impacts their economic status. Other resources on the quality of public care services show that more needs to be done on the quality and availability of care services for children. Meanwhile care services for elderly and disabled are even more scarce. The fact that the majority of inactive women are less educated it indicates that additional support for their employment is necessary to have. More research is needed to evaluate the role of care services for different groups of women, and on how to make them more supportive to women economic engagement. The fact that looking after children is not an issue for men and does not impact their labor status, specific policies that focus on equal share of responsibilities in the private domain are necessary for a more balanced society for both men and women.

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