



**SOCIAL CONSEQUENCES OF
UNEMPLOYMENT IN ALBANIA**

by

Gilana Ferizaj, BA

**Thesis submitted for the degree of Master of Science
Department of Political Science and International Relations**

Epoka University

September 2015

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Approval Page

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I certify that I have read this study that is fully adequate, in scope and quality, as a thesis for the degree of Master of Science.

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Exam Board of Thesis

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Abstract

This study examines the situation of unemployment in Albania as an issue of political character that for sure comprises the entire society through its consequences. It discovered that unemployment is a phenomenon existing for many years in Albania and that the reforms undertaken until now by different governments have not produced settlement of the crisis yet. The thesis talks briefly about some of the reasons behind this issue, as people's mentality because of the prejudices brought by the past, education process that has been neglected by the society because of the lack of opportunities etc. The study finds that most part of the responsibility belongs to the influence of the governmental policies that have caused the deterioration of the standard of living in the country, and the massive migration of the 21st century in search for a better life.

Keywords: *Unemployment, Crisis, Governmental Policies, Deterioration, Migration*

Abstrakt

Ky studim shqyrton situatën e papunësisë në Shqipëri si një çështje me karakter politik që sigurisht përfshin edhe të gjithë shoqërinë përmes pasojave të saj. Në të zbulohet se papunësia është një fenomen që ekziston prej shumë vitesh në Shqipëri dhe se reformat e ndërmarra deri tani nga qeveri të ndryshme të vendit nuk kanë prodhuar asnjë zgjidhje të krizës. Tema flet shkurtimisht mbi disa nga arsyet që e kanë shkaktuar këtë çështje si mentaliteti i njerëzve, paragjykimet e bartura nga e shkuara, procesi i arsimimit që është neglizhuar nga shoqëria ndoshta edhe për shkak të mungesës së oportuniteteve etj. Studimi konstaton se pjesa më e madhe e përgjegjësisë i takon ndikimit të politikave qeverisëse që po shkaktojnë përkeqësimin e mëtejshëm të standartit të jetesës së vendit dhe emigrimin masiv të shekullit të 21 në kërkim të një jete më të mirë.

***Fjalët kyçe:** Papunësia, Krizë , Politika Qeverisëse, Përkeqësim, Emigrim.*

Dedication

I am grateful for this thesis, to my dear parents who invested and strongly believed everything in me and my education. Their unconditional support has been my strength and will continue forward in the long way of consolidating my profile. I also want to dedicate and make part of my success, my fiancé Tedi, for accompanying me throughout this long and troublesome journey. His support has been very important for my achievements.

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Declaration Statements

1. The material included in this thesis has not been submitted wholly or in part for any academic award or qualification other than that for which it is now submitted.

2. The program of advanced study of which this thesis is part has consisted of:
 - i) Research Methods course during the undergraduate study
 - ii) Examination of several thesis guides of particular universities both in Albania and abroad as well as a professional book on this subject.

Gilana Ferizaj

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1 Chapter One: Introduction

1.1 Introduction

Recently unemployment issue has become a matter of study not only of the economist researchers but even of the sociologist ones. This study takes rise by the fact that unemployment market is a field of study that has always prevented the realization of the economic theory of equilibrium. So there is not an authentic economic theory valuable for the case of unemployment as long as the theory of equilibrium between economic parameters does not stand at all. Referring to the case of Albania, what is dramatic is the political trap where unemployment has remained during this social crisis by deepening in figures every year more. Concretely, unemployment actually has become a responsibility of governmental policy and a major challenge for every society, especially for countries like Albania. Because of historical background of the country and its fundamental structural changes, unemployment is considered one of the biggest diseases that will continue for a long time. This issue deserves attention and a proper study because of its social consequences and dramas. What we see actually as a problem of a democratic transition has a fundamental reason that is of course unemployment and the battle against it that for sure cannot be only an issue of economic or political character but an issue comprising the entire society.

The fall of communist regime in Albania and the transition from a centralized economy to a market economy, was accompanied with radical changes in labor market functioning and consequently was faced the need for restructuring employment policies. In the last 24 years of transition, Albania was highly exposed to major difficulties in the adaption with the reality of free trade economy. In these circumstances, the country has experienced repetitive unemployment crisis and lower activities of workforce. This crisis was relevant especially during the 1990s, a period where unemployment is fluctuated between 26 % in 1992 and 10 % in 1999 based on the data of the Institute of Statistics in Albania (INSTAT, 2004). Even if it was noticed a kind of improvement in the labor market especially due to the economic growth through years, actually it is relevant that the major challenge of Albania and most part of Europe would be to decrease the huge statistical numbers of unemployment that are continuing to be present in most part of the region. The reasons to this phenomenon are evaluated differently due to the different areas of

Albania and of course it needs to be accepted that they are strongly related to the education level and market demand. In parallel with these challenges, the intensification of the process of European integration as Albania is a candidate member, adds the pressure and responsibility of the country to ensure an efficient labor market by respecting the interests of all parts involved in this process. The expectations in this regard are related mostly to the implementation and application of effective employment policies that can be able to address the problems highlighted by the European Commission and other international actors involved. These bodies continue to clarify that the institutional willingness is essential for the country if aims to be part of the integration process that raises some duties and obligations to be fulfilled. European Union is the strongest supporter in the improvement of the process due to a more efficient public administration, a higher level of education and a lower level of unemployment.

In the first chapter will be treated generally unemployment concept by focusing on the methods necessary to explore it in different dimensions. It will be done a compare and contrast between different approaches of unemployment by emphasizing especially the causes and long term effects of this phenomena according to political and social analysis.

The second chapter will be a broad picture that goes in detail on Albanian case, more specifically on Albanian historical background and the situation of unemployed people in the past and today. By referring to communist regime the chapter aims to present the situation of unemployment after the transitory period that Albania used to live during 90s. This will be illustrated with numbers if possible in order to understand if this phenomenon was brought by the past or is it a recent issue due to the deep economic crisis that has affected the entire European region after 2008 Global Financial Crises. What were the reasons behind unemployment during the communist regime and the transition to pluralism and what are the reasons of the current unemployment situation in the 21st century?

The third chapter aims to explain the current situation of unemployment in Albania and the problems inherited by the previous government with regard to employment policies and results achieved in this regard. By demonstrating figures and respective data of the Institute of Statistics of Albania it will be clear picture of the performance of the two recent governments mandated versus the actual government in Albania. The chapter will try to focus on listing the reasons behind high unemployment rate as an economic deal

and especially as a social problem with huge damages within the society's psychology and economic welfare.

The fourth chapter will focus on consequences of unemployment issue in Albania where most of the responsibility is due to the political actors involved in governmental policies. After addressing briefly and properly the main problematic and reasons behind them about unemployed market the chapter will try to present or suggest possible solutions to improve the situation and increase employment rate. There are many solutions to be suggested initially looking at the situation, but all are considered as a long term process as far as unemployment is a phenomenon that exists for many years in Albania and all the reforms undertaken until now have not produced immediate settlement of the crisis. It can be started from the people's mentality because of the prejudices that they have brought by the communist regime, and then pass to the education process that most of the Albanian citizens have left aside because of their mentality. The other part of the coin belongs to the government that has to avail itself with promotions and new reforms to attract people's attention to be part of. It cannot be fair labor market as far as there is no meritocracy and no competitiveness for a place of work. Part of the process is the educational training that the government can offer or new social activities to improve people's skills. Lastly, very important partners are the NGOs that can initiate programs and activities apart from the government to justify their mission as non-governmental organizations.

The fifth chapter is a conclusion part that would give an answer to the hypothesis raised in the abstract. Suggestions about possible solutions in order to partially overcome this crisis that have absorbed people's life, are urgent and that is why this study will aim to give a modest contribution at least to the identification of the problems that is the first step, and then leave space to other specific studies that would be a complement of this work.

1.1.1 Research question and Hypothesis

Research question

The main research question for this study is formulated as follows:

- What are the reasons behind high unemployment and its consequences in Albanian society?

In order to find an answer to this question couple of subsidiary questions will also be employed:

- Does political affiliation affect unemployment in Albania? If yes, how?
- Is unemployment an issue of politics and society?

Hypothesis

- Political party affiliation matters when referring to the economic situation, especially to employment issue of Albania.

1.2 Literature Review

Unemployment issue actually for the worldwide is not considered a symbolic anymore but a harsh reality. That is why it is necessary to give more importance to the study of this problematic in order to identify the hearth of the problem and those who are responsible for increasing and deepening of the issue every year more and more.

The traps of unemployment and poverty are realistic situations where a country generally falls into because of the outdated and old politics or because of economic policy development without vision where employment is also integral part of. Albania is stuck in these “political” traps from the transition period until today where the situation seems deteriorating everyday more because of egoism, negligence and misrule of those governing the country.

If we refer to the analyses and conclusions of the World Bank, the incentives of creating new working places in Albania are in minimal levels and in some cases they have remained at zero.

Ellen Goldstein, the Director of World Bank for Southeastern Europe states that the external request for exports of the 6 countries of the Southeastern region have been a positive force for the economic development of 2014 even if the Eurozone has had a low economic performance and disappointing recovery in the same year. Mrs. Goldstein continues furthermore with her declaration by attributing responsibilities for the slow economic growth to political uncertainty as the main factor of the delays and cuts in new investments for the region. In her point of view, the responsibility for this stagnation period is also due to the destructive weather events of the previous year that suddenly stroked the entire region (The World Bank, 2015a). Following this, the Head of the World Bank for the region underlined that the economic growth of only 0.2 % is not enough to

improve the standard of living of the 6 countries, including Albania or to solve the issue of high unemployment rate in the region. The low economic performance of the region according to World Bank report somehow obscures the notable differences that lead among the 6 countries of Southeast Europe during 2014 but that they are continuing probably even this year. The study reports that Serbia is estimated to have fallen into its third recession since the global crisis captured entire European countries. On the one hand, Bosnia and Herzegovina is still in stagnation period from the crisis and it's not reeling yet because of several domestic problems. On the other hand, the levels of economic growth observed in Kosovo and Montenegro are estimated to be moderate during 2014 the somehow is promising as long as they have not fallen into recession. Within this regional situation, only Albania and Former Yugoslavian Republic of Macedonia have demonstrated signs of a sustainable recovery in economic growth thanks to the increase of exports outside the country (The World Bank, 2015a).

The sociologist Kosta Barjaba, in his book "Unemployment Traps" made of pros and cons on unemployment issue in Albania, notes that the most part of the working force in Albania, are out of the labor market and this is paradoxical. The author attempts to give an answer to 1 million of unemployed people in Albania and to explain the inverse relationship between unemployment rate and economic growth of the country. Today unemployment is the subject of many problems in Albanian society and this book serves as an analyze of what is happening in the country, by offering continuously suggestions and proposes to fight against informality on labor market so far to decrease the number of unemployed people that today means 1/3 of the population (Bajraba, 2014).

According to numbers and statistics on this regard, there have been many attempts and publications from different independent organizations or integral part of the voice of the government but nevertheless, this official and unofficial numbers have always been accepted or contested from different political wings as based on their interest.

This book serves to the research study because aims to explain unemployment as part of many obstacles with economic policies origins starting with developments of the state policies, methods of measuring unemployment rate from statistics, concepts that exist about unemployment and different types of it existing in other countries. Lastly, it passes to specifics with Albanian case. Generally all the analyzes done in this book make us believe in a clear portrait of Albanian unemployment case, in its causes and at the same time think about arguments on how this issue can be combated. Because of having such

importance and impression today it is the most sensitive issue in Albanian society. It is a disgrace that even if some countries have abandoned this expression, in Albania still continues to be used the term “Unemployment generation” among people referring to the young generation that gives us a clear picture of how problematic and sensitive is the issue currently (Bajraba, 2014).

A statement of International Monetary Fund mission in Albania dated in 30 June of this year came out after the conduction of discussions of the 5th review of Albanian’s Extended Fund Facility arrangement. After concluding the visit, the representative of IMF delegated in Tirana emphasized that “Albania's economic program continues to make progress. Economic growth is projected to continue its moderate recovery in 2015, reaching between 2.5 and 3 percent. Growth will be driven by a sustained recovery in domestic demand, continued Foreign Direct Investment, and a gradual pickup in bank lending. Inflation is expected to stay low, in part because output still remains below potential.” So referring to International Monetary Fund Albanian’s economic situation has improved even if with a very slow percentage. At the same time it emphasizes that the domestic output remains low meaning that the situation of increasing the effectiveness of the natural resources and that of employing more people due to this outcome are not at the same standard with the economic growth. Unemployment still remains at the same levels with any small increase during the trimesters of the last year. This seems to be attributed to the political crisis that has captured the country during the second year of governance of the left government (International Monetary Fund, 2015).

In the same logic with IMF continues even The Institute of Statistics of Albania (INSTAT, 2015a) with its recent publication of the 1st trimester of 2015 by also making correlations with the previous years in order to understand better the situation of employment and unemployment in Albania. The report presents that during the first trimester of 2015 according to the Labor Force Survey, the number of employed people aged 15 to 64 years old are around 1 million people. Meanwhile the number of unemployed people aged 15 to 64 is around 200.000 people. During the first three months of 2015 in Albania, for the population aged 15 to 64 years old, unemployment rate was 17.3%. While for young people aged 15 to 29 year old, unemployment rate was 34.1%. The survey finds that 63 % of population aged 15 – 64 years old is active in the labor market that means that they are employed or seeking for a job. Employment rate for the population aged 15 to 64 years old is 52.1% and lastly employment rate for men is 14.3%

higher than for women. The study will serve to understand better the differences of unemployment rate referring to different ages. It is relevant that the young age has more problems with employment even if with a better education or preparation than the older people. Gender discrimination still remains a problematic in Albanian culture. The percentages of unemployment rate are high referring to a total of 17% of it. For a country which aims to develop more economically, it is not a normal rate and it is a must to understand what the reasons behind this unemployment rate and especially to focus on the consequences that will be treated more explicitly in the thesis.

Jack Stone and Joe McCraw in their book about unemployment focused on its consequences to the human being by explaining how a capitalist system works and what efforts have to experience employers in order to preserve their working place. In the author's understanding of the system, it is found a great necessity to "use" unemployment issue and the fear over it, in order to ensure obedience and discipline among the workers. Capitalism seems to consider the fear of unemployment as a necessary tool to keep workers always under pressure and make them perform well. According to actors involved in the system and author's perception, this kind of procedure seems efficient sometimes in the working system because the workload becomes boring and on the other side, the monetary value to be paid is less than the standard of living. This situation is reversible because the service taken by the work process has no productivity and is deprived of creativity, mostly because the total wages to be offered are ridiculous and not sufficient for handling life normally. As part of human being psychology, employment is indispensable because people wants to feel needful in doing something and that is why the authors focused more on the serious consequences that the absence of a working place generates. Losing the job today means to risk losing the self-esteem that for each person would be dramatic for the future (Stone & Mc Craw, 2009).

1.3 Methodology

This is a political study related to unemployment problem and its consequences in Albanian case. It is a qualitative analysis of primary and secondary materials such as legal documents, reports, articles, international conferences or official declarations of high officials related to the topic. This study tries to analyze the current unemployment situation in Albania by relating it to the historical background during 24 years of

transition. Political affiliation and governmental policies are part of the most important factors that matter in the case of high unemployment rate in Albania.

Furthermore, the study will focus on eventual consequences that long term unemployment may have for the stability of state institutions and democracy of the country.

The paper provides an explanatory topic with qualitative data, focusing within a specific case study referred to Albania.

2 Chapter Two: Unemployment and Society

2.1 Introduction

An “unemployed” existence is a worse negation of life than death itself (Gonzalez, 2007, p. 181). This phrase is the best way of understanding the profound importance that unemployment has today on people’s life. Its effects are devastating if not treated for a long time. Many questions have risen about the increasing of unemployment every day, and have only an answer all over the world, that is: “misguided governmental policies and social egoism”.

Today the abyss of unemployment is increasing continuously by discovering more and more the pathologies that have plagued people’s psychology, their negligence or their double personalities as notions that are relative due to specific situations. In this regard, unemployment still remains a crucial problem in Europe and beyond, particularly in Albanian case.

Unemployment at its first meaning is an economic concept closely related with the success or failure of a healthy economy. The success is measured by the capacity of a new government that through reforms aims to change the parameters of unemployment rate as the best example of increasing the standard of living and social welfare among its citizens. Unemployment as a concept is mostly used in economic studies but this paper aims to view and analyze it from another point of view because of its political and social consequences that are of the same importance with the economic aspect.

Referring to Albanian case, unemployment is the subject of many problems in society and too many efforts has been done by different Albanian authors and studies to fight against it by pointing out new tools, incentives or reforms that would help to overpass the crisis and increase somehow people’s satisfaction. The main and most important obstacle on these researches or analyzes have always been political actors of different camps because of considering the situation on different ways of importance due to their interest. The majority ruling in Albania have proclaimed every 4 year of elections new working places, new reforms of decreasing unemployment rate and depoliticization of public administration but not many achievements have been viewed yet on this regard. The study will explain the phenomena as part of too many barriers arising from non-efficient

economic policies, the development policies, the way how unemployment is measured by statistics, the different concepts existing about the types of unemployment in different countries and lastly from the specifics that it has in Albanian case. In general, all this kind of analyzes have helped the development of the paper which leads to the suitable portrayal of Albanian case of unemployment, its causes and simultaneously to concrete arguments on how this phenomenon can be combated today. Without realizing the problem since its genesis, it is not possible to make an appropriate analysis, to find responsibilities and share obligations to those who have the right tools of keeping it under control and understanding it better.

Unemployment problems are very sensitive and easily touchable within the social environment and in the everyday life of the people in general. In this context as society is a direct subject of government policies, it is important to point out the effects that unemployment has caused and is still causing within it. These effects can be divided differently in different categories of society as following.

2.2 Unemployment and its Social Outcomes

Unemployment is a very important stimulus to the efficiency of the economic function in a market economy. Nevertheless it brings several social, political and economic consequences as well. These effects are mostly evident in the development or failure of the functioning and organizing of the labor market. As far as unemployment is higher in rates and longer in time, the economic and especially social problems will be deeper and complex because of social isolation and economic deficiencies. That is to say, the existence of a long and stable in time unemployment, draws out a considerable part of the working force by isolating the society economically, socially and of course politically because of job uncertainty. In addition, it is important to emphasize that long exclusion from working life and labor environment is accompanied with losses of professional skills and this automatically affects the efficiency and good quality of the public and private administration. For the society this is translated in the waste of monetary gaining, loss of social satisfaction and depreciation of all the investment made for their improvement skills because of having nothing in return.

From this perspective, is normal that the reintegration of this people in the working life after a long time disengagement means investing new money on education, professional

trainings in order to be at the same level of competitiveness with those who are already inside the market. By all means, people who are unemployed are part of a vulnerable group in terms of economic and social aspect because of their scarcity of resources that would have helped to be active part of the society and productive for their families and themselves. So in their everyday “war” for surviving, they are obliged to be under the dark side economy and attempted to violence and criminality because of having no other choices. Unemployment in many studies has been considered a major cause of behavior and psychological deformations as it influences the individuality of the people. During time, it has forced people to act unconsciously by destroying society values even if for a common cause (Bajraba, 2014).

The negativity of a longtime unemployment is usually present where there is an economy reforming itself mostly because of a political change or because of a continuous transitory system. This is the case of the Balkans and especially Albania, where the organization of the employment market is still improving in parallel with its structural arrangement. As a consequence, this phenomenon brings failures in the adaption of the actors involved in the long-term unemployment. The slow and harmful economic process in the region presents a typical case where the social costs of the transitory long-term period go beyond any expectation. Therefore the total isolation of a large part of the population, who has the capabilities to be productive and efficient, is a small piece of these costs.

On the other hand, most of the part of employed people is uncertain of their job because of the constant feeling of becoming potentially unemployed people. To this can be attributed political reasons because of a bad management constructed through years by different governments which aimed to use the working place for political pressure and political purposes due to their personal interest. These systems are categorized as part of economies with a comparatively high and stable rate of unemployment. The real problems and consequences of this phenomenon are deeper than numbers and percentages of economic growth. Unemployment does not mean only a negative economic indicator but is also translated in social and political effects.

Generally unemployed people after a long period of time tend to lose their professional skills and abilities. At the same time, society tends to invest more in unemployment benefits, social assistance benefits for long-term unemployment, and in costs for their reintegration in the working process again after the braking off period. In addition to the huge economic charge due to unemployment, political, ethnic, cultural and social effects

over the population show the real “penalty” of unemployment that the entire society and unemployed individuals have to cover for being part of this category. The phenomenon is not so superficial because an immediate and stable aspect of it is to deepen more the division of classes and the stratification of the society by creating a huge gap between the rich and the poor people. The last category becomes numerous while the rich people remain few and distinguished by the rest of the mass. In this case, a new social structure emerges suddenly operating with different standards due to different priorities that these social classes have (Stone & Mc Craw, 2009).

Consequently, the moral values of different social groups change in time. The poor category of the society, which is part of the long-term unemployed people, becomes more and more isolated and demoralized for the future while the rich people continues to gain more power and to construct a kind of elitist society with a growing influence within it.

Actually it is not appropriate to talk about long effects of unemployment in the case of Eastern Europe because it is the case of transitory democracies, but as long as the region is still a hostage of unemployment problems, poverty, misery and especially migration issues, is logical that these problems would affect solid ethnic groups. This means that ethnic division in society becomes more relevant by causing immediately tensions that would influence the entire national integration. These kinds of tensions are negative for national stability and European integration of the countries suffering long-term unemployment.

2.3 Unemployment and Young People

Young people are a major part of the unemployed category in general and of the long-term unemployed in particular. The core of this group is filled in directly by secondary school leavers and university graduates that have finally fulfilled their academic formation and are waiting to be part of the state apparatus in order to gain more professionalism. During the last several years this unemployment rate of young people remains high and stable (INSTAT, 2015a). Obviously, in a transitory period, the state is not capable of offering and providing a variety of jobs because of its lack of tools for undertaking such a positive reform. In fact, it cannot offer any jobs to large groups of young people as first there is a need to open new working places for then giving this possibility to the young generation.

Staying out of employment at the time they should start their working life, young people cannot reach self-fulfillment in the way which is typical for a democratic market economy as developed countries tend to do. They cannot improve their professional qualification on the basis of the preceding theoretical education in schools and universities because everything is gradual and each step is important to construct a professional career. Eventually, they cannot be competitive at the labor market because of the lack of professional experience. However, staying out of the labor environment they cannot establish contacts with people having professional skills and acquire the skills when working together with them.

Thus the break in the transfer of professional qualification in society is another dimension of the negative impacts of unemployment especially in the young generation and beyond this age. Mass unemployment among young people breaks the continuity in developing labor skills.

The labor market is not simply unfavorable to young people. The unfriendly situation is a long lasting one. In Albania, approximately a quarter of unemployed people of a long time are the young generations (The World Bank, 2015b). They tend to stay very long in the position of job-seekers until a new possibility of work for their future career. This seems to be paradoxical since the young segment of manpower is better educated than the older generation that may have the experience but not the perfect skills to compete with. It is more appropriate towards the changing environment and inclined to mobility. These are important requisites for adjusting the labor force market to the economic restructuring.

The consequences for isolated of young people are multiple yet interconnected. Without occupational status in the society and stable earnings, they fall to a low social position and as a consequence tend to influence negatively to the surrounding society with a pessimistic point of view over everything (Fineman, 1987).

The most important consequence of unemployment is the decrease of their living standards. When lacking incomes, young people are dependent on their parents so their economic and social problems are transferred to other members of the household by creating stress within the family. Unemployed young people are avoiding marriage and having children because of economic difficulties to affront the life. The statement is easily understandable if we refer to the recent publications of the Institute of Statistics of

Albania where the figures about marriages and divorces have changed quickly in the recent 5 years. In 2009, the percentage of marriages was 8.9%, in 2010 it was 8.7% and in 2014 was 8.2%. These numbers help to reach to the conclusion that marriages have decreased in Albania for the reason mentioned above. It continues in the same logic if referring to the number of divorces published by INSTAT. In 2009 the percentage of divorces in Albania was 13.8%, in 2010 it was 13.7% and in 2014 it was 17.8% (INSTAT, 2015b, p. 32). The numbers demonstrate that the divorces in Albania have increased rapidly in the recent years. Responsible for that is the stressful life that Albanians are experiencing due to the economic crisis that have caused directly social crisis too. People today have a low self-confidence because of the lack of opportunities enabled by the governmental reforms. Young people with lack of ability to influence a healthy labor environment, who dispose of limited incomes and are financially dependent, develop and express different problems in their adaptation to the community. They are socially unstable and disintegrated to a high level. Those who enter the long lasting unemployment path and therefore stay for a long time in economic and social isolation, are disposed to mental illnesses and inappropriate behavior that poses a risk to the tranquility and moral values of the society (Stone & Mc Craw, 2009).

The years of economic transition may be marked by increasing the quantity of people suffering of drug abuse, especially for young people that are ambiguous toward current phenomena. Unemployment is one of the basic factors for the stress, which causes this development. In their attempts to seek for a job, young people often face the underground world of the shadow economy which does not offer any incentive or inspiration for a promising future.

All these problems aim to be transferred directly or indirectly from the individual to the state and to the entire society by causing huge damages to the friendly environment among people and between the state and civil society. The pessimistic attitude toward life and the acceptance of a model of marginal labor and social behavior are synthetic expressions of the socio-economic consequences of unemployment among young people.

2.4 Unemployment and Gender

A positive feature of the new model of employment environment is the variety of choices concerning different spheres and forms of working places. In this case, women may

prefer to join the public sector, to start their own businesses, or to stay at home and devote themselves to the family and to the children. In parallel to this variety of valuable possibilities, the new model of the role of women in the socio-economic development contains some negative sides as well. The most significant one is the simple fact that these possibilities, which emerged during the last years, are hardly accessible because of discriminatory elements and cultural perceptions that are still relevant in the people's mentality. In the conditions of reduced incomes of households, high prices because of inflation and damaged social infrastructure, women could only join the employed environment or at least to be among the active job-seekers. In this way, women become actually more discriminated and restricted, than in the conditions of compulsory employment. This fact is demonstrated by different quotes of women working in the public administration who do the same job but are paid less than man. Another fact is the parliament of different European states, as Britain where the quotes of women are less in number than men and consequently with a lower influence in the decision making process (Keen & Cracknell, 2015) .The same happens even in Albanian parliament where we have 27 women out of 140 MPs in total (Hodobashi, 2014). Furthermore, apart from all the sensibility and promotion of different people and international organizations worldwide about this issue, the women is still a creature that continues to suffer discrimination wherever she is, in the workplace, home, civil society, and in politics.

2.5 Conclusion

Unemployment's social effects are already proven by many scholars over the world as some of these observations were mentioned above. In this context, being unemployed implies not having the necessary stimulus to be realized and not being able to have adequate living standards. In this way, the society tends to experience regressive steps that are direct influential of the individuality of the people. Unemployment has resulted to be a direct cause of psychological concerns that existing for a long time destroys the entire society values. These are sufficient for the government to take measures about and prepare development reforms. It is urgent for the society to join new opportunities that derive from governmental reforms in order to increase its position and to gain a kind of optimistic point of view over everything.

3 Chapter Three: Unemployment in Albania since Democratic Transition

3.1 Introduction

This chapter will aim to explain Albanian historical background about the situation of unemployed people. Initially it will be presented a legislative part that includes the development of the working relationship in Albanian Republic during its history since its first genesis. Subsequently, by using the communist regime as a point of reference the chapter will present briefly the situation of unemployment after the transitory period that Albania used to live during 90s and pluralism after this. Consequently the chapter will have a second part including the current situation of unemployment in Albania in order to reach to a conclusion and make the distinction between different periods to understand if this phenomenon was brought by the past or it is a recent issue due to the deep economic crisis that has affected the entire European region.

Unemployment rate is the ratio between the number of registered unemployed people and the number of active population that is able to work. The last category involves that part of the population within a working age starting from 16 – 18 year old until the age of retirement that is in constant search for work (Bajraba, 2014). This is an introduction of the concept of unemployed category of people that helps to understand the topic and analysis of the graphs presented below about unemployment rate. The study will rely more on the reasons behind this numbers and on the political and social consequences of it. Furthermore it is more important to focus in analyses than in technical issues of economic character.

3.2 First Legislation of Work Relationship in the Republic of Albania

The concept “work” has found a broad theoretical approach from many scholars of different periods due to the fact that the term “work” has gone through a permanent evolution in different periods and in different social systems. Since the beginning of human life, the terminology of work was used to imply a physical activity for the purpose of survival. Consequently in modern times this terminology together with the physical

work includes even the intellectual activity that is emerges as a new concept in modern-days.

Referring to the Civil Code of Zogu of 1929, the work was considered as a conscious and voluntary activity of natural and troublesome character because of including in it different projects for the creation and elaboration of a material and intellectual useful work (Cela, 2003, p. 5).

In the genesis of Albanian legislation, like many other laws, labor law has its roots entrenched in the Ottoman legislation inherited by Turkish rule and the customary law of that time of the history. The Ottoman Civil Code that used to regulate all the civil and juridical relationship of that time had a particular part within which used to regulate reconciliation contracts or differently called work contracts (Cela, 2003).

The changing of political and economic conditions during the period of Albanian Kingdom led by Ahmet Zogu was accompanied with different changes in the internal legislation which used to have as a point of reference or orientation to the Western legislation. The Civil Code of Albanian Kingdom of 1919, used to solve the working contract with a specific session made of ten articles. Those provisions considered the legal working relationships between employers on the one side and employees on the other as legal and civil relationships, whether the working relationships of civil servants in state bodies were called legal administrative relationships ("Papyrus" publishing house, 2010).

Although in the content does not exists a complete legal framework, for labor law there exist only 10 articles in total. In this context it is clear that the main purpose of these articles is to give a right definition of the work contract, its ways of arrangement and settlement by adjusting the consequences. In a concrete way, the Article 1632 presents the meaning of the work contract with temporary and permanent term. The settlement of the contract for a term over 190 years can only be made with the free will of the employee only if he announces the employer in accordance to the law. Furthermore, in this legislation is also regulated the way of the immediate settlement of the contracts with term or indefinite term because of a reasonable cause without respecting the procedures. A particular place in these articles is taken even by the indemnifications in case of non-legal settlement of the contracts.

As we see, even if it is about short provisions of that time, they tend to regulate a specific part of the law in a democratic way by firstly respecting the freedom of the parties involved and then protecting the interests of damaged party in case of the dissolution of the contract. From the analysis above it is worth mentioning that the legislation of Albanian Kingdom is too similar with the today's legislation regarding the work contracts. The further evolution of the legislation in this field follows the approval of the first Labor Code in Albanian history of legislation by the Popular Assembly on 25 August 1947. This was the first Labor Code in the history of Work legislation made of 17 Articles and 170 provisions (Instituti i Sigurimeve Shoqerore(Social Security Institute), 2014)

3.3 Current Legislation on Public Administration and Work relations

In a democratic state, the efficiency of the state functions has some requisites starting from a good organization of the state apparatus, especially of its administrative bodies and to be composed by a “team” made of civil servants that are real professionals in their respective fields. Employees that are part of a public administration body automatically are involved within administrative units that serve as supporters on the realization of all the public administration activities. By emphasizing this it is meant that professionalism and stability of the civil servants is translated also in a professional and stable public administration, made of meritocracy and productivity. Work relationships of civil servants in public administration are regulated by different laws based on the work position that each employee has. Apart from this, Albanian Constitution has included in its provisions a specific article that requests from the civil servants to execute the law and to ensure legal competitions for each vacancy in public administration institutions. The same Article of the Constitution, Article 107, provides that the regulation of work relationships between civil servants will be made by law (Constitution of the Republic of Albania, 1998).

Article 107

1. Public employees apply the law and are in the service of the people.
2. Employees in the public administration are selected through examinations, except when the law provides otherwise.

3. Guarantees of tenure and legal treatment of public employees are regulated by law (Constitution of the Republic of Albania, 1998).

In the meantime according to the Article 81 of the Constitution of the Republic of Albania, work relationships of the public functionaries are approved by law for a 3/5 of parliamentary votes. Of course that this does not mean that there aren't enough spaces for discussion of the terminology "public functionary" but apart from different interpretations, in this paper understands the purpose of the Constitution is to ensure transparency in the selection of those who should represent the public interest in their duties despite governmental changes or political pressures. Public administration should always be based on professionalism and stability.

In Albanian legislation, there is not only a particular law to regulate working conditions in public administration. In other words, this can be understood by explaining these two different terms that sometimes used to be distorted in connotation. There are two kinds of categories in public administration:

- *Civil servant*: "Part of different organs in Public Administration of Albania as: Parliament, Presidency, Constitutional bodies, Municipalities, Ministers, Council of Ministers etc. They join the status of civil servant based on the Law 8549 that has 3 main aspects: stability, meritocracy and depoliticization (Assembly of the Republic of Albania, 2013)".

Public Functionary: "A high position in Public Administration that has a political functionary status. This is related with the conduction of its political functions on different organs of public administration from central to local entities due to the protection of the interest of their political conviction (Assembly of the Republic of Albania, 2013)". All these laws and dispositions mentioned above have their own specifications about the recruitment, continuity and the interruption on the work relations of civil servants into public administration apparatus. At the same time the laws have enough aspects that clearly explain the elements needed to be followed for the enrichment of the state institutions in function of the public interest but on the other hand there is the possibility to find spaces for avoiding the respect for this legal framework by political actors that historically tend to include nepotism and other unofficial means in order to be protected in their work and to preserve their own interests that do not always fit with those of the common good. In any case the laws need some corrections and specific

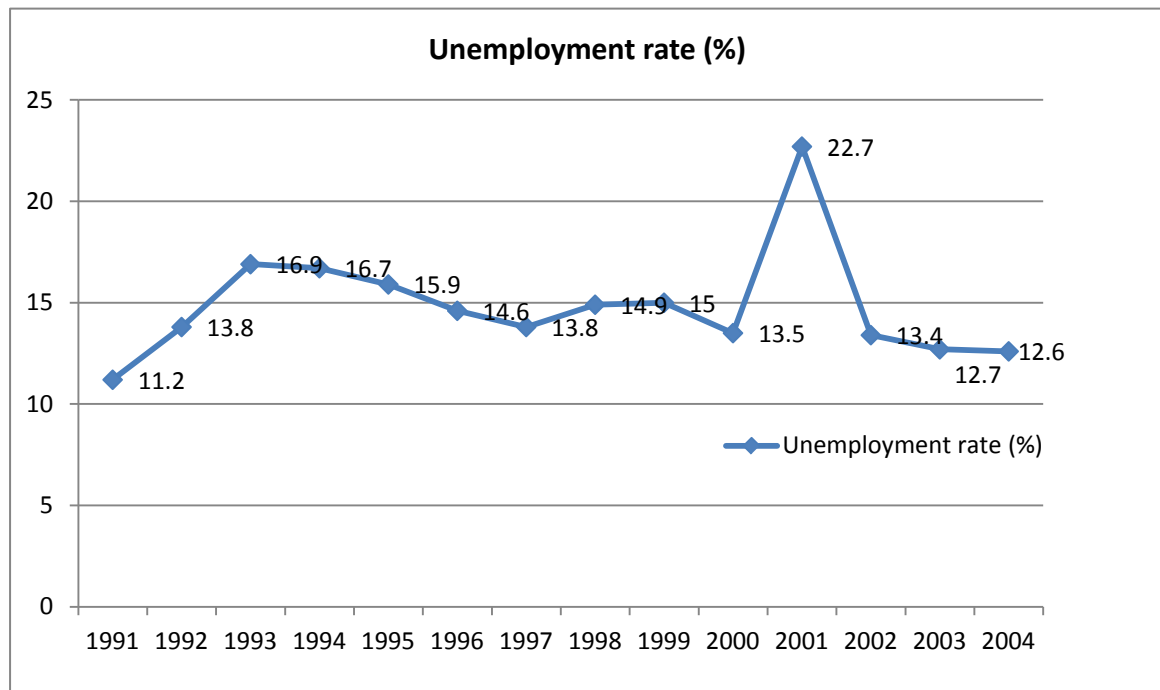
dispositions for each case of work relations in order to limit governmental power from putting hands over public administration.

3.4 Historical Background of Unemployment in Albania

Historically unemployment rate in Albania has followed the same trend as the output of the country but the difference is that unemployment is not reduced during the transition period as the GDP did in Albania. This finding derives from different international organizations such as World Bank and IMF and their annual reports.

This part of the chapter will reflect the current situation on unemployment in Albania and will focus firstly on the reasons behind the degeneration of this phenomenon not only in numbers but even because of the heavy consequences that it has caused to Albanian people. It is very important to point out with facts and arguments the situation in order to address properly each deficiency and to deliver responsibilities to who is directly part of this crisis. It will include a list of reasons or elements that were and still are important in this ongoing process. After this, it will be stressed out and emphasized on the consequences in the short term and of course in a long term process. There would be the need of graphs and statistics by official organizations in Albania in order to have a clear understanding and a better reasonable analyze.

Figure 3.1: Unemployment rate in Albania (%)



Source: The World Bank, 2015a

As understandable from the data of World Bank illustrated by the graph above, the consequences of the communist regime and the fall of it after 90s were a very negative precedent for Albanian citizens because it inherited to them a totally ruined country. Unemployment rate increased quickly until 1993, and starting from 1993 it decreases until 1997. After 1997 it tended to increase again slowly until 1999. In this context it is easier to understand that people were running from the pressure of the power but without knowing where to go because of their ignorance and hopelessness to surviving. Unemployment in 1993 reached its pick of the 1990s because the transition was hard to be achieved and democracy was far away to be reached after a 45 year of totally dictatorship and cultural darkness. There can be many reasons behind this but is enough to say that communism brought misery, poverty and the consequence was massive migration toward Western countries.

Even if the level of unemployment rate has been decreasing during the last 10 years, still it has never decreased at that of 1996 because it was the lowest one with a level of welfare that can be considered as satisfactory until 1997 where it came the collapse of the pyramids scheme and people lost all what they had constructed in 6 years of pluralism and “democracy”. Year 2001 was destructive for the employment level because approximately most of people were not working and were not able to find a job because of lack of opportunities. Unemployment rate in this year went at the higher level in history of Albania with a percentage of 22.7 that ruined totally the pillars of a stable economy that were tried to be reached until that year after a very difficult implementation of a new democracy.

If we continue further, in 2009 it is found an increase of unemployment rate with a percentage of 0.6 compared with the previous year. According to International Monetary Fund, unemployment rate in Albania in 2010 is evaluated to be approximately 12.5%. In 2009 the total of registered unemployed in Albania was at about 88.5%, people categorized as long term unemployed. From this percentage, only 6.3% were receiving unemployment benefit called as social assistance from the state that is a modest amount of money not sufficient even for basic food (International Monetary Fund, 2015).

Table 3.1: Unemployment rate vs. Education level

Description / Year	2000	2004	2009
Total Nr of Registered Unemployed	215,085	157,008	142,012
Mandatory Education	48.6 %	53.5 %	53.6 %
Secondary Education	48.6 %	44.7 %	43.8 %
Higher Education (University)	2.7 %	1.7 %	2.6 %

Source: INSTAT (Open.data.al, 2014)

As noticed from the table above it is seen a direct relationship between the level of unemployment and the education. The number of unemployed people has decreased from 2000 to 2009 but if we refer to education, we see that people with mandatory education have also the highest percentage of registered unemployed. With the increase of education, the percentage of unemployment decreases from 53.6 % in 2009 to 2.6 % in the same year. This is a direct answer of one of the most important questions of this thesis that is why Albania inherited a higher percentage of unemployed people. It is the level of education that has directly influenced the market of employment because those better educated has more opportunities to get a job but as seen from the table, most of the part of unemployed is the people with lower education and it becomes more difficult to find solutions for this category. The government had to be responsible for employment reforms for this people because even currently we notice the same problem but it will be treated in the chapters below of what is being done now with incentives, programs, trainings, rising awareness for this people in order to increase economic welfare and family pleasure as a direct indicator of social welfare.

In a time when unemployment is one of the major concerns in Albania and not only, when looking for reasons behind, should we also clarify the dilemma of the working culture in this country. Does Albanians have the culture of work as it functions all over the world, especially referring to our region or developed democracies in Europe to whom we want to compete in the future? According to some sociologists, former communist regime in Albania is the main responsible for what it happens now. It destroyed the

perception and ideal of work in people's mind by offering ridiculous payments in return to a hard work throughout the day. This was devastating and was the first crack between people and their will to work. The working sites were predetermined due to the desire of the party governing and no objection was allowed as the consequences could have been serious for everyone. For the sociologist Agim Muca, the consequences of the communist regime are still present in the mentality of Albanian citizens even after two decades passed. People now give less contribution in their work but in return pretend more because of the perception brought by the past and the fear of exploitation (vizionplus.tv, 2015). Nowadays Albanians have the opportunity to choose between a work in the public sector or private one but according to the statistics, the private sector has the major number of employed people that increases year by year. Furthermore/moreover, the public sector or public administration has less than a half in number employed people toward the private entities but still remains the most preferred sector for Albanians. What is understandable from this is that people used to prefer the public because they feel safe in their working place and do not think too much about the low wages. For Mr. Muca, public administration still remains the preferred one even because people think of it as a workplace that would only serve for getting a monthly income without too much hard work and on the other hand they can continue to have a second job in parallel in the private sector (vizionplus.tv, 2015).

The employment in the public sector has also another "advantage" because it is repeatedly used in every election period as a good promise by the deputies or MPs toward the electorate in order to ensure some votes in the electoral process. It was demonstrated that it has been the best way for them to ensure votes from the masses that are still suffering the consequences of their political affiliations by living in total poverty. The mentality inherited in 20 years of transitory democracy between politics and citizens, is that of the exchange of favors where each economic benefit by the eventual deputies, is sufficient for promising a vote because of the critical economic situation in which they stand.

3.5 Current Situation of Unemployment in Albania

As I am a representative of public administration in Albania because of my working position as a specialist in the Work Office, I am in contact every day with unemployed

people who came in search for work and this was very useful to my research paper and my personal findings in order to be more reliable in the information included. This situation for me was the best way to express and support my thesis about reasons behind and social consequences of high unemployment in Albania.

Albania actually is facing an unemployment rate that increases rapidly in the last few years. Albanian citizens feel increasingly insecure in their working place and the level of discontent is obvious. World Bank official site in its last data of publications indicate unemployment in Albania at a percentage of 12.8% for the first 3 months of 2013 (The World Bank, 2015a). In this statistic is not included the people who abandons the work with their personal desire but those who used to lose their job unfairly or those with whom the destiny has not been so generous and were not able to find a job because of the lack of opportunities that the labor market offers. Albanian's mentality continues to hold yet with fanaticism the same evaluation for the role of the work because it is considered the first necessity for the life of everyone and then having also an intellectual importance as that of realizing a better carrier for those who aim it. Somewhat it is given a vital importance to the working level and the status that it provides to the people. As a consequence it is normal that the norms of anxiety are part of the life of unemployed people or those who do not feel secure any more in their working place. Usually there are people who suffer from mental disorder and the number increases every day. In this regard is imminent to say that the effects of unemployment appear in different spheres of the life of each individual by affecting too deeply the society's values, norms, tranquility and general welfare.

After one year of new government in 2014 and after promising the opening of 300,000 new jobs, the situation seems very different from that of the electoral campaign of 2013. The current Prime Minister Edi Rama before the elections in 2013 made a speech to all its electorate by "punishing" with severity the work of the previous government with regard to employment policies and promised that he will bring the necessary change to this phenomenon because of knowing very well the reasons behind it. He stated that:

My dear friends, the twenty thirds of June vote is not a vote for a party against another , not even for some people against the others, nor a vote to distinguish a Prime Minister with another, but is a vote to stop further destruction of the country and to open a gate for an Albanian Renaissance. It is a vote to end the growth of unemployment rate and to create the possibilities for a real employment. It is a vote to end the further destruction of small businesses that helps to create new

jobs and to open a new chapter of support from the government to the business thanks to this collaboration (Translated from Albanian by the author of this thesis) ((EdiRama.al, 2013).

Two years later we are in the situation where the government has undermined a serious action against informality within small businesses by charging with heavy monetary penalties the small businesses who work all the day for only ensuring a normal wage for them and their families. In different cities have starting the protests by the small businesses because they pretend not gaining enough for their daily bread and there is no way they could afford to buy a fiscal case that costs 280 Euros. They pretend that they don't want to violate the law but if the state cannot find them a job, why it should starve them from surviving by their own means? Since it is a democratic state, should combat informality from the top, and from the big businesses that are the only responsible for the large losses to the state budget because of their fiscal evasion. In this context the big businesses are governmental sponsors and most sensitive partners in the electoral campaigns every two years so there is no way that this category of businesses can be punished by the governmental policies and reforms because of personal interest. This is the situation in 2015 for the small businesses that the Prime Minister Rama in 2013 promised to support and help them to survive with low taxes and reforms in their favor. The reality is totally different from that of two years ago and that from whom he gained 1 million of votes.

The other claim of the Prime Minister was to ensure 300.000 new jobs and to decrease unemployment rate from that of the previous governments but what has happened in this two years? With the crisis of European Union countries of the last years, many Albanian immigrants are turning back from in their homeland because of losing their jobs and having no more possibilities in these countries for working. The increase of the number of registered people as unemployed in the Working Offices all over the cities in Albania asking for a job has increased immediately in 2014 – 2015. According to INSTAT in the first months of 2014 unemployment rate in Albania reached 18.3%, in comparison with the previous year in which it was 14.9%. 26 000 unemployed people have been added in the Work Offices for 2014, according to the Institute of Statistics in Albania and the total number of unemployed people in Albania increased significantly (vizionplus.tv, 2014) .

Furthermore, for the first trimester of 2015 INSTAT published the new publication that presents the situation of unemployment in Albania for this year. In the report, unemployment rate for the first trimester of 2015 is 17.3% for the age 15- 64 years and

the total number of this category of unemployed people is around 217.000 (INSTAT, 2015a).

This means that there are no new jobs as promised but on the contrary the number of unemployed people has been increasing year by year.

The situation in the working places in public administration is not so positive because of having the same problems of political affiliation brought by the past. Every government that came into power in Albania promised to create a stable and professional public administration in the benefit of all but no government kept their promises. Whoever came into power, made massive dismissals of people without any professional argument. The reasons behind were purely political because of claiming to work only with their staff even if this “staff” means all the category of people who gave their vote because of political affiliation or because of gaining a job, want their profit back. There are reforms all over the world done on this regard that may be a good example for Albanian politicians but as long as the law of civil service protects the rights of every citizen working in public administration and is not respected by those who govern, is not appropriate to talk any more about respect to rule of law because of being violated every day with illegal dismissals of “political opposition” of civil servants from public administration even with very high professional skills. This phenomenon is a high loose for the efficiency, productivity and professionalism of public administration in Albania.

Several reforms are presented by Western democracies that are the best examples of regulating by other means the employment issue and they have been successful on it. Albania can make the same if taking as a point of reference by the National Labor Relations Act of 1935 (Congress, 1935) starting from each candidate that can improve its working conditions with a correct and depoliticized behavior and then passing to employers who can surely prohibit several political discussions or campaigning personal affiliations at work as it is not ethical. In the same line with this idea, the private employers have full rights to discuss about his/her working place conditions and no legal framework can damage this right. Therefore if the employee has the tendency to discuss the lengthy of the requisites or claims of an employer about candidate pretends to gain that workplace, then the employer can automatically take away this candidacy for that job and can clearly make a better choice in his understanding. On the other hand, it is normal in today’s reality that employers can obligate employees to be audience of meetings and attend town halls on behalf of its political affiliation. All these happen but are being

regulated by the National Labor Relations Act as a supplement of the Labor Code or other legal frameworks that each country has (Broughton, Higgins, Hicks, & Cox, 2009).

Nepotism is the last sad reality of Albanian politics and one of the most sensitive causes of the increase of unemployment rate in the country. Every day we read in the news about employers or political actors who tend to favor their family relatives and friends without any meritocracy criteria.

3.6 Conclusion

Trying to favor people is not legal in all countries of the world so it cannot be accepted or justified any more in the 21st century. In the private sector everyone should have the right to choose who considers more appropriate for the productivity and efficiency of its business but public administration is far away from this position. If someone works in public administration, each country, including Albania, has specific laws about the conflict of interests in case of relatives at a certain level and they should only be respected and applied by every government in order to have efficient state institutions who work on behalf of the public. Professionalism, meritocracy, impartiality are some of the criteria must be embraced and consequently should be used for further development of the country.

4 Chapter Four: How Politics Affect Unemployment in Albania?

4.1 Introduction

There are several primary and secondary factors that can be considered as directly or indirectly part of the responsibility for the deep crisis that Albanian society is experiencing. In theory, at the beginning every new government aims to have a good performance because of new spirit and in order to gain confidence, however in the case of Albania it has been demonstrated the opposite and above are the necessary evidences for this personal finding. In addition the research aims to identify some of these factors in order to understand better the reasons of unemployment regress. If possible will be trying to offer suggestions and predict what will be the future of Albanian economic development, social prosperity and well-being of the people living in the country. Bad governance, political discrimination, corruption, absence of the rule of law, loss of confidence and other factors are part of what can be the reasons for the deterioration of the standard of living of Albanian citizens and the massive migration toward Western countries in search for a job that would permit them to survive. This is not a normal situation or condition, especially for a candidate member country for European Union integration that claims to be full member of it within a few years. The path will be long and troublesome but not impossible to arrive at the final destination.

4.2 Factors Indicating and Affecting Economic Situation in Albania

The country is facing a missionary battle against economic problems and the decrease of living standard. Without arriving at a culminating point of progress, Albania cannot make steps toward European integration and confrontation with immediate challenges dealing with economic situation of the country, loss of hope, increase of migration etc. In this context it is necessary to list some factors that demonstrate this critical situation where unemployment is also integral part of.

4.2.1 Bad governance

The total desperation that have captured the citizens is almost evident in every common area and behind this are not only economic causes but even causes of disintegration of the civil standards, citizenship and democracy by influencing massive migration of Albanian

people to Germany and other European countries in the 21st century as compared to Middle East countries that are running away for reasons of dictatorship and war. The difference is that Albanians are running away from misery, desperation and lack of hope. The bad governance of this two years and somehow even that of the previous government has decreased the economic indicators of the country and has pressured migration that comes as a result of the hostage taking of democracy from an oligarchic clique which is deepening the economic crisis.

4.2.2 Investments

Edi Rama's government has decelerated and totally stopped new investments at zero by knowing very well that especially foreign investments but even domestic ones are vital for the economic development of Albania and for the creating new jobs and opportunities for Albanian citizens. In two years, besides this it has increased another even a corruptive record in Customs and Taxation system. Real figures, daily alerts from businesses and common people, international and national statistics are the real picture of the economic situation of the country (Basha Lulzim, 2015). These indicators are also the best partners of the citizen's battle for democracy.

4.2.3 State budget

The spending cuts in the budget of the state due to the Normative Act that the government voted in the parliament on 10 September 2015 created a deep hole in the economic development of the country. The non-realization or capacity of the state income by the government created a negative climate of the state policies of development. The Normative Act proposed and approved by the parliament means for the country reduction in spending that means reduction of state investments, reduction of social assistances for those in need, reduction of pensions, non-construction of new schools, hospitals, infrastructure, and most importantly it means increase of taxes in order to cover the deficit. All these are not a loss in the state budget but a loss in the Albanian citizen's pocket (SYRI.net, 2015).

4.2.4 Self-destruction

The further collapse of the system has almost started because people is protesting every day for reasons listed above, students are protesting every day for the increase of the student fees and reduction of university quotes so this kind of system cannot resist for too long. This claimed democratic system cannot produce anything translated in economic

growth, increase of salaries, pensions, social assistance quotes, employment rate and increase of new carrier opportunities for youth. This can be called simply an auto-destructive system.

4.3 Political Discrimination

Citizens used to be discriminated in their working places, during their hospital treatments or health services because who does not “pay” for a service that paradoxically by law is free, doesn’t receive the same treatment as those who “offer” something. On the other side, the rich people are privileged by frequenting private hospitals and the interest for investing in public institutions in the recent years has been minimal. The same feeling is faced even in the arrears of electricity bills that poor people have not the possibility to afford them because of having not sufficient income per month. At the same time, big businesses are favored in their delays because of being near to the political subjects and the mutual interest that they share.

As mentioned above, people in their place of work feel threatened to express their opinions or reserves toward government policies because of the fear of losing their job. Having a job position in public administration, more specifically in the Work Office of a city of approximately 40.000 people is an important element for the advancement of this study and its findings. Every day I use to meet at least 50 people a day who come at the office in the position of jobseekers that in a month become 1000 people. This means for me facing the reality of the majority of Albanian families who have economic and social problems. It is really painful that they only hope remains finding a modest job that would permit them to live with dignity. Some of them are victims of dismissals because of their vote of because of their political affiliation and most of them have experienced the pressure and fear of preserving the workplace. This is sufficient for me to reach strong conclusions and to understand that Albanian reality actually is experiencing a difficult period of its identity.

This is not normal in a democratic country but is what happens in everyday life of Albanian citizens. People who are near the government are more privileged in their work positions and have more freedom to govern themselves in their small territory of work because of having no accountability from above. A system different from above would be a perfect solution for Albanian institutional system. Different from the capitalist one, a

system in which people who works would have the right to participate fully in the decision-making affecting the three economic questions responsible for the production of goods and services that are what, how and for whom. If we would have a system based on democracy in economic field, there would not be a need to use the fear of unemployment as a tool for making people hesitate from their feelings, opinions and integrity. In the case of Albania, the inspiration and originality of almost a million of people who work in the public and private sector would be the necessary incentive that every state should evaluate for the sake of qualitative improvements in every field of study as health, education, infrastructure, energy, etc. In contrast of all this productive ideas, clearly speaking in capitalist system people are focused more of having a gainful employment with a satisfactory salary even if the price is to drop/sacrifice their personality, rather than living a life with a modest wage made of integrity and dignity but that would not permit them to improve their economic situation for a short time. This reality is disappointing for the society but should be accepted as it is. Furthermore, beside the fact of a simple need to earn for a living, productive employment is a necessary factor of the psychological composition of each human being. Basically people desire only to feel useful in their life, nothing more than that.

4.4 Corruption and Absence of the Rule of Law

There cannot be any progress toward European Union membership for Albania as far as the justice reform is not being successful yet. Generally every government at the beginning had willingness to succeed in it. This reform was one of the key priorities of European Union in the last 4 years and it can be considered as the most sensitive one in the relationship between government and citizens. Corrupted characters of judiciary system boast about their properties whereas they are money earned by selling the justice. This is more than enough for citizens to lose their confidence in the state institutions because justice has never been on the side of the weak and the innocent people. Corruption in the judiciary system makes even more difficult the war against informality and criminality and this has definitely created a climate of non- confidence in the citizen's mind who do not feel safe anymore in their country. European Commission has identified judiciary system reform as the main obstacle of the Integration process of Albania and there are immediate measures to be taken in this regard (telegrafi.com, 2015).

The last report published by the US Department of State in June 2015 speaks about corruptive affairs inside the state apparatus. The report starts with a serious charge over politicians. It states that the politicians evade the law and prosecution in their regard, adding here the claim that corruption has been extended in all the branches of the government. US Department criticizes Albanian government for the respect of human rights and for the increase of corruption at the highest level in Albanian history. The report speaks about human rights in the world for 2014 and Albania is an important part of the report. It continues further by emphasizing that the high officials of the state are not punished yet for their criminal precedent, including politicians, people with high business interests and judges. It resulted that the state has initiated the investigation of high officials of the country but the prosecution has suspended the case for unknown reasons. Other sensitive problems found by the report are corruption in the branches of the state as judiciary system, health care system, family violence and women discrimination. Human rights violation that is the matter of the study according to the report includes beatings and mistreatment from the police toward people who are taken in for questioning. Human rights violations are also evident in the substandard conditions in prisons and a totally inefficient judiciary infected by political pressure and profound corruption (Panorama Online, 2015). This report is enough evidence of the corruption situation in Albania that is part of the reasons for increasing of unemployment problem in the country.

4.5 The Effects of Unemployment in Albanian Society

Unemployment is responsible for affecting not only the person who suffers but also his family relatives and referring to the long run, the society where he lives is also influenced by this. Unemployment brings anxiety, unhappiness and depression. It can force people to live a life that they wouldn't have chosen for them. Expectations in life are negatively affected in this regard. These expectations include the satisfaction of their needs and wants by which people living in a certain place are able to conceive.

4.5.1 Mental condition

Mental health problems in this case may include feeling worthless, having low self-confidence, unhappiness and impossibility. Because of losing incomes and because of the frustration that this causes, unemployed people actually become a hostage of negative

behaviors toward shared things in their life. They feel like they have lost the sense of life and its goals. Low self-esteem accompanies their living and feeling disconsolate too.

4.5.2 Domestic tension

Loud voice discussions, disagreements and different opinions at home may lead to tension and this have increased numbers of divorces all over the world. Tensions at home are also reflected at child's psychology by influencing their performance at school and by isolating them from the society.

4.5.3 Political concerns

The loose of confidence in public administration because of political affiliation is a crucial element of unemployment matter. The absence of meritocracy and professionalism in the state institutions if deteriorates, can lead to political instability for a country.

4.5.4 Tension over tax rise

Unemployment can bring up unhappiness and a sense of defeat among citizens who have to pay taxes as having no possibility to afford them. When the government faces a loss in the state budget, generally the first intervention is that of increasing the state budget through the increase of taxes that can be destructive for those who do not have a job and who expect state financial support for basic needs.

4.5.5 Insecurity among people

The prevalence of a climate of unemployment toward people who do not have a job and their family relatives has been demonstrated that may automatically create or influence insecurity and fear among people who are employed but feel threatened in terms of competition by those who are not.

4.5.6 Violence and crimes

The increase in the rate of crimes because of having no other possibility to survive in life is everyday more obvious in Albanian society. Unemployment sometimes serves as a bad educator of people. If we refer to the daily news they tend to fall in the trap of crimes and violence mostly because of economic condition.

4.5.7 Cases of suicide

Increase in the number of suicide attempts and actual suicides have increased considerably among people who have lost their job or those who are not able to provide a

safe and normal life to their family. They become overwhelmed by a feeling of guilt and worthless that sometimes deteriorates into fatal decisions as suicides.

4.5.8 Living standards

Actually in a situation where unemployment rate have reached high numbers that means lower opportunities for work and high competition among people who are seeking for a job. In this case the compromise power tends to decrease and therefore the standard of living among the society decreases because of reduced income level.

4.5.9 Employment cleavages

The complication of employment gaps rises in situations where the individual is out of job for a long time as it becomes even more difficult for him to reintegrate in the labor market again and to find a new job. In this case, for individuals seeking for a job, these gaps are a negative aspect of the system.

4.5.10 Loss of skills

The unemployed people who do not have a job for a long time are in the situation where they cannot use their personal skills. Therefore if this goes for too long, the person may lose these skills and the reintegration in the labor market and the reacquire of these skills would need more investments again, more time and more exhaustion (Job-Interview-Site.com, 2015).

4.6 EU Influence as a Permanent Solution

After emphasizing some reasons and arguments upon unemployment historical background and current situation of it in the previous chapters, the following part of this research paper will evaluate and list some suggestions on how to improve the system. It is very important for a new government to have in its priorities the economic progress and the opening of new workplaces in a transitory democratic country like Albania with a lower income.

- ✓ The country's economy is based on agriculture, industry and what the government can do is to work on reforms on this regard in order to enhance employment, because INSTAT presents a country of around 1 million employed people out of

around 2.8 million of population. The most immediate reform for the economic development of the country is to intervene immediately on the employment issue as the only way to increase the standard of living and people's satisfaction (INSTAT, 2015a).

- ✓ Employment promotion is a reform initiated by the current government that is about cooperation between businesses and the government where this last one stands as a financial supporter for the businesses who accept to employ people for a contract of one year. Until now has resulted a successful reform but it has to continue working on this regard.
- ✓ Changing the mind set or mentality of the people on work culture because work has to be respected and taken more seriously in order to serve to the administration with dedication by avoiding self-interest and secondary purposes. This can be initiated by the government through education and in-house training programs or other specific social activities due to the profession that they prefer to follow in their life. Still education is a very important pillar of serving with dedication and respecting the institutions.
- ✓ NGOs inclusion are very important in their role considered as a third sector in that can contribute to escape from poverty by preparing and training people for the labor market in order to be ready tomorrow to compete and fulfill some criteria on it. New social trainings and political programs and activities can be a good start on this regard.

4.7 Conclusion

Unemployment is an issue provoked by some factors and causing various effects too. As mentioned above, bad governance, political discrimination, corruption and absence of the rule of law are some of the significant factors responsible for the deterioration of the living standards of Albanian citizens and the massive migration toward Western countries. In terms of effects that unemployment has caused, the most relevant ones are those of social character and psychological ones. This issue today has become responsible for different mental problems that people is suffering so there should be taken measures as soon as possible by the government itself who can offer free trainings or professional courses for those who do not have a profession. Private institutions can also offer new opportunities for youth in order to help them enter in the labor market. European Union

as a strategic partner of the country can initiate projects of financing professional schools or can offer limited working contracts in European countries by making agreements within countries. There are many things needed to be done in order to help Albania overcome the economic crisis and these are the first steps that can help to initiate the process.

5 Chapter Five: Conclusions

Concluding this study is not a simple undertaking because of having too much statistics, facts, studies and findings during the development of the work that if possible would be nice to mention them all and dedicate a special paragraph for each of them. As stated in the first chapter, this paper aimed to give answer to some research questions where the most relevant was asking to what extent political affiliation influences unemployment and how this happened. Attempts were made to find answer for this question and more or less this study achieved some results that can be considered as an answer for this question. Political affiliation matters in the case of increasing unemployment rate. This was proved in cases of new elections and changes of governments where massive dismissals occurred in public administration only because of political discrimination. In the same logic continues even the treatment of the civil servants in public administration. In cases of opposition actors in public administration, employers tend to keep under pressure their employees by using as unemployment issue as a threat against their claims. Unemployment rate during the history of Albanian pluralism and new democracy has passed throughout a troublesome journey in 25 years of post-communist period. In 1993 and 2001 unemployment rate achieved two peaks where that of 2001 was the highest in the history of Albania for a percentage of 22.7%. After this year the situation was stable until 2013 – 2014 where unemployment rate started to increase once more, then arriving in 2015 where unemployment is facing a new peak of 17.3% according the recent publication of the Institute of Statistics in Albania (INSTAT, 2015a).

This thesis has set out some lessons that try to give a broader picture of unemployment situation in Albania:

- ✓ Unemployment as a phenomenon can never be totally covered. It can be entered deep in its horizons but it would be very difficult to reach the limit because its roots and forms of development are not accessible or measurable at all.
- ✓ Maybe the discussion about unemployment cannot be political at all because is needed more a methodological study rather than political even if it is influenced automatically by politics. Every statistic or study about unemployment is not accurate at all as we may have other forms of unemployment that are hidden or undeclared.

- ✓ The fight against unemployment and the increase of the efforts for employment is not only a political matter with a specific political direction. Fundamentally it is a matter of all actors involved in a state decision making and for this are required new reforms, standards, policies that are being implemented in Western Europe for many years before and Albania should take example from those examples. Rights in the labor market are protected as long as the market implies even some obligations or duties.
- ✓ Albanian system of the labor market and social welfare is not commonly seen in other countries of the region because paradoxically most of the people who are able for work are out of the labor market and the welfare system. This category of people may be very useful because of increasing the pressure toward political actors but they do not contribute personally for the system and this is a negative aspect of the market that restrains further development of the country.
- ✓ Poverty and unemployment by feeding each other can be transformed into an obstacle for further economic development and can damage democracy and its institutions.

As a summary it can be stated that politics and society are the most important elements can influence positively the reduction of unemployment in Albania. Their efficient collaboration can bring good results to the economic situation of the country. On the one hand, politics can try to be near the society's needs offering tax incentives or social assistance until people reintegrate into the labor market. On the other hand, people must seek for more opportunities in order to gain new professional skills useful for their future. The future of Albania is promising as far as the only goal of the country is European integration and the fulfillment of the criteria required by the European Union. This membership ask for raising the living standards of Albanians and becomes a direct influential power for the new governmental policies in the interest of the citizens.

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