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Gendered Division of Domestic Work and Childcare in Albania and Serbia

A Comparative Study of National Time Use Surveys

The rise of women's participation in the labor force has not been followed by similar trends of men's involvement in the unpaid work (Orloff, 2011) and while western scholars are doubting if they should continue studying domestic work at all- when the results are the same (Hook, 2016)- a study of domestic work and childcare in Albania and Serbia opens the debate for a rarely questioned phenomenon in these countries. To contribute to advancing research in this area, the aim of this paper is to explore patterns of domestic work and childcare in Albania and Serbia. First, the main question I ask is: How do individual factors such as: education, marital status, employment, and parental status impact the time men and women in Albania and Serbia spend on domestic work and childcare? Second, by looking at matched couples and their characteristics, I explore how couples in Albania and Serbia share this domestic work and childcare. And thirdly, I offer a brief analysis of the contextual factors used to explain time use in unpaid work among men and women and couples in Albania and Serbia.

The paper employs 2010 national time use data from Albania and Serbia. The diary data provided by the institutes of statistics of each country were in the form of episode data for each individual. I did data management work in order to link the activity data with the individual questionnaire file. In this way, it was made possible to link the individual characteristics with the type of activity performed by interviewees during the day. Also, a day weight was used to correctly ponder weekdays and weekend days and obtain weekly average hours. Similarly, I performed data management work to create the main dependent variables from the diary file and independent variables according to the analytic strategy of the research. After the data was all set, I performed OLS regressions with 3 different models for the 3 main dependent variables: total unpaid work, routine work and childcare for individual data and the share of: unpaid work, routine work and childcare on couple's data.

After thorough literature review and a contextual analysis of Albania and Serbia, I hypothesized that Albanian women, in all life stages, perform more unpaid work (in absolute minutes), compared to Serbian women in all life stages. Similarly, I expected to find that men in Serbia in all life stages to perform more unpaid work (in absolute minutes) when compared to Albanian men in all life stages. Given that, as it is typical in more traditional countries where just selective groups are "innovative", education differentiates much more attitudes in Albania than in Serbia, I expected the difference in time use between highly and poorly educated men and women to be stronger in Albania than in Serbia.

Some preliminary findings indicate that there is huge gender inequality in the domestic sphere in both Albania and Serbia; however, in this domain, Albania is much more traditional than Serbia. Albanian women do more unpaid work than Serbian women and Serbian men do more unpaid work than Albanian men. Education, marriage, parenthood, and employment have an impact on the time Albanian and Serbian women spend on unpaid work. For Albanian and Serbian men,

however, the results are mixed. The study also shows that macro-level gender inequality predicts more unpaid work for women and the burden of unpaid work seems to be among women with elementary educational levels, especially in Albania. It also shows that individual-level factors (such as higher educational attainment) are not enough to increase men's contribution to domestic labor, in the presence of high macro-level gender inequality (in the case of Albania). However, educational attainment and employment are crucial in easing the burden of unpaid work for women. Even if their partners do not contribute more (in the case of Albania), employed women and women with tertiary levels of education find a way out of unpaid work.