

GIRLHOOD AND CHALLENGES IN ALBANIAN SOCIETY

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Abstract

Girlhood and challenges encountered in Albania have less attention when are not associated with social problems. According to Cambridge Dictionary, girlhood is defined as the period when a person is a girl, and not yet a woman, or the state of being a girl. In Gender perspective the term “girl” is often defined as “a female child” but it is loosely applied to females from pre-pubescence up until their late twenties or older.¹ Variables that shape the intersectional social life and discourse of girlhood depend on issues of class, race, sexuality, ability and physical appearance. The discourse requires a critical analysis that includes girls' life circumstances and experiences, their presentation in public life as well as the supporting programs and policies in Albania. However, girlhood in Albanian context has lack of studies that are focused particularly on girlhood in lens of a gender perspective. The paper aims to present a general analysis on girlhood's challenges and issues in Albania in a gender perspective with an understanding that girlhood shapes the lives of girls. The methodology is based on qualitative methods and secondary data analysis, such as girlhood studies, policies, programs and models implemented in other countries to support girlhood in a gender perspective. Key findings are related with lack of studies and programs focused particularly on girlhood in Albania. In addition, tradition, popular culture, education and media contribute to reshape girlhood discourse in Albania. The challenges that girls encounter are migration and integration, employment and emotional and financial independency, equal opportunities in every sphere of life and prejudices. Recommendations highlight the need of in-depth studies that evaluate the currently situation of girlhood in Albania; design of supporting programs and policies; implementation and monitoring mechanism of supporting policies; inclusion of girlhood in academic curricula and positive models in media.

Keywords: *girlhood, challenge, gender studies, supporting programs*