

Lone mothers and welfare policies in Albania
Conditions, experiences, expectations
1944-2013

This PhD dissertation is an action research project undertaken by Arla Gruda, representing the Independent Forum for Albanian Woman, an Albanian Association lead by Diana Çuli.

The financial provision of this PhD project was covered by Nuffic.

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ISBN 978-90-76905-36-5

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Skanderbeg Books
L. nr. 4, Rr. "H.H. Dalli", Pall. 184/9, Tirana, Albania
Tel. +355 4 2260945
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www.skanderbegbooks.com

Lone mothers and welfare policies in Albania
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Alleenstaande moeders en sociaal beleid in Albanië
Omstandigheden, ervaringen, verwachtingen
1944-2013
(met een samenvatting in het Nederlands)

Proefschrift

ter verkrijging van de graad van doctor aan de Universiteit Utrecht op gezag van de rector magnificus, prof. dr. G.J. van der Zwaan, ingevolge het besluit van het college voor promoties in het openbaar te verdedigen op vrijdag 13 november 2015 des middags te 2.30 uur

door

Arla Gruda

geboren op 26 februari 1976

te Tirana, Albanië

Promotor: Prof. Dr. M. L. Waaldijk

Copromotor: Dr. S. Pino (Gjipali)

Dedicated:

To the widows of my family, - my grandmother Behije and my aunt Neriman

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Acknowledgements

Working on a PhD project is a long and lonely road, but about the end one realizes that many people are involved along the process and have played several roles that have contributed in different ways to its accomplishment. Thinking back, where I started there are many people and organizations I am deeply grateful and thankful for helping me out in completing my PhD dissertation.

My most heartfelt gratitude goes to all lone mothers in Albania who took their time and shared with me their stories. Without their voice this dissertation would have been voiceless and would have suffered the real feminist and activist twist. My thanking and appreciation go to the representatives of local women NPOs and religious institutions, who became part of the survey I conducted with the civil society sector and who were informative and helpful to make me understand the services they provide to lone mothers and other groups in society: Diana Çuli, Bajana Çeveli, Brikena Puka, Lumturi Xhani, Etleva Tare, Natasha Buzali, Shega Murati, Sanije Batku, Marjana Meshi, Aurela Bozo, Flutura Xhabija, Luljeta Hysa, Afroviti Gusho, Luljeta Qose, Suela Kurti, Lefteri Kosova and Marjeta Mazniku, Father Richard, Ibrahim Bajrami, Haxhi Hito Shahaj, Arjan Emini, Blerta Ranxha, Ermal Lushi, Muis Kurtalla, Anduela Kaba, Bashkim Muhamet Muslija, Lydia de Vries and Bas de Baarn (see appendix 2.3., 2.4. and 2.5. for the names of organizations they represent).

I want to acknowledge the cooperation of the representatives of the Socio-Economic Aid Departments in the municipalities of Elbasan, Durrës, Korçë, Sarandë, Berat, Peshkopi and Vlorë, and express special thanking for sharing their work with me to: Kadri Kruja, Meme Xhaferaj, Ilir Zguri, Emanuela Çetri, Vjollca Hoxha, Rajmonda Haka, Irena Cakrani. In a cordial note I want to thank Etleva Bisha, the Director of the Social State Service, who had just received her position representing the Left Political Coalition coming into power, and who putted efforts to create me access to meet with Leonard Strazimiri, the Director of the Directorate of the Implementation of the Law on Socio-Economic Aid and Disability pensions.

All the local women NPOs in 10 cities of Albania who supported the process of data-gathering and cooperated with me in providing access to lone mothers were immensely important for the realization of my field-work. My thanking goes to: Association of Women with Social Problems Durrës (AWSPD); Vatra Centre (VC), in Vlora; 'Jona Centre' in Saranda city (JC); 'Embroyders' Association' in Korça city (EA); 'Woman – mother and educator' in Peshkopia city; Association

for Widow Women in Peshkopia city; ‘Me, the Woman’ in Pogradec City (MW); ‘Another Vision’ Association in Elbasan; ‘Women’s Centre Berat’ (WCB); ‘Light Steps’ in Shkodra city; Youth Centre ‘The New Epoch’ in Fier city, and ‘Useful to Albanian Woman’ Durrës branch Association.

No project can be accomplished without the financial blessing. My PhD project has been fully supported by Nuffic, and I am grateful to have had the opportunity to execute a financial budget that allowed me to have a decent living in the Netherlands and conduct the field-work in 10 cities in Albania. The additional financial costs that came in the last year of the PhD were supported by the Research Institute for Cultural Inquiry ICON, to which I am indebted for their generosity. The work of the Financial Department of the Faculty of Humanities, especially of Jan Welling who prepared detailed financial reports for Nuffic, and the work of Liesbet Cilek in coordinating the budget voices with Nuffic have been essential in the smooth-running of this project. I am thankful to my partner Herman, my parents Naida and Tahir and my brother Ermal who supported financially my PhD project when the grant ended. I am grateful to the Royal Netherlands Embassy in Tirana and Mrs. Aida Lahi, the Senior Fellowship and Education Officer who handled my application folder to Nuffic, and trusted and supported my PhD project.

My former colleagues, Elona Dini, Ermira Llubani and Ani Plaku have provided me with information on the existence of research conducted by UNIFEM (today UNWomen) on the use of economic-aid program my ‘women-householders’ in Albania. To prof. dr. Raimonda Duka I express endless gratitude for entering with professionalism the questionnaire content for lone mothers in the SPSS Page Editor. To Irina Dobos, Kujtim Mersini and Juul Verstegeen I am in debt for having advised me through an efficient use of SPSS program. A very supportive hand have been the feedback of my colleague Dr. Livia Ghita for the fourth chapter of this dissertation, in organizing graphs and tables as integrated parts with the annexes.

The academic director of the Netherlands Research School of Gender Studies (NOG) prof. dr. Rosemarie Buikema, and the PhD colleagues of the reading-writing seminar (Gisela Carrasco Miro, Heather Hermant, Dr. Shuyi Huang, Phoebe Kisubi Mbasalaki, Wei Wu, Aggeliki Sifaki, Isis Giraldo, Milica Trakilovic), for giving comments and feedback, and suggesting literature in improving drafts of my chapters. Especially thankful I am to Gisela Carrasco Miro for our hours spent on discussing international organizations and gender development, and for her thoughtful suggestions on feminism and neoliberalism literature. I have enjoyed and learned a lot talking about field-work epistemological approach and sharing field experiences from interviews with Phoebe and Aggeliki.

To Wei thank you for sharing lunch breaks and short supportive talks in the corridors. Dr. ShuYi have been a colleague and friend of PhD solidarity, with whom we spent hours discussing our PhD roads and struggles, thank you sister. My office-mates and colleagues, Bram Hendrawan and Dr. Chiara Bonfiglioli have offered an active ear in hearing me out on my PhD progress and dilemmas along the road, I am grateful to both of you.

My two supervisors, prof. dr. Berteke Waaldijk and Dr Saemira Pino (Gjipali) have been the source of inspiration, of constructive thinking and positive criticism, and have provided continuous practical academic guidance. The vigorous feedback of prof. Waaldijk in the last months of the writing process, and her academic-scientific presence has been the engine of this PhD project. The practical instructions of Dr. Saemira Pino during the formulation of questionnaires, and her positive attitude during the final PhD revision were vital momentums from which this dissertation benefited immensely.

A loud thank you goes to the heart, the eye, the ear of the NOG, Trude Oorschot for easing the life of every PhD student and for being helpful with information, coordination, guidance in every moment I could knock at her door.

To Diana Çuli, the president of the Independent Forum of Albanian Woman, I want to thank for trusting me in representing your organization through my research. To my former director Juliana Hoxha, and my former colleagues Ariola Agolli, Klotilda Tavani, Elona Kapexhiu I want to express my gratitude for supporting my career, and for welcoming amongst you every time I visit Albania.

I never could have asked for a better publisher than Richard van den Brink (Skanderbeg Books), who has been so careful in every detail of the layout and not only.

Christien Franken, my English editor I want to thank for my making my sentences more English. Annabel van Baren and Lisa Nap I want to thank for making time in late notice to provide additional editing of the dissertation.

A warm felt thank you goes to my friends Maayke Botman, Lisa Nap, Flutura Aça, Valentina Rao, Dr. Daniela Mustata, Dr. Livia Ghita, Rudina Koromani, Elona Saraçi, Valdet Qyrfyçi and Ejvis Frashëri who have contributed in many ways to support me throughout the years of my PhD. Maayke Botman and her family for hosting me in their house in Utrecht in the pick days of finalizing the PhD and for cheering me up in moments of despair. Lisa Nap and Flutura Aça for being my family in the Netherlands, for being always there for me, for sharing coffees, drinks, dinners, ideas and for organizing beautiful evenings together. Valentina Rao for being a house-mate, a colleague and a good friend in discovering the Dutch culture and international expats. Ejvis Frashëri, I would never thank you enough for offering me an entire house on my own during my field-

work in Tirana. Dr. Daniela Mustata and Dr. Livia Ghita for being together with me in bad times and good times, and for opening your doors, your minds and your hearts to accommodate my needs.

Rudina Koromani, Elona Saraçi, Valdet Qyrfyçi, Marjeta Terpollari: thank you for being my life-time friends and for making my stay in Albania meaningful with your presence and friendship.

And last but not least the words that can never express enough gratitude go to my precious Albanian family. My two dear parents Naida and Tahir, my twin sister Iris, my brother in law Servet, my brother Eri and my sister in law Giulia, thank you for being my family and giving me the warmth and support I need to continue ahead. I want to apology to all of you for having spent no time together during my field-works trips in Albania and the last 5 years. I want to thank my gorgeous niece Denisa for the joy she brought during the fieldwork trips in sharing a bed and having endless talks in English until early mornings. My adorable nephew Glen and my lovely little niece Luna, thank you for making my evenings in Albania joyful and more pleasurable.

To my partner Herman, who endured in one year and half my struggle of writing, who provided yamy meals and wonderful drinks to keep me writing and happy in the weekends, who did shopping and everything around the house that I would not be distracted by writing, I want to say THANK YOU. Thank you for being a mother, a father, a sister, a brother, a friend, a colleague, thank you for being my everything. To Marnix I want to apology for saying no so many times to play with him in the weekends. To 'mama Ana' I want to say thank you for letting me work on your laptop when I spilled coffee over mine, thank you for brightening our days with your presence, your smile and your warm words.

My very last words go to the dear people I lost the last year: my grandmother Vehide, my dear friend Irina Dobos and my Irish-Dutch friend and father Michael Robinson. Thank you for being part of my life and of my PhD project. Your light from above and your beautiful memories bring me smile and calmness.

List of abbreviations

ACER	Albanian Center for Economic Research
ACSF	Albanian Civil Society Foundation
ACRS	Albanian Catholic Relief Services
CAAHT	Coordinated Action Against Human Trafficking, US Agency for International Development; Albania
CAFOD	Catholic Fund for Overseas Development
CEELI	Central & Eastern European Legal Initiative
CEDAW	Convention for the Elimination of all Forms of Discrimination Against Women
CEFA	Education and Formation Center in Bologna-Italy
CRC	Civil Rights Congress, American Organization
CRIC	Centre for Research in Intensive Care
CSA	Civil Society in Albania
CRPSA	Codes of the People's Republic of Albania
DCM	Decision of the Council of Ministers
EOHCS	European Observatory on Health Care Systems
EU	European Union
GADC	Gender Alliance for Development Centre
GSN	Gender Strategic Needs
GPN	Gender Practical Needs
HDPC	Human Development Promotion Center
IATA	International Aid Taibeh Association
IMF	International Monetary Fund
INSTAT	Institute of Statistics of the Republic of Albania
IOM	International Organization for Migration
IPRSP	Interim Poverty Reduction Strategy Paper
IRC	International Rescue Committee
IRI	International Republican Institute
LNPO	Local Non-for-Profit-Organizations
LSMS	Living Standard Measurement Survey
LP	Labor Party
MAE	Ministry of Foreign Affairs of Italy
MARDWM	Ministry of Agriculture Rural Development and Water Management
MDG	Millennium Development Goals

MLSAEO	Ministry of Labor Social Affairs and Equal Opportunities
MWY	Ministry of Welfare and Youth as of 14th September 2013
NATO	North Atlantic Treaty Organization
NDI	National Democratic Institute
NDS	National Development Strategy
NGO	Non-governmental-organization
NPO	Non-profit-organization
NSDI	National Strategy for Development and Integration
NSGEDV	National Strategy on Gender Equality and Domestic Violence
NSSD	National Strategy for Socio-Economic Development
NSPLA	National Strategy for Persons with Limited Abilities
OGPRA	Official Gazette of the People's Republic of Albania
OSCE	Organization for Security and Cooperation in Europe
OSFA	Open Society Foundation Albania
OXFAM NOVIB	Dutch affiliate of the International Oxfam Organization
PHARE	Democracy Program (European Commission support for the development of democratic institutions and practices in Central and Eastern Europe
PRSP	Poverty Reduction Strategy Paper
PRSP	Poverty Reduction Strategy Program
SAA	Stabilization Association Agreement
SIDA	Swedish International Development Cooperation Agency
SLP	Socialist Labor Party
SNV	Stichting Nederlandse Vrijwilligers, Netherlands Development Organization
UN	United Nations
UNDP	United Nations Development Program
UNFPA	United Nations Population Fund
UNHCR	The UN Refugee Agency
UN WOMEN	United Nations Entity for Gender Equality and the Empowerment of Women
UNV	United Nations Volunteers
WBA	World Bank Presence Albania
WFP	World Food Program
WHO	World Health Organization
WUA	Women Union of Albania
WLNPO	Women Local Non-profit-organizations

Chapter 1: Introduction and methodology

“The main moral and spiritual support came from my widow mother, who became grandmother, mother and father to my two sons. I did not feel the pressure of having to ask for permission to take time off from work when my children were ill. My mother told me ‘I’m here; you need to go to work to take care of your children financially’”.

My widow aunt told me this about my widow grandmother

1.1. Introduction

I grew up in a large kin family with 15 members in a private house built by Italian architects in the early twentieth century in Durrës city, Albania. My twin sister and I were lucky to being raised by our grandmother Behije, a widow without education, who had already successfully raised and educated three children. My grandmother was a noble, generous, courageous, hardworking and rather silent woman who raised three generations: her brothers and sisters, her own children, and her grandchildren. She gathered around the meal table everyone and with her hands and her heart fed all of us evenly. Originally from Shkodra city, in the North-West part of Albania, she married a man from Durrës (Central-Albania). My grandmother was 17 years old when she married the vice-director of the Post Office in Durrës city. He died when she was 44. At that age, my grandmother had a married daughter, a 24-year-old son attending university and a younger daughter of 12.

It amused me every day how much respect she received from everyone, and I also noticed her honesty and practical way of dealing with everything. She did not speak much, but when she did talk, her words carried the weight of her experience! I was touched to see how she acted the big sister to her brothers and sisters and their extended¹ families every time they came to Durrës.

¹ In this dissertation I have interchangeably used the terminologies ‘joint’ and ‘extended’ families. By both terminologies I understand members of extended lineage blood line, mostly from the father’s side but also from the mother’s, who live together in the same household. In the Encyclopedia Britannica joint and extended, appear to have similar meanings in different cultures. Differently from joint families, the extended terminology is used for the extended bloodline members of a family who live or do not live together in the same household. In this first usage context of the extended term, I refer to extended members not living in the same household. In the rest of the book, I use it with the same meaning as joint.

Later in life I asked my parents and my aunts where my grandmother acquired her house management skills (she did not have any education) and why everyone respected her so much. They told me that when she became a widow, the family pension she received by the government was not enough to raise her two children. She left her husband's house in Durrës for a year and a half and returned to her parents' home in Shkodra to be able to raise her two other children with the support of her brothers and sisters. To avoid becoming a financial burden to them, she did handwork carpeting and sold them in the market. She never gave up when she did not have a sufficient income to maintain her family, therefore my grandmother Behije gained the respect of everyone.

A similar attitude of graciousness in accepting loss, and bravery in leading an independent household I encountered in my younger aunt when she became the widow mother of two sons at the age of 40. I was a teenager at the time. My widow grandmother moved in with her widow daughter to support her, and together they raised her two sons. I grew up in the company of an aunt who never complained; who always worked and raised two successfully educated sons, like her mother before her. These two widow in my family, proud in their pain and strong in character, made me wonder daily what it is like to lead a family and run a household on your own as a woman.

This life-memory was the first incentive for this research.²

* * *

'Lone mothers' are a category of women of all times. Although they have entered gender scholarship over the last 50 years, mothers who raise their children alone due to loss of or abandonment by their husbands/partners already existed well before the twentieth century (Rowlingson and McKay, 2002). The reason they have received discourse popularity in social research and family studies is the one-parenting dimension and the effect of the latter on child education and upbringing. When compared to other disciplinary studies, feminist and gender scholarship³ has paid attention to different aspects of the life of lone mothers.

² This is a presentation I gave in Berteke Waaldijk's master class 'Teaching with memories', with master-students in Social Sciences at "Marin Barleti University", in Tirana-Albania, on 1 November 2013.

³ In this dissertation I use the terms *feminist* and *gender literature* to refer to the scholarship of academic women in advancing and analyzing welfare systems for women and men. There are academics who refer to themselves as *feminist scholars*; others refer to themselves as *gender scholars*. In using and quoting their work, I remain true to their own definitions of themselves and their work.

They observed the routes to female lone parenting in two groups of lone mothers: women who became mothers by chance and by choice. Lone mothers by chance are those women who remain alone by natural and social circumstances such as teenage, widow, divorced, separated and abandoned lone mothers (including women who never married). The women who became mothers by choice can be found in post-industrial countries such as the Northern America or Western Europe, where highly educated and financially stable women decide to become single mothers by choice, without deeming the presence of a partner necessary.

This research on lone mothers' welfare policies in Albania, and their experiences, conditions and expectations over a period of 70 years is located in the Western-Balkans. It is one of the first research projects of its kind in this part of Europe, originating from my personal life-memories described above and the voices of lone mothers during community meetings I held while working as trainer on women's rights and gender mainstreaming for Partners-Albania, Centre for Change and Conflict Management, in Albania. The research questions of this study are informed by theoretical frameworks and critical viewpoints developed by feminist and gender scholars on the category of lone mothers and their usage of welfare policies.

The need for this research was voiced by lone mothers in Albania, at the National Conference on Human Rights, in December 2010. In the conference panel Women Labour and Social Services, where I also took part in, Ina Kasimati (a former single mother in Tirana) expressed this need explicitly. And it was affirmed by almost every lone mother I met for an interview, as the following statement illustrates: *'I cannot believe that for the first time somebody has come to meet me and ask me how I am doing and what I need, and how I can be helped. Thank you very much for coming and thank you for asking'* (Interview with anonymous widow lone mother in Saranda city). In Saranda, this retired widow mother enthusiastically invited me to attend Sunday prayers in the Anglican Evangelical church she was a member of. She introduced me there as a sign coming from God to help widows in their community.

There are these voices and expressions that testify to a personal agency of lone mothers, an agency that reveals their own recognition of inner power, and their action towards speaking out and making the first step in voicing their needs. Gender academics take note of the recognition of knowledge and self-agency of lone mothers when they speak out for themselves.

Two main topics are elaborated throughout the chapters of this dissertation: the identities, conditions, and experiences of lone mothers and the welfare policies provided by the state and social programmes provided by non-governmental organizations (women's organizations and religious organizations) in Albania over the last 70 years.

The questions that this dissertation seeks to answer are:

- What have been and are the research interests of gender scholars in Europe and English speaking countries on lone mothers? (Chapter 2);
- Who were/are the lone mothers in the communist period and after 1990 in North, South and Central Albania? What were their experiences and conditions? (Chapter 3, 4 and 7);
- In what types of families did lone mothers (and their children) live before their lone motherhood started and after this? How have these family patterns influenced their lives? (Chapter 3, 4 and 7);
- How did the cultural and legislative context during communism and after 1990 influence the marriage and divorce patterns of these women? (Chapter 3);
- What welfare services did the communist government provide to lone mothers, what welfare packages did the central, and local governments offer to lone mothers in Albania after 1990? (Chapter 5);
- How do international donors effect the central and local programming of welfare for lone mothers? (Chapter 5);
- What types of social programmes were/are introduced for lone mothers in Albania after 1990 by local NPO's (women's organizations) in North, South and Central Albania? (Chapter 6);
- What is the role of international donors in influencing local programs of these NPO's through their international agendas (Chapter 6)?
- What types of social programs are organized by religious institutions (Muslim, Orthodox, Catholic, and Evangelical) in Albania? (Chapter 6);
- How do lone mothers evaluate the services they receive by the governmental and non-governmental sector in Albania after 1990? What do lone mothers expect from the governmental and non-governmental institutions in Albania? (Chapter 7).

These open research questions indicate that this study is descriptive and analytical in nature, because it portrays and describes lone mothers' experiences in cultural and welfare contexts in Albania and it analyzes how these contexts directly or indirectly influence their lives and those of their children. The analytical aspect of this study has a gender perspective, and it is based on feminist and gender scholarship that insists on making the voices of lone mothers visible and audible.

In the following paragraphs, I will introduce the feminist and gender literature as the central theoretical framework that has informed the methodological, empirical and analytical approach of this study. This literature overview is subsequently presented more extensively in the second chapter and contextualizes lone mothers within different European welfare states. In this introduction, I combine the theoretical framework used in the second chapter with research questions I raise throughout the other chapters, and I indicate how each theoretical framework is used to inform the analysis of the respective questions.

The first concern of gender scholars is to point out that 'lone' or 'single' motherhood as 'exceptional' or 'problematic' or requiring special policies, cannot be understood without knowing what is considered as 'normativity' for family life. In Western Europe, lone motherhood was initially studied as an exception to the 'rule' of nuclear families (Bartolaia, 1996). In the 3rd chapter, I describe which family patterns were the norm in Albania in the twentieth century. I show that patriarchy in a specific patrilocal form, where women marry outside their clan, and move in to the house of the parent's in law, has been, and still is influential. The arranged marriages and living in joint families are other formal aspects of the patriarchal rule. In the 3rd chapter I describe the informal and legal regulation of family life in Albania to explain how the position of lone motherhood can be understood within this context.

The second concern gender scholars (Rowlingson & McKay, 2002; Kilkey, 2000) focused on is the contested category of lone mothers. Rowlingson and McKay (2002) criticized how the focus on the figure of the missing father is taken for granted, and Kilkey (2000) looked at the different housing arrangements lone mothers create with different family members. These housing arrangements, as Kilkey explains, blur the boundaries between the independent households that lone mothers create with their children and the joint households, which they share with other people, especially family members (*ibid.*, p. 68). Kilkey (2000) argues that they create confusion in the national censuses, which either do or do not count lone mothers and their children who live with other family members as independent households. This warning informs the 4th chapter of this dissertation, which demonstrates the living arrangements, and family patterns that lone mothers create before they were alone and the period after. The chapter con-

cludes that the interviewed lone mothers in Albania have difficulties creating independent households due to a lack of financial income, which as consequence creates time-circles of in and out living arrangements in joint families. The data retrieved for this chapter, in combination with the Law for Civil Registration/Status in Albania, will be analyzed in the conclusions of this dissertation. There, I am referring to Kilkey's argument on what counts as independent households for lone mothers and how the numbering of lone mothers can affect the welfare policies designed for them.

The extended family type of households in Albania is closely connected with the patriarchal, patrilocal, patrilineal and exogamous character of family organization in the early twentieth century, features which have remained strong until today. In the 3rd chapter I trace how these old, traditional features of the Albanian family have continued to persist, in order to describe the background of the family types in which the lone mothers I interviewed have been living before they were alone and after becoming alone. The 3rd chapter offers a historical development of family laws in Albania during communism and after. In this chapter, I examine how these laws impacted the marriage and its dissolution patterns in these periods.

Whereas the 3rd chapter deals with the family organization in a cultural context and the ways in which the introduction of the Family Code and political ideology on women's empowerment during communism effected the old tradition, the 4th chapter brings data from the quantitative findings concerning this family organization. The 4th chapter contains a quantitative analysis of the degree to which extended family types effect the housing arrangements of lone mothers during their marriage and after remaining alone. Such data then lead to the conclusion that lone mothers who remained alone after 1990 created extended families in 70% of the cases during their marriage. After remaining alone, they returned to their parents, sisters, and brothers, or continued to live with their parents-in-law and remained again in extended households in 60% of the cases. These data allow for the conclusion that extended family types are still prevalent in Albania, though they are more frequent in the North and Central than in the South part. The qualitative answers of lone mothers show that the main reason they live together with family members is a lack of financial income to create an independent household, which is associated with living in large-sized families. Moreover, in the 3rd chapter I address the package of incomes, a concept developed by gender scholars Lewis and Hobson (1997) who endeavored to look at the ways in which lone mothers would package their incomes in some European states and the US. For example, they package resources via state benefits, their own income, the biological father of their child/children's contribution, or pri-

vate resources. The income packaging I have employed in the 4th chapter to discuss to what extent Albanian lone mothers during communism and after 1990 could rely financially on the state and on the non-governmental sector. And last but not least, I discuss the financial (ir)responsibility of Albanian fathers towards their biological children, making up 78.3% of them paying no child allowance, and the contribution that lone mothers receive from their own family members (45% of them) and less contribution from their in-laws (12.6% of them).

Feminist researchers have contributed to the establishment of new conventions on the methodologies of social research, development studies and legal studies. By including women's perspectives in researching, connecting and representing the subjects of research, feminist researchers have changed the way institutional policies construct the needy (Harding & Norberg, 2005; Fraser, 1989). In the case of lone mothers, they have problematized the way in which stereotypes are created and by whom (May, 2010; Fraser, 1989). By analyzing how lone mothers themselves identify with these stereotypes, feminist researchers challenge the research methodologies used to describe them and the welfare policies drafted to serve them as based on old stereotypes (May, 2010; Fraser, 1989).

The identity formation of lone mothers and the stereotypes in public and media discourses have captured the attention of feminist scholars from the mid-1990 onwards. Phoenix (1996, pp. 175-177) observed how political discourses in the US and the UK have portrayed lone mothers as not fitting the image of partnered mothers. McIntosh (1996, p. 148) analyzed media discourses in the US and the UK and observed how lone mothers were described as deviant from normativity and as 'benefit scroungers'. They are feminist scholars who explain how stereotypes effect the welfare policies designed for this category of mothers. These debates in developed post-industrial countries focus on lone mothers in the US and the UK using long-term welfare benefits to raise their children. The stereotypes for lone mothers in Albania have not been created by politicians, policy-makers or journalists. Instead lone mothers in Albania are target to societal judgments due to the old patriarchal social mindset inherited from the past. For example, in 7th chapter, I present life histories of lone mothers, who told me about the unsuccessful marriage they continued due to shame brought on by the opinion of others or due to the pressure of family members. In one of these stories were the parents and brothers of the lone mother in question who endured domestic violence exercised on their daughter by her husband. This is especially true for lone mothers in the North of the country, from the Dukagjini areas, where the Canon of Lekë Dukagjini, with its patriarchal moralizing tone regarding women, still continues to play its role.

Fraser (1989) and May examined another aspect of stereotypes and public

images (2010). They point out how stereotypes that are created publicly and politically influence welfare policies designed for lone mothers. Fraser (1989) describes the politicization of a need as a condition for welfare entitlement. May (2004, 2010) studies the identity of lone mothers through their own positioning rather than through stereotyping and their position in policy-making. Fraser and May's analyses converge on one point: they argue for the study of policy discourses and identity discourses as constructed by the lone mother's themselves.

The issue of the interpretation and politicization of needs presented by Fraser (1989) is used in the 5th and 6th chapter of this dissertation where I observe and analyze how governmental and non-governmental policy makers advocate the needs of lone mothers in Albania. After 1990, in the Albanian context, the need interpretation changed radically. Under communism, leaders formulated policies for all women as deserving social support due to the caring duties. There was no public debate about needs or rights. The post-communist period opened public debates and local discussions on the needs of lone mothers. Both the government and NPO's participated in these debates on the interpretation of needs. Governmental policy-makers developed the program of Economic Aid to support the families living below the poverty line/in poverty, and included the category of 'women headed-households' in this program.

Fraser (1989) has introduced the 'needs talk' as a process that works from down to top, the process of the domestic need becoming politicized in the public discourse. The interpretation of needs by local women's organizations goes through such processes of representing and advocating for a domestic need to become politicized. One of my examples originates from the Association of Women Householders and the Association for Civic and Legal Initiatives in Tirana-Albania. These organizations advocated "drafting a project law, that accepts 'women householders in need' as a group with a specific status in Albanian population", based on a report on the socio-economic situation of 900 lone mothers in Tirana (delivered in June 2011). Consultative participatory processes organized by local governments and the Ministry of Labor that women's organizations in Albania took part in offer other advocacy examples they conduct on behalf of the women constituents they represented, lone mothers in particular. Over the years women in this category increasingly managed to comply with the criteria for accessing the Economic-Aid and fill in the necessary documentation lists. The policy stakeholders extended their criteria to include more categories of 'heads of households'. In 2011 this resulted in the inclusion of new groups of lone mothers in welfare programmes such as in the National Strategy on Gender Equality and Domestic Violence (2011-2015), and the amended law on Economic Aid of 2011: women whose husbands have migrated or are in prison, women who

are violated and are undergoing divorce, widows who cannot benefit from the child or family pension due to a lack of social insurance contribution of the husband. The amendment of the economic aid law is reflected in the 5th chapter and the consultative participatory processes are elaborated in the 6th chapter.

In the 6th chapter, I also discuss the role of international donors. Women's organizations in Albania have always been dependent on international donors. This dependency raises questions about the influence of international agendas on local ones and the designing of projects and programmes, which are responsive to international agendas, rather than to the local needs of the communities. In chapter 6 of this dissertation, I describe the discourse of US feminist scholar Fraser (2009, 2011) who blames feminist academics for their discourses on family wage, on androcentrism and cultural gender hierarchy, as being responsible in creating a new army of women ready for cheap labour, giving thus argumentative tools to neoliberals operating in Third World countries. Ghodsee (2004), a Bulgarian-American academic, blames feminist activists in Eastern Europe (Bulgaria, Hungary) in allying with the World Bank, the International Monetary Fund, and also UN organizations for creating an image of women as losers of democracy, who can be easily used for cheap labour in neoliberal projects as new economic investments. Both Ghodsee and Fraser argue against the agricultural loan investments given to women in rural areas as forms of empowerment. In this research, I ask whether this assessment of the role of feminist activists as promoting neoliberal policies, applies to Albania? My dissertation argues that the role of multilateral donors, UN organizations and European Commission, in cooperation with the Albanian government and women NPOs is a concerted effort to poverty eradication programmes and social inclusion. Though neoliberal structural policies are enforced via World Bank and International Monetary Fund in Albania until 2013, many projects undertaken with international donors' support are pro social welfare. Whether the new Albanian Left Wing government after 2013, through their employment boosting policies, would promote an army of cheap labor, this should be investigated, especially in the case of lone mothers that have earning and caring responsibilities.

In the 7th chapter I apply May's argument (2010) that the identity formation of lone mothers is self-constructed and is different from the categorical identity that policy and decision makers create for this group of women, through the life narratives of Albanian lone mothers. In consideration of May's examination of how locations, ideological modes of parenting, family and social networks can make a new identity, I explore the lone mothers' life-stories in a new light, as a chain of episodes. I describe their self-perception as untouched and detached from authoritative, outside influencers. This chapter constructs the narrative

of lone mothers through the support of family members, through their joint struggle for a common life. These narratives show the strength of character and agency these women embody and their empowerment within the contexts of both society and family. It elaborates how through traditional norms on marriage and family organization, lone mothers built their own strength. Social and family prejudices are external elements, which appear in these stories of lone mothers. From the 240 lone mothers interviewed for the period after 1990 I have selected 5 life stories, which tell us what it was/is like to be a lone mother in Albania, and how lone mothers negotiate their spaces and struggles with or without their family members.

Welfare policies for women in general and for lone mothers in particular have created significant and far-reaching debates in feminist and gender scholarship, starting with the innovation of welfare debates with the gender caring regimes to more recent reconciliation policies. With this study, I want Albanian experiences to be part of such debates. The responses of gender scholars to the work of Esping-Andersen (1990), highlighted the absence of women in the construction of social rights entitlements within welfare states (Orloff, 1994; Lewis, 1997), and opened the road for the introduction of the care dimension into scholarship and policies. The recognition of care and the way care is regulated between the family, the market and the welfare services has influenced other debates (Lewis & Hobson, 1997) which reached momentum with the conceptual frameworks on gender caring regimes (Orloff, 1994; Fraser, 1994). The one carer/dual earner regime suggested by Fraser (1994) supports the conclusions of this dissertation on the position of the communist and post-communist welfare state within the welfare models presented in Europe. The dual roles of caring and earning have gained sustainable attention in the work of Lewis (1997, 2000) and Lister (1997, 2006). Lister (1997) urged welfare policy-makers to distinguish between partnered mothers and lone mothers due to these dual roles. Lewis (1997, 2000), who has studied the welfare support for lone mothers in the UK and Ireland, supports the argument that the only way lone mothers and their children can escape poverty is via paid work instead of through welfare benefits.

Within these debates on welfare, the work of Knijn and Kremer (1997) suggests that care should be considered a social right that is of equal value as the employment right. This is an analytical tool, which I employ in the 5th chapter where I trace and analyze welfare policies provided by the government during communism and after 1990. This chapter concludes with the observation that care for sick family members or children in the life of working mothers (including lone mothers, since these were universal rights) during communism was legislatively acknowledged until 1981. With the Labor Code of 1982 it was replaced with social

insurance contribution, and after 1990 it disappeared from the legislative discourses of the Labor Code.

Other gender scholarship used in the 5th chapter to analyze the welfare policies on lone mothers is the work of Kilkey (2000), who positioned lone mothers as either carers, or workers in 20 welfare states. She refers to three groups of lone mothers with caring tasks within welfare policies: mothers who are in work, out of work or in a transition between out-and-in work. This division is employed in the 5th chapter to conclude that lone mothers in Albania have always been considered as both workers and then as carers, and they were not offered the position to choose between the two.

The reason of locating the theoretical overview of this study in European, English-language debates does not diminish the importance of scholarship by African, Indian, Arabian and Asian scholars. I strongly believe that lone mothers living in rural areas of Albania will have more in common with women living in Africa regions, if we focus on lacking infrastructures or low financial incomes. My selection of gender literature from Europe has been a decision of acknowledging the differences of experiences of lone mothers and the welfare direction towards this category of women in Europe. For 12 years, the Albanian government has been committed to joining the European Union and it is worth evaluating how welfare legislation and services in Albania compare with those in the established EU countries and the countries which joined the EU in its third and fourth enlargement process.

These debates have influenced the drafting of the questionnaires I used to interview lone mothers, women's organizations and religious organizations, local and central government representatives and policy-makers. Within the discourses in Western Europe and English-speaking countries, my research on lone mothers in Albania describes a reality for lone mothers in the Balkans. It describes their under-explored motherhood experiences and the conditions in which they had to live their lives, their routes to lonely motherhood, in terms of age, in terms of education and employment, number and age of children, the impact of patrilocality and the way they make ends meet (3rd & 4th chapters). It also describes welfare policies provided by the state before and after 1990 (5th chapter), welfare and support provided by NPO's, especially local women's NPO's and religious organizations (6th chapter) and, finally, it describes and analyzes the narratives of lone mothers and their own assessment of needs and rights of lone mothers (7th chapter).

In the conclusion (8th chapter) I summarize the findings and discuss briefly what implications this research can have for policy makers in state institutions and for activists and advocates of lone mothers within civil society.

1.2. On methodology

My research on lone mothers in Albania is a type of action research, which gives voice and power to lone mothers to narrate their situation, assess the services they are provided with and voice their immediate needs for future policies. By placing lone mothers at the forefront of this research, the analysis of legislation and policies targeting them becomes informed by an immediate reality. It is different from research done at a desk without getting in touch with the objects/subjects of research. The analysis of welfare policy legislation, which targets lone mothers either categorically or universally in the periods of communism and after, is informed by gender theories on care (Orloff, 1993; Fraser, 1994; Knijn & Kremer, 1997). The empirical gender approach of my research is motivated by the work of feminist research methodologist and anthropologists (Reid & Fraser, 2004; Harding & Norberg 2005; Wekker, 2013) and gender welfare historians (Waaldijk, 2006).

For clarity on my definition of 'feminist action research', I would like to refer to the work of Reid and Fraser (2004) who have summarized this research method as follows:

'Feminist action research is a conceptual and methodological research framework that is fundamentally about exploring and pursuing opportunities for social justice' [...] Feminist action researchers typically use qualitative research methods to generate in-depth understandings of women's experiences and put women's diversity at the center of the analysis. FAR strategies attempt to be inclusive, participatory, collaborative, and to elucidate poor women's experiences.' (p. 2).

In light of this definition, my action research has been participatory and collaborative not only in terms of engaging the interviewees in informing future policy-making by describing their economic, social situation and immediate needs but also by asking them to give their comments as users of a service and to voice their expectations.

The participatory and collaborative approach has not only been performed with lone mothers but also with women activists who work in local women's organizations. The participatory approach of this research also involves the participation of local women's organizations in creating access for interviews to lone mothers in their constituencies. The latter could tell me about their issues with the welfare services received from the government. Thus, I used the power of local women's organizations to get in touch with their constituents (lone moth-

ers) in order to empower through my research, both the lone mothers and the local women's organizations. The empowerment of women's organizations in this way has three elements: it introduces their advocacy for lone mothers into European academic debates; it introduces their advocating efforts to central policy-makers and international donors operating in Albania, and it increases their accountability for lone mothers in their constituency. I shall explain this last element in later paragraphs where I elaborate on the fieldwork methodology of this research project.

Wekker (2013) acknowledged the ongoing struggles of power relations among academics and activists, especially of those people trying to act as a bridge between the two groups. In her genealogy, Wekker (2013) raises the issue of knowledge produced in academia and in the community and the issues of validating what is recognized as coming from the community. She also points at the compromises activist researchers have to decide on in order to get a salary. Wekker (2013) reminds academics who think they can do activism via class teaching that they are accountable to activists who expect their research to contribute to social change. During my four-year transition from civil society and the sphere of activism to academia, I have experienced and recognized conflicts between knowledge perspectives and methodological approaches among civil society scholars versus academia scholars; thus, Wekker's statements reflected my own experiences in this respect. Regarding the knowledge production from the community and activism that Wekker highlights in her work, the interviews with the women's organizations provide insights into my understanding of advocacy processes and need's interpretation on behalf of lone mothers in consultative participatory processes with local and central governments in Albania.

Waldijk (2006) has emphasized the usefulness of social workers' histories, including their service to different groups in society, for a different and better understanding of the welfare. She has suggested that observing different examples of how social workers are collaborative or oppositional to state policies can lead to a new history and dimension of the welfare studies. Examining the welfare state from the position and through the work of 'inter-mediary' or social workers creates a new space of knowledge production. This work has motivated my decision to interview representatives (leaders and employees) of local women's organizations operating in Albania. In writing histories of social work in Eastern Europe, Waldijk found that social workers have sometimes developed collaborative agendas with the welfare states. Similarly, the women I interviewed have also responded to cooperating with the central or local governments. While Waldijk's findings in Eastern Europe also point the advocacy character to welfare states for services provided by the state, in Albania the opposing character of

women NPOs is found as suggestive advocacy arguments they provide in consultative participatory processes (6th chapter).

This research on welfare policies for lone mothers in Albania is interdisciplinary. It is positioned in the Gender Studies discipline and it employs feminist and gender theoretical frameworks and research methods. It engages sociological research methods in terms of providing quantitative data through conducting surveys in a pre-selected sample. The qualitative questions of empirical research are part of gender studies legacy, in terms of (Harding & Norberg, 2005) bringing the voice of women and recognizing the power of knowledge coming from the subjects of research as well as the tensions and power relations between the researcher and the informants. It is informed by studies on the sociology of the family and how this changed over the years. The studies of Albanian and Austrian family sociologists and researchers (Kaser, 1996; Kera & Pandelejmoni, 2003, 2008; Alia, 1988; Xhafa, 1985) informs my analysis of Albanian family organizations in which lone mothers lived during communism and after in terms of its patrilocality, patrilineality and exogamous character. The family sizes lone mothers lived/live in, in early marriage and after dissolution; the age difference between partners and the locality of men versus women after marriage are details of a family sociology from which this research has benefitted to improve my understanding of the lives of lone mothers. It is research connected with international development studies, since it answers questions and traces historically the women's rights development after 1990 in the groundwork of the International Framework on Women's Human Rights (CEDAW and Beijing Platform for Action) and Millennium Development Goals. It does employ methods of voice and agency of lone mothers as the first steps towards women's development, in international development conventions (De Silvia De Alvis, 2014; Klugman, Hanmer, Twigg, Hasan, McCleary-Sills and Santamaria, 2014). It evaluates the levels of access to education for lone mothers and their children, the access to quality health-care, the level of social protection, and the application of the right to access free marriage and employment, which are both concerns of gender studies and international development studies.

This research has made use of mixed method approaches to data collection, analysis and interpretation. I have used quantitative and qualitative data in understanding the conditions, experiences and expectations of lone mothers during and after communism in Albania. The level of prejudice they feel from society and the traditional normativity which effect their choice to either stay in their relationship or remain alone are also measured through quantity and quality data. For example, the quantitative data measures the percentages of women who feel prejudiced by society for being lone mothers. The qualitative data in-

interprets how they are prejudiced and why they feel prejudiced. The quantitative methods have offered the possibility of measuring in numbers and percentages the lone mothers who use different types of services provided by the local government, women's organizations and religious institutions. In measuring the probability of the usage of these services, the quantitative method offers the opportunity to correlate the types of services versus the groups of women who use them, such as divorced, abandoned, widowed, violated mothers or mothers in the process of divorce. They also allow observing the usage of a service per region divided in North, South and Central Albania. The qualitative data has provided me with the possibility to describe these services in terms of relevancy and assessment by lone mothers as users of these services. For example, in the 5th and the 6th chapter I make use of quantitative data, which describe the numbers and percentages of lone mothers using a respective service by the governmental and non-governmental actors. In the 7th chapter I use qualitative data in describing the experiences of lone mothers with their use of a service and their comments on its relevancy and further expectations they have.

The resource data for answering the research questions of this dissertation employed the gathering of five types of published data and three sets of interviews with different target groups. The published data comprised: Legislative official gazettes from the communist period and new legislation developed after 1990; the women's journal '*The New Albanian Woman*' and publications on family life and Party Congresses during communism period; websites of local women's organizations and international donors in Albania; national and international reports developed by Albanian institutes and multilateral international donors operating in Albania. The three sets of interviews were conducted with are: 1. lone mothers (appendix 1.1., 1.2.); 2. representatives of the local and central government (appendix 3.1., 3.2.), and 3. representatives of non-governmental organizations (women's organizations and religiously oriented organizations, appendix 2.1., 2.2.). I have conducted a survey through interviews with 268 lone mothers who live in 10 districts of North, South and Central Albania. For this survey I drafted two types of questionnaires, for mothers who remained alone during communism, and for mothers who remained alone after 1990. The questionnaire drafted for lone mothers who raised their children alone under communism was used to gather qualitative data from face-to-face interviews with 28 women. The other questionnaire was used to gather qualitative and quantitative data during conduction of 240 face-to-face interviews with lone mothers who raised/are raising their children alone after 1990. See appendix 1.1. and 1.2. for the questionnaires for the period of pre-1990, post-1990, and read the fourth and the 7th chapter to read more about how lone mothers have answered to the ques-

tions about their entrance to lone motherhood, education and economic situation, housing, use of welfare programs and how they voice their needs.

The qualitative questions' interviews with lone mothers from the communist period took one hour with each women. The interviews with qualitative and quantitative questions lasted 45 minutes to one hour. The answers were typed directly in separate word documents for each interviewee while lone mothers were talking. The advantage of using a laptop in the fieldwork, was that lone mothers could themselves see that their words were written correctly. This strategy I believe that it helped to strengthen the trust between the researcher and the researched. Communist surveillance and spying system in Albania and abuse by journalists, government officials and activists after 1990, who publicized online faces and histories of women who live in poor conditions or had been violated, have created fear of being public exposed and lack of privacy. Many women wanted to be sure that their face or their voice was not going to be recorded. Therefore type-writing in laptop their answers, and giving to them the opportunity to either reveal or not reveal their names and remain anonymous, or change their name and surname to not be recognized publicly helped in creating a trustworthy environment for conducting an interview. Yet, one of my advantages was typing blindly with 10 fingers, which gave me the possibility to write down the answers while constantly keeping eye contact with the lone mother. I have used data from all these interviews for quantitative and qualitative analyses. Both the qualitative and quantitative answers received in interviews with lone mothers were administered and analyzed quantitatively in the SPSS page editor.

A questionnaire with open, semi-open and closed questions was drafted to gather qualitative data from representatives of local and central governments (see appendix 3.1. and 3.2. for the questionnaires). I conducted face-to-face interviews with two of them and I hold official meetings with five others who filled the questionnaire online. I also held 3 official meetings with representatives of the municipalities of Shkodër, Pogradec and Gjirokastër to discuss my research with them and to request an interview or their time in filling in the questionnaire. For time reasons none of these municipalities returned the questionnaire. For the names and position of these representatives of the municipalities please see appendix 3.

There were interviewed 17 representatives of women's organizations, from which 12 of them were interviewed face to face and five others filled in the questionnaire online. For their names and the organizations, they represent see appendix 2.3. and 2.4.

These are the main methodological approaches, which have led to my research design. I will now turn my attention to the organization and management

of my fieldwork and to the questionnaires developed for lone mothers, representatives of local women's organizations and religious institutions, and for local governments.

The field work took part in the period between the last week of September 2011 and the first week of December 2013, a total of 8,5 months. There have been 5 trips to Albania which varied in length depending on the organization time of the fieldwork. In the acknowledgements of this dissertation, I have expressed my gratitude for the Nuffic organization on international education research which offered me a Netherlands Fellowship Programme Grant. Without the budget approval of Nuffic which enabled me to conduct fieldwork in 10 cities in Albania, this research could not possess its present format and its findings would have been based on desk research rather than on life experiences.

The organization and management of my fieldwork were helped by my previous skills acquired in the civil society sector in project implementation and management. I had limited time and finances for this kind of research; therefore, I needed to plan the activities before arriving in Albania. My previous experiences and the network created while working for Partners-Albania, Centre for Change and Conflict Management, the Gender Alliance for Development Centre, the Independent Forum for Albanian Women and Albanian Foundation for Conflict Resolution and Reconciliation of Disputes eased my access to women's organizations.

To get interviewing access to the category of lone mothers I researched, I cooperated with 12 local women NPO's in 10 cities in North, South and Central Albania (see appendix 4.3 for the names of these organizations). Local women NPO's are becoming visible and accountable social actors and advocates in representing the needs and problems their community is dealing with daily. Each of these local organizations has its own community (constituency) it works with and its employees have contact lists of women they provide several types of services for a limited period, depending on the programs they are running. Many of these organizations cooperate with local municipalities, especially with the Socio-Economic Aid Departments. 53.8% of interviewed women received or continue to receive socio-economic aid or other types of services from the local government. I was afraid that access to lone mothers via the offices of socio-economic aid in municipalities would refrain lone mothers from talking to me. Perhaps they would see me as someone who was trying to take away their economic aid, due to the filtering they have to go through every three months. The criteria list for the provision of socio-economic aid, social housing and inability pension is long and demanding. Probably lone mothers would be afraid that the interviews revealed details of their daily lives to the local policy executors who prepare the list

of beneficiaries of the economic aid. Women local NPO's are seen by women who have received services by them as closer to their daily struggles and successes but also as defenders of their rights to the central government and policy-makers. For this reason, my cooperation with local women NPO's rather than with the socio-economic aid offices was an approach based on political strategy.

The sample of lone mothers to be interviewed was approached in two ways. First, they were pre-selected based on the group division and certain characteristics. Second, the women NPO's I was cooperating with to create access to these interviewees were asked to present me with other groups of lone mothers which were present in their community and whose presence I had not been aware of in the pre-selection. If my list of requests for groups of lone mothers to interview was too demanding for women's organizations (see appendix 4.2.), they were free to provide me with a different number of lone mothers' groups they could give me access to and to also bring other women in interviews, whose situation or presence would reflect better the community reality, rather than my pre-selected list.

Initially, I was going to interview the following groups of lone mothers: widowed, divorced, separated, abandoned and teenage mothers. Widowed turned out to be a considerable part of the category of lone mothers in Albania. The divorced, separated, single unmarried mothers and teenage mothers have become most visible after 1990. Especially the category of abandoned and separated mothers has increased due to the Albanian context of mass emigration.

During the last 10 years, 'gra kryefamiljare' (women who head their families), is a preferred terminology in policy-making by non-profit organizations and the government stakeholders. My understanding, based on my experience as an activist in non-profit organizations, a feminist, and a current gender researcher of the 'lone mother' category, shows similarities and differences to the Albanian category of 'gra kryefamiljare' (women who head their families). I understand the category to include some groups of mothers such as divorced or widowed lone mothers, and mothers who were abandoned due to emigration and cannot benefit from child allowance or child pension. These groups have been included in the 2011 law on economic aid. Nevertheless, in my dissertation, in the 5th, 7th and last concluding chapter, I argue that more attention should be paid to other groups of lone mothers without any income resource, or housing accommodation, who for several reasons cannot gather documents needed to access economic aid or other welfare services. Where my understanding of the category of lone mothers differs with policy-stakeholders is in the usage of the terminology in the Albanian language. I decided to exclude certain categories of 'women who head their families', either because of the composition of their

families (married women without children), or due to already present policies for these sub-categories of women (women with invalid husbands/partners in the house who receive invalidity pension for their partners and caring allowance). As I conclude at the end of my dissertation, I am in favor of women packaging different resources of income, and different benefits, taking into consideration the low level of benefits, which the Albania government or Albanian families can give as support. What I aim to argue in this research, is giving priority to those women who are mothers and are alone without partners, as compared to those who have no children, or have adult children living separately, or have partners in the house even though they might be divorced by law.

I do use the Albanian term ‘nënë e vetme kryefamiljare’ (a lone mother who is the head of her family), whereas policy-makers and civil society activists use the ‘gra kryefamiljare’ terminology (women who head their families). Therefore, the main difference between policy-makers and me in using this terminology originates in the subject of address. I do use the word ‘mother’ and they use ‘women’, which means that the priority to treat lone mothers with dependent young or adult children in policy-making strategies has not been clarified yet.

My definition of ‘lone mother’ as a category is drawn from Kilkey (2000): she includes in it divorced lone mothers, single lone mothers, separated and teenage mothers, but she excludes widowed mothers because the latter have always been given priority by welfare states when compared to other groups of lone mothers. As this research on Albanian lone mothers concludes, due to the country’s socio-economic contexts, widow mothers also need to be treated with other benefits rather than only the child’ allowance or family pension from the deceased father due to fathers working in the non-regulated labor market without social contributions.

I initially intended to conduct a survey with 500 women, 200 of whom would be from the capital city, Tirana. Time and external (not dependent on me) organizational factors resulted in dropping the interviews in Tirana. After deciding on the groups of lone mothers I was aware of, I drafted a pre-selected list of group characteristics and the representation number of interviewees I initially intended to interview per city (read appendix 4 with a city example). At the time I drafted the pre-selected sample, the Institute of Statistics in Albania (Instat) had not yet published the results of the 2011 census. Therefore, I based my sample numbering representation per city on the statistics presented in *Men and Women in Albania 2010*, the yearly publication of Instat. The larger the population size per city, the larger the number of lone mothers I planned to interview in that city (appendix 4.2.). Certainly, my aiming list for interviews per category was left in the hands of local women’s organizations (see appendix 4.1. for an email correspondence ex-

ample). Thus, my criteria list explanation for lone mothers I planned to interview was based on the numbers of lone mothers per group that received services from local government, or are currently receiving or wanting to receive it but did/do not have access to these services. I used the same criteria request for the services, which were or were not accessed by local women's organizations and religious institutions in their community.

After this first phase, I entered the second phase of selecting the local women NPOs I was going to cooperate with. The selection criteria for choosing these NPOs was based on the history of work these NPOs had in their community, their public visibility and acceptance in their community, and their cooperation with the local stakeholders. Another element in this selection was the previous cooperation I had had with the majority of these organizations when I was working in the capacity of a trainer and program manager for Partners Albania, Centre for Change and Conflict Management. Therefore, some of the women I chose to work with were representatives of organizations I had previously trained, a position that enabled me to evaluate the seriousness of their work. Apart from this first list of organizations, I had to have a second back-up plan. I prepared an alternative list of organizations I could work with in case the first organizations selected would be busy or not willing to cooperate in this kind of project.

After planning the interviews in such a way that they would not overlap with summer or winter holidays, national fests, local and parliamentary elections and the overload of work of local women NPOs, my next step was to send emails to the selected local women NPOs to introduce the research I was engaged in, its purpose and relevance (read appendix 4.1.). I informed these organizations on the importance and the impact their participation would have on the findings of this research and the publicity and promotion they would get by being involved in it. In addition, I promised these organizations the chance to talk about the programs they had offered lone mothers in their community, as well as offering a plus minor service to lone mothers (every interview was paid) to speak out about their situation and provide a view on how they see their needs as considered by both governmental and non-governmental actors and policies/programs. I then provided them with the tasks I wanted them to perform since I did not and could not have direct access to their constituencies. After having received confirmation of their willingness to become part of this research, I sent detailed emails on the tasks I wanted them to perform as part of this project: 1. The number of interviewees per groups of lone mothers I was aiming to interview per city, select and call for interview; 2. The scheduling and organization of the interviews, based on the days we had agreed I would be there for these interviews, and based in the willingness of women to be interviewed in the morning, afternoon or evening;

3. The offering of a space within their head-quarters for the days I was going to interview women in their organization.

One complex element of this research was the payment for the organization and coordination of the interviewees, and the time involved in contacting and recontacting lone mothers for the interview, the place and the hour. More concretely, the representatives of these women's organizations were symbolically paid for the work they performed. They were paid for the telephone communication with lone mothers to introduce the project to them and the time they put into inviting them for interviews and introducing them to me. A fee was also paid for the use of the headquarters of each organization (read appendix 4). In addition, every lone mother interviewed received 500 All (3.57 euro) for their time spent in doing the interview. The lone mothers from the communism period (who were currently retired) and some others from the period after 1990 who were very informative and in a worse financial situation were given 1000 All (7.14 euro) per interview. This modest financial contribution to lone mothers was perceived as a small contribution by the local women's organizations, which had previously offered social programs to lone mothers.

I am grateful to Bajana Çeveli, the president of the Association of Women with Social Problems in Durrës, who advised me on the necessity of the financial aspect of this research survey with lone mothers and local women's organizations. Bajana Çeveli is one of the representatives of the local women's organizations with whom I have conducted an interview and cooperated with to get access to 45 lone mothers. The financial aspect as I explained earlier was covered within the budget allocated by Nuffic for the four years of this research.

A limitation of this research is that it has not covered the capital city, where 1/3rd of Albanians are living due to timing and financial reasons. Moreover, as I explain in the fourth chapter another limitation of the survey I have conducted, due to empirical and methodological approach of fieldwork is that it could not bring an even representation of the samples of lone mothers interviewed in the regions of North, South and Central Albania. It nevertheless allows evaluating different social and economic patterns within the region sample and in between regions. Parallel to the fieldwork with lone mothers, I organized the interviews with representatives of the local government and the representatives of women's organizations and religious institutions. Thus, parallel to sending explanatory emails to local women's organizations, I also asked them whether they were willing to be interviewed about their services. With some of these women's organizations, I had already done interviews during separate fieldwork trips, but those that were not located in Tirana I interviewed during my field trip in the cities they were working in. (Appendix 4.3) I asked women's organizations and some lone

mothers I interviewed to introduce me to religious community leaders who supported them for a possible interview. It would have been difficult for me to get access to religious community leaders during my limited time in each city. From my previous jobs in Albania, I already knew directors or employees of Departments of Economic Aid in the municipalities the research took place. Alternatively, I asked the support of local women's organizations to introduce me to them, since they cooperated with the local government. In the cities of Fier, Korçë, Pogradec, Shkodër and Peshkopi I asked the support of local women's organizations to introduce me to the representatives of the local government. In other cities, I used my former network of connections.

To summarize, during the fieldwork in the respective cities, I organized the working plan in a way that I could conduct the interviews with lone mothers, with representatives of women NPO's, with representatives of religious institutions and of the local government. This required a very rigorous working discipline and time management for a tight schedule. In general, my working days during the fieldwork lasted 10-12 hours a day, in order to manage all the interviews and meetings in the time I had reserved for that city. Everything needed to be covered on one trip since I did not have a second chance, or more additional time and financial resources to return to a city. (See for a list of women NPOs and religious organizations Appendix 2.3, 2.4 and 2.5, see Appendix 3.3 for a list of representatives of the local government I have interviewed).

The relevance of this research is both national and international. Nationally this research addresses the needs of lone mothers expressed by themselves, and I hope it will have a social impact on policy-making processes to draft social packages for lone mothers in the future in Albania. It moreover as a research feeds further and detailed investigation on the lives and situation of lone mothers and their children, which this research has not intended to deal with. Internationally speaking, this research hopes to contribute making audible the voices from specific situations of lone mothers located in Europe, which opens up debates on comparative studies for this subject in Western Balkans, or Eastern Europe that I have so far had difficulties to find existent. Furthermore, it addresses with new material, international debates on gender and neoliberalism.

Chapter 2: Gender scholarship on lone mothers

2.1. Introduction

Lone mothers have been on the research agendas of gender scholars over the last 50 years. They have gained gender scholarship attention as a different typology of family organization, i.e. 'the women headed families' which challenged the norms of the male breadwinner/domestic housewife model. By challenging family norms, lone mothers represented alternative motherhood types in terms of caring and earning. Increased numbers of lone mothers' independent households and children born out of wedlock have challenged welfare states in Europe to develop social policies that fitted the needs of these new family types.

Lone mothers in Albania (a European country, not part of the EU yet) have attained legislative consideration from the mid-1940s onwards. Sporadically, divorced women received some scholarly attention in the late 1990s to mid-2000. Surveys to assess the needs of 'women-headed families' have been undertaken by local NPOs and UN organizations since 2011. However, academic research into the different groups that compose the lone mother category (in the process of divorce, divorced, separated, abandoned, widowed, teenaged) has not taken place yet.

My research on 'lone mothers' in communist and post-communist Albania takes into consideration the identity and daily experiences of Albanian lone mothers. Furthermore, my research investigates and analyzes the welfare policies undertaken by the state during communism and after 1990. Moreover, this research looks at welfare programmes initiated by local women NPOs and local religious institutions and organizations in 10 regions in North, South and Central Albania. It excludes some subcategories of women included by governmental policies for 'women-headed families'. Based on gender theoretical frameworks, the current study uses two components to define the category of 'lone mothers': the absence of the father of the child/children and the dual role of lonely mothers in earning and caring tasks.

In this chapter I give an overview of the gender scholarship on lone mothers developed in English-speaking countries and Western Europe discourses which informs the theoretical and methodological framework for my research on lone mothers in Albania. This chapter consists of seven sections. Each of them directs the readers to gender scholarship I have found useful to work with, related to my analysis of debates on the Albanian lone mothers as a category and identity

formation, welfare policies from the state and social programmes from the non-governmental sector.

In the first section I look at how gender scholars have dealt with the definition of the 'lone mother' category, and which arguments they bring to the 'contested character' of this category (Rowlingson & McKay, 2002; Kilkey, 2000). The second section (2.2.) contains an overview of observations by gender scholars about the multi-layered formation of the lone mothers' category by policy makers, decision makers, and lone mothers. I review the work of gender scholars who have shown that categories are socially constructed and that, therefore, the collective identities established in cultural, ideological and political contexts do not do justice to what in reality is the identity of these lone mothers (May, 2004, 2010; Fraser, 1989).

In the third section, I discuss how gender scholars have used Gøsta Esping Andersen's work (Waaldijk, 2007; Kilkey, 2000) and how it affected their welfare analyses (Orloff, 1989, Fraser, 1989, Lewis, 1989). Furthermore, I indicate how gender scholars have worked with social rights and social citizenship on behalf of women's concerns in general (Knijn & Kremer, 1997; Daly & Lewis, 1997, 1998) and lone mothers in particular (Lister, 1997). These scholars, engaged with the gender dimension and caring aspects of women's lives, have suggested that welfare states ought to see care as a social right in itself, equally important to employment rights.

In the fourth section, I use some reports and surveys conducted by the European Parliament institutional mechanisms to understand the situation of one-parent families in Europe. From the reports of the EU institutions on family life, I come to similar conclusions as gender scholars have pointed out with regard to the definition of the category of one-parent families, and what should constitute an independent single parent household in terms of demography. I subsequently turn to the ways in which employment policies have influenced the directives on reconciliation policies in Europe more than family policies have (Lewis, Knijn, Martin & Ostner, 2008). These policies aim to assist men and women in becoming earners and carers, enabling them to reconcile work and family life. I address how gender scholarship on caring regimes have influenced the work of EU social policy scholars (Hantrais, 2004, 2007), Caracciolo di Torella & Masselot, 2010). On the other hand around also the work of gender scholars on EU reconciliation policies such as Lewis et al. (2008) has also been informed by EU social policy scholars such as Hantrais (2004) and Meier (2005). By overviewing work of EU social policy scholars, and gender scholars on EU reconciliation policies, I discuss how, in EU reconciliation policies, fairness in dealing with one-parent families has not been translated into legislative terms yet.

In the fifth section, I review the literature of gender scholars who have observed and grouped the welfare policies for lone mothers into ‘in-work’ or ‘out-of-work’ policies (Rowlingson & Millar, 2001). Other research has demonstrated that in many countries lone mothers are treated either as workers or carers or both (Kilkey, 2000). The section concludes that welfare policies for lone mothers in many EU countries will aim for earning power policies, as the only road to bring lone mothers and their children out of poverty (Rowlingson & Milar, 2001).

In the sixth section, I endeavor to give an overview of how gender scholars have viewed and analyzed the relationship between welfare and religious charity organizations (Morgan, 2006). Although Daly and Lewis (1997) and Bussemaker and Knijn (1997) have looked at the impact and role of volunteering and charity organizations in easing the burdens of care and finances in the lives of lone mothers, empirical studies which address both lone mothers and women organizations is still missing.

In the seventh section of this chapter I present some literature on welfare policies coming from Eastern and Central Europe and I examine how this literature is more concerned with women’s rights and EU imposture of gender equity directives (Hanney, 2002; Robila, 2010; Pascall & Kwak, 2005). I point out that the literature from Eastern and Central Europe has hardly engaged with the category of lone mothers.

2.2. The category of ‘lone mothers’

In the introduction to this dissertation I explained how the category of Albanian ‘lone mothers’ is defined in my research. I then highlighted the differences between the ‘lone mothers’ category I use in this research with ‘women-headed families’ category used by policy-makers in Albania. In this chapter I describe how feminist and gender scholars define the category of ‘lone mothers’ and what specific aspects of this category they consider when engaging in research. Gender welfare scholars have pointed to the contested character of the category of ‘lone mothers’. They connect this contested character with the demographics lone mothers represent in the national censuses (Kilkey, 2000). Kilkey emphasizes that these demographics are related to civil status by marriage and cohabitation law. Gender scholars have developed multi-disciplinary approaches to lone mothers’ demographics such as can be found in family, welfare, cultural and social studies.

One approach to a definition of the category of lone mothers can be found in the work of Rowlingson and McKay (2002, pp. 4-5). Their literature review on lone mothers in the UK considers them part of the family typol-

ogy of ‘one parent families’⁴. Rowlingson and McKay (2002) distinguish different types of lone parent families based on gender and marriage. They quote an earlier work of theirs on the growth and diversity of lone parenthood, where they divided one parent families into six subgroups: “1. Lone fathers; 2. Divorced mothers; 3. Mothers separated from a husband; 4. Mothers separated from a cohabiting partner; 5. Single lone mothers (women who have had no partner since the birth of their oldest dependent child,) and 6. Widowed mothers (bereaved either from husband or cohabiting partner)” (p. 5).

A second approach, developed by Kilkey (2000), focuses on the typology and demography of the lone mother’s family, where all the above mentioned subgroups (apart from the lone fathers) are included. Kilkey points out that the similar element all types of ‘lone mothers’ have in common is the fact that they raise their children on their own, without a partner (2000, p. 67). She emphasizes that:

“Academic and policy interest in lone mothers have been provoked by the assumption that they are distinct from partnered mothers, whether the latter be married or cohabiting (Roll, 1992:7). It should not be surprising, therefore, that what constitutes lone motherhood tends to be defined in terms of what distinguishes it from partnered motherhood” (Kilkey, 2000: 68).

Thus, the missing partner is an element that is taken for granted in this categorization of lone mothers. However, the question is whether this is a valid assumption. As I shall now show, the boundaries of the ‘lone mothers’ category are blurred due to the housing arrangements lone mothers undertake for themselves and their children. Like Kilkey (2000), Rowlingson and McKay (2002) contested the absence of partners in the lives of lone mothers. By looking at housing arrangements and welfare benefit programmes for lone mothers, they concluded that a new male figure in the life of a lone mother is often hidden, especially in countries such as the UK and the Netherlands, where welfare incentives from state are most frequent (p. 22). They also demonstrated that in other countries, in partnered families, a biological father living in the same house with a woman and children might be incapable or unwilling to contribute to the financial and

⁴ ‘One parent families’ or ‘single parent families’ is also the categorization terminology used in European Union Studies and Surveys on lone and single mothers as I will show later in this chapter.

physical wellbeing of his children (p. 18). Rowlingson and McKay (2002) also show that stepfathers or lone mother's new partners, who might or might not live with her and her children, can assume financial and physical responsibility for their step-children (p. 23). The presence of a man in a lone mother's life, therefore, "blurs the boundaries and questions her period of longevity as a lone mother (*ibid.*, p. 21).

In a similar argument, Kilkey (2000) considers the housing arrangements lone mothers and their children have with their close family and kinship members. She is aware that living with family members and having such housing arrangements become more diffuse in Mediterranean countries (Italy, Greece), where lone mothers live with children of an adult age, who remain dependent on parents until their marriage (Kilkey, 2000, p. 68). Kilkey notices that "missing details in prior research of such housing arrangements lone mothers commit themselves to, is a cons point to 'lone' definition" (2000, p. 68). The second reason why gender scholars contest the definitions on the category of 'lone mothers' is their civil status, married or non-married, divorced or separated (Rowlingson & McKay, 2002, p. 11; Kilkey, 2000, p.68)?

How do gender scholars bridge or define the boundaries between lone and single mothers? Could one argue that these two categories are the same? Why do some feminist scholars refer to 'single mothers' and others to 'lone mothers'? At first glance, it seems impossible to define the boundaries and/or the overlap between them. The more I tried to grasp the historical construction and usage of these terms, the more I became aware of their similarities, differences and overlapping meanings. Both 'single' and 'lone' referred to the fact that these mothers were raising their child or children without the support of a partner or husband (Rowlingson & McKay, 2002; Lewis (ed.), 1997).

Although I have not encountered any article on the historical use of the categorization names for lone or single mothers, by examining the feminist scholarship written on these categories of mothers from a welfare perspective I am able to argue two things. Firstly, these two concepts are closely interlinked and secondly, they were interchangeably used in different periods of welfare development. In my perception, there is a connection between the status of mothers and welfare, because their status allows them to gain access to certain benefits. How lone mothers have been defined has increasingly influenced their reliance on welfare (May, 2010, p. 427). Feminist scholarship on lone motherhood ideologies (Bartolaia (ed.), 1996), shows that the 'single mother' concept has been given prominence over 'the lone mother', also because populist culture, public

media and political discourses recognize and mention the former more often⁵.

As far as policies and provisions are concerned, it can be argued that in welfare policies 'single mothers' became a more accepted category after the Second World War, especially in Europe. Although after the 1950s the understanding of 'single mother' families' would include widows (together with non-married women and divorced women) this sub-category has traditionally been treated differently in policy provisions in many countries in Europe⁶. As I will show in the coming sections of this chapter, the welfare provisions for widowed mothers differed from those of 'single mothers' families.

Around the 1970s, scholarship on sub-categories of 'lone mothers' emerged with Second Wave feminism. These studies analyzed ideologies of motherhood, and the way in which the state, employers or societal culture, effected mothers' decisions to take up waged labour or unpaid labour at home. Around the 70s and 80s, feminists first wrote about and compared the barriers between lone working mothers and married working mothers with regard to welfare policies (Orloff, 1993; Fraser, 1994). After 1990s feminists made a distinction between non-married mothers, single mothers due to divorce, single mothers out of choice and so on (Fraser, 1994; Lewis, & Hobson, 1997).

In her 2000 study *Lone Mothers, Between Paid Work and Care. The policy regime in twenty countries* Kilkey gives a thorough analysis of the definition and terminology of 'lone mothers'. She starts her analysis by quoting Letablier (1996) on family studies who points out that when "talking about lone mothers it is important to decide whether you want to define them from a legal, policy statistical or sociological definition" (p. 68). Kilkey explains how many scholars who research lone mothers are careful to make the distinction between them and partnered mothers, especially when the latter do experience the same kind of loneliness in raising their children⁷ (2000, p. 68). Kilkey, however, deems it important to enable the specific kind of naming for mothers without partners. She accepts that 'lone mother' as a definition is problematic. Furthermore, she is aware that this definition does not refer to the support lone mothers can receive from different social networks, even from former partners. She explains that the 'single' termi-

⁵ A google search using both terms delivers 46,200,000 links for 'single mother', as compared to 9,750,00 for 'lone mother'.

⁶ See for research which develops the history of family policies in Europe: Ostner, (1992); Millar and Warman (1996); Busemmaker and Knijn (1997); Daly and Clavero (2002); Lewis (2001).

⁷ Earlier in this section, I mentioned how Rowlingson and McKay (2002) refer to the same situation concerning the lack of responsibility from biological fathers towards their family while they are still married or partnered.

nology relates more to the civil status of a woman who has had a child, while not married, enables the legal use of the concept (*ibid.*, p. 68). On the other hand, she argues that the 'lone' terminology is helpful because it is more descriptive and inclusive and refers to lone mothers (married or unmarried) in all categories (*ibid.*, p. 68).

Rowlingson and McKay (2002) have also tried to straighten out the implications of single motherhood, which for them belongs to the 5th subcategory of one-parent families, as I mentioned before. Just as Kilkey, they refer explicitly to marriage, which positions single mothers in a legal context. However, what makes the term 'lone' problematic for them are those mothers who have a child after divorce. It is difficult to establish whether these women have another partner living with them (*ibid.*, p. 4).

Thus, from a civil status (legal) perspective the term 'single mothers' refers to non-married mothers, and culturally speaking it refers to a mother raising a child without a partner. The 'lone mother' category allows for the inclusion of married or non-married mothers. Hence, it is a broader conceptual categorical name, and becomes a more flexible term to refer to all categories of mothers who raise their children alone.

Until now, I have reviewed how gender scholars related housing arrangements and living situations with the legal status of marriage and co-habitation prior and after child birth. There is also another aspect of housing arrangements which is connected with the acknowledgment of independent or mixed households by the national censuses. These statistics in numbers are later translated into social policies.

Kilkey (2000) and Rowlingson and McKay (2002) have pointed out that the definition of lone mothers is important in times of national censuses. They highlight the criteria predefined in methods of national population data gathering as related to independent households run by lone mothers. The definition of the status of lone motherhood and the decision to include or leave them out within diverse housing arrangements is, paramount for gender scholars. The data segregation on the prevalence of lone mothers guides welfare states in the family policy-making process. Higher numbers of lone parents leads to a higher chance that they will gain public visibility and will become a topic of discussion in policy making (Bimbi, 1996, Ostner, 1996). If their numbers are lower, they will be viewed as less problematic by societies and welfare states (Bimbi 1996, Ostner, 1996). Kilkey (2000) discusses the Luxemburg Study Index⁸ and the European

⁸ The Luxembourg Study Index is a non-profit organization which has earned international credibility in social sciences research and welfare policy-making, through data

Community Household Panel and shows what difference it makes to increase or decrease the presence of lone mothers in national censuses (p. 72). The point Kilkey makes, refers to two aspects that remain under the concern of national data gathering methodology decisions to make. The first one concerns the decision about the inclusion of non-married mothers when they are still living with a partner. Kilkey asks “does a census count them as lone mothers, or equivalent them with single mothers since by law they are not married” (2000, p. 74)? The second decision has to do with the housing arrangements of lone mothers. Kilkey asks the research question:

“In cases when they go back to live with their parents, or form other household unions with friends or else, does a census still count them as lone mothers with an independent income and independent household” (p. 75)?

These are important issues, which might differ per national census; therefore, it becomes difficult to do comparative analyses on these data because approaches to lone motherhood differ. This is also the first issue to consider when formulating family policies for this category of women.

Similar to Kilkey (2000)⁹ several gender scholars raised the relevance of demography. Ostner (1997) and Bimbi (1997) examined the social visibility of lone motherhood and welfare packages in Germany and Italy. For both these scholars, lone mothers have not reached public visibility nor have they been considered as high welfare users due to the fact that their numbers are relatively low (Ostner, 1997, p. 23; Bimbi, 1997, p. 175).

In my research on lone mothers in Albania, I have implied the all-inclusive sociological definition of lone mothers used by Kilkey (2000) to define the cat-

management. The working mission of LIS refers is: ‘LIS is a cross-national data center which serves a global community of researchers, educators and policy-makers. LIS acquires data-sets with income, wealth, employment and demographic data from a large number of countries’. For more information on data gathering methodology, data management and usage see the online site of LIS: <http://www.lisdatacenter.org/>

⁹ Other gender scholars have mentioned the demography of lone mothers in their research: Millar (2001, pp. 189-210); Phoenix (1996, pp. 175-190). The demography of lone parents (mostly female lone parents) has been highly recognized in reports prepared by the European Union Research Institutions. See *One parent families in the members states of the European Union*, European Parliament, Directorate General for Research, Division for Budgetary and Cultural Affairs, Women’s Rights, Brussels 1995.

egory of women I wanted to research. I have included the groups¹⁰ of widowed, divorced, separated and abandoned lone mothers based on the fact that they are mothers who raise their children without a male partner. This definition has guided my field work approach to pre-select which groups of lone mothers I wanted to research. Unlike Kilkey who does not include widowed mothers in her research, I have decided to include them. In the fifth and sixth chapters I discuss this sub-division of categories/groups to see what types of welfare policies from the government, welfare programmes from the women local NPOs, and local religious institutions are undertaken for these groups of lone mothers.

I also refer to Rowlingson and McKay (2002) and Kilkey (2000) in my examination of the housing arrangements lone mothers create during and after marriage to see the power of the independent households they create. I have analyzed family typologies of lone mothers in the third chapter, and in the fourth chapter I have studied the joint household as a form of financial support to estimate how lone mothers package their incomes. This enables me to look at the possible similarities between different groups of women who care for their children on their own. In the following section, I discuss how gender scholars have specifically worked with the category of lone mothers in their work.

2.3. Identities and representations ‘lone mothers’

Gender scholars have observed the relationship between the cultural perception for lone mothers and their position in the welfare state. They have emphasized that the cultural ideology of policy makers does play a role in the place lone mothers have occupied in welfare entitlements. Furthermore, they have pointed out that in countries where the usage of welfare by lone mothers is high, this influences the societal stigma and perception. For instance judging from the work of gender scholars, lone mothers have been stigmatized heavily in the UK, due to long lasting impact of Victorian cultural ideology which idealized the mothering figure in marital conjugations. However, reading gender scholars on this issue, it becomes clear that throughout Europe lone mothers have had different degrees of stigma attached to them. The gender literature suggests a direct connection

¹⁰ Throughout this dissertation I have used the terminologies ‘groups of lone mothers’ and ‘sub-categories of lone mothers’. I use the term ‘sub-categories’ when I overview literature of gender scholars on welfare, who discuss policies undertaken for different sub-categories of lone mothers from the welfare state. Thus, different sub-categories of lone mothers have recognized politicized needs. The term ‘groups of lone mothers’ I instead use to describe the different group belonging of lone mothers. Since I aim to construct a category, the different groups have not gained yet the status of a sub-category. As I shall discuss in the 6th and 7th chapters the lone mothers groups need to gain political power to earn a welfare status as a category/sub-categories deserving for benefits.

between the expenditure levels of welfare benefit lone mothers receive and the public and media stigma they gain. The level of stigma explains in many ways the societal response to lone mothers and their treatment by the welfare state. Lewis and Hobson (1997, p. 2) raised the question of the public visibility of lone mothers and their position in welfare legislation in Western European and Nordic countries. They worked with a group of scholars from Europe to look at the numbers of lone mothers in these countries and the welfare legislations drafted around them from the Second World War to the early 1990s, some of which I will discuss in the next paragraphs of this section.

Here the presence of prejudice and stigmatization will be addressed. In Germany, Ostner (1997) – one of the scholars who worked with Lewis and Hobson – recalls that historically lone mothers were not stigmatized in public opinion. Nevertheless, in legal policies they were referred to as ‘one parent families’ or ‘lone carers’ (p. 22). Ostner (1997) lists three reasons why there were no debates on lone mothers nor were they a concern for the welfare state. First, there is the demographical reason: the number of lone mothers did not increase, especially in Western Germany after the Unification (Ostner, 1997, p. 23). Based on the 1994 German Micro-census, Ostner indicates that “the main route in mid ’90s to lone motherhood was mostly through divorce. In 1994, 40% of children belonged to divorced lone mothers, and 30% of them belonged to the widowed mothers” (ibid. p. 36). The second reason is related to the cultural perception of and the political ideology on social policy regarding the highly valued child-care until the child reaches the age of three (ibid. p. 28). This explains why, in Germany, neither policy makers nor society did deem lone mothers a risk when they are raising and taking care of their younger children. The third reason why lone mothers are not visible in public debates in Germany has to do with the fact that they are mostly in full-time work, except when their children are young (ibid., p. 29). Due to the male-breadwinner family typology, widow mothers are more protected by the welfare state when compared to the divorced or non-married lone mothers. From 1986 onwards, in Germany the policies were directed toward the improvement of the status of the children, for which they coined the term ‘orphan child by divorce’ and ‘orphan child by death of the father’ (ibid., p. 31).

Compared to Germany, the position of lone mothers in the Netherlands has been rather different. Bussemaker and Knijn (1997) refer to earlier research that showed that before and after the Second World War, the widowed, divorced and non-married mothers were supported by local charity organizations. During the 1950s to the 1980s, they became incorporated into the pillarized welfare schemes. Bussemaker and Knijn concluded that the cultural ideology of motherhood and the societal value attached to raising a child meant that lone mothers were not

expected to work, nor were they stigmatized despite the many years they spent on welfare (until the youngest child reached the age of 18). Nevertheless, with the new reform of the welfare state and the changed perception on childcare, Dutch society and the welfare state expect lone mothers to start looking for jobs when the youngest child is three, and have at least a part-time job when the youngest child reaches the age of five.

Reading Ostner (1997), and Bussemaker and Knijn (1997), I would argue that a difference exists between the support chain of lone mothers in Germany and the Netherlands, i.e. the network support they receive from their families and from society. In Germany it seems as if the state takes over when close family cannot be of much financial help to lone mothers. In the Netherlands the charity and voluntary sector has played a prime role for lone mothers and their children, and only when these sources of support were not able to help they would turn to the state.

In the UK, Rowlingson and McKay (2002) have traced historically the existence of lone mother families, in order to understand their stigmatizing stereotypes as 'high GDP spenders', and the non-conforming with the Victorian married-motherhood-ideology. They refer to Snell and Millar (1987) who "have estimated that at the end of the eighteenth century and the beginning of the nineteenth, 19 percent of all families with children was lone parent families" (ibid. p. 34). These data for Rowlingson and McKay show that lone mothers are not a new family type formed after the 1950s, but already existed long before in the UK (ibid. p. 34), or are a return of the "old traditional family alternatives" (ibid. p. 36). Gillis (1985) is the scholar Rowlingson and McKay quote constantly regarding the existing forms of marriage during the eighteenth and nineteenth centuries. Referring to Gillis, Rowlingson and McKay reveal that "'self-marriage' and 'self-divorce' were local communal rituals for poor working class people that would allow couples to co-habit together, have children and get out with ease from such unions without the formal conjugal" (p. 36). Therefore, co-habitation, non-married mothers and children out of wedlock were strongly represented until the middle of the eighteenth century (ibid. p. 37) in UK. The literature on practices of marriages and children out of wedlock, quoted by Rowlingson and McKay (Houldbroke, 1984; Stone, 1990; Gillis, 1985), says that informal marriages and illegal children were mostly found in the poor working class family. When the Victorian ideology on motherhood became stronger, it imposed its values on the working classes.

The examples of Germany, the Netherlands and UK show how gender scholars have connected the cultural ideological perception of motherhood with lone mothers and their position within the welfare state. In what follows, I will review

how gender scholars have analyzed the identity and category formation of lone mothers by the part of policy makers.

The American scholar Fraser (1989) asks similar questions as May (2010), a Swedish-Finish scholar. Both want to understand how a social category is constructed and by whom. The argument on a collective narrative identity construction, created by lone mothers themselves, which May develops in her analysis, was pointed out earlier by Fraser (1989). Although Fraser (1989, p. 295) speaks of ‘*narrative conventions*’ of society constructing the identity of categories, and May (2010, p. 439) talks of the ‘*self-narrative*’ conventions of ‘*self-identity*’ lone mothers create, their points converge on the issue of identity from a multitude of narrations. Fraser (1989) discussed the fact that the need for certain categories in welfare discourses is socially constructed. She argues that they travel from domains outside politics (such as the institution of the family) to the political domain (such as the governmental domain where the categories and their needs are named (ibid. p. 302-307)). By analyzing ‘needs talk’ and discourses about needs Fraser is more concerned with the struggle over needs rather than with the categories these needs belong to. Nevertheless, she does stress how the ‘modes of subjectification’ by people with political power influence the stereotypization and naming of categories, and consequently the needs approved within these categories. Fraser states:

“Modes of subjectification; the ways in which various discourses position the people to whom they are addressed as specific sorts of subjects endowed with specific sorts of capacities for action; for example, as “normal” or “deviant,” as causally conditioned or freely self-determining, as victims or as potential activists, and as unique individuals or as members of social groups” (1989, p. 295).

Applying Fraser ‘modes of subjectification’ to lone mothers, enables us to analyze how political and media discourses position them as ‘others’, ‘*fckless*’, ‘*deviant*’ and problematic and their children as ‘*delinquent*’. These stereotypes were examined by Ann Phoenix (1996, pp. 175-177), who describes how the political discourses in UK have gained popularity by stereotyping lone mothers negatively, due to their miss-fit image when compared to partnered mothers in a society. Mary McIntosh (1996), another UK feminist who analyzed media discourses in the UK and the US, captured the stereotypes of lone mothers as ‘*benefit scroungers*’ (p. 148). McIntosh addressed how media discourses in the UK and the US depicted the identity of lone mothers as deviating from the normativity of together parenting. Such media texts also emphasized that citizens have to pay the taxes

that cover the welfare packages of lone mothers.

May is concerned with the implication of constructing the 'lone mother' category by others, as compared to the self-subjectivity that this category of women construct for themselves (2010, p. 429). She suggests that we look at the category of lone mothers from their own biographical point of view, of the way they narrate about themselves. This approach analyzes the 'lone mother category' from the perspective of lone mothers' self-understanding, location and identity construction. According to May, this biographical approach makes it easier to analyze firstly how the category of lone mothers is constructed and by whom, and secondly how lone mothers relate to this identity construction and where they feel a sense of 'belongingness or groupness' (May, 2010, p. 430, 439). Quoting work of Tilly (2004) and Hopkins (2008), May opts for the argument that "categories are never fixed but undergo constant boundary changes as a result of dialogue, dispute and power struggles" (ibid, p. 431). The non-fixed argument about categories responds to the concern of gender scholars I referred to earlier, pertaining to the demography and statistical enumeration of lone mothers based on their housing arrangements and the number of children they have, and the age of the child. Thus, May (2010), Rowlingson and McKay (2002) and Kilkey (2000) all observe the temporality issue in the lives of lone mothers: the years or months a woman spends alone without a partner, as a lone mother, makes her status not fixed and/or blurs the boundaries of her entrance into and exit from lone motherhood. May (2010) points out that the "social construction of this category remains hidden" (p. 433). Generally speaking, it has become a given that a society does not question, and take for granted the stereotypes and categorizations vested into certain groups. Thus, analyzing 'lone mothers' from their own perspective, as May (2010) suggests, can offer a fuller picture of this category formation and identification.

Following Iris Marion Young's work on the category of women, May (2010) also draws attention to the identity of lone mothers. She asks, "Does the category 'lone mother' represent their self-identity, their situational goals or projects" (p. 440)? As May (2010) remarks, Young (1995) used Sartre's work on "serial collectivity" by distinguishing between the self-identification of a 'group' and a 'series'. Women who belong to a group are self-conscious and have a sense of belonging, whereas collective seriality defines members externally" (p. 441). Using Young's distinction, May argues that the self-identity of lone mothers is not defined by the construction of their category, that is, there are differences between lone mothers as a category of practice and a category of analysis. To follow this methodological approach, May also uses the work of Brubaker and Cooper (2005). She proposes that social scientists look at the every-day practicalities of

lone mothers as a category of practice, before researching them as a category of social analysis¹¹. She lists a three-step methodology to approach research on 'lone mothers' as a category of practice: "1. 'categorization from the outside; 2. Situated self-understanding; 3. Connectedness or groupness" (ibid., p. 435).

In her earlier work May (2004) had used the every-day practice of lone mothers to gather empirical findings about their daily life. In 2004, she examined the story-telling of four Swedish lone mothers by origin, who live in Finland. Their stories showed that they constructed their identity as more related to their womanhood and motherhood identities than to their identities as lone mothers. May asked them to tell the story of their lives by emphasizing the most important events and the effects of these events on their lives. They were not directly asked about their position as lone mothers but rather they were initially considered as every other category of women. This personificated approach (reading and analyzing their live stories and the ways in which they narrated their own identity) had nothing to do with the stereotypes constructed by politicians, media discourses and society itself. As May found out the most authoritative life-changing event for lone mothers were their childhood, adulthood and mothering. Although their life goals were successful marriages, being good mothers, and career advancement, they could see these coming true either with a partner or without. Their lone lives with their children were not an issue as they saw themselves as part of their communities and their families. May's research (2004, pp. 169-189) proves that identities and categories are diversely constructed, and change over time and location. As May indicates the narrative identity of lone mothers might change if their audience changes. She concludes "lone mothers can construct different identities based on what questions they are asked to answer or how they are asked to tell their life story" (May, 2004, p. 175).

In this section I have reviewed literature from gender scholars who have dealt in their work with the cultural ideology of society, media and political discourses in creating the category of lone mothers. As I have shown, gender scholars have criticized traditional discourses on the construction of categories and their stereotypization. May's (2010) argument - that categories can be diverse for those who are part of them as shown by the life stories told by lone mothers - is part of the continuum of feminist and gender research on the every-day life of women. In the 7th chapter of this dissertation I will adopt the first two steps of May's approach when I analyze the sense of power lone mothers in Albania feel they have, and the comments they give on their experiences using welfare benefits by the

¹¹ In the coming sections on the conceptualization of welfare, I will show how Kilkey uses the category of lone mothers as a category of analysis to analyze welfare packages.

government and social programs by non-governmental organizations. I have also asked lone mothers to tell about their identity based on life events which have most affected their lives.

In the coming section I will discuss the literature of gender scholars on the social rights welfare states grant women and how different these rights are for lone mothers, as a category in need of continuous protection.

2.4. Social rights for women and lone mothers in welfare states

The history of social citizenship and social rights starts with the Universal Declaration of Human Rights. The two main components of this Declaration, the International Covenant for Civil and Political Rights and the International Covenant for Social, Economic and Cultural Rights¹² (CSEC) were drafted at different times. The 10 articles, contained within the third part of the CSEC, bind the nation states to ensure and protect the socio-economic and cultural rights of their citizens, and have played a major role in structuring welfare states. Social rights are very important for social historians, welfare economists, socio-political scholars.

Much comparative literature on welfare states starts with the issue of social rights. Waaldijk for instance argues that “welfare in a welfare state consists of a set of social rights that is granted to the citizens of that state” (2007, p. 2). She shows how a democratic state, welfare is perceived as a ‘right and entitlement for everyone and not a charity’¹³ (ibid., p. 4). She summarizes the social citizenship concept of T.H. Marshall (1950) with its three aspects: civil, political and social rights¹⁴. As Waaldijk outlines, Marshall understood civil rights to be the right of

¹² The International Covenant on Social, Economic and Cultural rights was ratified by General Assembly Resolution on 16 December 1966, and entered into force on 3 January 1976. For more information see: “Social, Economic and Cultural Rights. Handbook for National Human Rights Institutions”. Office of the United Nations High Commissioner for Human Rights. United Nations New York and Geneva, 2005.

¹³ Before the creation of the welfare state, social welfare was given and granted in the form of charity. Some scholars therefore posit a strong connection between welfare and charity. See Opielka, M., ‘Christian foundations of the welfare state: strong cultural values in comparative perspective’, in van Oorschot, W., Opielka, M., Pfau-Effinger, B. (eds.), *Culture and welfare state: values and social policy in comparative perspective*. 2008, pp. 89-114.

¹⁴ Other gender scholars who have traced historically the development of citizenship rights for women are Lewis and Hobson. See for the history of civic republicanism from a gender perspective Hobson, Barbara and Lister, Ruth (2002), ‘Citizenship’, in Barbara, Lewis and Birte (eds.), *Contested Concepts in Gender and Social Politics*. Edward Elgar. Cheltenham, UK. Northampton, MA, USA. See for a history on citizenship from a gender perspective Lister, Ruth (1997), ‘What is Citizenship’ in *Citizenship. Feminist Perspectives*. MacMil-

protection of citizens from the armed power of the state and their freedom of religion and political belief. With political rights came the power of citizens for active citizenship to choose their own government. And with social rights citizens were granted access to education, health care and social security from sickness and retirement for those in employment (*ibid.*, p. 4).

Kilkey (2000) recalls this division and conceptualization of social rights by Esping-Andersen, the social economist who developed the concept of the three regimes of welfare states (p.23). Kilkey's reading and interpretation of Esping-Andersen's work focuses his analytical research on welfare states on three elements: the de-commodification, the stratification and the relevance of the market, the state and the family in the provision of welfare (*ibid.*, p. 24-26). These three aspects are present in his analysis of pension, employment and sickness rights. Let me explain these three aspects in Kilkey's reading of Esping-Andersen. Firstly, the commodification aspect has to do with the application of social rights as universal rather than categorical. Secondly, the stratification aspect is related to the maintenance of the social class system. For Esping-Andersen, as noted by Kilkey, in liberal countries such as the US, there is a great distinction between classes. In these countries, social services are means-tested, and mainly offered to the poor classes (*ibid.*, p. 29). The socio-democratic welfare states where he positions the Nordic countries have had alliances between political parties and the working and middle classes. Therefore, here social rights are universal rather than categorical (*Ibid.* p. 29-30). Under conservative-corporatist welfare regimes, such as Germany, Italy and Greece according to Esping-Andersen, governments put efforts to refrain from modifying the rights of the middle classes. In conservative countries the first welfare role is given to the family as the prime responsible unit for the well-being of the individuals (Kilkey, 2000, p. 32). Following the logic of Esping Andersen, Kilkey argues that in the welfare triangle the state-the family-the individual, when the family cannot provide for its members, especially when they are sick and cannot work, the state takes over (*ibid.*, p. 32). In this respect Nordic countries put the prime responsibility in the hands of the state, and very few services are offered in private. The liberal welfare states give priority to the market which develops private services, that is, the state creates few categories of public services.

A few years after the publication of Esping-Andersen's *Three Worlds of Welfare Capitalism* (1990), two aspects of his work became debatable for feminist criticism: 1. the absence of women in the construction of social rights entitlements within welfare states (Orloff, 1994; Lewis, 1997); 2. The recognition of care and

the way care is regulated between the family, the market and the welfare services (Fraser, 1994; Lewis, & Hobson, 1997). The welfare regimes Esping-Andersen distinguishes have urged feminist welfare scholars to respond with different regimes, which also consider working women and women dependent on husbands and welfare. Fraser (1994) in *After the Family Wage* employs the welfare regimes of Esping-Andersen to understand the new welfare for post-industrial types of jobs and family regimes in North America and Western Europe. She argues that the new welfare state came into being because of two developments: families can no longer depend on a guaranteed family wage and safe old-style employment scenarios in industrial jobs have changed. According to Fraser, this has created new types of families and the position of solo-mothers¹⁵ or 'female-headed families' has become more complicated (ibid., p. 596). Therefore, Fraser calls for a new welfare contract which responds to new types of jobs and families and prioritizes poor single mothers (ibid., p. 593). For this new welfare regime, she refers to the kind of gender equity implied by feminist emancipatory agendas based on the importance of care work (ibid., p. 593). She distinguishes between a universal breadwinner model (typical of the US) and caregiver parity model (typically of Western Europe). Fraser states:

“The first I call the universal breadwinner model. It is the vision implicit in the current political practice of most U.S. feminists and liberals. It aims to foster gender equity by promoting women’s employment; the centerpiece of this model is state provision of employment-enabling services such as day care. The second possible answer I call the caregiver parity model. It is the vision implicit in the current political practice of most Western European feminists and social democrats. It aims to promote gender equity chiefly by supporting informal care work; the centerpiece of this model is state provision of caregiver allowances” (1994, p. 593).

In response to Esping-Andersen another feminist scholar, Orloff (1993, p. 303), proposes access to paid work and the capacity to form and maintain a new household as two new dimensions of analyses of the effect of social policy on gender relations. Orloff wants to incorporate gender in the welfare theoretical frameworks on citizenship and social rights. She notes the lack of attention to gender

¹⁵ Fraser uses the term solo-mother families (p. 596), and discusses their poverty. Nevertheless, she does not elaborate what categories of mothers she includes in solo-mother families, but she refers often in her text to divorced mothers whose incomes are halved after divorce or to non-married mothers (p. 599).

in Esping-Andersen's work and wants to include it in welfare analyses. However, at the same time she is aware that there are different reactions among gender scholars about women's oppression, especially when compared with male mainstream literature that is united in its analysis of class oppression (ibid., p. 307). Therefore, Orloff's criticism is aimed at the gender blind analyses of welfare states but also at the multi-diversities of women's position which makes it difficult for welfare states to satisfy their needs. As Orloff writes:

“Men make claims as worker-citizens to compensate for failures in the labor market; women make claims as workers, but also as members of families, and they need programs especially to compensate for marriage failures and/or the need to raise children alone” (ibid, p. 308).

In both the work of Fraser (1994) and Orloff (1993), single and divorced mothers are a matter of concern in the reconstruction of welfare policies. As a group lone mothers are seen as different from middle-class working married mothers. On this point Lister (1997, p. 187) has opened up the discourse of care and citizenship rights. She points out that care is work, which should be valued as much as paid employment, if we were to see it as part of social citizenship. Lister explicitly refers to the care given in the private sphere, as an unpaid activity and performed only by women. She observes that care performed by lone parents is difficult when they are also obligated to work, in order to maintain an independent family (ibid., p. 191). In my interpretation of Lister I would like to emphasize her clear concern with the dual roles of lone mothers who engage simultaneously in both caring work for young children and labour. In this respect, her argument focuses on two issues in gender debates. The first one is related to the aspect of difference between women: Lister holds that a working lone mother with young children cannot be compared to a working mother with young children who is part of a couple (ibid., p. 191). The second issue touches upon the parallel that feminists see between economic dependency on a male partner and dependency on the state. In the case of lone mothers, the power of male income is replaced with the power of the state income according to Lister. It is the combination of these two economic powers that can ease the situation of lone mothers to maintain an independent household, as Lewis and Hobson and their group of scholars elaborated in 1997.

Lewis and Hobson (1997), make an effort to relate caring to social citizenship in both the private and public sphere. To categorize the intentions of policies regarding the social rights of lone mothers in different countries in Europe and in English-speaking countries, they introduce *The Parent-Worker Model* and the

Caregiver Social Wage Model. Fraser (1994), whose approach I referred to earlier, has inspired their welfare models.

Let us now move from the place of care in regimes of welfare states to the caring work of women and lone mothers in particular. What do gender scholars consider the core of the social rights with regard to lone mothers? What kind of social rights/entitlements related to the activities in the lives of women (lone mothers in particular) have gender scholars engaged with?

In their work gender scholars have sketched not only the gendered dimension of the caring aspect but they have also consigned care as a social activity (Daly & Lewis, 1998; Leira & Saraceno, 2002). They have charted the multi-layered relations between people who give and receive care, between spaces where it is exercised and institutions which regulate it (Knijn & Kremer, 1997; Daly & Lewis, 1998; Morgan, 2006).

Knijn and Kremer (1997), Knijn (1998), Ostner (1998), Leira and Saraceno (2002), Daly and Lewis (1998, 2000), Kremer (2005) and Lister (2006) have considered the multidimensionality of care. Daly and Lewis regarded care as (1998, p. 4) - a category of analysis for the welfare state. Gender scholars researched how care is provided for children, for the elderly and for disabled or temporarily sick adults in terms of services and cash benefits (Knijn & Kremer, 1997; Daly & Lewis, 1998). Moreover, they pointed to and observed how care is regulated legislatively in welfare states, in the family, in the market and in the voluntary sector (Daly & Lewis, 1998). Most importantly, they saw the relationship between the cash benefits to regulate care and care services (Daly & Lewis, 1998), where maternity leave and sick leave, houses for the elderly and public kinder garden and crèches for children were also analyzed as part of paid care activities.

An additional important contribution to the feminist literature on welfare, Daly and Lewis (1998) make, is the two dimensionality of the economic character of care, that is, in micro and macro institutions. Micro institutions provide the informal aspect of caring in the home, an activity which has lately turned into a formal one (from the home to public or private institutions). Looking at the collective care which, at the end of the 19th century and the beginning of the 20th century, was initially offered by religious voluntary organizations, Daly and Lewis (1997, p.12) call for a revival in current research. The latter ought to study the incorporation of public and market incentives in the voluntary sector which engages with services of social care. They call to study 'the trajectories of care' via institutions engaged with care provision (*ibid.* p. 6).

The work on care by Knijn and Kremer (1997) has played an important role in the debate on care within the welfare state. For their argument that welfare states "have shaped needs and rights of caregivers and care receivers and have

done so in ways that contribute to gender inequality in citizenship rights” (ibid. p. 328). Knijn and Kremer looked at four dimensions of care: 1. The domain of the performance of care activities; 2. the financial evaluation of care provision; 3. the degree of dependence or independence between actors who are involved in giving and receiving care; 4. the right to time in giving and receiving care. In their historical overview of the cultural and political intentions of care arrangement in the welfare states (welfare care benefits and welfare care services), they show the development of welfare infrastructures. They describe the right to care after the Second World War as important for the social well-being via the packages of care benefits for stay at home women to the current organization of parental leave benefits (ibid., p. 330). Referring to T.H. Marshall’s ‘social citizenship’, Knijn and Cremer suggest that care should be seen as part of social citizenship, therefore as a need and a right. They argue that in Marshall’s time care was performed by the voluntary sector, family and social networks. Knijn and Kremer have pointed out that the ‘social citizenship’ as the basis of Esping-Andersen’s work, was far more developed regarding the public institutionalization of care at the time when he wrote his *Three Worlds of Welfare Capitalism* (1990).

Knijn and Kremer are in favor of a broad definition of care, because that allows for an analysis of different welfare states (ibid., p. 330). They recognize the social dimension of care activity, and therefore they deem it crucial to look at care as a social citizenship right. Their research looks at care as a citizenship right for both care givers and care receivers, and emphasizes the simple fact that each individual in the life cycle will have to care for their partners, children or elderly family members (1997, p. 332). Therefore, welfare states should consider the timing element of care, and grant individuals the right to choose to give care and the right to receive care in a life cycle (ibid., p. 333). Knijn and Kremer state:

“The term “inclusive citizenship” should be used to describe the social citizenship we argue for. In this conceptualization of citizenship which contains civil, political, and social rights, citizens (women and men) still have the right and the obligation to participate in the labor market, but this conceptualization also recognizes citizen’s involvement in caregiving or care receiving. Paid work remains important, but care is just as important. Only when care becomes a vital dimension of citizenship can both care (giving and receiving) and citizenship be degendered” (ibid., 332).

Knijn and Kremer (1997) have surveyed cash transfers and social services for both children and the elderly, dividing them on the *The right to Time to Care* and the *Right*

to *Receive Care* in Denmark, Britain and the Netherlands. As result of their research, they acknowledge that the caring dimension of welfare states has always been there in different shapes within national settings, based on the cultural context of who does the caring, on the political intention behind policymaking and the administrative, institutional dimension of how collective care is organized. In the right to time to care, they also look at the exemption from work granted to lone mothers who care for their children at home. Knijn and Kremer (1997) analyse care as a right in welfare states. Kilkey (2000) positions lone mothers as either workers or mothers in the 20 countries under discussion.

To conclude this section, the introduction of care into the analysis of welfare is a feminist contribution to mainstream literature on the subject. Feminist and gender scholars have added care to the package of social rights developed by Marshall, such as education, employment, housing, health care, social insurance. Although they have thoroughly examined the historical development and aspects of care in the life of women, few of them (Lister, 1997; Lewis, 1997; Knijn & Kremer, 1997) have explicitly examined it for the category of lone mothers. Lone mothers might or might not be exempted from the obligation to work. For gender scholars care has a social aspect, a financial cost, an ethic of dependency and responsibility between care-givers and care-receivers, and its institutional providers can historically vary and circulate. If we consider all these care dimensions in the lives of lone mothers, we need a new prism through which to view their relationship with the welfare state. For they are women who can chose to work versus care, who are entitled to cash-benefits or care-services for their children and for the elderly, or who can have the ability to choose quality care from different institutions.

In my 5th chapter I will build the work of Fraser (1994) and Lewis (1997) who analyzed welfare policies. I will argue that welfare policies in socialist Albania have been created for a family typology, which responds to the two adult worker/one adult carer model, or two breadwinners/one carer model were mothers were both workers and carers. I will also refer to Kremer and Knijn's work which suggests that the caring aspects of a person's life should be recognized as a right and an obligation for both sexes. I analyze whether the Albanian communist government and the governments who came into power after 1991 recognized care as a right. I also ask what financial incentives these governments attached to them, if any.

Gender scholars within EU framework have worked with the care dimension of welfare states from late 1990s onwards. With the development of gender equality roadmaps and mainstreaming strategies at the EU level, they saw its social aspect connected with social rights. The reconciliation policies from 1998

onwards have seen caring as a right in itself, which should be negotiated between men and women in the labour market (Bleijenberg, 2006).

After this general overview of gender scholars' analyses of social rights for women and lone mothers in welfare states, I will now examine how the scholars working with the European Union directives and legislation have considered lone parent families and the care aspect in these families.

2.5. Evaluation of EU reconciliation policies for women and lone mothers

Although EU family law scholar (Ardeleanu, 2013, p. 52) stresses that there is not an EU family law which enforces every member state to transpose its directives, regulations and resolutions to arrange the well-being of families, family law has been part of the Commission's agenda.

From 8 to 10 October 1985, an international workshop on one-parent families took place in Brussels. The workshop was organized by the Population & Family Study Centre (C.B.G.S.), Administration for the Family and Social Well-being, Ministry of the Flemish Community. It was held under the auspices of the European Association for Population Studies (Deven & Cliquet, 1986)¹⁶. The workshop gathered together experts from Western, Central and Eastern European countries. Its motivation was the rising demographics of one parent families, and the reorganization of welfare policies and services to respond to this new type of family. The workshop organizers acknowledged that until that moment family policies had been designed for coupled families. It was time to consider the dimensions of one parent families, the child-care services for single mothers, their employment possibilities and working hours, and their chance to lead a life which adhered to European standards (Cliquet, 1986, p. 4). The synthesis of this workshop argued that the term 'one parent families' is more neutral compared to negative terms such as 'incomplete families', due to also to the more general acceptance of this family type (Wilfried, 1986, p. 350). The experts also made a distinction between 'one parent family' and 'one parent household' (Trost quoted by Wilfried, 1986, p. 350). Albeit the 'one parent families' and the welfare policies were described from a sociological perspective, the synopsis also paid much attention to data collection, the methodology of data collection and the definition of concepts as concern 'one parent families' per country. The workshop was important because it provided the European Parliament and the European Commis-

¹⁶ The papers presented by Western and Eastern European Scholars in this workshop were published by the Publication of the Netherlands Interuniversity Demographic Institute (N.I.D.I) and the Population and Family Study Centre (C.B.G.S.) in a volume called 'One-Parent Families in Europe, Trends, experiences, implications', edited by Deven, and Cliquet, 1986.

sion with information on ‘one parent families’ and therefore on ‘female-headed families’ but it did not pay attention to gender and caring regimes.

In 1995 a working paper, ‘One-parent families in European Union Member States’ was presented to the European Parliament by the Directorate General for Research (Women’s Rights Series). The research intended to inform the Union and the Commission on the diversity of welfare benefits and social services available to members of one-parent families (children, single mothers, and single fathers). The legal expert Nadine Boujan worked with representatives from the Welfare Ministries in each member state and collected information on the existence of welfare packages from 1988 to 1993. By that time one parent families accounted for 10% of families with children in EU countries (ibid. p. 5). The study also reported that ‘approximately 85% of one-parent families have a woman as head of the family’ (ibid. p. 5).

This study by the European Parliament announced that:

“There is no internationally recognized definition of one-parent family; each country has its own definition. Parliament’s resolution on one parent families defines the single parent as the parent living with children and not at the same time with other people”.

In *Lone Parent Families in the European Community* (a study published by the Commission) the following definition of one parent family is used:

“A parent who: Is not part of a couple, not married and not cohabiting; Whether or not living with other people, friends or relations; Living with at least one child aged under 19’ (ibid. p. 5).

A *Report on the situation of single mothers and single parent families* was prepared by the Committee on Women’s Rights on 8 July 1998. Based on this report, the working paper and the data gathered earlier, a motion for a ‘resolution was adopted unanimously’ (Committee on Women’s Rights, p. 3). This motion acknowledges the challenges (in terms of employment and care) faced by single mothers and single fathers and their lower incomes (ibid. p. 5). The European Parliament wished to show solidarity with single parents, in contrast with the US Government, which obligated lone mothers to go to work by banishing benefits. Article 12 of the motion for resolution states:

“Rejects the United States model for getting single mothers to work through refusing benefits unless they are employed which is inconsistent

with European social welfare thinking which is built on solidarity and not punishment” (ibid. p. 6).

The motion for resolution and the reports on the situation of women’s employment in the European Union members states, for single parents are further explored in the work of gender scholars on family policies, employment policies and citizenship rights of women in general and lone mothers in particular. The full and flexible time to care, the organization of social care services to allow women to work while they can afford time-adaption and quality care, the introduction of new leave measures, which also consider the care for sick family members, are all new important caring instruments towards reconciliation policies. EU law and gender scholars have examined the rights and entitlements suggested by feminist scholars as part of a work-life balance in the last decade through the analysis of Reconciliation Policies in the EU.

EU social policy scholar Hantrais (2007) and EU law scholars Eugenia Caracciolo di Torella and Annik Masselot (2010) emphasize that reconciliation policies on an EU level received a boost from the demand for working women in order to advance the European economy. However, Bleijenberg (2006), in tracing the history of reconciliation policies, claims that European Union member states had started these policies three decades before they actually reached the EU agenda (p. 62). She distinguishes five periods in the introduction of policy measures to combine work and family: “1. Child Care Recommendation (1992); 2. Maternity Leave Directive (1992); 3. Parental Leave Directive (1996); 4. Part-Time Work Directive (1997); 5. Child Care Target Figures (2001)” (Ibid., p. 63).

Looking at this spectrum of directives and recommendations and linking it to feminist and gender scholarship on lone mothers, each of these directives have been researched¹⁷. However, the paternal leave directive with regard to the ex-partners of lone mothers with children below the age of 3 is worth further analysis. In the countries that have introduced paid or non-paid parental leave for both parents until the child is younger than 3 years, in cases when parents get divorced or separated, the burden of the lone mother to provide and care for the child is more immediate as compared to when her children do not need as much

¹⁷ See the work of gender scholars on eu reconciliation policies: Stratigaki, ‘The Cooptation of Gender Concepts in eu Policies: The Case of “Reconciliation of Work and Family”’, in *Social Politics*, Volume 11, Number 1, Spring 2004. Oxford University Press, pp. 30-56. Lewis (2006), *Work/family reconciliation, equal opportunities and social policies: the interpretation of policy trajectories at the eu level and the meaning of gender equality*. *Journal of European Public Policy*, 13:3, pp. 420-437.

physical care. How many men have taken leave to support their former partners in the countries that have introduced the parental leave has not been studied yet (Caracciolo di Torella & Masselot, 2010).

Bleijenberg (2006), Caracciolo di Torella and Masselot (2010) have highlighted the negotiating power of the Social Partners to introduce Parental Leave Directive and the Part-Time Work Directive as EU directives. As they point out, their application on the national level is dependent on the political willingness of the governmental and private sector. It would mean that National Trade Unions in respective countries will have to convince private companies to suggest legal instruments to the government to institutionalize reconciliations policies in their employment policies. With the support of government incentives, national private companies can be runners and successors of parental leave and flexible time tables for divorced or separated parents with younger children below the age of 3.

Hantrais (2007) observed that from 1983 the “European Parliament formulated a resolution on family policy in the European Community on which concerns were given with the change of family structure and especially the speed rising of lone-parent families” (p. 103). In response to this, in 1989, the Commission drafted a communication of ‘family policies’ with four main areas:

“the means of reconciling work and family life and sharing family responsibilities, measures to assist certain categories of families, consideration of the most deprived families and the impact of Community policies on the family, in particular the protection of children during childhood [5.3, p.3] (ibid., p. 103)”.

EU Law scholars, Caracciolo di Torella and Masselot (2010) argue that reconciliation policies are beneficial not only to working mothers but also to working fathers, who can become part of the life of their children. These policies play a role in the prevention of poverty of children and mothers, especially in ‘single mothers ‘families’. Reconciliation policies may bring furthermore an economic growth in Europe, a rise of fertility rate and an improvement of pension schemes (p. 3). They develop the thesis that ‘reconciliation policies’ cannot stand on their own unless they incorporate three prior set of measures in leave policies, timing policies and care policies (ibid., p. 35). Leave, timing and care policies are directly connected to employment measures; however, here and there they lack the real enforcement laws or implementation policies when it comes to domestic practices. For example, although the parental and paternal Leave are designed with the intention to bring more fathers closer to their children, and to the children the right to know their biological fathers and spend quality time with them

due to the best intention of children rights, in the majority of the countries the paternal leave is not paid, or the parental leave has greater negative consequences on income when it is taken from the father instead of the mother (ibid. 156-157). The EU implication to have further enforcement of parental or paternal leaves when it comes to the children born from single mothers remains unclear. It is left to the member states to give similar rights of parental and paternal Leave to non-married couples, according to the authors.

In line with the debates among EU Law scholars, gender scholars Lewis, Knijn, Martin and Ostner (2008) have focused on the work-life balance equation policies from 2000 onwards in the UK, Netherlands, France and Germany. They work with the hypothesis that the work-life balance becoming part of EU employment-led social policy should instill more family oriented policy and instrumental legislation in order to ease female employment. By looking at policies to increase child-care services, female employment, flexible working hours and cash versus service policy, their findings were led by different organization of such policies in each country and the female employment level by 2000. Lewis et al. (2008) embraced the individuation politics of such policies, trying to look at a change in 'labor-market attitude behavior', even though aware that this is difficult to measure (p. 264). Although France has taken strong measures to increase mothers' employment by introducing policies for child-minders and house-nannies to take care of younger children, it did not result in a boost to female employment (ibid., p. 266). French policies on child-care have allowed women to choose to either be mothers or workers. The UK on the other hand has politically pushed for lone mothers' employment boosting policies, by leaving them no choice to decide whether they want to be home carers or go to work if they want a way out of child-poverty (ibid. p. 275). In the Netherlands, due to the high employment level of women working part-time and the adaptation of a one and a half breadwinner model, there has not been much debate on claiming the right to choose between work or mothering (ibid. p. 275). In contrast, Germany, due to its strong ideology on motherhood, has tried to introduce instruments on paying cash subsidy rather than child-care service to allow mothers to choose the care system for their children. They conclude:

“Work/family balance policies are about combining paid and unpaid work, and about the gendered divisions of that work. Employment-led social policy goals have increasingly dominated this policy field. The growing acceptance of the adult worker model family represents what governments want to see by way of labor market participation” (p. 278).

To sum up, gender scholars studying the impact of EU policies conclude that despite the ongoing reformation of employment policies and social policy in the EU, the reconciliation policies that allow coupled and un-coupled individuals to move in and out of work with ease in times of caring, education or leisure are still lacking in terms of family policies. The expense of maternal leaves into parental and paternal ones does not reflect the financial incentives to bring about gender equity; therefore, caring is still performed mostly by women. As gender scholars point out, the direction of employment-led, social policies to stimulate economic growth through female employment are not properly accompanied by incentives for women to allow them to reconcile care and work. For lone mothers this situation is presented more problematic, especially in countries that treat women primarily as workers, rather than in those countries which have a strong societal emphasis on mothering care.

I use the work of EU law scholars and gender scholars on reconciliation policies in the fifth chapter when I trace the trajectory of change for social policies on lone mothers during communism and the period after communism in Albania. I also observe which EU employment, gender equality and social policy directives were adopted by Albania, in order to adjust the national law with the *acquis communautaire* of the EU. I try to see the implications of these adaptations for benefits for lone mothers in the future. This debate is part of the argument of framing the social policy agenda nationally via the expertise and financial implications of multilateral international institutions such as the UN, the World Bank, the International Monetary Fund and the EU.

2.6. Lone mothers' sources of income

In this section I will be working with welfare comparative approaches (Kilkey, 2000; Millar & Rowlingson, 2001). I have chosen to work with gender scholars, who in my view can help to clarify the main trajectories that have occurred in welfare policies aimed at lone mothers and at the same time can highlight some distinctive features and future directions of these policies. I have selected from the large body of comparative literature on lone mothers to work with Kilkey, (2000) *Lone Mothers between Paid Work and Care. The policy regime in twenty countries*, and Millar and Rowlingson (2001) *Lone Parents, Employment and Social Policy. Cross-national comparisons*.

In the earlier sections of this chapter I mentioned the gender related work of Lewis and Hobson (1997) and their group of scholars, who described the background of policy logic reform for lone mothers from the period of the Second World War until the late 1990s. Unlike them, Kilkey analyzes the employment and care policies for lone mothers as an application of citizenship rights. Kilkey

stands apart from those scholars who used gender as a category of analysis in their adaption of Esping-Andersen welfare clusters (p. 92). Her work is based on cross-national and comparative research and it has two crucial intentional components. It first of all tries to answer the question whether caring and working have equal social right validity regarding the position of lone mothers. Secondly, it does not see lone mothers as only carers or only workers but instead constructs their identities as both carer and worker during periods of child-rearing (ibid. p. 13). An advantage of Kilkey's study is that it has enabled research in 20 countries, has gathered detailed policies on country groupings and made detailed comparative analyzes of policies within each group (2000, p. 266-267). Her research does not incorporate the father's social rights or evaluations of the impact of informal policies that a lone mother' family network can have on her and her children. Kilkey's analysis of social rights via entitlements for lone mothers does not include the policies for widow lone mothers, as she herself observes (ibid. p. 91). Kilkey research 'methodology is restricted to only three types of families of lone mothers'¹⁸: 1. With a child below the age of three; 2. With two children younger than eight years old; 3. With three children with the oldest child not older than 22 years (ibid, p. 95). The relationship these lone mothers had with the welfare system and unemployment represented only three types of them:

“a) a lone mother with half average earnings; b) a lone mother with average earnings; c) a lone mother without earnings, in long- term unemployment, receiving social assistance with no entitlement to insurance benefit” (ibid, p. 95).

Kilkey's research focused on policies which allow lone mothers to accept employment while they have caring responsibilities, or to choose full time care and move from care and work time. She did not include in her approach policies for women with long-time caring needs for their disabled children, disabled parents or elderly parents. Kilkey describes national caring policies based on their intention. She distinguishes five types of care policies: those which allow women to care at home and undertake training simultaneously; those who are allowed to stay home to care via an allocation of a caring wage; the registration in social insurance schemes while caring at home; the continuation of the social insurance contribution for long periods of care, and the other cash transfers basically to

¹⁸ Kilkey asked 20 national informants to complete a 'model families income matrix'. "This is a simulation technique used to explore the impact of tax and benefit systems on a given set of family types' (Kilkey, 2000, p. 94).

support housing costs, local taxes, child education and so on (ibid. pp. 88-89). Regarding employment policies, Kilkey concentrates on two types: reconciliation policies which allow lone mothers to combine care and work, and other financial incentives which aim at increasing lone mothers' income stability while they are in paid work (ibid. p. 89). Kilkey analyzes the entire package of income for lone mothers. She divides them into three main categories:

“1. cash transfers in the form of family and child allowances, and parental leaves, 2. in kind contributions in the form of tax relieves and housing alternatives; 3. non-material policies in the form of child-care, trainings to upgrade their skills, employment counseling services” (ibid., p. 82).

Based on these three policy logics, she classifies the lone mothers in four groups, with respective countries applying certain policies as follows: 1. Poor mothers (Australia, New Zealand, United States, United Kingdom and Ireland, p. 105); 2. Non-poor mothers (The Netherlands, p. 141); 3. Poor workers (Austria, Germany, Greece, Italy, Japan, Luxembourg, Portugal, Spain and the United States p. 157); 4. Non-poor working mothers (Belgium, Denmark, Finland, France, Norway and Sweden p. 199).

Kilkey arrives at the conclusion that in the first group, lone mothers are entitled to limited social assistance to stay at home and care for their children and are given less facilities to undertake work. Only Australia has in place re-insertion policies called JET (Jobs Education and Training) as compared to other countries. However, as Millar and Rowlingson (2001) show the UK is adopting the JET model of Australia in its future policies. Kilkey's main criticism of the caring policy regime in these countries has to do with the social assistance schemes, which do not allow lone mothers during the periods of extensive child-care, to save or to invest financially for their old age. However, caring activity is seen as a job, which gives them some rights in the social assistance schemes especially in Australia and New Zealand (Ibid., p. 117). Kilkey also criticizes the absence of child-care services for lone mothers in the poor mothers group.

The second group of lone mothers, which is represented by the Netherlands, which gives women the right to time to care and to a generous payment for caring compared to all the other countries. Their age and the age of their children, as well as their housing situation, is taken into consideration. Their financial income is provided through the national social assistance scheme. Although caring is acknowledged in the future as social protection in the social insurance scheme, it does not have the same value as when the mothers are workers (ibid., p. 146). However, the child-care services are insufficiently flexible to allow lone

mothers to take part-time or full time jobs easily (*ibid.*, p. 151). Financial help for lone mothers in the Netherlands appears to be contra women who leave good jobs to in order to care for their children, and pro those women who have cared for their children and never worked but who decided to enter the job market.

The third group is divided into two separate groups. Italy, Japan, Portugal and Spain do not recognize caring through social entitlements, and therefore they provide no financial support for it. Austria, Germany, Luxembourg, Greece and United States invest in lone mothers with few facilitation entitlements and with a limited period of paid care (*ibid.*, p. 171). Lone mothers in all the countries and part of Austria fell into the trap of losing half of the social transfer through the distribution process (*ibid.* p. 189). Since these countries primarily perceive mothers as workers, they face difficulties in the transition period from work to caring (*ibid.*, p. 191). In all these countries, lone mothers are provided with poor financial incentives if they want to take up full-time care. They seem to have no other choice than to work after short periods of maternity leave (*ibid.* p. 194).

The fourth group is diverse when it comes to social rights attached to caring so it is better to divide them into three types. Finland, France and Norway have introduced an exemption from paid work to undertake full-time care giving. France though does not tolerate longer leaves, while Finland and Norway are more generous. Belgium and Denmark give lone mothers the opportunity to undertake full-time care, and the last type is Sweden, 'which is characterized by the absence, whether as of right or discretionary, of a right to a labor-market exemption to undertake full-time to care' (*ibid.*, p. 213). Denmark, Sweden and Finland are the most prominent countries to offer reconciliation policies for lone mothers as employees who have caring responsibilities.

To sum up, Kilkey argues that welfare policies for lone mothers present a challenge for governments. Governments design policies that differ in the way they satisfy the diverse needs and rights of lone mothers' situations and their families. The fact that much of these policies are designed for working-class mothers, their role for highly educated ones is questionable, apart from Nordic countries, which have created universal packages to maintain a level of welfare that responds to all social strata. Also, the fact that there are more non-industrial than industrial countries, especially in the European context, poses challenges to the adoption of training packages for lone mothers. Other scholars I will be referring to in the next paragraphs have demonstrated that these packages can be very expensive.

The coming section focuses on the work of Millar and Rowlingson (2001), who examine the transition periods from care to work in another level. Their work (eds., 2002) attempts to show policy-makers in the UK how other coun-

tries have treated care and employment in social policy for lone mothers. Lister's introduction to this book highlights the fact that welfare policies that force lone mothers to work, are based on the simple assumption that their children's well-being and the economic situation of their family can only improve if they participate in the labor market (*ibid.*, xvi). For this reason but with different direction with regard to 'out-of-work policies' they analyze countries which are similar to the UK.

Gender scholars from the UK, Australia, the US, France, Norway and the Netherlands have analyzed policies and programmes that have been introduced with the aim of helping lone parents enter, and stay in paid work, making employment more attractive to lone mothers than social benefits. These are measures to 'make work possible' (labor market programmes); to 'make work pay' (financial support for employment); and to 'make work feasible' (measures to help reconcile work and family life) (*ibid.* p. 6).

The scholars in this project have concluded that activation policies are not a cheap option for many countries, for they can have higher spending as compared to the package of social support. However, by considering the different types of lone parents (based on their age, educational and qualification background, their participation in the labor force, the age of their youngest child) they can develop measures to bring as many of them into the labor force. Yet another alternative advantage of activation policies has to do with labor market demand. They see businesses as allies in co-creating labor programs and support policies to make lone mothers more attractive for the labor market and keep them into work longer than in 'out of work benefits'.

Rowlingson and Millar explain three types of policies that make work possible through activation policies. Australia, Norway and the UK have introduced these policies. In Australia lone mothers are offered training and education. In Norway they are offered advice on self-confidence and social skills. In the UK lone mothers have to undergo compulsory interviews to be credible for benefit (*ibid.*, p. 256). Making-work-pay policies try to make work attractive as compared to out-of-work benefits. They are associated with two types of policies, named as "sticks" and "carrots". The term 'sticks' refers to the measures to make out-of-work benefits low and unattractive; the term 'carrots' aim to increase financial incomes.

Jane Millar, in her cross-national comparative approach of labour programmes and work-related activity requirements, elaborates on the few existing evaluation programmes and surveys for work-related schemes. The government conducts the monitoring and evaluation of these programmes focusing on the number of women entering these labour market programmes. In my view, the

data that indicate the participation of lone mothers in these programmes should be accompanied with an evaluation of the feelings and experiences of lone mothers participating in these programs. Do they give them what they really need in the period under implementation? This second type of survey can be influenced by what Ruth Lister has continuously highlighted: the right of lone mothers to decide whether they want to care or become earners.

Based on the work of Kilkey, I took into consideration during fieldwork and descriptive analyses that lone mothers' families have children of different ages. Therefore, I looked at the different family types lone mothers create depending on the number and age of their children. Since there are no specific social policies which can allow lone mothers in Albania to position themselves as either workers or carers in the welfare state, I do treat the development of maternity leave policy and the instruments of the Labor Code and Social Insurance Policy which allow working women/lone working mothers to choose to care for their children in certain periods. The work of Millar and Jane has been useful to my research to compare the National Strategies for Employment Boost or Social Policy with regard to cash benefits versus child-care services.

2.7. Support for lone mothers from civil society and charity organizations

Earlier in this chapter I introduced the economic character of care in micro and macro institutions as an important contribution of Daly and Lewis (1997) to feminist literature on welfare. Looking at the history of the collective care which was provided by religious voluntary organizations at the end of the 19th and beginning of the 20th century, Daly and Lewis (1997) called for a revival in researching the incorporation of the voluntary sector which engages with services of social care in the public and market incentives.. Waaldijk (2007), a gender welfare scholar, suggested that welfare should also be analyzed from the perspective of social workers, as care providers to clients. The development of welfare policies therefore can take an additional understanding of their trajectories in time if it is researched from the experience of social workers.

A significant work with regard to the influence of the voluntary sector on shaping family policies in the early welfare state structure and the organization of the 'golden age welfare states' comes from Morgan (2006). Morgan sheds light, not only on the influence and role of the voluntary sector in the late 19th and early 20th century in Western Europe and the US, but also pointed to the religious character of the voluntary sector and how religious institutions influenced politics and the family policies at that time. She pieced together how religious organizations influenced the early welfare state structure in France, Sweden, the Netherlands and the US. Morgan (2006) observed that child education was considered

a welfare social service; Catholics and Protestants wanted to keep control of it, especially in the Netherlands. At a time when the state in France and the Netherlands did not want to interfere in family issues, the Catholics in France, and Catholics, Protestants and Orthodox Protestants in the Netherlands achieved a leading administrative role in child-education for prior-education group age and school-age children (*ibid.*, p. 34). Their aim was to educate the children, for they were seen as the future. Child-education at that time was closely related to the mother's employment. In most of the countries, child-care and child-education programmes were organized as a social and welfare service for single mothers considered as poor, working class, and middle-class families in France, Sweden and the Netherlands.

Bussemaker, van Drenth, Knijn and Plantenga (1997), tracing the history of welfare support for lone mothers in the Netherlands, refer to former scholars who have shown that before and after the Second World War widowed, divorced and non-married mothers were supported by locally based charity organizations. From the 1950s to the 1980s they became incorporated into the welfare scheme, which is a pillarization scheme. Nevertheless, with the new reformation of the welfare state and the changed perception on care for children, both society and the welfare state expect lone mothers to start looking for jobs when the youngest child is 3, and have at least a part-time job when the youngest child reaches the age of 5 years. Reading Ostner (1997) and Bussemaker et al. (1997), I conclude that the difference between the support chain of lone mothers in Germany and in the Netherlands resides in the network support they receive from the family and from society. In the Germany the state takes over after the close family cannot be of much financial help for lone mothers. In the Netherlands, despite the family, the charity and voluntary sector has played a prime role for lone mothers and their children, and only when these sources of support could not help would they turn to the state.

Hering and Waaldijk (2006) and Pascall and Kwak (2005) researched social welfare and gender regimes in Eastern and Central Europe. They point out that the lack of civil society in the former communist countries after the Second War is accompanied by the lack of a visible feminist social movement. This makes gender equity and the emancipation of women part of the socialist regime, which was practiced in public spaces, but not in the private spheres at home. For this reason, after 1990 the rebirth of civil society in Eastern and Central Europe made it difficult to advocate the maintenance of both former public benefits and to lobby for new benefits which respond to the new demographic and socio-economic challenges to the family.

The literature mentioned above contains factual information about civil so-

ciety and charity organizations as welfare mechanisms in Western and Eastern Europe. However, in my attempt to find empirical research on the programmes and services that civil society and charity organizations and the people working in them, volunteers and social workers offer to lone mothers, there is not much I can refer to. Therefore, an added relevancy of my research on welfare policies for lone mothers in Albania concerns the incorporation of newof empirical data about the social welfare programmes provided by civil society to lone mothers. I also look at both perspectives, of the clients (lone mothers) and of women and religious NPOs (providers of benefits). In the introduction chapter, I have included empirical research conducted with representatives of women local NPO's in Albania. In the sixth chapter I demonstrate how welfare provided by these NPO's differs from state welfare, and can be as important or even more important to lone mothers in the Albanian context.

2.8. Gender and welfare in Eastern Europe

There is not much literature coming from Eastern Europe regarding family policies, gender, welfare programmes and the welfare state. In the Western Balkans poor language transmission of knowledge and a lack of funding research makes it difficult for scholars to engage in International debates and arguments. Mainstream gender literature from Eastern and Central Europe has mostly targeted women's rights and women's position in between communist and post-communist periods. It is not dedicated to single or lone mothers per se, rather the reader has to find information about this subject in the body of literature which refers to women's rights and working mothers experiences. This is not to say that Eastern European scholars do not recognize the differences between women. It is probably caused by the fact that in many former-communist countries during communism lone mothers were considered working mothers. Therefore, the research conducted after the 1990s looks at the effect of the transition for these former working mothers and talks about their social class diversities in experiencing the new socio-economic and political changes (Haney, 2002). Little research has been conducted on the implications of the transition to welfare entitlements, and there is a weak focus on gendering regimes and welfare policies (Haney, 1997).

Endeavours to discuss family policies in Europe come from Robila, a Romanian-American scholar. Robila (2010) examined family policies in Eastern Europe, utilizing family systems and feminist theories (pp. 34-35). Like other Eastern European scholars (Pascall & Kwak, 2005), she compares the lower national GDPs expenditure on social policies in the previous communism period and in Western European countries. The lower expenditure on education, health and child care and family allowances influences the family organization and the gen-

der roles within the family (Robila, 2010, p. 32). Notwithstanding her concern with the high rates of emigration and the number of “children living without one or both parents”, she does not further investigate one parent families in Eastern European countries. Her article is descriptive on parental leave policies in the EU. She portrays the absence of Family Studies Educational Departments at Universities, school programmes on family history, sociology and organization, family planning policies or domestic violence legislation (*ibid.*, pp. 33-34). The lack of family planning in Robila’s viewpoint has caused the high rate of teenage mothers in countries such as Romania, Estonia, Lithuania, and Hungary (*ibid.*, p. 34).

Pascall and Kwak (2005) wrote on *Gender Regimes in Transition in Central and Eastern Europe* and caring responsibilities shifts after the fall of communism in these countries in terms of gender and employment paradigms (*ibid.*, pp. 2-3). The transition of the economy and politics has changed caring dimensions, and therefore the fertility and employment rates (*ibid.*, p. 4). Adding to this transition, the expansion of the EU has questioned the validity of European social policy, leading to new challenges for both the EU itself and the new countries that joined it (*ibid.* pp. 3-4). Pascall and Kwak (2005, p. 5) quote a UNICEF report (2001), which compared the Scandinavian and former communist welfare states after the Second World War. Pascall and Kwak have used quantitative data from three resources: ‘European Commission, Published sources (2004), The TRANSMONE data from the UNICEF’ Innocenti Research Centre in Florence and data from the European Foundation for the Improvement of Living and Working Conditions’ (*ibid.*, p. 8). Based on Lewis and Hobson’s work (1997), Pascall and Kwak (2005) argue that Eastern Europe saw a re-traditionalization of gender roles and the born of male breadwinner/domestic housewife families after the 1990s. However, the welfare policies of this type of family are not similar to Western Europe after the Second World War (*ibid.*, p. 34).

Hering and Waaldijk (eds., 2007) published about welfare practices before 1990. By looking at the histories of social welfare from the perspectives of social workers, Waaldijk argues that the study of social welfare under other, non-democratic regimes can offer a better understanding of the need of civil rights and political rights in addition to social rights (*ibid.*, p. 3). Analyzing the social welfare histories of Eastern and Central Europe, she points out that in many non-democratic countries social rights were approved prior to civil or political rights (*ibid.*, pp. 2-3).

In the fifth chapter where I elaborate on state social welfare policies for lone mothers in communist and post-communist Albania, I will engage further with the work of Waaldijk (2007), Pascall and Kwak (2005) and Haney (2002) to position the gender and welfare regimes of Albania in an Eastern and Central Euro-

pean perspective. The overview I have offered here aimed to indicate that the welfare and gender regimes in Eastern and Central Europe has been investigated in the literature, but it merely touches on lone mothers without a proper empirical focus. It therefore invites scholars to pay attention to research on lone mothers in Eastern Europe which fills in the gap from the perspective of employment and demographics within an expanded Europe.

2.9 Conclusion

This chapter has offered an overview of feminist and gender literature on the category of lone mothers. In the first section I examined gender scholarship which argues for the contested and multidimensional character of the category of lone mothers in the work of Rowlingson and McKay (2002), and Kilkey (2000). It demonstrates that the age of the children, household arrangements, civil status of lone mothers and hidden partners are elements that blur the boundaries of lone mothers as a group.

In the second section, I reviewed how gender scholars, May (2010) and Fraser (1989) have highlighted how a category gets constructed by people in power, rather than by the people who are part of the category, thus creating stereotypes which do not reflect the identity of those stereotyped. This section ends with the suggestion of May to research lone mothers as a category of every-day practice, by counting on their own self-narratives. Fraser, similar to May points out at the power of stereotypes of a category constructed by those in power, in the formulation of policies. For both of them how lone mothers are stereotyped by policy-makers defines the policies that will be designed for them.

The third section of this chapter considered the welfare state via its application of social rights and social citizenship addressed by gender scholars (Waldijk, 2007; Fraser, 1994; Orloff, 1993; Lewis and Hobson, 1997). The social citizenship in the work of Marshall and Esping-Andersen as the mainstream concept of literature on welfare came in for criticism from gender scholars. The latter opposed this type of social citizenship application because it only addressed working men. This section reviewed how gender scholars Fraser (1994), Orloff (1993), Lewis and Hobson (1997) developed new welfare typologies based on gender sensitive regimes of male breadwinners and domestic housewives and later on the dual earner-and care-giver parity model.

The position of lone mothers within these new regimes is seen as problematic since it does not fit the regular normativity of middle-class or working-class nuclear families.

In this section I also outlined the contribution of gender scholars (Daly & Lewis, 1997; Knijn & Kremer, 1997) to the analysis of the welfare state, by in-

cluding the category of care as a feminist concept. This section resumes how gender scholars have created charters to work with care as a conceptual tool. They looked at care as an activity performed in the private and public domain, as an activity which involves care-givers and care-receivers as two main actors, as an activity which has emotional, moral and financial costs, as an activity regulated via cash-benefits and services, as an activity performed for children, for the elderly, for handicapped and other temporarily sick adults, as an activity performed by public or private institutions, by the voluntary sector, by family members, by paid professionals. I showed how these gender scholars have extended the formation of social right by suggesting that care performed in the private sphere should be seen as a social right and entitlements deriving from it should be instituted for both men and women (Knijn & Kremer, 1997). Lister (1997, 2006) who researched lone mothers, saw the dimension of care as very decisive to their employment and poverty levels.

In the fourth section of this chapter, I looked at family and employment directives undertaken from the European Union Family and Employment Policies. Like gender scholars, the reports produced by the European Parliament concluded that it is difficult to give a conclusive definition of one parent families, rather than positioning them as living alone with one dependent child and without a partner. In its consideration of the rise of one parent families, the low fertility rates in EU member states and the growing numbers of people in retirement, the European Parliament considers as crucial the facilitation of women's employment and development policies. In this way, the European Commission formulated several Directives from the late 1980s to enable men and women to reconcile work and family. Measures of child and elderly care, flexible time and parental leaves have been introduced, albeit without instrumental directives. However, the Reconciliation Family Policies are not specific on the implementation of these policies with regard to one-parent families. In this section, I addressed how the work of EU Law Scholars and EU Social Policy Scholars, Caracciolo di Torella and Masselot (2010) and Hantrais (2004; 2007) is influenced by the work of gender scholars when they analyze the EU reconciliation policies. I also addressed the fact that gender scholars such as Lewis, Knijn, Martin and Ostner (2008) have been informed by the work of EU Law scholars in their analyses of the EU reconciliation policies.

In the fifth section of this chapter, I reflected on how gender scholars have grouped and analyzed the welfare packages for lone mothers. Kilkey (2000) analyzed the welfare packages for lone mothers in 20 countries in periods of care and work and the transition between them. She positioned lone mothers as poor working mothers, poor carers, non-poor carers and non-poor workers. As Lewis

and Hobson (1997) did, Kilkey (2000) emphasized that lone mothers do better in countries where welfare allows them to package income/benefits and where child-care benefits or child allowances are generous. The chapter concluded via the work of Lewis (2001), Millar Jane and Karen Rowlingson (2001) that welfare policy direction for lone mothers, also in countries which have treated them more as carers rather than as workers, is moving to welfare to work policies, as the only road to lead lone mothers and their children out of poverty.

In the sixth section I discussed how gender scholars have addressed the work of charity and voluntary organizations in supporting lone mothers and their children. Knijn and Bussemaker (1997), Morgan (2006) refer to this type of welfare before the 1990s. Waaldijk and Hering (2006), Pascal and Kwak (2005) show that civil society/women organizations in Eastern Europe does play a role in the level of application of social rights for women. I concluded that gender scholars have not worked empirically on support for lone mothers by civil society. Therefore, my research on NPO support for lone mothers in Albania offers a new dimension to welfare studies.

Finally, this chapter endeavored to look at the welfare policies for lone mothers in Eastern Europe and concluded that the literature is descriptive on women's rights and the adaptation of the legislation on gender equity, but does not engage further in welfare packages debate.

Chapter 3: The Albanian family: regulation of marriage and divorce in a time span of one century

3.1. Introduction

The increasing number of lone mothers in Albania after the 1990s, or put differently, the existence of one parent families, raises questions about their earlier prevalence, family formation and the organization of family life.

Before bringing on board the demographic and the socio-economic analysis of lone mothers, which I will present in the fourth chapter, I will first engage with the characteristics of the Albanian family formation from the early twentieth century to the first decades of the twenty-first century. In this chapter, I look at how marriage was apprehended and arranged to fit the multi-functional settings of the social, economic, cultural and political contexts of the respective times. Parallel to observing the conception of marriage as an entrance to family life, I analyze the organization of family life.

Aiming to explain the existence of several types of lone mother families (headed by widowed, divorced, separated, or abandoned lone mothers) I pay attention to the role of marriage in the formation and structure of the family. Historically speaking, marriage has played a motivational role in the lives of Albanians in the late nineteenth and early twentieth centuries, as Albanian, Eastern and Western scholars have claimed (Kera & Pepa, 2003; Kera & Pandelejmoni, 2008; Uçi, 2003; Frashëri, 1946; Young, 2000; Durham, 1909; Kaser, 1996; Todorova, 1989). Family formation via marriage and the structure and organization of the family were closely connected. The entrance into marriage as a product of love was not a free individual choice until WWII. The realization of Albanian marriages has been related to social class, family or kinship networks. In the first section of this chapter, I show how the concept of love as a fundament of marriage and family formation was absent in the early twentieth century and gained strength during the socialist years in Albania, especially after the years of the further revolutionization of all fields of life after 1966. Although socialist scholars pointed to an increasing amount of love bonding in the formation of new families during communism, I nevertheless argue in this chapter that this fact is questionable for the period under discussion, because there are no data that can measure the extent to which it proliferated. Moreover, the imposition of the Marxist ideology of socialist family and socialist love is also difficult to measure.

Research conducted by English, German, Eastern-European and Albanian

family scholars (Halpern, Kaser & Wagner, 1996; Todorova, 1996; Kaser, 1996; Kera & Pepa, 2003; Kera & Pandejmoni, 2008; Uçi, 2003; Frashëri, 1946), has indicated that the main features of the Albanian family were patriarchy, patrilineality, exogamy, and patrilocality. Capturing fragments of social, historical and political developments in the country, in the first section of this chapter I pursue how these features prevalent in the early twentieth century formed different trajectories of change or persistence. I describe how patriarchy resisted change in Albania, how exogamy attenuated during the socialist period, and how patrilocality became a feature of socio-economic circumstances, albeit keeping its traditional elements. Furthermore, I show how patrilineality also continued to manifest itself strongly during the socialist period. Only after the 1990s, with the adoption of the New Family Code in 2003 the daughters were legally acknowledged as inheritants. However, in practice it is still difficult to measure its application.

The research questions this chapter answers are: What were the features of the Albanian family before communism? How did these features develop in the years of the socialist state? What features of the Albanian family did the post-socialist period inherit, gain or reinforce? What was the role of love and free choice in marriage before, during and after socialism in the Albanian family? How did family legislation and family codes develop during communism, and how were lone mothers recognized legislatively? How did the socio-economic situation of Albania after 1990 touch the family and what were the new causes of marriage dissolution? How did family legislation develop after 1990 and how does this development compare to the period of communism? What is the place that lone mothers occupy on research agendas, in family legislation and the population census in Albania after 1990?

To answer these questions, I have used five types of resources: research conducted by Albanian and European scholars; the *New Albanian Woman* magazine published under communism; the *Official Gazette of the Legislation of the People's Republic of Albania*; the Codes of the People's Republic of Albania (the Family Codes of 1965, 1982 and 2003), and data published by the Institute of Statistics.

3.2. The development of the Albanian family until 1990

Research on the Albanian family is part of the body of literature on the Balkan family. This literature has emerged within a multidisciplinary context, involving history, demography, historiography, anthropology and family studies. Researchers from all these disciplines have contributed extensively to tracing the Balkan family formation and its structure from the nineteenth century onward. Based on Balkan country censuses (Halpern & Wagner quoted in Kasser, 1996),

country case studies (Tomasic, 1954), and individual life interviews (Cook & Rajaj, 1995), historical and geopolitical developments of the Balkan region (Kaser, 1996; Todorova, 1996), these scholars have been able to examine the origin of the Balkan family from the early fourteenth century. The research on the Albanian family life has taken another dimension with the work of gender scholars, such as Antonia Young's "The women who become men: Albanian sworn virgins" (2000). Young looks at the life- of sworn virgins and describes how these women enter the world of men and patriarchy for the sake of ensuring the patrilineal line and take revenge for the blood-feud taken from the men of the house when there were no other man left to continue the family blood line.

The Balkan Peninsula offers a diversity of territorial geographical features, characterized by high mountains and hills, low lands, and water surfaces. Cities were hardly developed until the industrialization of the early twentieth century, the major part of the Balkan population and Albanians lived in rural areas (Terodorova, 1989; Tomasic, 1954; Kaser, 1996). In 2008, the Austrian historian demographer Siegfried Gruber, in his article on the household structure of Albania in 1918¹⁹, quoting Seiner (1922), indicated that:

"Urbanization was only a minor phenomenon in Albania at the beginning of the twentieth century but there was migration to the larger settlements. The urban population amounted to 12% of the whole population (Seiner, 1922b, p. 6) and urban meant that these settlements had at least 3000 inhabitants" (ibid., p. 142).

Pastoral and agricultural economies were the most widespread forms of living incomes. Due to a lack of security (the Albanians have been invaded by Italians, Austro-Hungarians, Turks, Germans, and Serbs, (Durham, 1909, pp. 6-8; Young, 2000, p. 2), the majority of the population had chosen to live in mountain areas. A good part of these households was mobile during winter and summer times, mainly for the sake of pastoral possessions (Durham, 1909, p. 19). They escaped impact of the invasions of Turks who never succeeded in reaching out the mountains (Durham, 1909, p. 19; Hascluck, 1954).

Two types of houses were prevalent at that time: "the simple house" or "ka-

¹⁹ The data on the house-hold structure in Albania are based on the first census conducted in Albania by the Austro-Hungarian Army, during their invasion. For more details about this census read Gruber, S. (2008), *Household Structure in Urban Albania in 1918*, pp. 138-151; and Kera, G. and Pandelejmoni, E. (2008), *Marriage in Urban Albania (during the first half of the twentieth century)*, pp. 126-137.

solle” and “kulla” (stone tower house), or the house with two up to three floors. The first one was not considered safe from the attacks of enemies, whereas the second one was safer (Hascluck, 1954, pp. 32-33), especially when people wanted to hide while they were in blood feud, as Young has remarked (2000, p. xiv).

Albanians did not have a government until 1912, and people who lived in the mountain areas had their lives ruled and disciplined by customary codes or Kanuns. Three customary codes won popularity and were transmitted orally and in writing: the Code of Lekë Dukagjini in the North, the Code of Skanderbeg in NorthNorth-West, and the Code of the South. One of them, The Kanun of Lekë Dukagjini, was especially resistant to change, for it protected geographical borders between tribes, kinships and villages. Moreover, it kept law and order at the time these did not exist (Durham, 1909; Hascluck, 1954; Gjeçovi, 1993; Young, 2000). Because Albanians could avoid conflicts between tribes and kins, could respect each other's property, could develop trading regulations, could establish the highest sense of unbroken word of mouth as a unique code of ownership, these Kanuns were and continue to be valued for what they represented²⁰. However, despite their positive role in maintaining order, the rules on family life, marriage and family organization created a submissive, subservient and humiliating role for women at that time.

The most pervasive type of Albanian family life in the late nineteenth and early twentieth centuries was the joint or extended family. Kaser (1996), a scholar of the Balkan family, talks about a similarity of blood lines and family size in the structure of joint and extended families in the Balkans. Although the majority of them consisted of people from the same blood line living together (agnatic families), joint living of people with community ties was also allowed (known as brotherhood families) (Kaser, 1996, p. 384). Albanian families belonged to the blood line togetherness living type of family. Family structure and size, the organization of day to day life of family members, and marriage arrangements to strengthen and continue the blood line and these types of living, were part of what characterized the conceptual formation of the Albanian family (Gruber,

²⁰ Father Gjergj Fishta, the director of the Franciscan Gymnasium in Shkodra, also a poet of the Albanian National Renaissance period (1870-1912) who wrote the introduction to the Kanun of Lekë Dukagjini, collected by Father Shtjefën Gjeçovi, highlights that gathering of this material from Gjeçovi gives law makers the opportunity to know the traditions, customs and functioning style of Albanians up close. He stressed that law and societies change simultaneously. Therefore, he suggested that understanding how Albanians were self-organized until the early twentieth century, through their customary codes will give law makers an idea of the society they are creating through new laws (Fishta, A., 1993, p. XI).

2008; Kera, & Papa, 2003; Kera, & Pandelejmoni, 2008).

To understand the current Albanian family, I would like to provide an overview of its earlier features, and then explore the historical and socio-economic development of the country to trace which features remained, disappeared or gained strength over time.

3.2.a. Features of the Albanian family until the end of WWII

Kera and Papa (2003), Uçi (2003) and Young (2000) pointed out that in the late nineteenth and early twentieth centuries the Albanian family showed features of **patriarchy**, **exogamy**, **patrilocality**, and **patrilineality**. These features, although not referred to as such, appear as the main source of regulation of marriage and family life in the non-written codes of Albanians. As I indicated earlier, the Albanian population was mostly of a rural composition and the majority lived in the mountain areas due to lack of governance. Hence, they created their own code of conduct to regulate and discipline the relationship between family members, families within a closer territory, and members of different territories. The Kanun of Lekë Dukagjini, the customary code I refer to in this chapter, was gathered by Gjeçovi, a Catholic priest of the Franciscan Order. Initially, he published the material gathered for the Kanun separately in the *Hylli i Dritës* (The Star of Light), the first Albanian journal published for the first time in 1912 by Father Gjergj Fishta. All the parts published in *Hylli i Dritës* were subsequently gathered in *The Kanun of Lekë Dukagjini*, a book which was published for the first time in 1933 (Fishta, 1993, p. XI)²¹.

Patriarchy attributed leading roles to men; moreover, the disciplinary order of the organization of the family was arranged according to men's rules, codes of conduct and regulations. Women had no say in the matter. The only 'right' they had was to provide for the basic needs of food and clothing (Gjeçovi, 1993). Woman's daily tasks carried other obligations too:

“keep her honor for her husband, waste nothing of her husband's wealth, be submissive to him, be responsible for all marriage obligations to her husband and his family, increase his wealth through her labor, take care

²¹ The Kanun itself was gathered and published in old Gegë, the North dialect of the Albanian language, which used to be the standard language until 1968. The Tosk dialect has been the official Albanian language ever since, also known as the South dialect. Adjustments to the Gegë dialect, and the translations are all mine. See for this information about Kanuni and more details this online resource: <http://igjinajkirkanuniilekdukagjinit.sitiwebs.com/page28.php>

maintaining his clothing and having to never interfere with engagement decisions for her children” (p. 21).

Exogamy²² underlined the prohibition of marriage and family formation between a man and a woman from the same male blood-line within 5-7 generations, and in the case of a woman with kinship relations to the sister-in-law of the man who asks her hand (Gjeçovi, 1993, p. 23). In some Albanian villages marriage was forbidden between families, since people living in that village were considered to be brothers and sisters (Kera & Papa, 2003, p. 33). Marriage was also censored between family members who had become brothers in blood (Gjeçovi, 1993, p. 23).

The **patrilocality** element of the Albanian family stressed the tradition of the new bride moving to the family location and the house of her husband. In their research into the population registration of 1918, Kera and Papa (2003) have found that “36,6 percent of married or widowed women were still living at the place of their birth, compared to 81 percent of married or widowed men” (ibid., p. 33). This data indicates that the majority of women after marriage moved to the locality of their husbands. The **patrilineality** character of the Albanian family refers to the inheritance of family property and wealth in the male line, considering male children as a bigger blessing and necessity to a continuation of the family line²³. The Kanun of Lekë Dukagjini states that “the Albanian woman does not inherit her parents’ home, or family wealth, or the house, - the Kanun considers women as a surplus member in the house” (Gjeçovi, 1993, p. 27). Although not regulated or specified in the Kanun, a woman could become a man, influenced by the limitation of women’s rights and the many obligations women had towards their male blood lines and the male brotherhood of the husband. Swearing on their virginity, Albanian girls of the North could gain male rights, inherit the family surnames and properties, and take over the blood revenge.²⁴ Even more

²² Discussions about exogamy also featured the existence of polygamy, concubinage and levirate in Albania. For a detailed and careful research into these patterns see Kera and Papa (2003), *Familja, Feja dhe e Drejta Zakonore në Shqipëri deri në Gjysmën e Parë të Shekullit XX*, (Family, Religion and Customary Right in Albania until the First Half of XXth century) pp. 31-44; and Nicholson (2006), *Women who shared a husband: Polygyny in Southern Albania in the early 20th century*, pp. 45-57.

²³ In her book ‘Women who Become Men: Albanian Sworn Virgins’ Antonia Young also connected the phenomena of sworn virgins with the patrilineality character of the Albanian family. Another Albanian novelist and documentary filmmaker who dedicated a book to “Sworn Virgins” is Elvira Dones. Whereas Young’s work deploys anthropological and ethnographical methods to research the ‘sworn virgin’ phenomenon in all its dimensions, Dones’ book is fiction that takes the ‘sworn virgin’ beyond the Albanian borders.

²⁴ The blood feud is a regulation of non-written laws in Albania, such as the Cannon

so, they could perform the tasks of a male head of the family. Young explained this phenomenon by linking it to the high number of blood feuds (around 30% of the male population in the North a few centuries ago). Thus, there was a shortage of family members to take the blood of the other member and take over the family affairs (2000). Today this phenomenon has more or less ceased to exist (Young, 2000; Dones, 2000). As I will show later in this chapter, the socialist system which claimed the equality of men and women did not constitutionally recognize or determine women's right to property as it did with other social and political rights. It was not until the Family Code of 2003 that Albanian women gained inheritance rights to the family property.

Patterns of patriarchy, exogamy, patrilocality and patrilineality were strongly connected to the geographical features of the country and the population distribution. In 1938 the urban family only made up 15.9% of all families; therefore, the majority of families were living in rural areas (Uçi, A.: 2003, p. 18). The family economy relied on agricultural work and food and clothing produced from family dairy farms and pastures. Scholars of family studies (anthropologists, ethnographers and demographers) have positioned the Albanian family of previous centuries into the type of joint families²⁵ (Kaser, 1996, 2003; Young, 2000; Todorova, 1989). The common element of joint families is the presence in a big house of more than 3 generations which members are connected together by blood. In old times, the Albanian household or "shpi" was inhabited by 50 and more dwellers in some cases (Uçi, 2003, p. 18; Young, 2000, p. 13). However, in the first decades of the twentieth century a joint family would not exceed the number of 20²⁶

(Kanun) of Lekë Dukagjini, which addresses the right to take the blood of a male member of a family due to a violation of property, of land or of the virginity of a female member of the family. When a male family member is murdered, his family male line members have to take revenge; as a consequence, this family is in blood with the male line of the other family, the males of which murdered their member. In the Kanun of Lekë Dukagjini the revenge was taken from the blood of the person who committed the first blood. As Shtjefën Gjeçovi highlights, in later times the blood revenge was taken also from the male line of the family of the man who committed the murder (pp. 147-148).

²⁵ The initial term of a *joint family* or *zadruga* is contested. Todorova thoughtfully revisited it in 1989. As she elaborates, anthropologists, ethnographers, demographers, historians and sociologists use it in different ways. Elements of geographical location, historical presence, number of people living in a joint family, the reason for entering joint families and so on were fundamental components considered by scholars within the different disciplines mentioned above.

²⁶ I am a living example of such a family organization. I was born in 1976 and grew up in a big two-floor private house, which housed 4 families consisting of more than 3 generations. There were the uncles of my fathers with their wives, their male children with

(Fischer, 1999, p. 282). Until the 1950s, the family structure was organized on hierarchical levels: at the top was the male-head of the house or “I zoti i shtëpisë” in Albanian. The Kanun of Lekë Dukagjini (Gjeçovi, 1993, pp. 14-15) enumerates the many tasks the head of the house needed to perform, in order to coordinate the work of everybody else in the house. He had to make sure that the basic needs of food and clothing were fulfilled and that his family members would behave well in the village. More importantly, “I zoti i shtëpisë” divided the tasks for every other men in the family and traded or bought property and material goods to increase the family wealth (Gjeçovi, 1993, pp. 14-15). In the majority of cases, the man of the house was the elder man of the house, who would lead and coordinate all his younger brothers and sisters, his children, stepchildren and the members of related kinships that were living with him at that moment. The man of the house was elected from among the other men. When he failed to accomplish his duties and obligations or would not fulfill the tasks he was chosen for, another male member of the family would take over his role (Gjeçovi, 1993, pp. 14-15). The hierarchically structured organization of women’s tasks was led by the “zonja e shtëpisë” (the lady of the house), whose main duty was to organize the work of all the other women in the house (Gjeçovi, 1993, pp. 14-15). Every person in the house had his or her tasks to perform to increase and maintain the wealth of the family. The new bride in the house in the Kanun of Lekë Dukagjini is an added labour force to perform agricultural, domestic works within the house and be biologically reproductive, to give birth to future heirs who would inherit the family blood, surname and properties (Gjeçovi, 1993, pp. 14-15).

This section has offered a picture of the organization of life in a joint Albanian family until the first half of the twentieth century and illustrated the main features of this family typology. After this exposé of married life in Albania in the period before the 1950s, I will now move on to the concept of love and the organization of marriage in the same period.

3.2.b. Love and marriage organization until the first half of the twentieth century

Even though marriages in Albanian society were conditioned by the customary codes of the North and South Kanuns, “in the second half of the XVI century, with the decision of the Holy Council, the Catholic Church drafted the provisions of the canonical right” (Beqja & Sokoli, L. (2000; p. 20), the connection between the

their wives and children, and their as yet unmarried female children, and us, the younger generation of step-step-children. Altogether we were with 16 people, we lived in 8 rooms. There were two toilets, two big corridors, and a large garden with many fruit trees.

Church and the unwritten Kanuns of that time is still historically unclear. Gjeçovi (1993) writes that the “official marriage is approved by both the Kanun and by the Religion” (ibid.p. 19). In 1909 Durham believed that customary codes were more important than religious codes in North Albania (ibid. p. 11). Historically speaking, from the beginning of and during the Ottoman invasion, especially during the seventeenth century, the Albanian population was forced to replace their Catholic belief with Islam (Young, 2000).

Therefore, it might seem to be the case that marriage at that time was not regulated according to religious rules and beliefs²⁷, but it is acceptable to say that the institution of marriage obeyed to the social and customary codes of Albanian society at that time. From 1458 until 1929 the relations between the husband, the wife and the children were ascertained by the customary codes. Beqja and Sokoli (2000) emphasized:

“In the conditions of the absence or limited application of the bureaucratic right of the state, the customary right has been our main form of law. And even after many years of the Declaration of Independence, it is stressed that until the establishment, organization and strengthening of the Albanian state, the approval of these laws (cannons, H.B.-L.S.), is a necessity... (Elezi, 1983: 27-28)”²⁸, pg. 21.

In the past centuries, love has hardly been the subject of discussions in Albania, until the socialist regime. Nevertheless, in poetry women occupied quite an idyllic place and their beauty was heightened. Due to family structures and the role of individual members within this structure, marriage had a useful purpose, rather than offering life fulfillment. A marriage was not meant for two people who knew each other, who fell in love, decided to get married and united their lives. A marriage was arranged by the parents of the groom and bride for purposes that would serve the former’s interests. Kera and Papa (2003) state that:

²⁷ The history of Albania and Albanians is still being rewritten due to many facts hidden by the Socialist regime of almost half a century. Because of the ideological, atheist perspective ruling the country from 1967-1991, historians were obliged to erase the religious roots of Albanians. Therefore, Albanian history was proclaimed and propagated to several generations from an archeological, ethnological, political and social perspective, but not from the viewpoint of religious beliefs. During 2012, on the verge of a century of Albanian Independence, many historians rewrote several parts of Albanian history.

²⁸ This quotation and others from Albanian scholars published in Albania are translated by me.

“love was forbidden in those times in Albania and a man in love was considered a fool: engagement arrangements did not give priority to feelings. Love was considered as women’s weakness and this could justify the need to protect girls. On the other hand, although it was supposed that men had sexual desires, they were not called true men if they would show an interest in a woman” (Ibid., 2003, p. 34).

Moreover, Kera and Papa quote Young:

“A man who was very much attracted to women and flirtation, or who would fell in love, was considered a weak man. He was not considered a person on whom you could rely, he was qualified as “fool” and as a person who could not control himself adequately, because love was an unfortunate trend of youngsters without experience and it was not perceived as an element which could decide upon the future of the family... love and marriage existed separatedly from one another” (Young, 2000, p. 22, quoted in Kera and Papa, 2003, p. 34).

The Kanuns stated that a man who married by love and not through mediation of his parents, was excluded from the family property, and his children could not inherit family property (Gjeçovi, 1993, p. 39). On the grounds of such strong remarks by Albanian and British scholars, and from the regulations of the Kanun itself, it can be concluded that generally speaking love was not a reason for and a road to marriage and family formation in older times. Instead love was regarded as an impediment to a healthy, traditional relationship. In the fourth chapter I will demonstrate quantitatively how love and arrangement, as roads to marriage has effect marriages of lone mothers during communism and after 1990 in Albania.

Indeed, in the early twentieth century the new bride and groom did not know one another before marriage; affinity members of their clan or kinship, or trusted people from the village were the marriage negotiators or mediators. In the Albanian language the people who handle the negotiating role between the families of the groom and the bride for the organization of an arranged marriage are called “shkues” (mediator) or “lajmës” (the information giver). Until 1950 the role of “shkues” was strictly defined in the Kanun of Lekë (Gjeçovi, 1993, pp. 22-23). The “shkues” was selected from the groom’s family and his²⁹ duty

²⁹ Until the first half of the twentieth century, the “shkues” was a man. During socialism and the current period, “shkues” can also be a woman. In older times women had no

was to gather correct information on the family of the bride and transmit the necessary messages to arrange the engagement for both families. In the centuries preceding 1950, the “shkues” was a male for the reason that at that time “*prerja e fjalës*” (the given word for the daughter’s hand) was accompanied with dowry negotiations. Kera and Pandelejmoni wrote about this marriage ritual:

“A marriage could happen on the sole occasion when the groom’s family would pay an amount of money called “*prika*” (direct dowry) to the father’s bride. The money was used for purposes of preparing the “*paja*” (bride’s dowry) of the bride, which were basically her clothing and house equipment; therefore, it was money that would go back to the groom’s family. However, there were cases when the bride’s family used the money for other purposes in the house instead of preparing their daughter’s dowry” (2008, pp. 129-130).

From what can be read in the Kanun of Lekë Dukagjini, the new bride is brought to the groom’s house to procreate, and especially to ensure the future heir in the family line. In case the woman was reproductively challenged, or could only give birth to daughters and not to sons, polygamy and polygyny were alternatives to secure a heir to the family wealth (Kera & Papa, 2003, pp. 38-40; Nicholson, 2006, pp. 45-57). The son to marry had no rights to get involved in the decision of the family men and kinship men on the girl he would marry or her family. However, he did have the right to choose the bride himself in case his parents had died (Gjeçovi, 1993, p. 20). Only a widowed woman had the right to choose her second husband, whereas the widowed man needed to negotiate via the other men of his family. The widowed man could choose the girl he wanted to marry and send other men to ask for her hand in marriage (Gjeçovi, 1993, p. 20).

As indicated in the Kanun of Lekë gathered by Gjeçovi (1993), and in re-

rights, and therefore they could not be involved in family decisions about the marriage of their own children; consequently, they were not granted the right to engage in negotiating marriage affairs between two families. At the same time, the “shkues” was supposed to be involved in bride pricing and women had no say over money. I believe also for the fact that money administration was only performed by men and since marriage mediation engaged money matters women were seen to be unfit for such tasks. Later on, in socialism, the price for the “*prika*” (direct dowry of the groom’s family to the bride’s family) was considered an old and patriarchal tradition, therefore the socialist government resisted this tradition. Women who gained more rights were then also socially and culturally accepted to get involved and play the role of the “shkues” in the community. See for more information on this ritual, Kera and Pandelejmoni (2008).

search by Durham (1909), Hasluck (1954), Young (2000), Kaser (1996), Kera and Papa (2003), Kera and Pandejmoni (2008), women had no rights until the first half of the twentieth century with regard to marriage and family decisions. The family typology, household structure and age of marriage are other elements that shed more light on the roles women were required to take on. As noted earlier, the work of Albanian scholars (Kera & Pandejmoni, 2008; Uçi, 2003; Kera Papa, 2003) on family typology and structure until the first half of the twentieth century has also offered much information on marriage organization. The new bride very soon becomes one of the women in the house. She has responsibilities to her children, to the other children of family members and to her in-laws (parents, brothers, sisters). She participates in field labour (planting and harvesting). Considering these facts and the family organization in older times, it looks as if family practice offered no room for love and romance. However, scholars have argued that they encountered feelings of harmony³⁰ while they visited these joint families in their houses (Durham, 1909, p. 23).

Another important element that relates to marriage organization is the age of the groom and bride. Until the mid-1950s, “marriages in the cradle” were known in the Northern part of the country (although not in large numbers). This phenomenon was explained by pointing to a shortage of females available for marriage. Kera and Papa/Pandejmoni (2003, 2008) have argued from the data they had available that the size of the male population was much higher when compared to the female population. So, families with strong bonds and comparable wealth status would promise their daughter to the other family who had a son. If two families had exchanged this promise, there was no way back. That girl belonged to that man her entire life (Gjeçovi, 1993, p.25). The groom’s family had to wait until the right age for the girl to be ready for marriage. The age of marriage differed slightly within religiously affiliated families. As Kera and Papa note:

“[...] the middle age to marriage for females of the Muslim population was 17.5 years old, for Catholic females 16.5 years and for Orthodox fe-

³⁰ In confirmation of what Durham encountered, I felt this harmony in 2002 when I visited five joint families in villages around Shkodra (West-North Albania), who were involved in blood-feud. I was there in the role of the translator for two CNN journalists, as project coordinator of the Albanian Foundation for Conflict Resolution and Reconciliation of Disputes. In one of the families 22 people lived together. Although the men dominated and controlled women’s behavior, inside the house there was a harmony of feelings when husbands and wives would cross eyes.

males around 20. The same pattern for the marriage age for men is observed in men of Orthodox belief, who married at 28 years of age. For the Catholic and Muslim men, the age of marriage was almost equal, 26 and 27 years old” (2003, p. 36).

However, in some cases a family would pressure the son to marry earlier (around 14³¹), due to a shortage of labor hand in the house, which was supposed to be filled by his new bride in the house.

The social status of the bride’s family and groom’s family was yet another important component which was carefully considered by both families. The groom’s family and the groom himself had to work really hard to be able to afford the bride (Kera & Pandelejmoni, 2008, pp. 130-131). The price of “prika” was sometimes too high for the financial situation of families and grooms had to work for many years, or emigrate and return back to marry. As Kera and Pandelejmoni point out, in urban areas it was difficult to enter in a “krushqi”³² relationship, unless both families came from the same social strata. Wealth was mostly kept within the same network of families from the same social class. There are however no data available to indicate marriages between boys and girls from feudal families and those from farmhands.

The Kanun gives the husband the right to end the marriage by sending the “shkues” and two other males of his kinship or village to the bride’s family. The married woman left by her husband has no right to marry again ever until he dies or unless he allows it. The marriage could also be ended when the bride did not appear to be a virgin. In these cases either the marriage was cancelled or the groom decided to shot the bride with the cartridge given to him by the bride’s parent when they delivered the dowry (Gjeçovi, 1993, pp.23-26). Women on the other hand had no right to leave the man.

At this point in the chapter, based on the evidence provided by Albanian scholars and the Kanun of Lekë Dukagjini, and after discussing family composition, functionality, and organization, marriage age, social status of families, the right or possibility to choose a life partner, I can conclude that until the 1950s

³¹ Andon Zako Çajupi, a Renaissance poet in Albania, wrote a comedy-poem titled “14-year-old Groom”. This comedy during socialism was turned into a movie of a comic zhanre. Both the poem and the movie based on this poem, made fun of the old tradition in some rural families working in agriculture to find a bride for the only son they had, no matter what age he would be, in order for them to have a working hand in the field.

³² “Krushqi” is the Albanian word used for the relationship created from the bond between the groom’s and bride’s family.

love was not the usual reason couples married. Instead the economic situation, the need for another hand in the house, and the need to ensure there was a heir to inherit wealth were the reasons the parents of the groom and the bride would negotiate between them the marriage of their children. Did this state of affairs continue in a later period in time? How did communism influence the family formation and how did marriage intentions change? The coming section analyses marriage organization and family formation in this period, the communist one.

Before arriving at the beginning of the next section, I want to give a short overview of the presence of lone mothers and their recognition until the first half of the twentieth century. The Kanun of Lekë Dukagjini acknowledged lonemothers. The Kanun consigned to widow women the right and the power to find their second husband themselves. If they had no children they had the right to choose marriage or stay at their parents' home, in which case the parents could get back their dowry. When they had children and they decided to stay at their husband's place, both the family of the husband and her parents' family had no right to touch her or force her to marry somebody else. At the moment that she would get married, she had to live in her second husband's house and had no place in the first one (Gjeçovi, 1993, p.37). Meanwhile the women who married via love and not via the rules of Church or the Kanun were married without celebration. They and their children had no rights to property in the house of their partners. Later on in this chapter, I will present this lone mother history and experience as an indication of the fact that some old traditional forms of widowhood or remarriage still exist in the Northern part of Albania.

Let me now move on to the regulation and organization of marriage and family life in communist Albania.

3.2.c. Albanian marriage and family during communism (1945-1990)

In this dissertation I have used the words socialism and communism, not necessarily meaning the same thing. I use the word communism to refer to the ideology of community goods and the idea of a classless society where the good of the community is given priority over the individual good. I also use the word communism to refer to the way political power was organized, structured and exercised over individuals. I use the word socialism to refer to the socio-economic system which put communist ideology into place.

In this part, I shift the focus to the character of the Albanian family in another socio-historical period, 1950s – 1990, under socialist guidance. Did the Albanian family free itself from or strengthen the patriarchal, exogamous, patrilocal and patrilineal character it had until the 1950s? Did love and romance become part of marriage and family life? Were lone mothers' families part of a public discourse?

Did they receive governmental attention? In this section, I try to answer these questions via the literature I gathered from the communist period, such as the women magazine “The New Albanian Woman” (Shqiptarja e Re), marriage legislations and family codes, speeches by communist leaders in Congresses and Plenums³³ and the scant literature published by scholars during communism and after. In the 4th chapter I answer these questions on the basis of an analysis of the answers lone mothers who married and divorced in communist times gave me through the survey.

The constitution of the People’s Socialist Republic of Albania in 1976 institutionalized, ensured and legally protected the equality of men and women in article 41:

“The woman, liberated from political oppression and economic exploitation, as a great force of the revolution, takes an active part in the socialist construction of the country and the defense of the Homeland. The woman enjoys equal rights with man in the work, paid holidays, social security, and education in all social-political activity, as well as in the family”.

It was the time when the family opened up slowly and in most cases by force, notably in rural areas, to new structural forms and marriage organization.

The country’s industrialization, building of urban infrastructure, rural electrification, opening of new public factories and concentrated efforts to eradicate illiteracy were new public arenas which called for the participation of women. Moreover, the unification of cooperatives in the late 1960s and early 1970s did change the composition of the rural areas with newcomers from urban areas, although in small numbers (Alia, 1988; Xhafa, 1985). Data presented by Pashko, vice-minister of the Ministry of Industry in 1975, indicated that “[...] women today make up 42% of the total number of workers in urban and rural areas, equal to a figure of 248,000, by the end of 1967” (p. 71). Sheri, professor at the Department of Economic Sciences in the mid-1970s, writing on ‘The role Albanian women play in the development of our people’s economy’, highlighted that:

³³ ‘Kongres’(Congress) according to the “Fjalor Gjuhës së sotme Shqipe” (1980), (Dictionary of the Contemporary Albanian Language) is defined as extensive meeting with national and international character, which is attended by representatives of political, social, scientific and so on organizations. Representatives of different countries, which make decision on fundamental issues of particular importance can as well attend (ibid. pp. 859-860). ‘Plenum’ is a meeting with national character, which is attended by members of a governing body of a political party, a social organization etc. It is a meeting organized during a period between two congresses (ibid. p. 1501).

“[...] in comparison with the end of 1960, the number of women in the industrial sector increased by 146%, in building construction by 107%, in agriculture (the State sector) – by 232%, in transport and communication by 141%, in trade and accumulation by 75% and in the municipal sector by 75%. [...] Regarding the non-productive sphere the educational sector underwent a great increase of women’s participation at work. In comparison with the end of 1960, their number at the beginning of this year, increased by 127% whereas in banks and public health institutions their number increased by about 51% and in administration 36%” (ibid. p. 80).

Other nomenclature leaders, economic and cultural academics in the Albania of the 1960s and 1970s offered more or less the same inflated numbers during their plenary³⁴ talks, or academic writings. To mention a few of them: during socialism, Violeta Foto was the Chairwoman of the Women’s Organization for Berat District; Afka Gambeta was Secretary of the General Council of the Women’s Union of Albania (WUA); Naum Guxho was the Scientific Correspondent of the Institute of Marxist-Leninist Studies at the Central Committee of the People’s Labor Party (PLA). The numbers given at that time were not questioned publicly, and today the methodology of the Socialist Institute of Statistics operating during communism is not questioned nor do people examine how politically free this data production was.

The socialist ideology behind the country’s production and the movement of women’s participation directed by the state did have their impact on the personal lives of individuals and the family. Whereas until the 1950s the joint family functionality resembled the organization and coordination of a government (Frashëri, 1944; Uçi, 2003; Kera & Papa, 2003), this picture changed during communism. The family enjoyed the protection of the state and therefore its creation, structure and organization was an expression of the socialist ideology of communist leaders. The large joint families with many members experienced a cut back in numbers. Nevertheless, the joint family remained strong in rural areas, and in urban areas the creation of nuclear families and stem families increased. During socialism the term “extended families” which refers to the presence of more than two officially married couples in a household, whose male members and the new born females where from the same blood line, was used as terminology and also as a practice. I will use the term ‘nuclear families’ when talking about families

³⁴ In socialism the country-production was organized through 5 years planning. Every year the Central Committee held the Sessions for Yearly Plenum Evaluation and every 5 years for the Planning Plenums.

comprised of only one married couple and their children. The term extended or joint families, will be used for families comprised by two or more couples and their children living together.

One of the main achievements during the communist regime was the annihilation of patriarchal customs and norms that touched upon the gender roles outside the extended Albanian family. The man of the house still ruled the house but his daughters had the support of the government to receive education and go to work, even without his consent³⁵ (Kapo, 1973, p. 8). The authority of the man of the house remained unquestioned, in that his role needed to be respected. The Albanian Family Code of 1965 mentioned love, respect, mutual care and obligations as new characteristics of the relationship between parents and children and vice-versa (Alia, 1988; Xhafa, 1985).

Women in deep rural areas in the North and South of Albania, whose families did not allow them to be educated or go to work in the community's cooperatives, found support in women groups brought from the city to emancipate their sisters. The Labor Party (LP) found a way to convince those male heads of families who would not allow their daughters and women to participate in the cultural life of the rural community. The head of the commune went to these families to talk as man to man with "I zoti i shtëpisë" (the head of the house), or would find different ways to denigrate them publicly in front of their comrades for their traditional and patriarchal life style and way of thinking ("New Albanian Woman", no. 1. 1968)³⁶, until they would silently comply with the party ideology of family and social life.

The first law on marriage regulation in communist Albania dates back to 18 May 1948. The second article of law 601 announces the legal protection of marriage by the state. The fifth article declares that both spouses have the same rights towards their children; they are obligated to take care to raise and educate their children on equal terms. The seventh article gives both spouses the right to choose their professions freely, and in case one of them is moving to another city due to work the other spouse is not obligated to follow, unless willing to do so. The right to property states that both spouses can individually administrate

³⁵ As a child of 12 years old, I saw the play "Cuca e maleve", about an emancipated young Albanian girl from the mountains, who wanted to open a school in the mountains and teach other girls and people to read.

³⁶ Until the late 1970s many numbers of this magazine contained a rubric titled 'Fighting against patriarchal and old traditional customs'. Women from different parts of North, South, and Central Albania told their story about their triumph over the old traditions and patriarchal fathers, grandfathers or fathers-in-law. Other urban women described how they went to rural areas and helped their sisters fight patriarchal customs.

the property they possessed before marriage. Regarding their joint contribution during the marriage, in the case of a conflict or a divorce, the court decides on the separation of the jointly gathered properties. These valuable properties include the share in the household work, and in child rearing. From a gender perspective, the law on Marriage and Divorce of the early communist period, , was gender sensitive recognizing women's contributions to the domestic sphere. Nevertheless, being raised and having lived under communism until the age of 16, and as a contemporary gender scholar who reads the law and literature on the family in the communist period, I want to draw attention to the fact that that this gender sensitivity was only played a role with regard to divorce. When it came to the daily organization of family tasks "communist regime failed to bring a domestic revolution at home" (Pino, S. 2012). The domestic revolution, from the viewpoint of Albanian scholars and from my personal experience, has to do with the advanced technology revolution, which failed to erase the time needed for domestic activities via the introduction of new technologies such as laundry machines, vacuum-cleaning machines, electrical cooking plates and so on. As I elaborated in the fifth chapter, although the socialist government introduced in the late 1970s laundry washing machines to reduce the time women spent on hand-washing, there was a priority list of families who could first benefit. Legislatively speaking, the domestic revolution with regard to the equal distribution of domestic tasks was not regulated in the communist period.

The minimum age for marriage was 18, for both boys and girls, although they could marry earlier under special circumstances. Later on, because of the Family Codes of 1965 and 1982 the age of marriage for girls was lowered to 16 years, and remained at 18 for boys. With the New Family Code of 2003 the age of marriage became 18 again for both girls and boys. Albanian citizens who were living abroad could marry a foreign citizen in another country but the reverse was not allowed. Article 37 of the 1948 law declared that after the registration of the official marriage and the approval of the Chairman of the People's Council, or the governmental representative, the couple could also celebrate the marriage according to religious traditions if they preferred. Article 86 of this law states that if the leader of a religious community celebrates the marriage before the official state does, he will get punished with correction work or with a fine of 20.000 ALL (OGPRA, 21 July, no. 76, 1948, p. 8). It should be noted that in the early communist period marriages abroad, and religious celebrations and festivities were allowed. After 1965 started the further revolutionarization of the country life³⁷,

³⁷ In the Albanian Encyclopedic Dictionary (2008) the political, ideological and social movements of the 1960s are explained as: "These movements were launched by the La-

which is also reflected in the Family Code of 1965, where neither marriage to a foreign citizen, nor religious marriage celebrations were allowed anymore.

Under the law of 1948 the dissolution of marriage could be requested by any of the spouses, and could be granted in the case of the death of one of the spouses, the absence of one of the partners and divorce³⁸. Spouses could legitimately divorce each other under the law for the following reasons: character incongruity, continuous conflicts, contradictions, incompatible character, hostility towards one another, adultery, or violence towards the other partner, maltreatment, mental illness of the other partner, abandonment without giving a reason, and being declared an enemy of the people, or the imprisonment of one of the partners (OGPRA, 21st July, no. 76, 1948, p. 5).

With the dissolution of the marriage, and when there are children involved, each parent had a share in childrearing, based on the economic abilities they had. When parents could not agree on child care, the court would decide on child care arrangements and custody. When one parent received sole custody of the children, the other parent was obligated to pay a monthly allowance. The spouse who is not guilty and is not capable of work, or is temporarily unemployed can ask the court to decide on the allocation of a food payment by the guilty spouse. However, this right is suspended when the spouse remarries. (OGPRA, 21 July, no. 76, 1948, p. 6).

The relationships between children and parents were protected through the law on marriage in 1948. Law 604 (20 May 1948) recognized the rights and duties of parents toward their children born within the marriage and out of wed-lock, as well as vice-versa. Article 11 of this law allowed children to work when they were 14 years old, and obligated them to take care of their own education and take care of the family in case they had no other means of living. The parenting right is suspended by law when the child becomes 18 and has legal authority of his own

bour Party of Albania, but they were presented as a proposal raised by the will of the people. The so-called “great revolutionary movement” began after Enver Hoxha speech at the Vth Congress of the PLA, in November 1966. Part of these movements was the movement for the emancipation of women. The motives of this movement were both political and pragmatic. Canon norms and customs that hinder women’s equality with men in the family and in society were considered a dangerous ground for the development of the socialist path and it was used to preserve and strengthen the dictatorship. The movement aimed to further increase the participation of women in production and in political and social life” (pp. 1500-1501).

³⁸ In this 1948 law on marriage, divorce was expressed via the word ‘çkurorëzim’, which carried a negative connotation, equivalent to de-crown in English. Also, the civil registry noted the civil status of both divorced spouses as ‘de-crowned’ (*i/e çkurorëzuar*).

and can get married and create his own family (OGPRA, 21 July, no. 76, 1948, pp. 8-10). The parent who was legally required by the court to give the child alimony can pay child a certain amount of money, take the child in his home to feed him or find another way to secure his food (OJPRA, 21 July, no. 76, 1948, pp. 8-10). The child alimony in this law of 1948 and also in the family Code of 1965 must be given until the child becomes 18 years old. The Family Code of 1982 expanded the age for child alimony to 25 years, because it took account of the children's education and not only nutrition.

The first Family Code of the People's Republic of Albania dates from 1965. It is composed of 5 parts, and it unifies together the earlier law on marriage, the law on the obligation for food for children and parents, the relationship between parents and children, and the regulation and dissolution of marriage. The first article of this Family Code states that "the family is created and guided from principles of communist morals" (p. 3).

During my research I have had the opportunity to gather, read and compare three Family Codes of 1965, 1982 and 2003. It is noticeable that the Family Code of 1982 uses a politicized juridical authority and therefore the regulation of marriage and its dissolution are intentionally enforced and normalized according to the ideology of the Labor Party. For the first time the Albanian family is named 'socialist family' and its principles expresses the 'volition of the working classes' (CRPSS, pp. 60-61). More specifically, the third article of this family code states:

"The family legislation is guided by the politics of the Labor Party of Albania and is based on the ideology of the working class and on Marxism-Leninism" (ibid. p. 60). Whereas in the Family Code of 1965 marriage and family were stated to be under the protection of the state, the fifth article of the Family Code of 1982 states that marriage and family 'are under the care and protection of the state and of society. State organs and societal organizations take care of the strengthening of the socialist family, the education of all its members with the Marxist-Leninist mentality, in the fight against foreign appearances" (ibid. p. 16).

Judging from this article, both the government and society were responsible for the protection of the family. It does sound as if family life was not free of external interferences. This was indeed often true. Women were given rights, but the families they created were surveyed by many eyes. One example of the ways in which society interfered with family matters can be seen in the magazine 'The New Albanian Woman'. A column from 1962, on the *fight against traditional behavior*, tells the story of a cooperative woman from Pogradeci village (South-East

Albania) who disclosed publicly that her husband slapped her while working in the field. All the workers had come to a public meeting which was organized by the cooperative council to judge publicly the behaviour of the man. The story starts with the female colleagues of the woman who judged her for reporting her husband and for not enduring his violent behaviour of her husband and moreover for not being submissive. It then narrates how the party comrades had given her husband Enver Hoxha's³⁹ work on women to read and had given him one week to understand the importance and the new role of woman in the family and in society. All his colleagues, the villagers and his wife heard how he apologized to her for his behaviour. Due to the lessons of Enver Hoxha he had understood that his violent manner at work towards his wife was not correct and he told all the other men present at the meeting about the important role of women in their lives and in society.

From 1964 until the late 1980s the *New Albanian Woman* magazine started a new item titled "Do you think this is the right position to take"? This item focused on family problems of a social nature, and specifically targeted the relationships between family members. Divorce or the misbehavior of husbands was referred to in many sequential numbers of this published magazine. In one of the issues a new problem was raised in the form of a story and different people from the society were invited to write to the Editorial Board of the magazine; these reactions were then published, for instance letters by women about divorce (number 6, 1968). In the item titled "How to understand divorce"? we find letters about the story of a woman who was married for 14 years, and had three children with her husband. Her husband had committed adultery for several years. He had asked twice for divorce but the legal authorities did not grant him a divorce. The couple had not lived together for four years and the man lived with another woman and had a child with her. His first wife was still willing to take him back and continue their married life together for the sake of their children. This divorce story gener-

³⁹ Enver Hoxha was "the Leader of the Communist Party (1948) and later of the Labour Party of Albania. He led the Anti-fascist National Liberation War and after the war directed the Albanian state. Under his direction, Albania was ruled by a Stalinist dictatorship. In the country was effectuated a tough fight against classes associated with violations of human rights and persecution and capital sentences to political opponents. Over the years that Hoxha led the state, the economy in general, the energy, the education, culture and health recognized high development rates. But radical measures that were implemented in economy, led an complete liquidation of private property and private initiative towards the creation of the centralized economic system, which proved ineffective and ultimately failed, and caused an economic crisis" (Fjalori Enciklopedik Shqiptar, 2008, pp. 957-958).

ated many reactions, and one of them published in that number states:

“The Party teaches us that woman and man should have equal rights in everything and everywhere and that woman should fight for herself to increase her personality. A woman must be proud of her place in society and the family and in no way must she ask for piety from the others. But what does this woman Vjollca write about? By not accepting the dissolution of her marriage, this woman has lowered her personality in front of a man who betrayed her and who was not worth it. Also, she did not act in the right way because she should be the first to ask for the dissolution of the marriage, and not her husband. A family without love, mutual understanding, harmony and a mutual belief between the two spouses, makes no sense, even when there are children. A family like this resembles a damaged apple, which drops from the tree of its own accord.

For the sake of the interest of the children that this woman brings here as a reason to not dissolve her marriage” does not sound right in my opinion. What kind of example would she set her children when there is no harmony between their parents, but continuous conflicts, when their father lives with another woman and their mother keeps on resisting all of this?” (ibid., p. 14).

If we compare these lines to what I quoted earlier from researchers of the socialist period, there is a similarity in wording and the logic behind the ideology of family life. These lines enforced and highlighted repeatedly the message of the socialist ideology for the protection of the family.

Judging from my interviews with divorced mothers in the communist period, all of them want to talk about empathy or judgmental behavior. The divorce process in itself had a major impact and was a public concern during communism; therefore, mothers could not experience it on their own. Their work colleagues were also involved in those years. I have selected two stories from divorced mothers in the period of socialism which confirm this experience of community support during the divorce process. Both women are from the same city, from Korçë, in South-East Albania. Tereza, a divorced lone mothers was 63 years old at the time of the interview. She is a mother of three: two of them are her biological children from her previous marriage, and another one is her stepson from her second marriage. The lone mother is a nurse by profession. With the death of her second husband, she became a widow 9 years ago. She therefore belongs to two groups of women, both as a divorcee of socialism and as a widow of the democ-

racy period. The other woman, Malvina is 56 years old. She used to be a worker in the wool-furling industry, a state enterprise. She is a mother of two children. Ever since her divorce, despite the support from colleagues and the community she has been unable to recover from the divorce trauma. She is still under medication treatment and has had traumatic symptoms since then. Both mothers wanted to remain anonymous and therefore I will keep their names confidential.

I asked both mothers how her and his family members reacted to her divorce. In addition, whether they feel judged or supported by her colleagues, neighbors or the community in general? The first mother answered:

“I have had major support from his parents, who were also witnesses and my supporters at court during the divorce process. They testified on my behalf. They told the judge that the bride of our son is not guilty; our son is guilty. My colleagues and neighbors on the other hand were surprised, though, because I was not talking with anyone about what was happening to me in the house. My colleagues did say that I was losing weight, but I told them that this was because of the children who cry during the night. The truth was that my parents would take care of my children during the night, because I was working in shifts. I never talked about my problems with anyone.

At that time I was elected in the People Council of the Neighborhood as a selected member for the housing sector. The community and the Party trusted me with this work”. (Appendix 1.3, interview no. 26.)

This history of this divorced lone mother from the socialist period revealed the justice received from her in-laws during her divorce from their son. It also indicates how family matters are kept behind closed doors, a fact which this lone mother discloses by narrating how surprised her colleagues were when they heard about her divorce. This is how family members dealt with the many eyes watching over family affairs. The emotional support she received from her parents-in-law at the time and the support from the community and the Party members who elected her to a public position were a sign that a divorce requested for good reasons was not punished publicly in socialist Albania.

The story of the other mother which I will voice in the coming paragraph reveals how society plays a role when the man of the family is not well behaved and does not perform his expected tasks. This lone mother is under medication and talks in fragments when interviewed. For the majority of questions she answers “I do not know”, but there are moments when she is clear and willing to

talk. When I asked her whether she felt judged at the time by society or the family she said:

“No, I did not feel judged, because he was an alcoholic, and he never brought his salary home. He was cheating around with other women, the police even caught him with a woman, so I had a fantastic court case. I had 15 testimonies in court from his colleagues and my colleagues and neighbours”. (Appendix 1.3, interview no. 25.)

Analyzing from the stories mothers told me, it is clear that at the time society was socially active and was asked - politically speaking - to interfere in family relations. Indeed, under socialism women did enjoy the protection of the state *de jure* and *de facto*. The misbehavior of men was discredited on the labour and the communal front and therefore men were careful not to mistreat women. Before the 1990s divorce was not only a problem of the involved partners but also a concern of the community. As divorced mothers in that period show, the state gave them access to employment and income for them and their children and forced the biological fathers to pay the monthly allowance and also tried to provide housing for divorced mothers and their children. The social policy for lone mothers in the communist period will be elaborated in the 5th chapter.

Reading the family codes of the communist period, the publications of the Women’s Union, research by Albanian scholars and speeches of communist leaders and academics, I noticed the uniformity of the debates and data and the propagation of the communist moral with regard to family life. Let me introduce how these family codes in the Marxist-Leninist ideological vein led the masses, and how they were presented in written media and research literature.

Through several propagation means (written media, literature, film production, radio programmes, daily and weekly cultural workshops and seminars, the establishment of The Union of Albanian Women and its written publication *The New Albanian Woman*, the LP upheld the image of the nuclear family and the importance of women and men knowing one another while building socialism at the work place or engaging in cultural activities. In the Family Code of 1982, in its third part about marriage relations, article 13 states: “marriage is bonded with the volition of the future spouses, and is based on the recognition and love of partners for one another” (CRPSA, 1982, p. 62).

A clear explanation of a socialist way for youth to get to know each other before marriage is described in the work of Xhafa (1985), on *Marriage relations in our socialist society*. In his work he focuses on the new marriage forms within the Albanian family and shows how the old marriage tradition and bourgeois-revisionist

theories could negatively affect the new socialist family. When he describes the arranged marriage as a transitional form to create a family he points out that:

“For love to emerge and be strengthened amongst youth bonded to one another via arrangement, it is necessary to create the conditions for the boy and the girl to profoundly know each other through frequent visits and the participation in different activities organized by social and youth organizations. From this request one can understand that a marriage bonded through arrangement does not have love between young people as a start, but their knowledge of each other through recommendation. Other than that there are still cases when general opinion supports marriages via arrangement, because they are closer to the old forms of marriage. Therefore, this kind of marriage should not be idealized, also because much negativity is behind it” (ibid. pp. 41-42).

In 2003, in a published article on ‘Some aspects of marriage and family relations’, Uçi refers to the revocation of marriages in 1965, a year which saw the invalidation of 3718 engagements conjoined through “mediation” or arranged according to old traditions.

Through these types of new forms of marriage education books, through “Shqiptarja e re” (*The new Albanian Woman*) magazines, through “Drita” (*The Light*) newspaper and seminars at schools and universities, the Albanian youth received ideological guidance and propagation with regard to the socialist family. The institution of the family was perceived and treated as a very important setting for the rise of future generations. However, the family faced the transition of challenging relations between family members, especially in rural areas, to fight the old traditions. By virtue of this new kind of family imposed by socialist ideologies, it became more difficult for families to still bond together. The socialist family not only referred to proletarians co-creating future families, but also to proletarians whose living and working ideology resembled that of the Labor Party in Albania. As elaborated earlier, the principles of the Family Code of 1982, followed the party ideology exclusively. These arguments pro and contra the regime brought sorrow to many families who were spied upon. During socialism, Sigurimi i Shtetit (the National Informative Service), created a network of ‘spiunage’ (surveillance and spying) in each neighborhood of villages and cities, which was in charge to control the pro-socialist behavior of citizens. Those people who showed bourgeois behavior in their living styles or thoughts or were anti governmental political strategies were named enemies of socialism and of the nation and were deported to concentration camps or lost isolated villages to

live under basic conditions. Kinship members and neighbours in villages and cities had a hard time feeling love, care and respect for each other, due to invisible spying networks everywhere, which fought old customs and bourgeois manners. The family was kept together united and bonded through fear of community spies. If family members said anything against the regime outside the house, he or she would take the rest of the family with him/her into deportation camps and deep rural areas. After 1990 some famous Albanian writers, such as Flutura Aça (author of 'Where are you?' (*Ku je?*)), wrote novels based on the real life-histories of families who experienced life in deportation villages. However, until now, the untreated wounds created in politically persecuted families by the 'spiunagé' network have not fully been revealed or cured.

When socialism started to build up, the majority of the Albanian population was of a rural composition; more than 75 % of the population lived in rural areas. As textile, metallurgic, glass, wood, plastic and auto-tractor factories and rug processing enterprises were built in different cities of the country, the need for a labour force became pressing ("*New Albania*", 1965, no. 3). In 1967 Ramiz Alia, member of the political bureau and secretary of the Central Committee (CC) of the Party of Labour of Albania, reported in the Second Plenum of the CC about the intensification of women's emancipation, and their role in the country's industrialization:

"Over 248,000 women and girls take now part in production; this is 42% of the total number of urban and rural workers. With rare exceptions, we find the women engaged in all professions and branches of our people's economy while in some of these branches they make up the majority of workers as, for instance, 73% in the textile industry, 52% in the food-processing industry, 69,4% in public health and sanitation and so on. It has been a decisive step of the Party towards the emancipation of women [...]" (ibid. p. 45).

Many young boys and girls were brought from rural areas to cities to attend evening school and parallel to education also work in factories. In 1978, an Albanian booklet which gathered reports, articles and journals on women's emancipation in Albania reported that "in 1973 the number of women workers attending schools without interrupting their work reached 15,698, and in 1977 it increased to 22,768" (ibid. p. 43). It was there, in the work place, where the SLP propagated socialist love as the basis for a socialist family.

Under communism measures were taken to prepare and educate women for their roles as mothers and workers. The *New Albanian Woman* magazine wrote

about several activities of women from different regions in Albania who participated in courses against illiteracy. Other courses about “Mothers and children” taught women how to take physical care of their children by following a time schedule in breastfeeding and sleeping hours. In its first issue of 1954 the “New Albanian Woman” published some working mothers’ feedback who had participated in such courses and their new experiences with child-rearing after being taught how to mother their children.

From 10 October 1950 onwards, mothers with large families received the Medal “Glory to the Mother” and the Order “Glory to the Mother” in communist Albania. This title was approved by the Presidium of the People’s Assembly under decree no. 1159. It was a title which congratulated mothers who raised 6 and more children. The youngest child could be 1 year old and the others were alive, or were martyrs of the War to defend Albanian borders.

When we currently talk about the outcome of research in communist Albania, we should be aware of the fact that scholars were not free to publish results which would reveal vital problems of the system. Their analytical interpretation also needed to conform to the Marxist-Leninist ideology, the guiding ideology of the LP during 1944-1991. Therefore, reading studies of that period one encounters the ideology of glorifying community values and the disapproval, criticism or ridiculing of individual bourgeois norms. For Alia, Xhafa and Uçi who wrote about the Albanian family and its Marxist-leninist ideology, inspired by the writings and speeches of the socialist leader Enver Hoxha, a bourgeois family was not based on love, but on economic interests. This type of non-love related family, which promoted the dependency of women on men, was condemned in socialist Albania, as a form of selling domestic services for life security offered to women by workingman. Bourgeois forms of marriage and family in Western countries was equated with the feudal type of family in Albania, in which marriages were negotiated for higher economic status, and the female was seen as a profitable object.

In 1988, Alia wrote a small booklet on the *Socialist Family and its Structure*. She analyzed family typologies before and during socialism. In her analysis the phase before socialism resembles the Western bourgeois typologies, where private property and social class were part of the bourgeois-feudal type of family. Instead the ‘socialist Albanian family’ was rooted in pure, mutual feelings of love and respect, gained in the working environment. The young couple was supposedly not interested in property, wealth or social class of their partner. Rather, sharing similar thoughts about the socialist society and ideology were seen as values which brought the young husband and wife together. Alia divided the Albanian socialist family into three types: the village family, the working class family and

the intellectual family (ibid. pp. 36-38). She points out that:

“The affirmation of the socialist family in our country as a dominant typology is a consequence of deep and multilateral social transformations. Primarily, it is a consequence of the economic base of our society, of the abolition of private property and the exploiting classes. These processes eradicated in our country the economic and social-class basis of the feudal, bourgeois and micro-bourgeois family. They weakened the influence of the remaining of marriage and old family relationships and made possible that family could exist mainly in three types: as working family, as rural-cooperative family and as the family of intelligence”⁴⁰ (ibid., p. 19).

Although socialism tried to build a classless nation, where all would be equal this was of no relevance in practice. Indeed, there were these three types of families and children born within them would understand that they were different from others. The children from the family of intelligentsia filtered their relations with children from working-class families. Likewise, the children from the rural cooperatives would face enormous difficulties in close relations with children from the two other forms of families. However, some data (Alia, 1988) from that period indicate that there were marriages between boys and girls and women and men from different social strata. It was rare though for children from these different family backgrounds to grow up and get to know each other in different cultural, working or educational settings. Moreover, love between these children would have to be tolerated by their parents based on good socialist work and morals from both families that would unite their children in marriage. Alia presents some available evidence noting that “in 1976 marriage between girls and boys of different social backgrounds increased by 18 percent, whereas this indicator grew by 23 percent in 1986” (ibid. p. 34). However, it is quite evident that in the late 1980s social class was still the main precondition for marriage.

Khafa, another Albanian scholar of socialism, took a different approach to marriage and family in his book *Marriage Connections in our Socialist Society*. He portrayed the Marxist and socialist ideology of the introduction and marriage of young couples. He made use of resources from the Directory of Statistics and National Archive on “Marriage Connections 1980”. Based on these data, he announced that “by the end of 1960s the arranged marriage in Albania was still dominant, until the late 1970s it remained this way through the mediation of

⁴⁰ The translation from the original is mine.

third persons, whereas today⁴¹ the marriage based on mutual love and cognizance occupies a visible place” (Xhafa, 1985, p. 34). In her interpretation of new forms of marriages, Alia (1988) also looked at a survey conducted during 1985 in cities and rural areas of Albania. In this year “68.3% of the interviewed men married of their own accord and with parental consent whereas in the villages this percentage was 44.6%” (p. 62).

Analyzing and quoting the work of Albanian scholars of the socialist period, I can conclude that greater emphasis has been put on the fundament of love for marriage and family formation. Patriarchy and patrilocality were features which were avoided in the creation of the new socialist Albanian family during communism. Patriarchy was fought by law as an old tradition which did not benefit women’s emancipation. The fight against patriarchy determined many campaigns all over the country. Mobility from rural toward urban areas increased. This tendency was condemned as micro-bourgeois. Xhafa shows some data when he writes about this trend:

“From some generalizations of data collected in some districts, it could be argued that under the influence of micro-bourgeois concepts, the tendency to arrange youngsters’ marriages (especially of girls outside the village) is increasing, whereas the number of youngsters who marry from the city into the village is not increasing. In Kruja city, for example, 66 girls married from the village into the city in 1970. In 1978 this number reached 127. [...] In the Dibra region there are 890 marriages from the village to the city and only 268 from the city to the village” (ibid. p. 47).

This paragraph suggests what was happening with marriage mobility in the rural and urban areas. The urban population was increasing with newcomers from rural areas. The opposite was encountered less frequently. In any case, it is difficult to use data to determine the weakness of the power of patriarchy and patrilocality under communism. It is especially difficult to produce data for patriarchy, because it is difficult to measure patterns of behavior. We do know for certain that these features remained strong in the North of the country and in rural areas. Love bonding prior to marriage for young couples was greatly propagated under socialism and encouraged by the government, networks at work and families. However, the social class of both the boy and the girl remained a precondition for parental approval of their wedding.

Until now I have been engaged with the legislation on marriage and family

⁴¹ By today he means the late 1970s and early 1980s.

life. Now I will have a closer look at the legislation on the dissolution of marriage in socialist Albania.

Generally speaking, in communist Albania divorce was “[...] considered a shame to society. Divorce was almost never mentioned by researchers in Albania, was rarely researched and politicized as their studies in the social domain were” (Orgocka, 1995, p. 4). Xhafa’s analysis of the dissolution of marriage is one of the few researches on marriage in socialism. He highlighted that the dissolution of marriage was “an important indicator of the stability in marriage and family relationships” (1985, p. 103). Indeed, in the socialist system the communist leaders, and therefore the researchers at that time as their political levers, proclaimed the negative sides of divorce as a positive achievement of the creation of the new socialist family. Uçi (1975), professor of philosophy at that time, explained support for women wanting divorce as a consolidation of the socialist family, were women who were forced into marriage could say no to the chosen husband (p. 150). Another argument Uçi brought forward was that the socialist family appealed to beliefs in harmony, respect and equity between partners. When this was violated by male partners, the law allowed women to call the end of the marriage (Uçi, 1975, p. 152). Even more so, divorce was trumpeted as an achievement of women’s emancipation. Xhafa indicates that the creation of the socialist family was disengaged from the patriarchal norms which were based on the exploitation of women by men, and also from the bourgeois norms which were based on individual property and not on love and values. He states “In circumstances foreseen by law, the dissolution of marriage is accepted as an important measure to consolidate the socialist family and to protect from the state the right of each citizen for family happiness” (ibid. p. 104). Xhafa reports that 86 out of 1000 marriages ended in divorce in communist Albania, as compared to other Western European countries and the U.S. where one third of marriages end in divorce. On 6 February 1967 Enver Hoxha gave a speech in which he guaranteed women’s rights in the Albanian Constitution. In the subsequent decade a higher number of women filed for divorce (52.75% of the cases), “and in the period 1976-1980, lawsuits filed by women increased even more (60% of the total number of marriage dissolution files)” (Xhafa, 1985, p. 114).

Xhafa (1985, pp. 119-120) pointed out that the dissolution of marriage in socialist Albania was entrusted to the People’s Court and unless the judge decided that the marriage had lost its value and its meaning the couple would not be divorced. In 2000 Ariana Fullani and Merita Malike came to the same conclusion but from the perspective of female law scholars. They highlighted the fact that before 1991 the Family Code acknowledged the dissolution of marriage as belonging to the relative system of divorce. This type of system allowed the dis-

solution of marriage by default of one of the partners involved (p. 3). After 1991, as Fullani and Malile describe, the legislation of marriage dissolution allowed divorce to be granted without the system of guilt (p. 9).

Although divorce during communism was thought to have been not widely approved and a missing discourse in the electronic media, the situation is differed in written journals and published speeches of Congresses and Plenums. My Neighbour, a short story by Salo Satroschi in "The new Albanian Women" (Third issue, March 1954, p. 18) is a case in point. The main character of the story is a man who after 14 years of marriage and the birth of two children is violent towards his wife. The neighbours knock at his door and ask him why he treats his wife in this way and he answers that he is the man of the house and that she needs to obey. After another violent incident, he tells his neighbours that he wants a divorce because he and his wife have different characters. The neighbour writes that he and others do not understand this motive (after 14 years of marriage) until one day he sees the neighbour with another woman and he starts questioning the character of the man.

The Family Code of 1982, saw the property of man and woman before marriage as a unity when they got married. Article 101 of this code on the dissolution of marriage also states that the court has the right to decide on the division of the matrimonial household at the request of the ex-spouse. However, they do not refer to the fact that most of the time the matrimonial household was not the property of the spouses but belonged to the parents of the man who is divorcing the woman. In a country that condones individual property, it was very difficult to divide property when the marriage ended. In the fifth and seventh chapters I will discuss how the court decided in the divorce cases of the women I interviewed (these women were divorced in the communist period).

Another visible imposition of the communist ideology against individual property is article 73 of the Family Code of 1982. This article states that, until the child is 18 years old, parents are not allowed to change the immovable properties on his or her behalf, unless they are given permission to do so by the Trusteeship Council.

Lone motherhood did exist during socialism. The most representative numbers of lone mothers during socialism, were widowed mothers and divorced mothers (the former outnumbered the latter). Data from the Directorate of Statistics, from the Archive of FDSH on "Marriage Relations 1982" and from the Magazine "Rruga e Partisë" (The Party Way), show that "86 out of 1000 legally bind marriages ended in divorce in Albania in 1982" (Xhafa, 1985, p. 104). Fewer numbers of mothers who had children out of wedlock. Teenage motherhood was not prevalent at the time in Albania, due to the legal age of marriage for girls

at 18 and later on at 16 and for boys at 18. Children born out of wedlock during socialism were seen to create a bad image of the girl who had the baby without getting married but also of her family. Although such stories were covered and hidden during communism, nowadays they are communicated publicly in the TV Show “Njerëz të humbur” (Lost people), directed by Aida Shtino. The revelation of such stories in the public sphere questions the existence of only three types of lone mothers in socialist Albania, meaning that a politico-community dictatorship forbade other forms of motherhood. There were even cases when the parents would force the daughter to leave the house and follow her own destiny. Or, they would allow the girl to give birth to the child under the condition that she would bring the newborn to the “Orphanage House” in the nearest city. Sometimes the mothers of the pregnant girls covered the pregnancies of their daughters and the birth of their nieces or nephews. Their sacrifice would go far, as they would pretend in public that they were pregnant, would keep their daughter hidden from the cousins who wanted to help, and would declare when the baby was born that they had another child.

The last paragraphs are an invitation for new research on the children of orphanage houses in communist Albania and their biological mothers. The years we are currently living in might be the last to give researchers the opportunity to meet with both the orphans of the communism period and their biological mothers. After a few years it will be very difficult to meet with the biological mothers and discover their real histories and the choices they had to make as non-married mother in communist Albania. Non-married mothers and children born out of wedlock were mentioned in the Family Code and Civil Code in communist Albania.

Since the Albanian Socialist State proclaimed the protection of the family by law, it did develop protection legislation and mechanisms for each of these groups of lone mothers. Even though the legislative measures will be extensively elaborated in the fifth chapter it is worth mentioning here that the state did take measures for protection. After the 1950s **widowed mothers** and their children were given the right to receive child pension until the children were 18 years old and later 25 until finishing school or until entering labour relations. Later on the mother was also allowed to either take the pension from the contributive years of her husband for herself or leave it to her children. **Divorced mothers** were given housing facilities and priorities on the housing list, as well as employment. Ideologically speaking, the socialist regime promoted as a positive achievement the increased number of women asking for divorce. **The lone mothers** who had never been married until 1968 were given a cash allowance for their children until they were in a legalized relationship with a partner.

These are the main findings from the literature on family and marriage in communist Albania on the connection between family codes and written publications and speeches. In the coming section I will give an overview of the start of the transition period in Albania and how it influenced family life. I will look at the ways in which types of new family forms, family organizations and marriage dissolution became relevant in a new democratic reality.

3.3. Marriage and family after 1990 in Albania

With the collapse of the socialist regime, Albania went from a central economy to an open market one. No longer did the Albanian state represent only Locialist Party. The country shifted from a socialist regime to a pluralist one. The Democratic Party, which came into power in the early 1990 until 1997 (when the country faced a turmoil due to the pyramidal scheme collapse⁴²), represented the majority of the population which had sensed for several decades that socialism was not bringing the goods and lives they wanted. The government was unprepared to deal with the high inflation rates, the emigration and migration flows, and the high rate of unemployment caused by the closure of many public state enterprises.

Xhumari (2009) refers to some data published by the Institute of Statistics (INSTAT) during 1991-1999 to elaborate on the high rates of unemployment:

“The total number of registered state enterprises, compared to the number of active enterprises shows the level of closure of these enterprises

⁴² At the beginning of 1995, Albanians were not presented yet within the Banking System. Two major Banks were functional in Albania then: The National Bank of Albania and the Arabian Bank. A pyramidal scheme was introduced, with the possibility to double and triple the money of citizens within a short period of time. Some families sold their houses, and lived in rented apartments, thinking they would become rich in a few years. Many others put the remittances of the first emigrants or their life savings into these schemes. This possibility became mainstream when the Prime-minister of Albania, Mr. Sali Berisha declared on national television that these pyramidal schemes were safe and clean. This declaration stimulated many more Albanian families to put their savings into these schemes. Three months later the pyramidal schemes collapsed and the country entered a state of civil war. Albanians broke into munition depots to arm themselves. They plundered and broke into private family businesses, which had just started in local communities and grabbed the goods found there. Other armed groups became the safe-guards of their communities and broke into other businesses to feed the isolated families. The country suffered a lack of security, electricity and basic means of living for a few months until the Temporary Government leading in this emergency installed law and order again.

[...] during 1990-1995 in about the 50% of them. This phenomenon is more centralized in the prefectures of Fieri and Vlora, which reaches a level of about 68%, followed by the prefectures of Shkodra and Korçë with about 60%” (INSTAT, 1991-1999:232)

The closure of these public enterprises, but also of public agricultural cooperatives brought about high rates of unemployment in the country. The data from INSTAT in the early 1990, indicates the number of the working force population losing jobs rapidly. From 1 404 091 total number of employees in 1991, this number dropped in 1 094 821 in 1992, and even more so in 1993, as of 1 045 918 employees.

In the early 1990s to 2000, Albanians were poor and unemployed. This situation caused four big migration flows: in May 1990, March 1991, April-June 1997 and early 2000. The majority of emigrants were from the intellectual elite and the rest were from the working class population and cooperativists, whose former professions were no longer needed in the country.

The data from INSTAT (2001) on age groups and sex, as presented in the table 1 shows that by 1990 to 2001 the number of men and female in the category 0-19 years and 20-64 years had decreased on the country level. This lower number can be explained with a higher level in infertility⁴³ and emigration.

Table 1 The representation of men and women in country level, per age distribution factor

	Age-groups		
	0-19	20-64	65+
Year 1990			
Male	718253	890229	77559
Female	669590	831513	99398
Year 2001			
Male	659546	798143	82292
Female	627026	813792	106362

This table is taken from Instat. *Women and Men in Albania*, 2001, p. 10

The government in the early 1990s therefore found itself caught in a situation when new needs of citizens were proliferating rapidly and needed to be accommodated. The new government was not yet prepared to face and deal with

⁴³ In 1994, 72159 births were registered on country level. By 2000 this number dropped to 50077. (INSTAT. *Women and Men in Albania* 2001, p. 15)

the poor families, the unemployed, the abandoned elderly, the orphans, the abandoned mothers and children and the many divorcees.

Barjaba (2009, p. 1), well-known in Albania and Europe for his research on Albanian migration, accounts that around 1,5 million Albanians as international migrants as compared to 2.8 million living in the country. After 1990 there were approximately 600,000 migrants in Italy, and about 700,000 in Greece; the rest are living in the US and other European countries. (Barjaba, 2009, p. 1).

The outcomes of the last census of 2011 in Albania show that “For the first time, the population living in urban areas has exceeded the population living in rural areas. The resident population in urban areas was 53.5 per cent while 46.5 per cent of the population lived in rural areas” (ibid. p. 10). From the census of 2001 until the last one of 2011, the Albanian population declined by 8.7%. The effect of emigration on this decline accounts for 500,000 people who left the country in a period of only 10 years (Census 2011, Institute of Statistics, p.7).

Certainly these socio-economic changes, and the international and inner migration flows had their consequences for the family formation, organization of marriage and its dissolution. Social scholars and law scholars in Albania (in cooperation with women’s non-for-profit organizations in the country) investigated the implications of divorce on the lives of divorced women and their children. For example professor Hamit Beqja, a well-known children and family pedagogue in the country together with Dr. Lekë Sokoli published a book on *Divorce, observations and reflections* (2000). Their intentions were to find out the reasons for divorce in Albania after 1990 and to understand the emotional and psychological implications of divorce on the life of divorcees and their children. Their main research methodology was through a nationwide survey with 1953 men and women. Their findings concluded that 7.5% of Albanians divorce for economic reasons, 1.2% of them due to a high difference in age between spouses, 13.7% of them due to conflicts inflicted by the parents in law, 14.7% due to adultery, 29.9% due to character congruity, 11.2% due to adultery committed by the husband.

In 1995 Lida Grabocka, in cooperation with the Women Association “Refleksione” and its president Valdet Sala, conducted a survey among 71 divorced women from three Albanian cities: Tirana, Korça and Pogradeci. 40 of them were divorced during the communist period and 31 during the period after 1990. The questionnaire focused on their thoughts, opinions and feelings on a broad range of subjects. Its findings revolved around the fact that the women who divorced after 1990 were less confident than the women who divorced in the socialist period. The women in the first group also felt more shame at being divorced women in society as compared to the women who divorced before the 1990s.

Ariana Fullani and Merita Malile, family lawyers and law scholars, wrote a

study on *Divorce: its causes and outcomes*. They analyzed 7204 divorce files in the courts of Tirana, Durrës, Lezhë, Fier and Korçë during the period 1991-1999. Fullani and Malile discuss the problem of child alimony after divorce and how fathers can pay it. They critically examine the difficulties created with fathers who work in the non-regulated market and are international emigrants. As I already mentioned about their work, they also point to the necessity of the casualty of divorce and the necessity of writing the reason of divorce cause by the court decision. 57.2% of these court decisions were granted without attributing guilt to any of the partners. They were convinced that these divorces were caused by men, and they pointed out that these types of court decisions have consequences for divorced women, such as missing out on the child allowance paid by their ex-husbands for their children and for them when they were unable to work (*ibid.* pp. 10-11). Fullani and Malile have also researched their data in terms of the percentage of divorces occurring in urban areas versus rural areas. They pointed out that in safe economic situations the divorce rates are higher in the country (when compared to economic crises).

As can be observed, divorce after 1990 has continuously gained attention from social scholars and law scholars. They have researched its causes, psychological aspects, and juridical perspectives on the responsibilities that both parents have for their children after divorce. My research on lone mothers includes divorced women. It also includes other categories such as separated and abandoned lone mothers and lone mothers undergoing divorce. My research is sensitive to the new dimensions of the new family types created after 1990, whose lone mothers cannot divorce for financial or other reasons and can therefore not be part of the legislative schemes. It does not focus on the psychological aspect but investigates divorced women and similar categories from their perspective in life in combining work and care, and in packaging the incomes and facilities from the governmental and non-governmental sector, the ex-husband and the family network. It is a study which focuses on showing the identity of lone mothers with their ups and down while struggling alone, and with their agency.

As can be seen from my literature review of research already conducted on divorce, it does not show how patriarchy, exogamy, patrilocality and patrilineality as the main characteristics of the Albanian family developed after 1990. I will be able to answer these questions in the fourth chapter.

Let me now move to the question what the new Family Code brought for Albanian families. What are numbers of divorced couples today? In my readings of the Marriage Law and Family Codes from the communist period until today, the Law on Marriage in 1948, the Family Code of 1965, of 1982 and the latest of 2003 have one element in common: the recognition of the same rights for children

who are born inside and out of wedlock. What the Family Codes of communism and after in Albania have in common are the principles of caring obligations between parents and children and vice versa. Also, the food obligation involves not only the parent-children relation (and vice versa) but also the obligation of elder sisters and brothers towards the younger ones. This aspect of the Albanian family code makes the family the primary unit of welfare for the individual. In this research, I argue that the organization of the state welfare system in communist and post-communist Albania and the non-governmental and religious welfare system in the post-communist period is structured according to this legislative obligation. The family in Albania, legislatively and practically speaking, is the first source of welfare for the individual. When under special circumstances the family members fail to meet the obligations they are required to perform, then the state and the non-governmental sector takes over, by trying to fill in the created gaps. The welfare system is discussed in the fifth chapter and the non-governmental welfare system is discussed in the sixth chapter. In this chapter I mention the law for the purpose of creating a view on the organization of family life in communist and post-communist Albania and how the law influences its regulation or dissolution.

The Family Code of 2003 introduces explicitly the *Marital Property Regime*. For the first time, the pre-nuptial agreement is introduced (in article 69). This agreement can change between partners, for the family good after 2 years of its execution (ibid. p. 27). In the absence of the pre-nuptial agreement in this code, the *Property Regime in Communion* was introduced. Division of property, deposition, compensation and obtaining the value in cases of the absence of movable properties are all new articles introduced in 2003, which constitutes a new organization of family regulation in Albania. Though the first legislation that regulated inheritance properties within households was known to be the Civil Code of Ahmet Zogu, and the Family Codes of the communism had some arrangements on property I addressed, the inheritance by the daughter of the family and the prenuptial agreement took shape in 2003.

The statistical evidence from 1 January to 2 March 2015 in the Court of the First Degree in Tirana lists a number of 553 divorce files during this period. The Institute of Statistics has published the number of marriages and divorces from 1990 to 2013 on its online website as shown in Table 2, based on the data collected from the Ministry of Justice of Albania (see bibliography for the online sources).

Table 2 Number of marriages and divorces for the period 1990-2013

Years	Marriages Total	Divorces Total	per 100 marriages
1990	28,992	2,675	9.2
1991	24,853	2,236	9.0
1992	26,405	2,480	9.4
1993	25,963	2,251	8.7
1994	27,895	2,108	7.6
1995	26,989	2,331	8.6
1996	27,690	1,901	6.9
1997	24,122	1,430	5.9
1998	27,871	2,005	7.2
1999	27,254	2,114	7.8
2000	25,820	2,168	8.4
2001	25,717	2,462	9.6
2002	26,202	3,494	13.3
2003	27,342	3,634	13.3
2004	20,949	2,968	14.2
2005	21,795	3,929	18.0
2006	21,332	4,075	19.1
2007	22,371	3,305	14.8
2008	21,290	3,610	17.0
2009	26,174	3,606	13.8
2010	25,428	3,478	13.7
2011	25,556	3,642	14.3
2012	22,891	3,561	15.6
2013	23,820	3,747	15.7

These data indicate that divorce was at its highest rate in 2005, 2006 and 2008: 18, 19 and 17 divorces out of 100 marriages respectively. As shown by the table, during the economic and political crisis of 1996-1997 the divorce rate is as low as 6.9 and 5.9 divorces out of 100 marriages. The highest number of marriages can be found in 1990: 28,992 nationally.

In October 2014, UN Women, UNFPA and INSTAT in the framework of the cooperation programme between the government of Albania and UN 2012-2016 published for the first time a gender analysis of the results of the 2011 census. From the early 1990s, INSTAT gathered, analyzed and published its data on women and men in the labour market; life expectancy; marriage rate, and fertility rate. The data segregation of the 2011 census is sensitive to age, sex and gender with

regard to the representation of widows, one parent families, and household size composition, health services for men and women and social services for people with special qualities. Moreover, the 2011 census ensures information on school attendance, education, migration, employment level and disability. The results of the 2011 census and its gender analysis will be used in the fourth, fifth and sixth chapters to provide the reader with a background to the category of lone mothers under research and the services they use. In this chapter, I will make use of the 2011 census data and its gender analysis which concerns family life patterns and the composition of households.

One of the main findings concerning population, marriages and families is: “The families with one parent are increasing, making up 8% of all family units (until 7% in 2011); the majority of them (84%) are lone mothers”⁴⁴ (ibid., p. 9). In 2011 the average age of marriage for girls is 23; for boys it has increased to 29 (ibid. p. 22). Among 214,000 elderly people (70 years and older) more than half of the women (56%) are widows when compared to 14% of men. In 2013, the average age for marriage in boys increased in 30.5, and for girls in 24.9 (Instat, *Women and Men in Albania, 2014*, p. 26)

This data from INSTAT indicates that lone mothers are entering population censuses and that in the future it will be easier for researchers and policy-makers to organize new research based on this data. The overview given in this section creates a new profile of the Albanian family. It is a family which is touched by unemployment and massive international and national migration. Woman and man alike enter into new non-regulated employment contracts which make it harder to provide incomes for families. Moreover, in the case of divorce it makes it difficult to implement the law on the maintenance of recovery in marriage dissolution. The emigration has created new types of families in Albania: abandoned lone mothers due to emigration which I will refer to in the fourth chapter, but also new abandoned brides and their children who live with the parents-in-law while the husband has emigrated. To conclude this section and offer one of the many dimensions of the Albanian family after 1990 I have selected one story, from the North of Albania to display a new form of marriage formation with an emigrated

⁴⁴ The gender analysis of the results of the 2011 census in Albania uses the terminology ‘lone mothers’. This is different from the term ‘women-headed families’ used in governmental policies and the vocabulary used by local women NPOS. As I have explained in the introduction, in my research I use the terminology ‘lone mothers’ which excludes some women groups which would be included when using the terminology ‘women-headed families’. The usage of the terminology lone mothers might be a result of the influence of the international experts who have worked on gender segregation analysis.

man and a new form of dissolution of marriage due to reasons of emigrations.

Esi is a 33-year-old lone mother undergoing divorce. She has two daughters, aged 9 and 5. She narrates how she has created an arranged marriage with an emigrant man living in Italy and how she has lived with her parents in law and her children in the absence of her husband. His lack of financial responsibility towards his children has pushed Esi to file for a divorce. When asked about her family formation and her reason for undergoing divorce she says:

“At 20 my parents and my neighbors arranged a mediated engagement for me. From the engagement period onwards there were debates because he was an emigrant in Italy. Mostly, the debates were started by his parents, because he himself was coming once a year for only two or three days. I was engaged and married for 7 years without him being there. Two of these years I was engaged and 5 years I was married. I lived with his mother, his two brothers and his divorced sister. He has lost the right of extending his residence permit in Italy and he never brought me money when he was an emigrant, his mother was sending him money to Italy from Albania. 5 months ago I filed for divorce”. (Appendix 1.4, interview no. 131.)

3.4. Discussion and Conclusions

In the first part of this chapter, I gave an overview of the organization of marriage and family formation in two periods: 1. Until the 1950s; 2. From the 1950s to 1991. I observed the character of the Albanian family in previous centuries until the first half of the twentieth century and I tried to trace the transformation of its main elements. I paid attention to the patriarchal, exogamous, patrilocal and patrilineal character of the Albanian family. Whereas until 1950s these characteristics were the main features of the Albanian family, in later periods they started to fade away. However, the patrilineality character of Albanian family will need more time to transform itself. Though the right of women to property was introduced for the first time in the Civil Code of the period of the Kingdomship of Ahmet Zogu in 1929, Albanian scholars analyze that due to the power of the customary codes, where women had no property rights, it was difficult to apply this law. The Family Codes of 1965 and 1982 addressed the property of married women in a couple life and in dissolution of marriages, but did not address the daughter inheritance from parents. New Family Code of 2003 in Albania, gave girls the right to inherit parents' property similarly to the guys of the family. Therefore, it will need some decades to enter into institutionalized family behaviour.

Furthermore, this chapter argued that love has not been the main entry route to marriage until the 1950s. In old times, until the first half of the twentieth century, love was condemned as childish which did not honour the man, but denigrated him in the eyes of the community. Therefore, arranged marriages were the norm until the 1950s and they were guided by intentions of economics, family social capital, provision of the blood inheritance line, and necessary labour force in the house. Customary codes were the community wisdom which guided marriage arrangements in those times in Albania. Moreover, until the 1950s arranged marriages were connected with the joint family structure. In that period Albanians connected by blood lived with more than 20-30 people together in big houses, where each person had his/her special task to perform during the day. The rules in these houses were man-made and patriarchy dominated its organization. Women had no say and no rights. This was however not the case in the urban households.

In the socialist period, from the 1950s to 1991, this situation faced a drastic transformation. The introduction of equality between men and women in the Constitution gave women economic and education rights. The increase of industrialization in the country created opportunities for the formation of a new type of family, the nuclear one, based on mutual love and respect. However, this family type was found more in urban areas. The socialist ideology propagated the formation of the new socialist family which had three forms: the rural family, the working class family and the intelligencia family. Although socialism claimed to build a classless society, the division of these types of families made it hard for boys and girls representing these families to cross the lines between them. However, in the last decade the number of marriages between the different types of class-based families increased by more than 20%. The love bond was given a priority in the formation of new families and it was legally institutionalized in the Legislation of Marriage in 1948, in the Family Code of 1965 and in the Family Code of 1982. Arranged marriages were fought as an old and patriarchal tradition; nevertheless, they remained still strong, especially in rural areas. Although nuclear families were created, the number of extended families was still very high, which indicated that the socialist government was not able to offer independent space to new couples. The early marriage legislation of 1948 and the following family codes recognized children born out of wed-lock. The dissolution of marriage in communist Albania was proclaimed by socialist leaders and scholars as an achievement on the road of women's emancipation, because it fought old patriarchal traditions and new bourgeois behaviour. The Family Code of 1982 emphasized strongly the communist and Marxist-Leninist ideology. It made the Family not only in principle protected by the state but also by so-

ciety which opened the road to the community to get involved in family matters. Moreover, this code specifically addressed women as equal to man with regards to responsibilities in the house and it provided children and grandparents with a special place. For the first time this code increased child alimony in cases of dissolution to 25 years of age, which recognized parent's responsibility for education (instead of only referring to the provision of food).

In the second part of this chapter, I offered an overview of the transition period with its rising unemployment levels in Albania, with the start of the non-regulated labor market, international and national migration. Research from Barjaba indicated that about 1 million and 500,000 Albanians live in Italy, Greece, US and other European countries since 1991. The national migration increased the population in urban areas, which for the first time have outnumbered the rural population.

In 2011 lone mothers became a visible reality in the official statistics, as 8% of families in Albania. Divorce increased drastically from 6 to 19% of 100 marriages in the last 2 decades. This increase of divorce has generated research by scholars in law, social sciences and psychology. Nevertheless, there is need for research that incorporates all categories of lone mothers in Albania, and not only divorced mothers. In the fourth chapter of this dissertation, I describe the other types of lone mothers after 1991 in Albania.

The second section also concluded that the new family code introduced the pre-nuptial agreement for the first time and legally allowed women to be inheritors of their parents' families, as men have always been. Nevertheless, as research by law scholars has indicated, and as I shall show in the coming chapter, it will take a long time before patrilineality will change *de facto*.

Chapter 4: Characteristics of lone mothers, housing arrangements and income packaging

4.1. Results of the survey

The chapter has a descriptive character in terms of summarizing the data gathered from the survey conducted with 268 lone mothers in 10 cities of Albania. This chapter summarizes the quantitative data collected for this research. As described in chapter 1 I conducted a survey that consisted of a questionnaire that was answered in my presence. In total 268 women participated in this collection of data. One group raised children alone during communism. This group of 'pre-1990 lone mothers' consisted of 28 women. The other, much larger group of women who raised children on their own after 1990 consisted of 240 women. This chapter deals with the demographic and socio-economic trends of lone mothers living in 10 cities and in two periods of time, namely during communism and after 1990. The data have been organized in two different spss data entry-sheets, one of them for the 28 mothers who raised their children alone in communism (see appendix 1.3 for an overview), and one for the 240 other mothers who raised/are raising their children alone after 1990 (see appendix 1.4 for an overview).

The limitation of this survey is the uneven number of women interviewed in the North, South and Central Albania, which makes the comparison between regions difficult. In Central Albania 102 women were interviewed, in the North 52 and in the South 114 women. In the introduction and methodology part I explained the field-work approach and the difficulties of having access to lone mothers. Also, I justified the pre-selection by me and the selection of lone mothers by local women organizations, as connected to the decision of interviewing more numbers of lone mothers in cities where the population is larger. Thus, I invite the reader to take into consideration this limitation, while reading description variables analysed as representing the three regions. I have tried therefore to present percentages which are relative within the region itself and between regions.

For both groups a separate questionnaire was constructed, although 13 questions were the same. This allowed me to compare the answers of the two groups, resulting in tentative conclusions about historical changes taking place in the situation of lone mothers in Albania. The questionnaires can be found in Appendix 1 (translated as they were conducted in Albanian). Both questionnaires contained qualitative (open) and quantitative (multiple choice or closed) ques-

tions. The answers to open questions, often resulting in short or longer interviews, have been integrated in 5th chapter (on state support for lone mothers), 6th chapter (on support from women NPO's and religious organizations) and 7th chapter (on lone mothers identity formation, on their evaluation of services provided by the state and by NPO's and religious organizations and on their expectations by state and non-state actors).

The data gathered from this survey allow grouping lone mothers based on several components: the route to lone motherhood, the location where they currently live or the location where they were born, their age, their educational background, their employment history, and the number of children they have. Due to questionnaires composed of mixed qualitative and quantitative questions, the answers allow for quantitative measurements of these components, and for qualitative descriptive answers. Though the questionnaire with lone mothers during communism period holds open questions that are answered with extensive qualitative answers, the analysis of the data through the software allows for introducing the same variables as for the mixed questionnaire for the mothers who are interviewed about raising their children alone after 1990. Some variables for lone mothers of the after 1990 period are clustered based on interviewees answers, such as is the case for their type of employment they hold during communism or after or for the type of extended family they created. Since the numbers of women interviewed about the communism period do not equal the numbers interviewed for the period of after 1990, no comparisons will be drawn between the two periods; rather, data will be informative and descriptive for the two periods. Also the presence of some women who divorced or were widowed during communism but who continued to raise their children alone after 1990, and the presence of women who were educated and married during communism but who divorced or were widowed after 1990 blurs the boundaries between the two groups by recognizing the presence of the transition period of 1990-2000. These are aspects which are reflected through the findings of the survey and data analysis. However, it needs to be stated that the data findings are based on two different data sheets separated for the periods as lone mothers who raised their children in communism, and those who raised or are raising children alone after 1990. The data for lone mothers of these two periods are discussed separately, in order to create the possibility for some tentative interpretations changes in welfare policies, education and employment, type of family formation and dissolution of marriage and housing arrangements in communism and after 1990. Nevertheless elements of the transition period are reflected during the description and analysis of education, the employment history, the type of marriage and the housing arrangement.

The chapter is divided in three parts. After summarizing the differences between this data collection and other available data on lone mothers in Albania, this first section consists of a description of the characteristics of the interviewed lone mothers. It summarizes data on characteristics in terms of age, place of birth or where they currently live, education, employment history and number and age of children, and internal and international migration.

The second section (4.2) of this chapter addresses the impact of Albanian family and marriage patterns on living arrangements of lone mothers. In the second chapter I offered an overview on how gender scholars have worked with the category of lone mothers and why they think it has blurred boundaries. While elaborating the findings of this survey in this chapter I engage with the analysis developed by Kilkey (2000) on the importance of living arrangements that lone mothers and their children create after entrance into lone parenting. Kilkey has raised the debate on counting family composition and how the joint household lone mothers create, especially in Mediterranean countries such as Greece, can increase or decrease their real numbers, depending on the methodologies used to count them as independent households or not during national censuses. Kilkey's argument on family composition, which I elaborated on in the second chapter, is related to the argument on Albanian joint family structures that Albanian scholars Kera and Pandelejmoni (2003) have worked on. The feature of joint families in the Albanian context is connected with the patrilocal character of Albanian families that for centuries determined the mobility of the bride to move to the house of the future husband. This extended family composition is presented in values in the second part of this chapter. The aim of the second part is to show with quantitative data how Albanian patterns of patrilocality, arranged marriages and extended families have impacted the experiences of lone mothers. This part presents the types of marriages lone mothers created before becoming lone mothers and the extended families or large size household arrangements they lived in during their marriages and after remaining alone.

The third part (4.3) of this chapter observes the income packaging of lone mothers after 1990. The income packaging is a gender scholarship concept developed by Lewis and Hobson (19975), who inform that in Western and Nordic European countries there are three types of income packages for lone mothers: 'labor market, absent father and the state' (Ibid. 5). However, the picture is different for the Southern European countries, such as Italy, where the family network plays an important role in supporting lone mothers to raise their children (Ibid.5). In other countries the community or the voluntary sector can become a good substitute for this. The situation for Albanian lone mothers, as the data gathered will confirm, differs from that of Western European lone mothers. The

aim of 4.3 is to position the context of financial incomes and how lone mothers in Albania package different sources of incomes.

Available data on lone mothers in Albania

Quantitative data on lone motherhood are scarce, and often do not provide information that would help to understand the situation and experiences of lone mothers that is central to my research project. However, the following data have been assembled.

Sociologists and law scholars in Albania of after 1990, some of which in cooperation with women's non-profit organizations (WNPO) have conducted research first and foremost on the category of divorced women. For example Beqja and Sokoli (2000) published a book on *Divorce, observations and reflections*, a research on the reasons for divorce and its implications for the lives of divorced women and their children.

Grabocka, in cooperation with the Women's Association "Refleksione", conducted a survey in 1995 with 71 women, of whom 40 were divorced in the time of communism and 31 others that got divorced after 1990, living in three cities of Albania: Tirana, Korça and Pogradeci. The questionnaire focused on thoughts, opinions and feelings of divorced women about a broad range of questions. Fullani and Malile, family lawyers and law scholars, wrote a research on *Divorce: its causes and outcomes*. They analyzed 7204 divorce files in the courts of Tirana, Durës, Lezhë, Fier and Korçë during the period 1991-1999. Amongst other issues they raised the problem of child alimony after divorce and how fathers can pay it.

In 2009, UNIFEM (today UN Women) funded a study to analyze the Economic Aid and Gender Equality in the municipality of Elbasan (central Albania) and the Commune of Rrethina in Kukës (North-East Albania). The research in both targeted localities aimed to interview in person and in groups women-headed households and men-headed households, parallel to interviews with local and central policy stakeholders and perform desk analysis of the policy-provision. They have similar findings to my research in terms of excluding women householders who live in rural areas from economic aid, due to them having no access to rights of housing property. They suggest for enlargement of the categories of 'women householders' to include divorced women who have no proof from the bailiffs that they received no child allowance.

The Albanian Association for Women Householders, in cooperation with the Centre for Civic and Legal Initiatives in Tirana, Albania, in 2011 conducted a survey among 900 women householders in suburban areas of Tirana. Its findings were presented to local and central policy makers and representatives of the civil society sector in Tirana. The aim of this project was to analyze the Albanian Leg-

isolation on the provision of rights for women householders and to monitor its application in six areas of Tirana. They have similar findings to my research on the level of poverty that lone mothers and their children live in, and on the need to support these children with school facilities in order for them to continue to follow education and have a better future than their mothers.

I now turn to the characteristics of the women who participated in my two surveys: one of 28 women who raised their children alone during communism, the 'pre-1990 lone mothers', and one of 240 women who did so after 1990, the 'post-1990 lone mothers'.

Reasons of lone motherhood

During this survey (as shown in Appendix 5, table 1 and table 2) I interviewed 71 widowed lone mothers (of which 7 pre-1990 and 64 post-1990), 122 divorced lone mothers (of which 21 pre-1990 and 101 post-1990), 25 separated lone mothers post-1990, 38 abandoned lone mothers and 11 lone mothers undergoing divorce process also post-1990. Thus, during communism two groups of lone mothers are dominant: the divorcees and the widows. In the period after 1990 new groups of lone mothers appeared: the separated, the abandoned and undergoing divorce. In the second chapter I offered the discussion of Kilkey (2000, p. 68) on difference between single mothers and lone mothers. She explained that single mothers is a legislative term used for lone mothers who have never been married (*ibid*, p. 68). When it comes to the group of separated Albanian lone mothers I want to point out that the women I interviewed were by law married. They call themselves separated from the husbands because of having no financial income to file for divorce, or because of having registry documentation problems to start a divorce procedure in cases of inner migration. The group of abandoned lone mothers consists of mothers who are married or not, and whose husbands or partners either have emigrated and bring no remittances home, have created other families in emigration, or are incarcerated and have no financial responsibility for the time they are in the jail over their family members.

Age and new partnerships

Regarding their age, the mothers who remained alone during the communism period are divided in three age-group representations, respectively 41-50 years old (seven informants), 51-60 years (13 informants) and the group of 61-75 years (with nine informants), as shown in Appendix 6 in table 3. These women remained alone during communism, and women from the first age-group continued to raise their children alone after 1990. Six of these women remarried after 5 to 10 years of remaining alone, which testifies also for Albania what Rowling-

son and McKay (2002) stated as lone mothers entering and getting out of lonely-motherhood. The longevity of lone motherhood is one of the issues gender scholars have raised concerning the contesting category of lone mothers, and Albanian women are not any different. They also get in and out of lone motherhood, and amongst them are also women who have remained alone after both marriages. However, as the research has testified through lone mothers' experiences, especially widowed women in Albania tend to remain alone and not remarry, for good memories and out of respect for their deceased husband.

I have divided lone mothers who remained alone after 1990 in seven age groups. As demonstrated in Appendix 5, table 4, there are four teenage lone mothers of the age-group 14-19 years old. 13 lone mothers belong to the age-group 20-25 years old. 28 other mothers belong to the age-group of 26-30 years old, 67 others were 31-40 years old at the time of the interview. The highest presence of women, 85 in total, is found in the age-group 41-50 years old. 40 women of the age group 51-60 years remained alone after 1990, and two other women belong to the age group of 61-75 years old. As we will later observe, the major characteristic lone mothers of all age groups have is living together in extended families, either with family members or with their own children of adult age and their families when they marry. The teenage lone mothers are not a prevalent phenomenon in Albania.

From 240 women who remained alone after 1990, the data reveal that only 12 of them or 5% of all women had a second relationship, which made them twice divorced, or twice widowed, or widowed and abandoned, or divorced and abandoned, as appendix 5, table 5 shows. The low percentage of re-marrying or re-partnering of lone mothers in Albania is a discussion topic that requires further research. This research only intended to observe the phenomenon whether lone mothers remarry and, if so, within what time-frame from the end of the first relationship. This research does not intend to investigate why lone mothers in Albania prefer to remain alone for longer periods or forever. Nevertheless, in the 3rd and 7th chapter, in which I address the influence of family law in the life of lone mothers and the cultural influence on family life norms, I show sections of the interviews in which lone mothers state that they are pressured by family members or parents-in-law to remarry.

Number and age of children

The mothers I interviewed had children of different ages. I have also divided them in 11 main groups. The data allow for a more detailed description of children's age groups, especially for those lone mothers who have the second child after a decade from the first one, or for those women who married twice and had to take

care of their new husband's children and their own children within diverse age groups. The data are indicative of welfare policies, based on the group division of lone mothers and the age of their children (Appendix 5, Table 6).

Information on the children's age is important for reconciliation policies for child-care provision for lone mothers with children under 5 years old and for social housing policy for lone mothers with children 25 years and above who are married or not and continue to live in the same household as adult children with their lone mothers. The data gathered point to another part of Albanian joint families, which has to do with the age of children. In difference of most of the West European countries, where the age of the children living in independent households with lone mothers is 18 years old (Rowlingson & McKay, 2002; Kilkey, 2000), the data gathered for Albanian context indicate a reality when lone mothers have to take care of their adult children, accommodation-wise and financially. Therefore lone mothers' family-life-cycle in Albania endures constant shifts (Appendix 5, Table 6 and Graph 1).

The age children born to pre-1990 lone mothers is shown in graph no. 1, appendix 5. More than 55% of these lone mothers have adult children with whom they still continue to live in the same house, together with their new families. The data indicates that 11 mothers from the age group 51-60 and 61-75 years old have children above 31 years old. Four mothers of the age group 41-50 years old have children 26-30 years old. What is evident from the housing arrangements of these lone mothers is that 74% percent of them live in the same house with their adult children, the family of their sons, and in three cases they have taken back home the divorced daughter with their children. This behavioral manifestation in housing arrangements is part of the Albanian culture, in which parents tend to live in the same house with their adult children until they get married and in many cases, until the lone mother dies, she stays with the family of her sons. The Albanian context is different from other European contexts. Lone mothers in Albania older than 55 years of age, as the research has shown, still have difficulties in having a personal income, due to being unemployed. More than 65% of lone mothers of 50 and above continue to live in the house with their adult children of 25 and 30 and above who are also financially dependent on their lone mothers. The retirement pension that some lone mothers receive or the family pension which is too low to maintain a person is used to maintain adult children and pay all the bills in the end of the month. In other words: in Albania lone motherhood does not end when children grow up.

The correlation between the age of the lone mother and the number of children she has (Appendix 5, table 7) allows arguing that families with two children are the most widespread type of one-women parenting type of family. The age

group with the highest number of children is the 41-50 years, representing 85 (35.3%) of all women. Post-1990 lone mothers still have quite a high number of children, especially for lone mothers living in rural areas. 59 lone mothers have only one child. Most, 93 of them have two children. 54 mothers have three children, 20 of them have four children. Nine of them have five children and only five of them have six children. The number of teenage mothers is rather low, namely four out of 240 lone mothers.

Geographical background

This overview differs from previous surveys conducted in Albania on some groups of lone mothers. My research focuses on analyzing different groups of lone mothers and the characteristics they embody, in 10 cities in North, South and Central Albania.

The 52 lone mothers interviewed in North Albania, have different experiences from 102 women interviewed in the Central Albania, and even more so from 114 women interviewed in the South Albania due to also the geographical characteristics of the regions where they live. The geographical features of the North of the country, namely high mountains, lakes and some low lands, have not been favorable to economic growth, not even for family tourism; therefore lone mothers are highly affected by unemployment; this is especially evident in the North-East of the country (Peshkopi city). North-West Albania, the city of Shkodër where I conducted the interviews, is bordered by Montenegro. The Dibër district, where Peshkopi city is positioned is located in North-East of the country and is bordered by Macedonia. The South-East of the country is bordered by Macedonia and Greece and the cities in the West-coastal area of the country (Durrës, Vlorë, Sarandë) are connected to Italy and Greece by the Adriatic and Ionian seas. The bordering and coastal cities, due to more international connections, have had higher economic growth and foreign investments compared to other cities. On the one side lone mothers in these cities are more hit by the immigration of their ex-husbands/partners as compared to other cities, and on the other side they have higher chances of being employed due to more job opportunities (in hotels and tourism) as compared to lone mothers who live in highly remote areas. The Berat, Fier and Elbasan cities which are neither coastal, nor bordering cities have higher rates of unemployment for post-1990 lone mothers, with the closure of state enterprises. Thus, taking into consideration such geographical locations, in the North, South and Central Albania, this survey displays how the employment trend changed after 1990 in all these regions, and how the immigration and economic growth or stagnation influenced marriage patterns, the family composition, the route to lone motherhood and employment levels.

Education

In order to measure the income of lone mothers, there is a need for a description of their educational level. Of mothers interviewed who were married and remained alone in communism, three (10.7%) have finished only first elementary basic education⁴⁵. Eight mothers (28.57%) have finished second elementary school. 11 mothers (39.2%) have a high school diploma. Three (10.7%) of them have a university degree, and four others (14.2%) have a professional diploma.

Post-1990 lone mothers have a different educational level, 127 (52.9%) of post-1990 lone were educated during communism. The remaining 113 (47.1%) were educated after 1990. From the data it can be concluded that after 1990 illiteracy and lack of education increased due to low financial income (Appendix 5, graph no. 2). Illiteracy after 1990 is mostly found in the Roma and Egyptian women. Both in communism and afterward, second elementary education is the most prevalent education lone mothers pursued. University degrees are more present after 1990. Masters and PhD degrees are newly present after 1990, which indicates that a higher number of women pursue higher education. Compared to the communism period, vocational training has deteriorated, as only one woman has pursued it. The findings regarding vocational training may indicate that there is a need to reorganize the vocational training program.

Migration

Another important factor which has influenced the lives of lone mothers before and after remaining alone, alongside their educational and employment opportunities, is internal and international migration. The international migration has

⁴⁵ The education system in Albania during communism was divided in pre-school education programs for children in crèches and kindergarten age (one month-six years old). The elementary education lasted four years, mostly for children aged between 6 and 10, or, if parents did not prefer to bring children to school already at age 6, from 7-11 years. This education was followed by the second-elementary education for another 4 years, for children from 10-14 years old. The high school was for children from 14-18 years old, but this school was also followed by working age people after working hours, called night high school. The professional educational programs were as well part of the education for working age population who needed to learn and improve skills in a certain field. The bachelor university degree follows after the high school education, and during communism, this lasted 4-5 years. Until 2000 Albania maintained the same education system and afterwards introduced the Bologna system with three years of bachelor degree education and a masters of one or two years. Also the second elementary school of eight years was expanded with one more year, making it nine years and high school became a three-year program.

been undertaken by lone mothers, but not to the extent of their partners. From 240 post-1990 lone mother, 19 (7.9%) migrated internationally for some years and then returned back to Albania (Appendix 5, graph 3). From these 19 women, nine are divorced, and their destination countries were Greece, Italy and Turkey. Five separated lone mothers migrated to Greece and Italy. Two widowed women, two abandoned and one lone mother in a divorce process migrated to Italy and Greece. The years abroad vary from 1-6 years as shown in graph no. 1. Nine of these lone mothers are from central-urban Albania, and one from central-rural areas, seven others from South-urban and two lone mothers are from a North-urban area, as graph no. 1 presents. It shall be noted that during their international migration these women did not have social insurance in Albania or in the destination countries. Most of the mothers refer to having been domestic house-wives and few of them worked in the fields or in house-keeping services, or worked in the black market in Greece and Italy.

The international migration of partners has touched 30% of lone mothers or 72 out of 240. As I will later demonstrate, marriage dissolution is caused by international migration of husbands/partners in 10% of lone mothers, and two widowed women have lost their husbands in construction work in Greece and Italy. The groups of lone mothers who indicate a higher percentage of partners in emigration are the divorced lone mothers, 31 of them out of 101 have emigrant ex-husbands. 20 out of 38 abandoned lone mothers or 52.6% of them have emigrant partners. Eight separated lone mothers, six in divorce process have husbands abroad and in the group of widowed lone mothers seven of them have had their husbands emigrating for some years. Different from lone mothers, their former husbands or partners are emigrants for more than ten years in Italy, Greece and from 5-10 years in Spain, Belgium, Sweden, Italy and Greece. See for more information on their destination countries appendix 5, graph no. 4.

Later in the chapter I will return to the impact of emigration when discussing the income for lone mothers, and will demonstrate that emigrant husbands or partners do not provide child allowance. Emigration has moreover affected family formation, family management and family dissolution, which is narrated by lone mothers in the third and the seventh chapter.

The internal migration of lone mothers is a demographic element which is prevalent all over the country. For the first time of national censuses in Albania, the one of 2011 shows that urban areas have surpassed rural areas due to internal migration. The cities which are hit largely by internal migrants according to INSTAT are Tirana, Durrës, Elbasan, Vlorë, Korçë and Shkodër. In this research, (see Appendix 5, table 8) lone mothers have largely moved from the North and South parts of the country towards the center, mostly in Durrës. For example

from the Peshkopi district (North-East) two lone mothers from the rural and one from the urban area moved to Durrës in the Central-West Albania. Or from North-West, Shkodër district, three lone mothers from urban areas and one other from the rural area moved to Durrës. From Elbasani district, one lone mother from urban area and another one from rural area moved to Durrës. There is a larger inner migration to Durrës, of five lone mothers from the South-East-urban (Korçë district), or two others from the rural areas of Korçë. Two other women from urban and rural area of Vlora (South-West) migrated, and three other women from urban Peshkopi have moved to the rural areas of Durrës. Thus, from 64 women interviewed for the period of after 1990 in Durrës 21 (32%) of them are internal migrants. In Elbasan in the Central Albania I have spoken with internal migrants from North and South, and in the Shkodër city in the North-West with two internal migrants from Central Albania (Durrës) and South-East (Korçë).

4.2. Lone motherhood and Albanian family patterns

In the third chapter I argued that, differently from the normativity of single family unit in Western society and other European countries, the Albanian family is characterized by an extended nature, which brings living together more than two generations in a household. I gave an overview of the characteristics of the Albanian family from the early 20th century until today. The extended character of the Albanian family has been a feature which resisted time, initially due to family organization in an agricultural society and during industrialization in communism due to low income and limited housing arrangements referred to in the fifth chapter. The extended feature of the Albanian family responds to its patrilocal and patriarchal character. It is patrilocal because the new bride leaves her father's house to enter her husband's house after marriage. As the husband often lives in other areas than the wife to be, this latter is destined to be mobile and relocate during marriage, which reflects the patrilocal element. Appendix 5, table 9 and graphs no. 5 and no. 6 show places of origin for lone mothers and the husbands they married please refer to. The patriarchal character of the extended family has to do with the organization of every-day tasks to perform, where the decision of the oldest man of the house dominates. The patriarchal character of the extended family has as well to do with the marriage arrangements, decided upon the will and interests of the male members of the house, or kinship, and on maintaining the social class or shifting in higher social rankings during communism.

In this chapter, the impact of such family and marriage patterns discussed in the third chapter through literature of Albanian scholars is demonstrated via the data from the interviews with lone mothers. It is important to highlight these elements of the Albanian family, because they have and continue to im-

pact how lone mothers in Albania lived during their marriages and during their lonely-hood in raising their children. Yet the extended character of family living arrangements throughout different life phases of Albanian women, in these research lone mothers, is exceptional when compared to other Western European lone mothers, such as British, Dutch, Norwegian or Swedish. Whereas in these other countries, as the second chapter showed, lone mothers and their children can form a single unit, living through the support and financial incentives of the state and the biological fathers of the children (Lewis, 1997; Kilkey, 2000; Millar & Rowlingson, 2001). Albanian mothers cannot rely on these two sources of income to continue a decent normal life in single units. Albanian lone mothers are majorly dependent on their families of origin and less on parents and brothers-in-law for survival. The resources they receive from the state, from the biological father of their children, and from the local women organizations and religious institutions are temporary solutions for certain issues they need to resolve, but not a stable source of income sustenance.

As an Albanian activist, knowing the extended character of Albanian families and lack of financial income to create an independent household, I started the survey questionnaire with an open question on the types of families lone mothers have been living in during their marriage and after, and the years they remained in such households units. As a scholar during the data-entry and data analysis I came to find out that current lone mothers throughout their lives have been entering, exiting and re-entering the extended family composition either with their own parents and sisters and brothers or with the family of the parents-in-law.

Lone mothers' experiences with extended families during their marriage

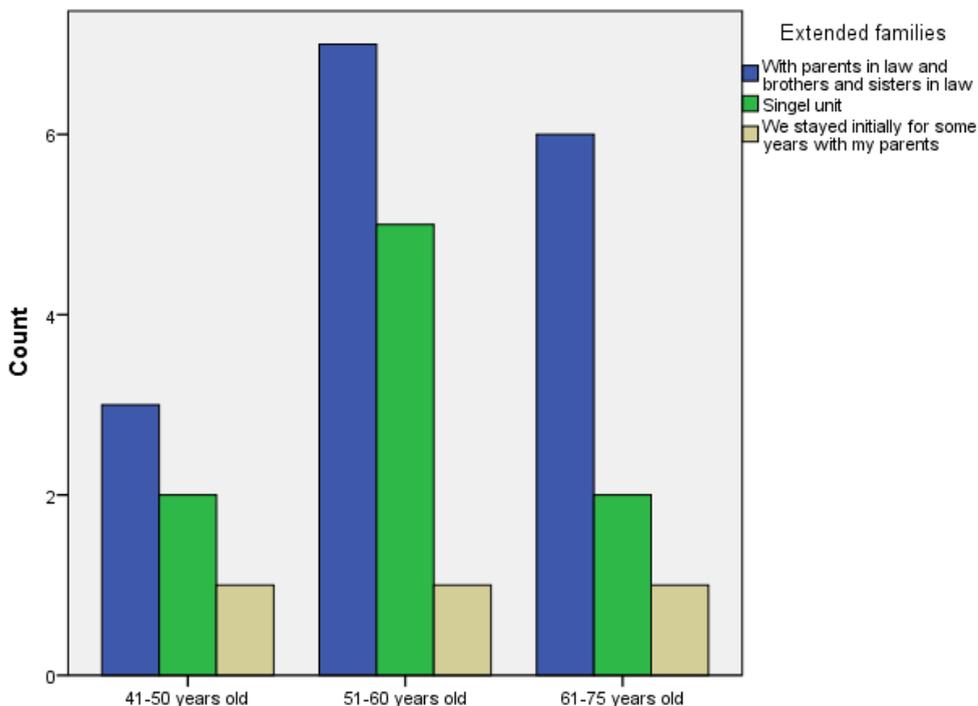
The extended family composition in Albania pre-1990 and post-1990 is directly connected with housing arrangements, where in general the son's parents give a room in the house to the newly married couple. Living with parents of the groom used to be and continues to be a prevalent norm in Albania, and its length can be from 3 to 18 years, until the young couple is financially independent. In families with low incomes these housing arrangements last until the parents of the husbands die. Living with the parents of the bride to be is not a favorite position for the groom, thus this type of family composition is not as often found. Family types where the young couple lives in the families of either the sister of the groom or the bride are very rarely found in early marriage, and these types of living arrangements do not last more than three years. The reason why it is valuable to bring this discussion into this research is that living together in families with two or more families of the same blood in many cases become a source of conflict and, as pointed out by lone mothers, also a reason for divorce. For example

some mothers have raised the issue of alcoholism of the ex-husband as a result of there being too many people in the family and him not coping well with having not enough space for his own family. Other mothers, as I shall demonstrate have blamed their mothers and sisters in law as the first cause of divorce. Since in this research on lone mothers I divide them in groups based on the route to lone motherhood, it is useful information to know the cause of different routes to lone motherhood.

In the questionnaire lone mothers were asked whether they lived in extended households or not, and if so, what types of extended households they lived in, for how long and of how many people those households consisted. Thus the clusters of the variable of types of extended families are presented based on the qualitative answers I received by lone mothers. Lone mothers differentiated between the types of extended families where they have been living with their parents-in-law, their sisters and brothers-in-law and their children, thus making a composition of more than six people living in a household. In some other cases they have been living with only parents-in-law and in some others with the parents-in-law, the family of the brothers or sisters-in-law and their new family creating a household unit with three families in it. All these types of family composition I introduce with the variable extended family divided by respective nominative clusters as lone mothers have pointed it out. Other more rare types such as living with the parents of the bride, or the sisters either of the bride or the groom I have introduced with nominative data in the same variable of extended families, dependent on how lone mothers name these types of families since they are living situations which have been part of the start of married life of lone mothers.

The data gathered from the 28 lone mothers who remained alone before 1990, presented below in graph no. 7, show that 16 of them (57.14%) entered, when they got married, into joint families with parent-in-law and brothers and sisters-in-law. Nine others (32.14%) created independent households and three others (10.72%) created joint families with their parents. Eight lone mothers (42.10%) out of 19 women who lived in joint families stayed in the same living situation from 1-3 years. Five women (26.31%) of those who created joint families stayed together for 4-7 years, five others (26.31%) and only one women stayed with her in-laws from the marriage until they died. The family composition was made of 4-6 persons living in a household for 15 (78.9%) of the total of women who created joint families. Two others (10.52%) lived together in households with 7-10 persons, and two other mothers (10.52%) lived together in families with 11 and more people.

Graph 7 Prevalence of extended families at start of their marriage for 28 pre-1990 lone mothers.



In table 10 (below) I have presented the correlation between the age-group of 240 lone mothers who remained alone after 1990 and the family types they lived in at the beginning of their marriage and later on in their marriage. The data indicate that from 240 women who became lone mothers after 1990, only 71 (29.5%) had started out the marriage in a single family, living with only their husband and later on their children. 152 other mothers (63.3%) started their family inside the family of their parents in law, three others (1.25%) with the families of their brothers or sisters, five women (2.08%) stayed some years with their parents and some other years with their parents-in-law, and seven other mothers (2.91%) brought their husband to their parents' families. There are two exceptions, one from a Roma woman and another from an Egyptian woman who had nowhere to create the family but in the street, and in the family of their uncle. The overall data illustrates that from 240 lone mothers 168 of them, or 70.5% percent have created extended families in the beginning of their marriage, versus 29.5 other percent that have created single units.

Table 10 The distribution of extended family types versus the age of the interviewee for the sample size 240 women

Extended families	Age of the interviewee							Total
	14-19 years	20-25 years	26-30 years	31-40 years	41-50 years	51-60 years	61-75 years	
With the family of parents in law	2	9	17	38	60	25	1	152
Single unit	1	2	9	24	20	14	1	71
In the street	1	0	0	0	0	0	0	1
Living either with my sisters' family or his	0	0	0	1	1	1	0	3
Some years to his parents some years to mine	0	0	1	1	3	0	0	5
We started out living with my parents	0	2	0	4	1	0	0	7
Myself with my mother and sister stay with family of my uncle	0	0	1	0	0	0	0	1
Total numbers	4	13	28	68	85	40	2	240
Total % within ex- tended family type	1.7%	5.4%	11.7%	28.3%	35.4%	16.7%	0.8%	100.0%

These data inform the conclusion that the patrilocal character of the Albanian family is still tenable after the collapse of socialism. From the data we can observe that living together situations are present in all age-groups of lone mothers, it is however more prevalent in the age-groups 31-40 and 41-50 years old. The highest representation of extended families is observed in the age-group of 41-50 years old lone mothers, making up 60 (39.5%) of all mothers who lived in extended families, according to data presented in the table 10. The number of lone mothers who live in extended families after 2000 is lowered, making up 38 (25%) of 31-40 years old, 17 (11.2%) of 26-30 years old, or nine (5.9%) of 20-25 years old (table 10).

Regarding the length of living together of 168 lone mothers who started out their marriage in extended families, 71 (42.2%) of them stayed together with their parents-in-law for 1-3 years, 44 (26.1%) stayed for 4-7 years, 35 (20.8%) for 8-14 years, 11 (6.5%) stayed longer than 15 years together and seven (4.1%) stayed with their in laws until they died. The length of living together is an indicator which shows how many years it takes a new couple in Albania to become financially independent and to start living on their own.

The data gathered from post-1990 lone mothers display a shorter time spent in extended families, therefore a higher percentage among the group of women who stayed 1-3 years with their parents in law. Although their number is higher than the mothers in the communism period, only 4.1% of these lone mothers have stayed with their parents in law until the moment they died. The conclusion about the extended family types' attitude is that lone mothers of today started out in most of the cases living in extended families, mostly with their parents in law, but they try to get out of this extended family composition within 5-7 years, but it may take as long as 15 years. Staying together gave more time to these mothers and their husbands to create independent economic units with their own incomes.

The creation of marriages, age of marriage, and the reasons for dissolution of marriages or abandonment

In the third chapter where I trace the Albanian family sociology, through the research of Albanian scholars (Kera, Papa/Pandelejmoni, 2004, 2008; Alia, 1988; Xhafa, 1985) and literature from the magazine published during communism *The New Albanian Woman* I outlined how arranged marriages have been the dominant form to create a new family in Albania until the end of the Second World War. In that chapter I traced how until 1950s the marriages in Albania were arranged and that it was no room for love, due to the function of marriage as a source of procreating the male heir of the house to inherit the property. The birth of a female child was as I elaborated seen as surplus in the house, and the entrance of the new bride in the house of the man was seen as a plus hand to work in the fields. In the third chapter as well I overviewed how this traditional custom of marriage arrangement was opposed by the communist ideology, and how it started to loosen its grip after 1945. In this chapter I want to bring to the attention the way lone mothers report about the character of their marriage. In order to have a clear picture and a better understanding on the types of marriages lone mothers created and the age they entered marriage they were asked whether they had an arranged marriage or they knew their husbands themselves and at what age did they marry. It might be striking for Western scholars to read that Albanian scholars have to ask these questions when it comes to marriage, or when lone mothers indicate that their marriage was a love marriage and not an arranged one, taken the normativity of freedom in choosing the partner, and freedom to marry or not in Western Europe. However, this has not been the reality in many countries, and this is one more difference on how Albanian lone mothers entered or exited marriages as compared to other European lone mothers. As a scholar I do not want to judge whether love is absent in arranged marriages, because some

widowed lone mothers have talked about a strong love bonding with their arranged partner. In this regard I will correlate the variable of the type of marriage with the variable of groups' representation of lone mothers on route to loneliness (divorced, abandoned, separated, undergoing divorce) to observe whether marriages based on self-choice have less probability in dissolving as compared to arranged marriages. This last correlation follows by the work of Xhafa (1985) and Alia (1988) who demonstrate that in communism a high percentage of marriage dissolution was result of forced or arranged marriages. With the increase of the divorce rate in Albania post-1990 there was a common perception that the majority of divorces occurred among arranged marriages. Therefore I will correlate this variable to analyze whether there is a connection between the divorce and the arranged marriages. However, I did not want to confirm prejudice by asking lone mothers whether the arranged nature of their marriage caused their divorce. But by correlating the variable of lone mothers who married through arrangement or out of love with the routes they entered into loneliness some interpretation can be drawn as of which marriage types have higher chances to end in divorce. These questions are answered by 28 pre-1990 lone mothers and 240 post-1990 lone mothers. I have also divided the results in regional groups: North, South and Center.

The region of living of lone mothers have been compared with the types of marriage they created in the communism period. The data show that from nine lone mothers interviewed in the Central Albania only one of them entered into marriage by their own choice. Many women called marriage by their own choice a marriage of love. I follow their choice of words, but I do not want to suggest that love had no place in arranged marriages. From the 16 women interviewed in the South, eight of them have entered marriage via arrangement and eight others via love, and the three women of the North have created a marriage via arrangement. In total 19 (67.9%) of the women in North, South and central Albania have entered marriage via an arranged procedure as compared to 32.1% others who married out of love, knowing their future husband already. This data cannot be representative for the entire country during communism, but it does indicate what was discussed in the third chapter, namely that communist ideology tried to preach an ideology of marriage through consent of both future partners. Thus to conclude: arranged marriage dominated in North and central Albania before 1990, and in the South it was disappearing (Appendix 5, table 11).

Regarding the age of marriage, 13 pre-1990 lone mothers married when they were 15-18 years old, only one woman was younger, she was married at 2 years

old⁴⁶. The early entrance to marriage affects the education level and the employment possibilities in cases of having children early in married life. 13 other mothers married when they were 19-24 years old, one of them 25-35 years old.

The correlation between the types of marriage and their prevalence per region (North, South, Central) per urban-rural areas for the 240 lone mothers post-1990s also allow a tentative comparison, despite the fact that lone mothers interviewed in the North of Albania are half of the numbers interviewed in the center and South Albania. From the 240 interviewees, 128 (53.3%) post-1990 lone mothers entered marriage via arrangement versus 112 or 46.7% who married out of love. The data thus indicate that arranged marriages are still a predominant type of marriage compared to knowing the future husband themselves. These findings point out that lone mothers in South-urban and central-urban Albania have higher percentages of having love marriages as compared to lone mothers in the North where the arranged marriages are prevalent, the respective percentages of arrangement being 49.4%, 38.3% and 77.5%. In rural areas though the numbers of interviewed women are lower as compared to urban areas, the arranged marriages take prevalence over the love ones, representing 52.9%, 62.5% and 100% of central-rural, South-rural and North-rural Albania (Appendix 5, table 12).

Of the post-1990 group of interviewed lone mothers, 57.32% entered into marriage when they were 19-24 years old. 28.45% of them were married when they were teenagers between 15-18 years old. Two women (0.84 %) married when they were 6 and 12 years old. The other data indicators display that in Albania the age between 19-24 years is the most preferred timing for Albanian girls to get married. The presence of 13 percent of mothers who got married in their early 20s until mid-30s suggests that Albanian girls in the 2000s marry later than during communism.

The correlation between the age of the interviewee and the type of marriage reveals other data. Regarding age-group of 41-50 years old who married in between 1990-2000, arranged marriages have also a higher prevalence, making up 51 women (60%) out of a total of 85 within this age-group. Lone mothers of the age-group 51-60 years old also show higher prevalence of arranged marriages as 24 (60%) out of 40 lone mothers form this age group. Differently from this age-group of mothers, the younger lone mothers have a higher presence of marriages out of love such as it is represented in three (75%) of the age group 14-29 years old, nine (69.2%) of the age group 20-25 years old and 16 (57.1%) of the age group 26-30 years old. This finding presents a tendency of marriage behavior

⁴⁶ See the third chapter for the phenomenon of 'the marriage in the cradle in Albania', which is ceasing to exist after 1990.

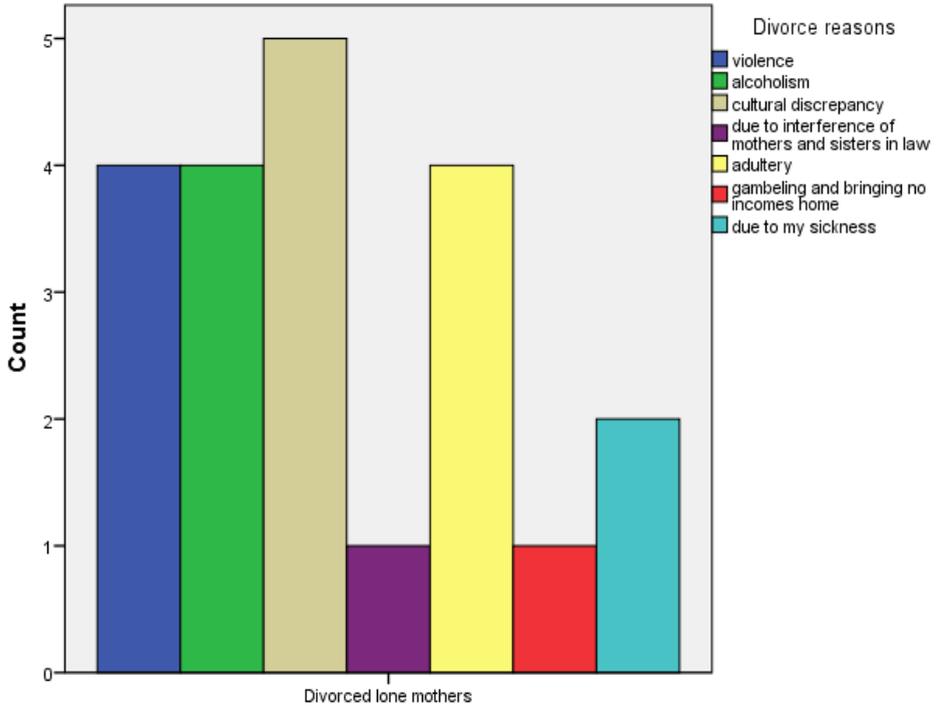
of earlier ages, thus also for future generations to know the future partner as compared to being introduced and mediated to enter a marriage relationship. (Appendix 5, table 13)

Routes to divorce, abandonment and separation

The reasons lone mothers give for the end of their marriage offers another insight in the way the Albanian family influences experiences of lone motherhood. The reasons of entrance into lone motherhood were part of the initial qualitative information gathering in order to comprehend better the situation of remaining alone. In the introduction questions to get to know the lone mother together with the questions on their early marriages and living arrangements, I also asked why they are a lone mother. Their qualitative answers I confirmed in a second alternative choice question which listed the reasons of being a lone mother. The data is organized divided per group representation of lone mothers based on entrance into loneliness. Divorcee, undergoing divorce, separated, abandoned, widow and teenage lone mothers were distinguished.

From 28 mothers interviewed who raised their children alone in communism, 21 of them were divorced mothers and seven others were widowed. Graphic no. 7 shows the divorce reasons for lone mothers who divorced during the communism period. These data suggest that in communism violence (5 women or 22.73%) and the different cultural perception (5 women or 22.73%) were more prevalent reasons to file for divorce as compared to adultery or other reasons. Intensive alcoholic consumption and adultery by the husbands is represented by four women respectively (18.18%). Lower in numbers reasons for divorce are considered the illness of women in two (9.09%) cases, and even less the living together with the mothers-in-law mentioned by one woman (4.55%) and the gambling and irresponsibility in the financial contribution. As we will see in the coming section living together with in-laws is a higher cause for divorce after 1990 as compared to the communism period.

Graph. 7 The reasons for divorce in the communism period sample size 28 women



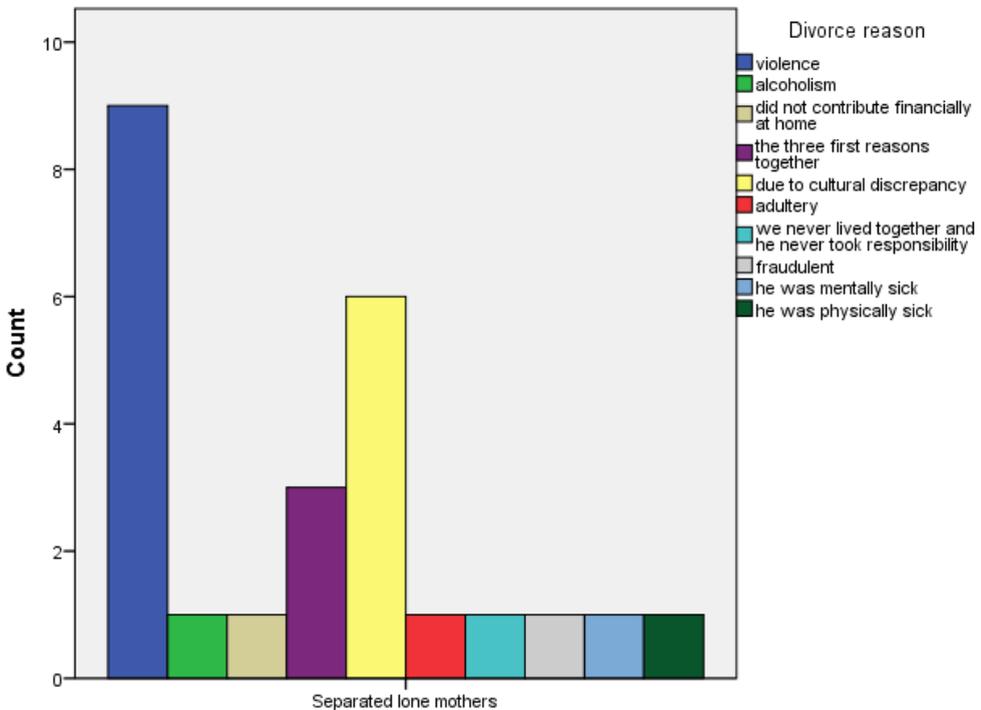
From 240 post-1990 lone mothers of the after 1990s period, 101 of them were divorced, 25 were separated not divorced, 64 widows, 38 abandoned, 11 in a divorce process and only one of them had an invalid husband in the house (Appendix 5, table 1).

The divorce reasons after 1990 are more diverse as compared to the communism period, as well as the groups of lone mothers. In graph no. 8 the data presented show that the violence, cultural discrepancy, living together with the parents and sisters-in-law, and adultery, similarly to the communism period, is found as reasons for mothers who divorced after 1990s. Emigration, jealousy, housing and economic problems are new reasons of divorce found in the mothers of this period. The data gathered show that 38 (34.86%) of 112 mothers who entered lone motherhood via divorce, filed for divorce due to the violence of their husbands. Financial irresponsibility of the husband and housing problems were a case in 14 (12.84%) of the cases. Emigration in combination with bringing no remittances and marrying another woman are reasons for 11 (10.9%) lone mothers. The interference of the mothers and sisters-in-law is given as reason by 10 (9.17%) women. Cultural discrepancy has caused divorce in 8 (7.84%) of the cases. The combination of violence, alcoholism, and not bringing financial incomes

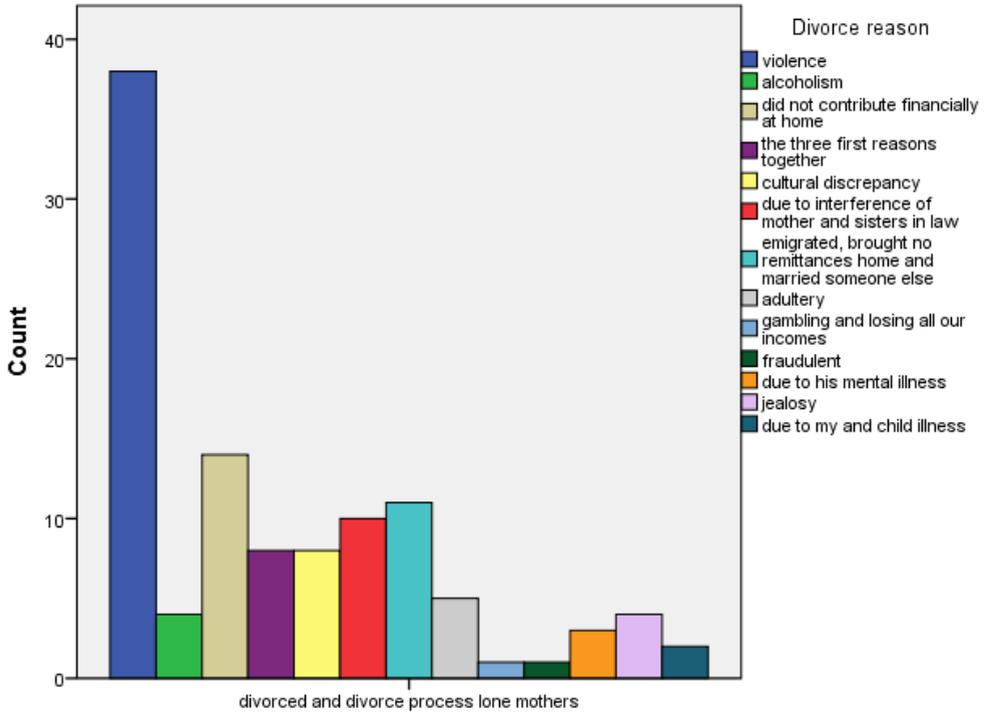
home have been a reason in 8 (7.84%) of lone mothers. The rest of the causes such as fraudulence, gambling, sickness of the man, sickness of the woman or the child are other causes of divorce but of a lower rate as compared to the others (graph no. 8).

The other group of 25 separated lone mothers which includes women who have never been married, had children out of wed-lock, but also women who are still married but for financial reasons or due to their husband’s emigration cannot file for a divorce. The data gathered in graph no. 9 (see below) indicate that, similarly to divorced lone mothers, violence is the highest reason for separation reported by 9 (36%) of this group. Cultural discrepancy is reported by 6 (24%). The combination of violence, alcoholism and financial irresponsibility is present in three (12%) of the cases. Fraudulence, never living together and lack of financial responsibility is found in 4 cases (7%). The adultery, mental disturbance, sickness, financial irresponsibility, adultery and alcoholism are found in rare case, one woman per category reported this. (graph no. 9) Abandonment of lone mothers has happened to 20 women (52.6%) for emigration reasons and six (15.7) for incarceration reasons. The other reasons are violence, financial irresponsibility and fear of commitment to children.

Graph. 8 The reasons for divorce after 1990, reasons for divorce reported by 112 women, divorced and in divorce process.



Graph. 9 The reasons for separation, reported by 25 separated women from post-1990 sample



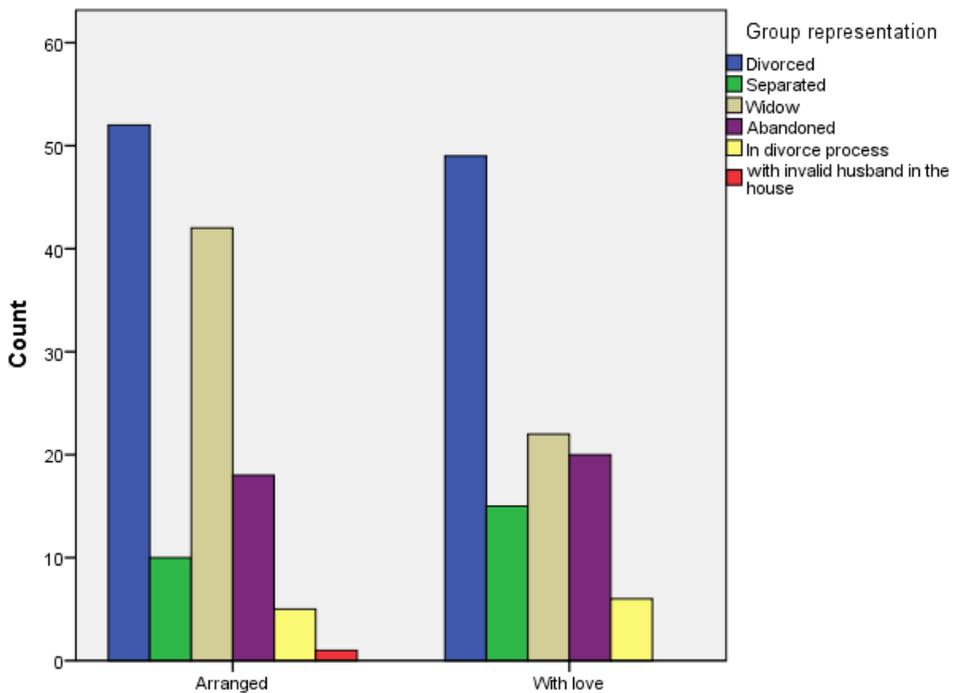
The relationship between the type of marriage and the route to lone motherhood

Through comparing gathered data I have tried to understand whether there is any relation between the types of marriage, whether it was arranged or via love and the entrance to lone motherhood, which are represented through the group division of lone mothers.

The data presented below in graph no. 10, where I have introduced the correlation between the type of marriage and reasons for lone motherhood point out that there is not any significant difference between divorced lone mothers who chose themselves the partner versus the others who were mediated the partner for marriage. For example in the group of divorced lone mothers there are 52 women (21.7%) who had a marriage through arrangement versus 49 (20.4%) women who found the partner themselves. Lone mothers who are separated are represented by ten women (4.2) out of 240, who had an arranged marriage versus 15 others (6.3%) who chose the partner themselves. As a conclusion it can be said that choosing the partner themselves is not a preventive measure to not end up

in divorce or separate as compared to the women who married via arrangement. On the contrary, more women of all representing groups who married or chose the partners themselves show to have a slightly higher chance of being divorced, separated or abandoned as compared to the mothers who were introduced and mediated the future partner. Having said this, I am not concluding that arranged marriages are stronger than the love marriages. That would require a larger study sample. Rather, I am suggesting that neither love nor arrangement are a strong guarantee for a successful marriage.

Graph. 10 The type of marriage and reasons for becoming a lone mother



The family typology when entering lone motherhood

In the previous sections I described the variables lone mothers displayed regarding living in an extended family when starting out married life. The data exhibited that 69% of the mothers who became lone mothers in socialism and 70.8% of mothers who remained alone after the 1990s have created extended families with their parents-in-law, their own parents or other family members. The indicators manifest a high level of economic dependency on the family of origins of the couples who get married in Albania.

In the questions I directed to lone mothers concerning the housing arrangement when entering lone motherhood, the situation displays differences. It shows that many of them continue to remain economically dependent in housing accommodation from their families of origin. The rented apartments and the creation of independent households they mentioned suggests new developments.

The housing arrangements of lone mothers after 1990s show (see Appendix 5, table 14,) that only 17.1% percent of them are capable of living in rented apartments, and around 22.9% percent live in a house that they already own. 60% of lone mothers are dependent on their parents, brothers and sisters, parents-in-law, exes, government and NPO shelters to secure accommodation for them and their children temporarily or long term. This high percentage of lone mothers and their children without a proper accommodation suggests that these arrangements are temporary and cannot continue for longer periods. Of the 240 post-1990 lone mothers, 41 (17.1%) are currently living in rented apartments with their children. The rented apartment is a living accommodation mostly found in the group of divorced lone mothers, making up to 25 women or 61% of all renters, eight of them are widowed, four are abandoned, and two are separated. 55 women (22.9%), who are mostly the widowed ones (31 women or 56.4%) and few divorced (13 women) and separated (10), are living in the houses they bought with their husbands, or few of them themselves (Appendix 5, table 14).

The impact of extended family as a popular way of arranging housing is clear from the collected data. Of all lone mothers, 30 (12.7%) have returned back to live in the house of their parents together with their sisters and brothers and their own children. In most of the cases their brothers are married and have their own family in the same house of her parents, causing this way a composed household with more than 9 people living together in a small space. 21 lone mothers or 8.8% of them have returned back to live in the house of their parents together with their children. This housing accommodation is higher for divorced lone mothers making 11 of them, four are abandoned, three separated, two widowed and one of them is in divorce process. 12 lone mothers or 5% of them continue to live in the house with their parents in law and their children. Six of these women are widowed, three others are divorces and the other three are abandoned. Seven lone mothers (2.9%) reported to be living in the same house with their ex-husband and their children because the house was divided in two after the divorce (Appendix 5, table 14).

Social housing seems to be available to only a few lone mothers: 11 lone mothers and their children or 4.6% of them live in social housing or housing arrangements with soft loans through the housing programs of the local govern-

ment. This part of housing is elaborated in more details in the 5th chapter, and it is the area where the mother requests more supports from the government. The same is the case for shelters offered by local women NPOs. 2% or 5 lone mothers in the time of the interview were living together with their children in a shelter offered by local women NPOs. And last, another large group of 52 women or 21.7% of lone mothers have different housing arrangements, where most of them declare to have built a house in the land property of their parents, or their emigrant brothers and sisters bought a house for them.

Conclusion

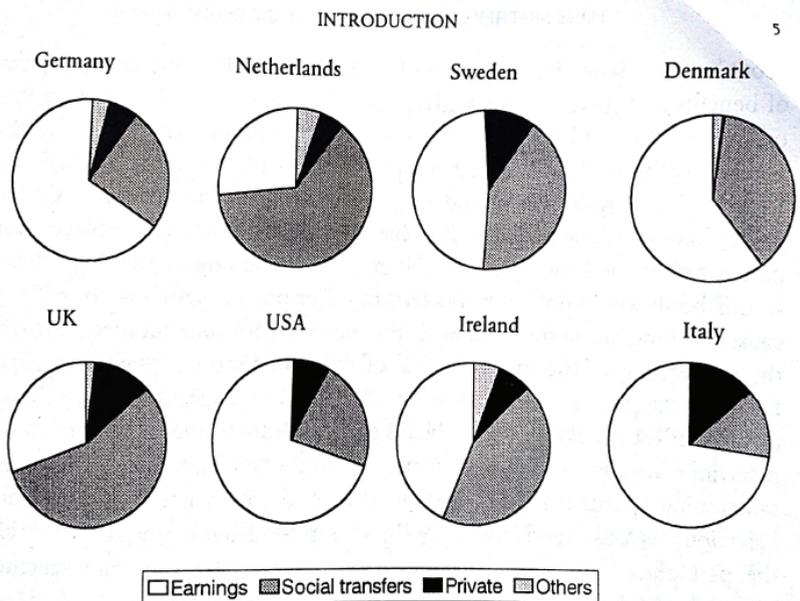
The patrilocal character of Albanian family which I traced in the third chapter, is in this chapter concretely presented with the region of origin of lone mothers and their husbands/partners in the time they married. The data gathered showed a higher patrilocality in the urban and rural areas in the North and central part of Albania as compared to the South. The data gathered indicate that most lone mothers who married and remained alone in the communism period started out their family life in extended families, for 67.86% this was the case. Lone mothers who married in communism and remained alone after 1990 or married after 1990 started out their family life in 63.3% of the cases in extended family. Regarding the entrance of lone motherhood, many of the post-1990 lone mothers displayed concerns about not being able to create an independent household. 55.5% of them rely on their parents, sisters and brothers, and 5% of them rely on their parents-in-law for housing accommodation. The high presence of lone mothers living in together situations with their parents and in-laws, needs to be carefully considered in national censuses when counting the independent households for lone mothers and the percentage of them still living in extended families.

4.3. Packaging income and support by lone mothers

The income packaging is a measuring tool introduced by gender scholars (Lewis & Hobson, 1997, p. 5) to analyze state welfare policy logics designed for lone mothers and their children, and to understand how lone mothers can make use of different sources of income to maintain an independent household. Lewis and Hobson (1997) acknowledge that welfare states are heading towards cutting the provision to lone mothers and leave it more 'to the market, the family and the voluntary sector' (ibid, p. 1). Analyzing the welfare policy logic from the perspective of the gender regime of male breadwinner/domestic housewife, they point out that in countries where the male breadwinner welfare system was stronger, such as in Germany, the Netherlands, UK, the state has tried to substitute his income. They highlight the fact that income packaging for lone mothers varies in dif-

ferent countries and within a country. Lewis and Hobson (1997, p. 5) group the incomes in four divisions: the ‘social transfers’ provided by the state, the ‘earnings of lone mothers themselves’, the ‘private incomes’ where they put the child alimony from the father and other private incomes, and the ‘other sources’ of incomes upon which they do not elaborate further. Lewis and Hobson show the results of their research project graphically in the figure 0.1.

Figure 0.1. Income packages of lone mothers, aged 20-55, from Lewis, J. and Hobson, B. (1997, p.5).



Note: Social transfers include child or family allowances, unemployment compensation, parental leave pay, means tested cash benefits, near cash benefits and other social insurance. Private transfers include alimony or child support, other private income.

Source: Data for this figure are from Luxemburg Income Study. The years included are: USA, 1991; Germany 1984; UK 1986; Netherlands 1991; Sweden, 1992; Denmark, 1992; Ireland 1987; Italy 1991.

The age bracket that Hobson and Lewis study lone mothers is from 20 to 55 years, can be compared to the age-groups that I have researched. I asked lone mothers whether they received financial support from the government, from the biological father of their children, from their parents and parents-in-law, from their sisters and brothers and the brothers and sisters-in-law, from their friends or colleagues, from local women NPOs and from religious institutions (see appendix 1.1 and 1.2). Lone mothers were also asked to provide information on their

employment history and their current financial income and to give financial values to the financial support or in kind contribution they receive from the other sources of incomes. The results of my survey are not strictly comparable with the conclusions of Hobson en Lewis, because Albanian women have a wider range of sources of support. It became clear that parents, brothers and parents-in-law have given contribution, such as paying rent or offering housing accommodation, paying for daily food and children's clothes of lone mothers, paying for sicknesses of children, their medication and so on. The local non-governmental contribution as discussed in the 6th chapter has mostly been contributing in the form of social services, such as psycho-social assistance or legal assistance which are paid by international donors. The religious institutions (Muslim in the North and Central, and Evangelical in the South) are more supportive to children of widowed mothers, offering to them a child benefit of 20-25 dollars per month until they reach the age of 14. The Catholic institutions have played a crucial role in North, central and South Albania in offering medication and taking over surgical intervention expenses for children of widowed or divorced mothers. Though these are temporary services they have significant financial values which neither the lone mothers and their families, nor the local government can afford to pay.

Therefore in this part I present the sources of income in two perspectives. The first one is based on how I collected the data and what I could convey from their findings. I have divided the reported sources of income in nine groups: self-earned income, biological father's contributions, parents' contributions, sisters' and brothers' contributions, parents-in-law's contributions, brothers' and sisters-in-law's contributions, social transfers by the local government, support from local women's organizations and finally support from religious institutions'. The second perspective will group the data in four sources of income that Lewis and Hobson's (1997) distinguish in their model: self-earned income, social transfers from the local government, private income, here I will include the biological father's contribution and the contributions from parents', parents-in-law's, brothers' and sisters' and brothers' and sisters-in-law's, and 'others'. In this last one I will include support from local women's organizations' and religious institutions.

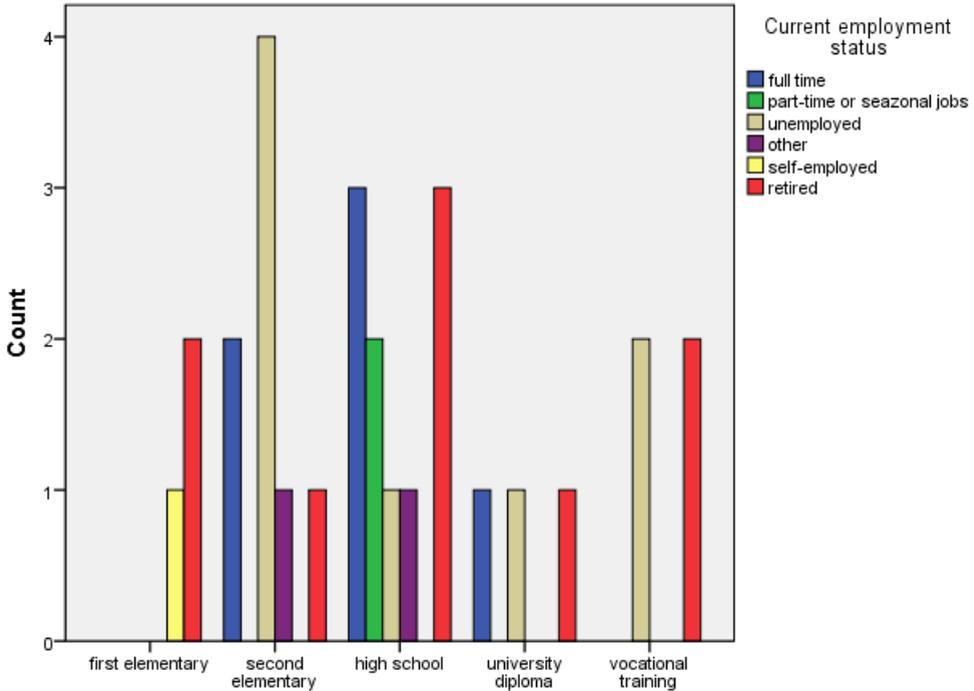
Income from employment of lone mothers during communism

During communism lone mothers were fully employed. The types of jobs they did in those years differ from the jobs they do after the 1990s. Apart from a difference in job performance and skill gaining during the two periods of working in socialism compared to working after the 1990s, the collection of the retirement years through social insurance contribution is what marks the safety and work

insurance in socialism. Only those women who work in public institutions have a social insurance package and few who work in private companies as well enjoy minimum social insurance coverage. The majority of mothers who work either in black or in grey for private companies or individuals have no social contributions for many years.

The types of jobs performed in the socialism period are directly related to the location of mothers. Almost every city from mid 1960s onwards had its own industrial factories and produced certain products for the purpose of national coverage. Matching the employment history of lone mothers in the socialism period with the speeches in the second Plenum a map can be drawn for the industries that existed in communist Albania, and where lone mothers worked at that time, but no longer after 1990s. From the experiences of lone mothers, the cotton textile industries were located in Berat (named Mao Zedong) and Korçë city. The carpet production wool industry was located in Vlorë city. The oil refineries were located closer to Fier and Berat city. The mine industries were in the Dibër region, closer to Peshkopi city. Women interviewed in Peshkopi did not work in the mine industry themselves, but instead 3 of them declared that their husbands worked there. The factories of chemical phosphates, cigarette production and plastic were located in Durrës city. The Metallurgic Industry “The Steel of the Party” was located in Elbasan city. The areas surrounded by mountains and hills in the North part such as rural areas or cities around Shkodër in the North-West Albania, Peshkopi in North-East Albania, Sarandë in South-West Albania had nevertheless difficulties in developing industries due to its specific geography. Instead agricultural cooperatives were developed in these regions as well. Cooperatives during socialism were in every village, therefore out of 28 lone mothers of the socialism period seven of them (25%) worked in cooperatives, and for those who remained alone after 2000, but who were educated and started their employment history in communism, 40 of them (16.6%) worked in agricultural cooperatives. In graph no. 11 I have presented the current employment situation of 28 lone mothers who remained alone during communism and how their employment status versus their educational qualification faced changes. Seven (25%) of these women group are retired, seven others (25%) are unemployed and they mostly represent (four of them) lone mothers with a high school diploma, university degree and vocational training.

Graph. 11 Education background and current employment status for 28 pre-1990 lone mothers



Apart from income, thanks to full employment, lone mothers during communism received some form of social insurance of state support for children.

From 240 women interviewed 153 of them or 63.7% of all of them have problems with their social contributions. 36 women or 23.5% of 153 have more than 16 years without social contributions. 57 lone mothers or 37.2% have not been paying social insurance contribution for more than 10 years. The rest of lone mothers are either working in black or grey market without contribution, some of them have never worked or the rest have been international emigrants for some years and have had no contributions in Albania or in the destination countries. The data gathered from the lone mothers of the communism period indicates that personal incomes and the child's allowance from the biological father and the child's pension from the social contribution of the deceased father were safe sources of income. Only one lone mother has been jobless in this period. The high participation in the labor market allows for the statement that lone mothers during communism could rely on their own income to raise their

children after remaining alone. The seven women who were widowed did receive the child's pension from the social contribution of their husbands. Of 21 lone mothers who were divorced during communism only 9 of them continued to receive the child allowance after 1990.

Income packaging by lone mothers after 1990

Since not all lone mothers were open to talk about their finances, these findings are based on 181 women who revealed different sources of incomes (table 16). A few lone mothers unveiled their monthly salaries (table 15) and the others spoke about packaging incomes from different resources. The answers are diverse: some mothers spoke about their income, others spoke about the sources of their income. I have combined this information in tables 15, 16, below.

Table 15 Earnings of lone mothers

Number of lone mothers	Amounts and sources mentioned
65	8.000-15.000 ALL (56.5-106 euro) per month
32	16.000-22.000 ALL (113-155 euro) per month
23	23.000-30.000 ALL (162.5-212 euro) per month
12	31.000-40.000 ALL (219-282 euro) per month
7	41.000-70.000 ALL (288-495 euro) per month
5	70.000 ALL (495 euro) and above

What is a striking element from grouping the incomes of every lone mother interviewed for the period of after 1990 is the diversity they package the incomes. The diversities are presented in different forms taking into consideration the nine groups of incomes I divided (see table 17). For those women whose parents are more active in contributing, the government does not offer social transfers, nor does the biological father of the child/children offers child custody. This is mostly evident in the lone mothers between 19 and 25 years old. For some others whose parents are not able to offer financial incomes or contribute because of their own lack of funds, or being deceased, their sisters and brothers mostly who have emigrated send remittances for them and their children. This is more evident in the age group of 31-40 lone mothers. Some lone mothers can package income from the government's economic aid: they can work part-time without social-contribution paid, and they can as well be supported by local religious institutions or local women's organizations. Some mothers can package income from all sources, and still be in a poor financial situation. Others yet cannot pack

Table 16 Source of income lone mothers

Number of lone mothers	Sources of income mentioned
10	My only income is the economic aid from the municipality
6	My only income is the family pension I receive from the deceased husband
1	My mother and other family members gather and sell cans and they support me and my children financially with those money (this income is from a Roma woman and it goes until 3000 ALL, 21 euro)
2	I receive economic aid and in the invalidity of the child, the total amount of both this benefits reaches 15.000 ALL (106 euro)
2	Me and my children live only with the pension of my mother, initially it was 12.000 ALL (85 euro) and now it is 18.000 ALL (127 euro)
3	Me and my children live only with the invalidity pension I receive from the government (168.000 ALL, 119 euro)
2	Me and my son live only with his child's disability benefit from the government
1	I gather cans and I sell them for 5000 ALL per month (35 euro)
1	Me and my children live only with the retirement pension of my parents-in-law
1	I receive economic aid from the municipality, work in cleaning houses and corridors of flats, and I receive support from religious institutions and from local women organizations all this together make 15.000 per month (106 euro)
1	I and my children eat every day at the houses of my sister and brothers
1	We have no cash incomes as a family, we only live from the production of vegetables we receive from our land

age income from any resource. The parents-in-law and sisters and brothers-in-law are more supportive to widowed women and their children and rarely to divorced women under circumstances that their son has exercised physical and financial abuse towards his wife. Due to a lack of space to demonstrate all possible correlations of how every lone mother packages her incomes, I have divided their incomes packaging based on how they confess to be supported by different sources of incomes.

Table 17 Sources of income mentioned by post-1990 lone mothers

Lone mothers	Self-income	Biological Father of the children contribution	Parents' Contribution	Sisters' and brothers' contribution	Parents-in-law's contribution	Sisters' and brothers'-in-law contribution	Local government's contribution	Local women NPOs' contribution	Religious organizations' contributions
Numbers	146	38	110	110	29	23	129	99	63
Receiving support	60.8%	21.7%	45.8%	45.8%	12.08	9.58%	53.8%	41.3%	26.2%
Numbers	94	137	130	130	211	217	111	141	177
Not receiving support	31.2%	78.3%	54.2%	54.2%	88.02	90.42%	46.3%	58.8%	74.2%

This income of lone mothers interviewed should be evaluated with the poverty trends during the periods 2002, 2005, 2005, 2012 published by the Institute of Statistics of Albania, in cooperation with the UNDP-Albania and the World-Bank-Albania as well as with the standard of living, also published from the institute of statistics. Despite of the ongoing problems with the last population censuses which are reflected in the measurement of GDP or the poverty, and despite the measurement of the economic poverty with the World Bank methodologies versus the European Commission ones, the official data comes from this institute and therefore I will use this data for my research.

The poverty trends for Albania according to the Institute of Statistics in April 2009, states that:

“The fraction of the population whose real per capita monthly consumption is below ALL 4891 (in 2002 prices), fell from 25.4% in 2002 to 18.5% in 2005 to 12.4% in 2008. This means that roughly 200,000 out of about 575,000 poor people in 2005 were lifted out of poverty. Extremely poor population, defined as those with difficulty meeting basic nutritional needs, decreased from about 5% in 2002 to 3.5% in 2005 to 1.2% in 2008. In urban areas, only 1.17% of the population can be considered extremely poor” (ibid, INSTAT, 2009,1).

The regional poverty for these years has increased or remained steady in the mountain areas, and has decreased in the coastal areas and central Albania.

For the period of 2012, the Institute of Statistics in Albania declares an increase of poverty due to the economic crisis. In the aftermath of the global financial crisis and the overall macroeconomic situation associated with low growth rates since 2008, poverty in Albania has increased.

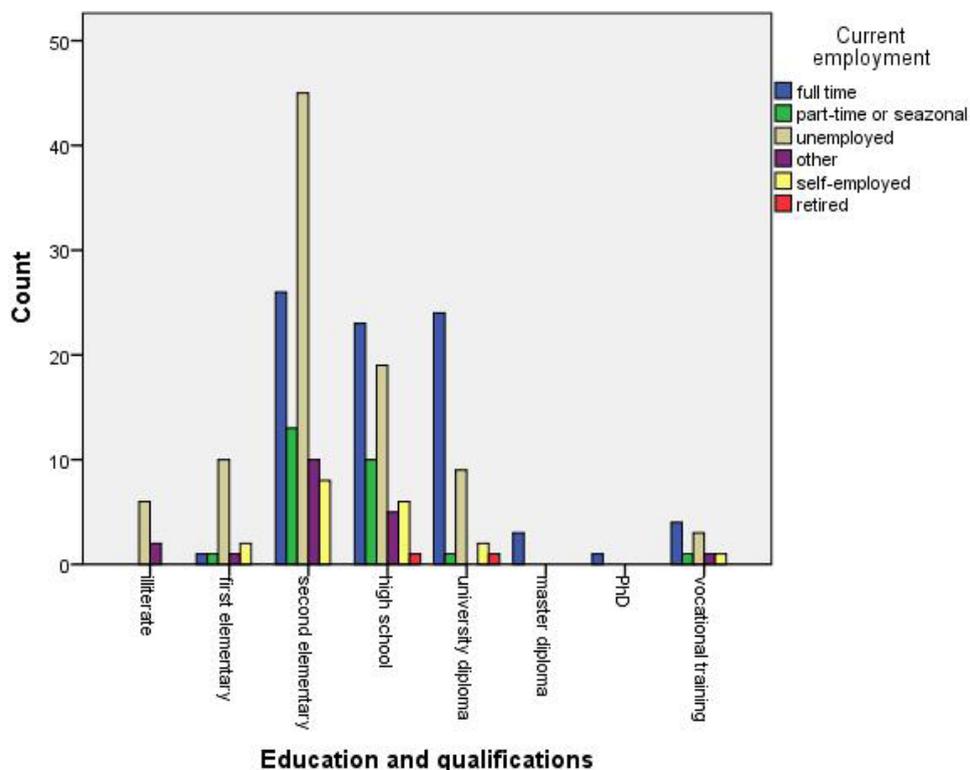
“The fraction of the population whose real per capita monthly consumption is below Lek 4891 (in 2002 prices) increased from 12.5 % in 2008 to 14.3 % in 2012. In the previous years, poverty fell from 25.4 % in 2002 to 17.9 % in 2005 and 12.5 % in 2008. This means that roughly 64,402 people in addition to 350,636 poor people in 2008 fell into poverty. Extremely poor population, defined as those with difficulty meeting basic nutritional needs, increased from 1.2 % in 2008, to 2.3 % in 2012. Extreme poverty decreased from 5.0 % in 2002, to 3.3 % in 2005 and to 1.2 % in 2008. In 2012, extreme poverty has increased for both urban (2.2 %) and rural areas (2.4 %)” (INSTAT, *Standard of living 2015*, p. 1).

According to the household budget survey for the period 2006-2007, the monthly income for one parent families in Albania in this period is 36.169 ALL (256 euro) or 11.535 ALL (82 euro) per person. Comparing these last incomes to the incomes of lone mothers I have interviewed, very few lone mothers reach this level of being able to earn 256 euro per month and being able to maintain themselves, their two children, because the given standard of living by INSTAT Albania is foreseen for a one-parent family with two children. Only 23 lone mothers out of 181 who revealed their incomes and income packaging can reach the standard of living stated by INSTAT Albania. This means that the rest of other lone mothers and their children live closer to the poverty line or in severe poverty, especially those women who have no other incomes but the economic aid from the government, which, as I elaborated in the 5th chapter, is from 8 euro for one parent family with one child in rural areas to 40 euro for one-parent family with 3 unemployed adult children in urban areas.

In table no. 17, I have presented nine resources of income that some lone mothers in Albania rely on for themselves and their children to cover everyday living expenses and very rarely in maintaining an independent household. The different categories of income will be explored in more detail via the graphs 13-18 (below).

Let me first summarize data that show how important education level is for employment for the post 1990 lone mothers. In my sample, see graph 12, below, 82 lone mothers (34.1%) of 240 women are fully employed, evenly a number that is evenly divided over women with second-elementary, high-school and a university degree. 26 lone mothers (10.8%) have part-time or seasonal jobs, and second-elementary and high-school diploma. 19 lone mothers (7.91% of the total) are self-employed, coming from a second-elementary, high-school and university background. There are 19 other lone mothers (7.91%) who are categorized as doing another type of employment, which, in their experience, is a black job in which they do housekeeping for families in their communities, performing carpet laundry, ten floor apartments cleaning, agricultural work in their family land or gathering cans as stated by Roma and Egyptian lone mothers.

Graph. 12 Current employment status for 240 post-1990 lone mothers, related to education background

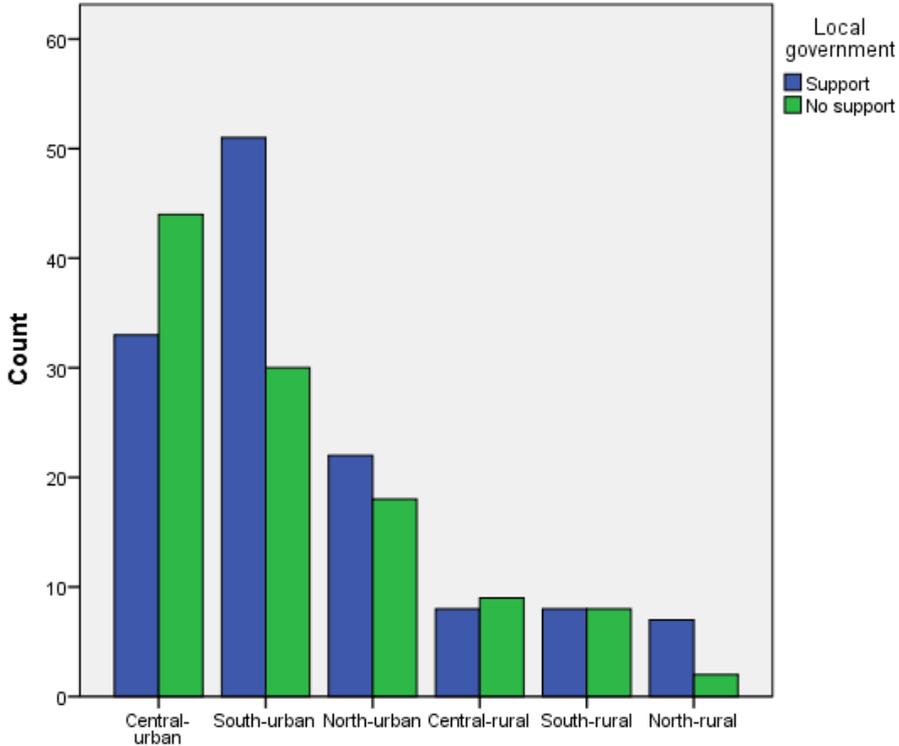


What is striking about the incomes of every lone mother interviewed for the period of after 1990 is the diversity of the sources of their incomes.

From their own income (Appendix 5, table 18), 60.8% of lone mothers can rely on their monthly or seasonal income for daily expenses. The region with the highest number of full time employed lone mothers is in the urban areas of central Albania, represented by 34 out of 82 in total, and the South-urban area with 27 mothers. Unemployment is higher represented in rural areas.

The main benefits lone mothers receive, come from the local government are the Economic-Aid program, family pension or child-pension in cases of their husbands' decease. Only six lone mothers receive disability benefit for themselves as being incapable to work due to prolonged sicknesses, and 13 others receive a disability pension for their children. Only 11 of them have received social housing from their local government or are supported by the municipality where they live to receive housing with soft loans through the bank. Some cities, depending on their annual budget subsidize the school books for the children

Graph. 13 The distribution of support received by the local government versus the region of living for sample of 240 women who receive or not this support



of lone mothers who as well receive Economic-Aid. From the local government in total 129 (53,7%) women receive services, which can count as part of their income packaging. The distribution per region is presented in graph no. 13.

The areas where the local government delivers more services are in the South-urban areas, North-urban and North-rural areas, representing 63%, 55% and 77.8% of women interviewed in these regions. It should however be noted that the income packaging from the government is inconsiderable especially for lone mothers who receive only Socio-Economic Aid, which is from 8 euros in rural areas per month to 48 euros in families with 3-4 children in urban areas. In the fifth chapter I discuss in more depth this service by the local government. In the 7th chapter I have provided lone mothers' comments on receiving this aid as being dissatisfied and as not bringing them out of poverty. Moreover only 45% of lone mothers are receiving this support.

Income from the biological father of the children can count for the group of divorced lone mothers by law entitled to receive child-allowance after divorce or

the child's pension after the father's decease. Even-though the family code acknowledges the obligations of both parents for children born out of wedlock, in practice for the mothers who are abandoned, separated or teenage mothers who possess no document of prenuptial agreement with the biological of their children, it is difficult to claim child allowance via the bailiffs. The same applies for having no document from a bailiff for the socio-economic aid assistance of the local government. Therefore the lack of documentation of lone mothers and also the lack of legislative enforcement instruments for biological fathers to pay child's allowance does not facilitate a situation where they can rely on income packing.

From 101 divorced, 25 separated, 38 abandoned and 11 lone mothers in a divorce process only 38 of them or 21.7% of all 175 women receive child allowance from their partners. Only five of them or 2.8% receive child allowance irregularly. This data reveals an alarming situation of lone mothers and their children where only 21.7% can rely monthly on this income from their former partners. This reality describes Albanian fathers as no responsible persons for their children, be them outside or inside Albania.

The main reasons lone mothers list for their husbands as not being able to pay child allowance are: they have no contact with their former partner and they do not know where to reach them; the father of the children clearly states that he does not want to pay any contribution; the father of the children is jobless; the father of the children has created another family and has other children to support; the father of the child is an emigrant and he has given no contact phone or address to reach him; the father of the child works in private in the grey sector therefore the bailiffs cannot track his income and cannot claim anything from him and the last reason is that they are imprisoned and therefore cannot work or have any income.

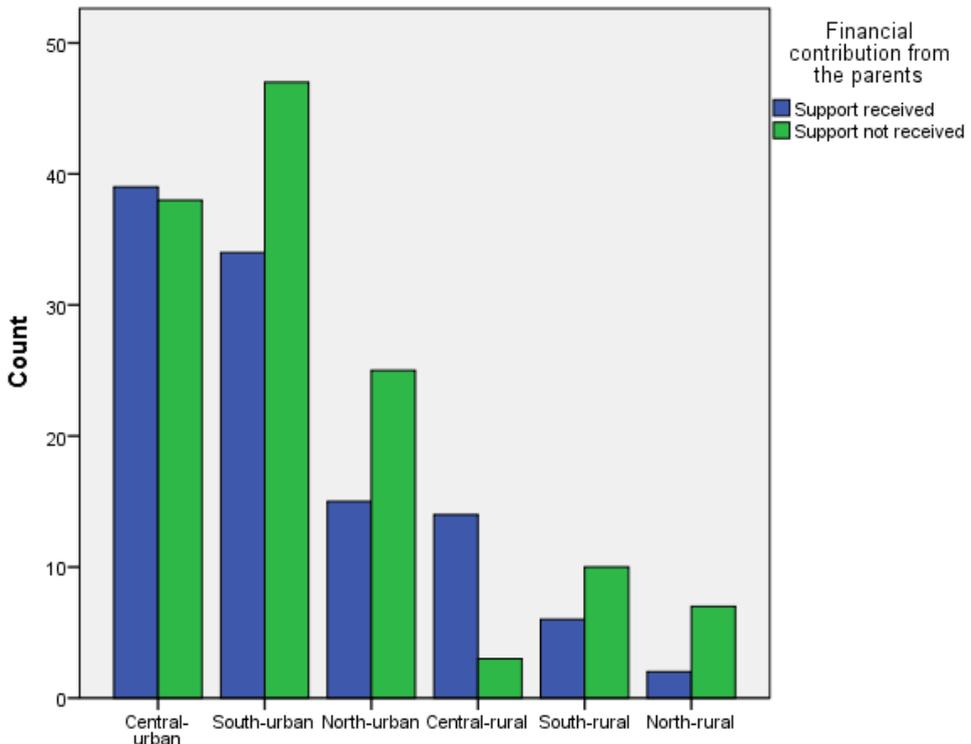
The family of origin, parents, brothers and sisters play a major role in the life of lone mothers and their children. From the extended family types when entering lonely-hood we saw that at least 55% of lone mothers and their children rely on housing accommodation from their parents, brothers and sisters and 5% live still with their parents-in-law. The housing accommodation is a financial income by nature which lone mothers can count as coming from their family resource.

Besides the housing accommodation lone mothers can rely on their families, the monthly financial support to cover school expenses of children, clothing and health issues of the children, lone mothers indicate to rely especially on remittances brothers and sisters who are living abroad (England, Italy, Greece). 110 (45.8%) of lone mothers can rely financially on the support of their parents,

versus 54.2% whose parents are not able to support them.

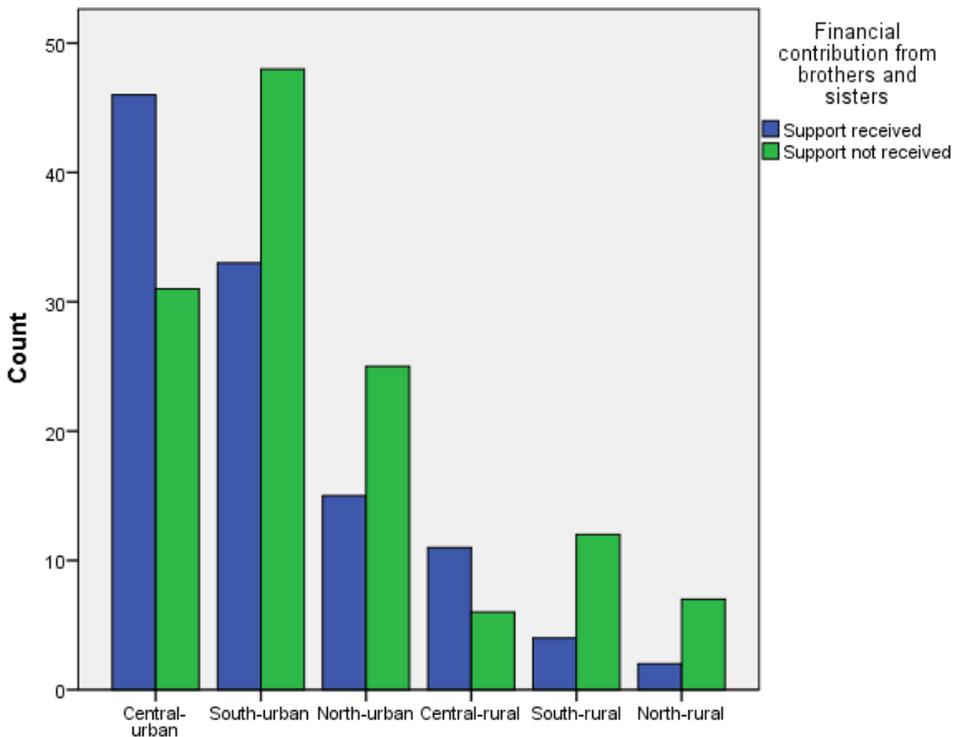
Data on financial support from parents (graph no. 14) show the differences on the possibility for parents to financially support their daughters and the children in North, South and central Albania. Families in the central-urban areas are more capable of supporting their children financially, making up 50.6% of lone mothers interviewed in the center. This support in South-urban reaches 42% of lone mothers interviewed in this regions and it drops down to 37.5% of lone mothers in the North-urban areas. The economic growth of the regions is reflected upon the financial support offered by the families of lone mothers. Thus families in the central and South urban areas where the employment is higher as compared to the North are more capable of supporting the lone mothers. Lone mothers in central-rural Albania have higher chances to receive financial support from their parents, reaching 82.7% of women interviewed in this region. The support in rural North reaches the lowest level as of 22.2% of lone mothers interviewed. Again the North of the country reflects a lower economic possibility in the urban and in the rural areas to maintain family responsibilities.

Graph. 14 The distribution of support received by the parents versus the region of living for 240 post-1990 lone mothers



The financial contribution, from brothers and sisters (Graph 15, below) represent the same value as from the parents, making up 110 (45.8%) of lone mothers being supported by their brothers and sisters. The main contribution from sisters and brothers is encountered in Central-urban and rural Albania making up 59.7% and 64.7% of the interviewees in these area. In the South this support is represented as 40.7% in the urban area and 25% in the rural. In the North instead only 35% of lone mothers in the urban areas and 22.2% of those living in the rural areas can be supported from their brothers and sisters. The reason of a higher support in the central Albania can be explained with the remittances from emigration and with private businesses run by brothers of these lone mothers. Again the North of the country creates no higher possibility for financial support for lone mothers from their brothers and sisters.

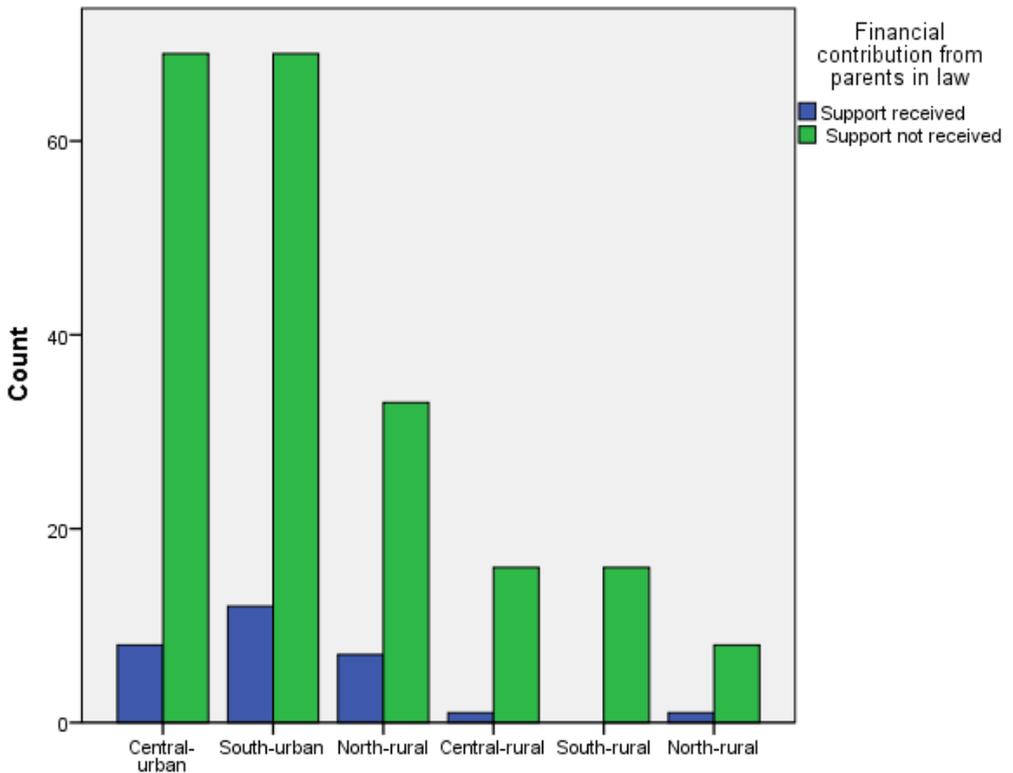
Graph. 15 The distribution of support received by the brothers and sisters versus the region of living for sample size 240



The financial contribution from the parents in law is presented in graph no. 16. The findings show a lower financial support from the in-law family compared to the fam-

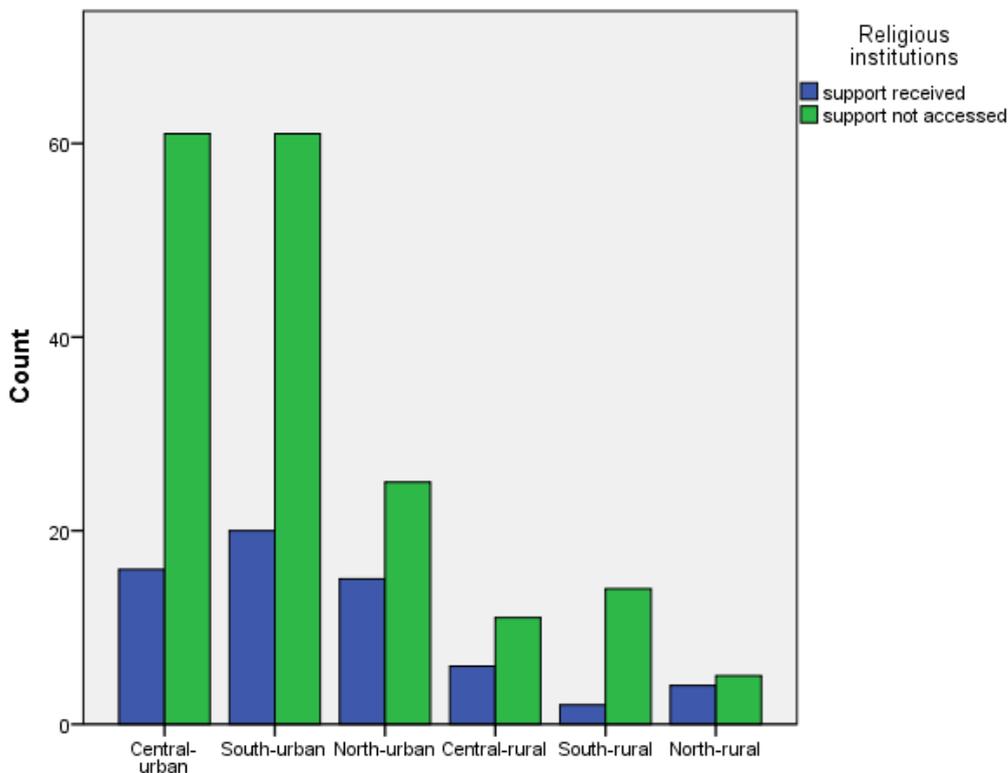
ily of origin, of up to 29 lone mothers or 12.1%. The financial contribution of brothers and sisters in law is even lower, making up 23 lone mothers or 9.6% of the total.

Graph. 16 The distribution of support received by the parents-in-law versus the region of living for sample size 240



Support from religious institutions is received by 63 of the interviewed lone mothers (26.2%). In graph no. 17 I have presented the support of religious institutions although it should be stressed that this support is less in quantity as compared to other sources of income. Lone mothers in North urban and rural areas and in the South urban areas seem to have higher chances of being supported by religious institutions.

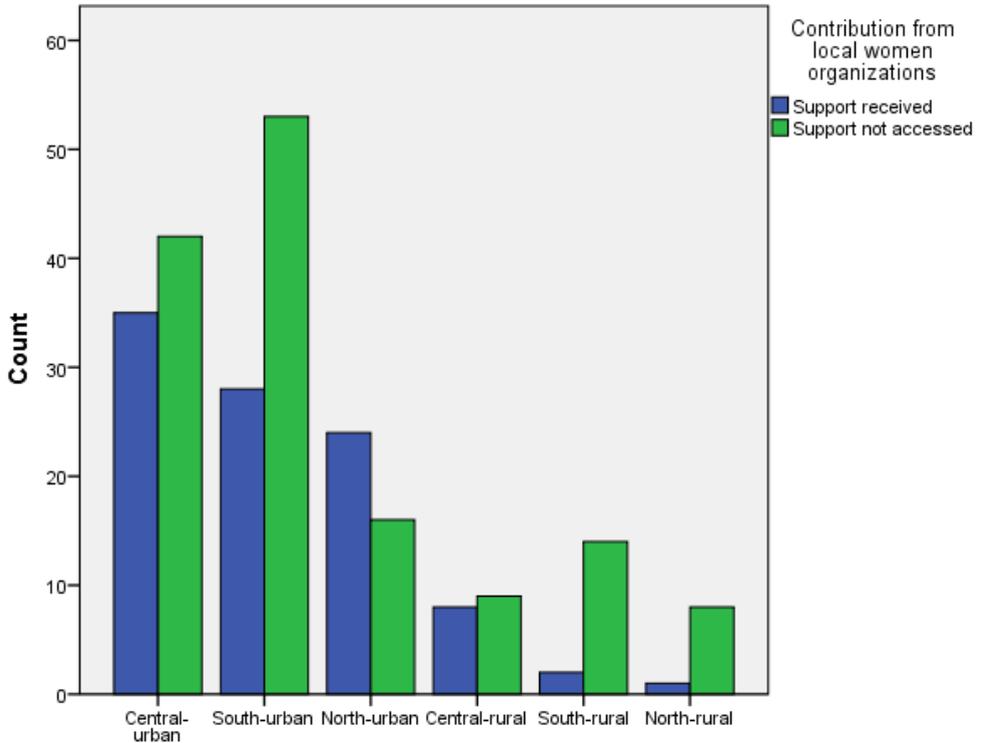
Graph. 17 The distribution of support received by religious institutions versus the region of living for sample size 240



The Muslim institutions in the North-East (Peshkopi city) and the English Evangelical foundations in the West-South of the country (Sarandë) have created a pension program for children of widowed mothers. This economic-assistance varies from 25 dollars per month per child until the child reaches 10 or 14 years old depending on institutions, to 100 dollar per month in cases when lone mothers need to pay rent. This assistance is only for widows.

The services received from the women's organizations reach 90 women (40.8%) as presented in graph no. 18. The highest representation of women who have received services from women's organizations is in the North-urban, central-urban and South-urban area. The rural areas especially in the South and North part of Albania lack coverage by local women's organization.

Graph. 18 The distribution of support received from local women organizations versus the region of living for 240 post 1990 lone mothers



The types of services received by women's organizations I describe in the 6th chapter. Here it can be noted that some of the services entail indirect cash contribution, such as free legal assistance, free psycho-social assistance, shelter services, free vocational training courses, and food and clothing provisions. The cash value of these services is difficult to assess.

Comparing data on income packaging

I presented so far how I gathered the incomes and the financial contribution from different resources that lone mothers in Albania report about. In table 17, I presented the Albanian version of the income packaging by lone mothers. This differs from the division in 4 sources of income that the Lewis and Hobson model uses. Instead I follow the reports from the lone mothers themselves, and I distinguish nine different resources presented in the table 17 and specified in graphs

12-18. The incomes they received by their own employment, be it legally or not in paper, were the most mentioned resource for lone mothers. The second type of support they mention the most are the social benefits they receive from the local government. Though very insignificant in value as I have demonstrated in the 5th and the 7th chapter, for 53.8% of them this support is mentioned as calculated together with other types of support. The third important resource, for some of them in addition to the part-time, seasonal or black jobs which are low paid is the support they receive by their parents mentioned by 45.8%, amongst which some of it come as in kind contribution for rents or offering housing arrangements. The fourth important income packaging counts for 45.8% of women as coming from their sisters and brothers. As it shown in the respective graphs though the representation of support is equal in numbers of women who receive it as compared to the parents' support, the graphs clearly show where the differences are. Not all women who receive support from parents receive also support from brothers and sisters and vice-versa. The fifth type of support as mentioned more by lone mothers comes from women's organizations, representing 41.3% women who can access it, although as the 6th chapter has elaborated upon it is difficult to measure in monetary value the support received by local women's organizations due to mostly social nature that this programs have. The sixth type of support is listed as from religious institutions, mentioned by 26.2% of the post-1990 lone mothers who can access it. The seventh type of support comes from biological fathers mentioned by 21.7% of women who receive this benefit also in low financial values, and the eighth and ninth resources come from parents in law and sisters and brothers in law, representing 12.8% and 9.58% of lone mothers, mostly widows who are able to receive this support.

I presented so far how I gathered the income packaging and the financial contribution from different resources for lone mothers in Albania. To follow the model of Lewis and Hobson (1997) I will create four groupings of income. First I will list the earnings of lone mothers, second the social transfers from the local government, In the third group of Lewis and Hobson which is the private group I will gather the child allowance (21.7%) and all resources from family of origin and from the family in law which I take as a base (45.8% + 12.8%). In 'others' resources of income since Lewis and Hobson do not elaborate I will put the non-governmental incomes, thus the incomes from the religious institutions and local women's organizations (41.3% + 26.2%). In the table 19 I present these data as follows:

Table 19 Sources of income mentioned by lone mothers, categorized along the lines of Lewis and Hobson:

	Earnings	Private incomes	Social transfers	Other incomes
Gathered sources	146 60.8%	177 79.58%	129 53.8%	162 67.5%

Compared to the income packaging by lone mothers as analyzed by Lewis and Hobson my data suggested a different grouping. The detailed answers I collected in table 17, show that 60.8% of lone mothers report that they can count on earnings from work. This was followed by a group of 53% who reported support by local government (thus comes as the second often mentioned source of income) followed by 45.8% who report being supported by the family of origin and brothers and sisters mentioned. If I would follow the model of Lewis and Hobson presents as the highest source of income 'private earnings', as this includes support from family and child allowances by the father and then 'Other incomes' which include support of the non-governmental organizations. In my data, the last subcategory is less important when compared to mentioned support by the local government. The third in ranking of incomes in this model is 'Earnings' of lone mothers themselves, and the least important seem to be the 'Social transfers' from the government. Within my subdivision of nine categories, these two last categories would be first and second (Table 17).

Conclusion

Based in the gender perspective on income packaging I have presented two different methodological findings, one which is based on detailed answers to questions about income packaging for Albanian lone mothers, which I divided in 9 categories: the income from the self-employment, the financial support from the biological father of the children, the financial support from the parents, the financial support from brothers and sisters, the financial support from the parents in law, the financial support from the sisters and brothers in law, the financial support from the local government, the financial support from the local women's organizations and the financial support from the religious institutions.

According to this finding the incomes from employment are the most mentioned income, followed by the local governmental support and support from parents. In a second method of analyzing income packaging based on Lewis and Hobson's (1997) model with four sources of income, the earnings from the labour market, and the social transfers from the government which are mentioned more by women in my findings, are outnumbered by the private and other income from the Lewis and Hobson model.

Therefore, there appears to be a difference in findings when you apply a

Western European and English speaking countries model in a Western Balkan context. In this method of analyzing income packaging the 'private incomes' include child support from the biological father as well as the support from family. This makes invisible what are in reality the main source of income for lone mothers in Albania. This finding does not represent the Albanian reality where biological fathers are financially responsible for their children only in 21.7% of the cases. On the other hand support from family is much more important in Albania. The second problematic category is 'Other incomes', which represents the incomes by the non-profit institutions, both women's NPO's and religious institutions. Also Taking into account the temporary contribution and the nature of services provided this category is not helpful to understand the Albanian context. A third category from the Lewis and Hobson model, 'Earnings', is indeed often mentioned as a source of income by Albanian lone mothers. then the social transfers, which also if separated would be differently ranked.

Thus this chapter suggests that income packaging for lone mothers is more diverse than Western European countries and it invites for a more detailed study to better grasp the economic situation Albanian lone mothers live in.

Chapter 5 Governmental social welfare for lone mothers in Albania, 1944-2013

5.1. Introduction

This chapter intends to contribute to the debates on socialist and post-socialist welfare policies in countries located in the Western Balkans. It looks at socialist welfare in Albania in the period 1944-1990, and its development during and after the transition years (1990-2013) via the category of lone mothers.

As gender scholars would argue (Lewis, 1997; Fraser, 1994), even though 'lone mothers' have been on the family policies agenda since the early 1920s, they still continue to trouble both the traditional 'male-breadwinner' model and the modern welfare state's 'adult carer and earner' model. Therefore, looking at welfare policies from the perspective of a 'vulnerable category' which is 'troublesome' to conventional family typologies, such as lone mothers are, can be analytically informative to comparative welfare policies within both the periods under discussion.

The methodological approach of this chapter generates a chronological perspective on how social rights for lone mothers and their children developed in communist and post-communist Albania, through the analysis of Official Gazettes published during the communist leadership and after. The period after the 1990s is outlined via the analysis of the National Strategies for Poverty Reduction and Economic Growth (NSPREG) as well as the United Nations Development Program (UNDP), World Bank (WB) and International Monetary Fund (IMF) reports and their joint strategies with the Albanian government. Since Albanian democracy after the 1990s and Albanian welfare policy development have been a counseling process with the international donor community, their reports are the first resource to be analyzed. Moreover, the chapter makes use of data and stories gathered in a qualitative and quantitative survey with 268 lone mothers who raised their children during and after communism, to measure the usage of welfare entitlements in urban and rural areas of North, Central and South Albania. For an analysis of the welfare services provided by the local government, I have conducted interviews with seven representatives of the Departments of Socio-Economic Aid in seven municipalities. I also interviewed the Director of the Directorate of the Implementation of the Law on Economic Aid and the Disability pension.

The chapter engages with the social rights of lone mothers and their chil-

dren in the socialist period and the period after the 1990s in Albania. I will look at these social rights from three perspectives: the legislative *de jure* existence, their *de facto* application of entitlements attached to them, and the relevancy to their users. This triple approach enables me to draw a comparison between two periods of welfare in Albania. The comparison itself aims to highlight the major difficulties faced by the Albanian government during the early transition period 1991-2000 transferring and maintaining universal and categorical rights and entitlements. The chronological history of changes in the law helps to understand how the political, socio-economic and cultural developments had the power to shape the mind-set of policy-makers differently, shifting from universal rights to categorical rights and entitlements. Last but not least, this approach allows for a comparison of the needs of lone mothers and their children with the rights and entitlements in place, thus suggesting future policies, based on the expectations of lone mothers themselves. This last point will be developed in chapter 7 of this dissertation. My approach to finding and selecting the laws, formulating interviews and questions for lone mothers and central and local-policy makers was guided by gender studies and feminist scholarship.

Based on a gender perspective of analyzing welfare policies (Fraser, 1994; Lewis, 1997), the chapter concludes that both the socialist and the post-socialist government in Albania have positioned lone mothers as workers and then as carers. It moreover argues that the socialist government tried to maintain an acceptable economical level for the working class of lone mothers under socialism, whereas in the aftermath central and local policies failed to offer a minimum of social welfare to lead lone mothers and their children out of poverty. Last but not least, whereas the socialist government acknowledged care as a right (Knijn & Kremer, 1997), the political parties which governed Albania after the 1990s removed the care dimension of mothers from the law. Seen from a more practical perspective, the kindergarten and crèches built during socialism, after 1990 were closed leaving many lone mothers in the house taking care of their children.

The chapter concludes that although lone mothers gained legislative visibility during communism and after, on the whole the welfare state in both periods lacked the accessibility and quality of services for all groups of lone mothers, and does not offer a good type of welfare for this category of women.

5.2. The welfare policies of the communist period⁴⁷ and lone mothers' usage of them

Background to the allocation of civil, social and political rights in socialist Albania

One of the main positive deeds of the Labour Party in Albania (LP), has been the position it guaranteed to women in society. Women were given citizenship rights by law and welfare entitlements which accompanied their socio-economic rights. In the third chapter I quoted some histories selected from the family life and work environment which showed how in the public and private sphere women were physically protected by the state from the violence of men. Women were not discriminated in terms of gender in the work place. They held jobs which until that time had been performed by men, such as tractor driver and engineering jobs, and they worked similar shifts to men. The individual rights on freedom of thought and expression were banned after 1954. The communist regime shut down all churches and mosques in 1967 and banned all forms of religious belief and exercise. The decree no. 1906 (02.08.1954) regulated the deportation and expulsion as administrative penalties, for people who dared to express a different opinion from the official one. The freedom of assembly and movement was regulated via the mass organizations of youth, women and labour syndicates. The leading ideology of these mass organizations evolved from the LP. Their hierarchical structures and activities were maneuvered also by the LP leadership. The political rights were dictated by the Marxist-Leninist ideology and underwent continuous restrictions. The right to a fair trial, especially for people who were against the existing ideology, was influenced by the nomenclature leaders, as the histories of many deported people and communist imprisonments have demonstrated. The voting right for women was guaranteed by law; however, its

⁴⁷ I refer to two different concepts regarding the guiding ideology of the Albanian Government from 1944-1990. The Government itself was guided by a Marxist-Leninist ideology, which put the good and the benefit of the community masses above individual needs. In this respect, politically speaking the Albanian Government was led by a communist ideology. The policies undertaken by this government to assist its citizens were of a social nature and universal in character despite the de-classed groups. Hence, when I refer to socialist welfare policies laws, I have the same approach as the Romanian scholar, Gheaus (2008). In her struggle to define communist and socialist concepts she reminds us that we should be careful in using socialist instead of communist government since "socialism would carry the risk of confusion between different (East and West) European models of socialism and would make less clear the distinction between communism and post-communism [...]" (ibid., p. 201).

application was not free of political influence. The same was applicable for men.

Regarding socio-economic and cultural rights during socialism, the individual was not free of self-determination on the pursuance of the political beliefs, social and economic status he/she aimed to achieve. People were deprived of their own wealth and were classified into categories of cooperativists, workers or intelligencia, based on ideological approval and propagation. The right to employment was guaranteed to every woman and man of a working age. Women were strongly advised and encouraged to participate in men's professions; however, they were forbidden to work in the heavy industries, such as the mines. Technical and vocational guidance training programmes were set up in the new soft textile and metallurgic industries in the country for both women and men. Equal pay for equal work for both men and women was guaranteed by law from the mid-1960s. Promotion at work was mostly subject to people's contribution to the party rather than to seniority and earned skills and competence. Workers, civil servants or other institutional employees were not allowed to establish trade unions of their own accord. They were, however, invited to become part of the Workers Syndicates run by the state. Until 1991, workers in the Republic of Albania were not given the right to strike. The build-up of the social security system started in Albania in 1948 when all employees were requested to be registered as such and obtain the working booklet. Working men and women had the same rights in the social insurance system, which gave them access to the country's universal social protection entitlements. Marriage acquired a new meaning (I traced its legislation in chapter 3): marriage meant joining a family with couples' consent and not via the intentions and needs of family members. The family received protection from the state. Children and mothers were given universal health-care rights and working mothers could receive child care services provided by crèches and kindergartens.

Social rights allocation and entitlements application for lone mothers during socialism

1. Housing policy

After the Second World War, the leadership of the new Albanian government reformatted its political ideology massively. The country's economy had very low parameters of developments. Administratively and operationally speaking, the government needed to establish institutional mechanisms and draft the first Constitution to acknowledge citizens' rights and enforce the regulation of the administrative structure within ministries. The first step to deal with citizens' rights was to provide them with notification-letters and birth certificates (Law no. 306, 30 August 1946).

The Marxist-Leninist philosophy was the prevalent ideology propagating a classless society and the good of the community above the good of the individual. The first drastic measure undertaken by this government was the confiscation of private properties. The properties of more wealthy individuals were taken from them and turned into administrative offices⁴⁸. Many others became state properties. This overall move had a direct impact on the housing policies of the socialist state. The mobility of citizens increased due to the enlargement of the state-controlled industrialization in urban areas and the housing policy. The population of cities grew and the family size of people living in one house was reduced from 11-13 to 7 or 8 people. The interviews with lone mothers from the communist period testify that 15 out of 28 created extended families with their parents-in-law (6 to 8 people in a household). 2 of them have been living with 7 to 10 people in one household and 2 others with 11 to 14 people. The data from the lone mothers of this period show that only 32.1% of the mothers interviewed lived in single units with only one crown; the rest lived in joint households. The presence of 6 to 14 people living in a household leads to very crowded households and a lack of privacy in many respects.

Housing policies have remained the most problematic welfare policies in Albania since the Communist period. The decree on *The Administration of Demands for Housing and its Delivery* (07.07.1989), approved by the Council of Ministers and proposed by the Ministry of Communal Economy states that the “normativity of living space per individual should be minimum 6 square meter, but can in no case be less than 4 square meters’. The use of ‘but’ creates space for different interpretations meaning that it can also be 4 square meters but then it cannot go lower. If the minimum was 6 square meters, then a family of 10 people should be living in a household of at least 60 square meters, which was not the case in Albanian dwellings during communism.

Alia, whose work on the socialist family and its structure I also refer to in chapter 3, elaborated on the housing policies of the Albanian government in the 5-year plan 1985-1990:

“During 1981-1985 the number of all apartments and households built was 75,000. During the 9th five-yearly plan 85,000 apartments and new dwellings will be built. The policy of the construction of households

⁴⁸ I know these historical legacies also due to the oral histories of my grandfather, who belonged to a leather trading family. His family properties were confiscated by the government and their kinship houses were made offices for City Councils, such as in Fier city, or were used as part of the city maternity hospital, such as the one in Durrës city.

by the state supports the creation of families with one crown with two generations. Thus, the structure of state households for this five-year annual plan is foreseen as: 40% of these houses will have one room and one kitchen; 48 percent will have two rooms and one kitchen and about 12 percent of them will have three rooms and one kitchen” (ibid. p. 118).

This housing development policy highlights a trend towards a formation of nuclear families. Nevertheless, if I compare the data of families Alia presents, 463,333 families by 1979 (ibid. p. 99) and if we take into consideration that many families were part of extended families, there is a huge gap between the household constructions and the number of families created.

During communism, these policies were regulated by the Ministry of Communal Economy and executed by Communal Centres for Households in cooperation with working centres per locality. A Decision of the Council of Ministers (DCM) was approved in 1958 on the regulation for rented houses, and in 1983 another DCM for the Administration of Demands for Accommodation was approved. Summarizing these legal acts, the government provided housing for people through its constructing policies, or organized workers in volunteering work to build their own flats and houses. The communist leader Enver Hoxha, as Alia quotes in her work, had proclaimed a socialist way of living, which is not for large patriarchal family sizes (Alia, Z. 1988, p. 98). Alia claims that “not from every marriage a single family unit was created, due to new families being incorporated into existing larger families with more than one married couples” (ibid. p. 99). The extended character of the Albanian family, which Hoxha addressed as a patriarchal feature, is elaborated in the third chapter of this dissertation. The data from the survey in chapter 4 indicate that of the 28 lone mothers interviewed for the communist period, 67% lived in extended families after their marriage. In this chapter I connect the housing policies developed in communism with the realities already talked about. In her work Alia confirms that the family size did not change that much in the period 1923-1979: 4.9 members in urban areas in 1923 and 4.6 in 1979, or 5.8 members in 1923 and 6.2 in 1979 (Alia, 1988, p. 104). Therefore, she explains that this does not reflect the real change of patriarchal relationships between household members.

She also presents data which compare the family size in percentage per 100 families in urban and rural areas from 1950 to 1979. Her data proves that families with 6 members (which reflects the presence of two crowns in the family) has remained steady throughout these years whereas the family size with 8 members had a decline in the urban areas but increased in the rural areas. Although Alia does not refer or quote any data gathering methodology and data analysis

approach (apart from when she quotes Enver Hoxha's works), her bibliography lists the work of Misja and Vejsiu on "Family Demographic Changes in the Socialist People's Republic of Albania". Therefore, the delivery and interpretation of the data raises questions about the methodology and the political bias of this type of research (i.e. scholar's bias caused by the communist and Marxist-Leninist ideology). According to the data she presents, in 100 families in urban areas in the 1950s 21.4 percent were made of two crowns, and this percentage reduced to 18 in 1979. The same trend is observed in rural areas per 100 families, which represented 30.1% of the total in 1950 and 29.2 in 1979 (ibid. p. 106).

The laws on housing policies during communism and the interviews with lone mothers from those who participated in volunteer work to build their housing tell us that the constructing materials were paid by the government and the construction labour was done by the people themselves who would enter and use the new apartments. The housing situation, however, was not the same in urban and rural areas. After the 1980s, the government began to allow the cooperativists to also build their houses on the state lands permitted them.

The 15th article of the decree on *The Administration of Demands for Housing and its Delivery* puts the orphans and the divorced mothers on the priority list for housing accommodation. The law expressively says:

"The turn to fill in the requests for housing shall be for citizens: 1. [...] people from Children's Houses who will receive treatment for the first time; [...] 4. Have in temporary usage the housing according to the divorce court decision, and will remain without housing after the application of this law or are coerced to leave the building for the necessary needs of the house owner" (p. 87, Official Gazette 1989).

I had difficulties tracing the housing legislation regarding divorced lone mothers in the Official Gazette of the socialist period. However, based on the housing policies, as refereed during the interviewees with the divorced of that period, and women who had been working in the Women's Union, I can conclude that by the end of 1970 and early 1980 divorced mothers gained legislative power in housing regulations. From the histories of divorced lone mothers under socialism it is difficult to estimate the exact delivery of housing entitlements to them. I have interviewed 21 divorced lone mothers from the socialist period. Their ages are 75, 73, 60, 55, 51. The maximum years of divorce for them has been 37; their divorces happened in the years 1975, 1978, and after the 1980s. None of them were given the possibility by the government to be accommodated immediately in another house together with their children after divorce. Initially, all of them

returned to live with their parents and the family of the brother in the same house for a few years. Afterwards in the cases when their family had good networks with people who were working in the government they could be accommodated elsewhere. From their stories regarding the housing accommodation offered by the government, it can be said that although this housing policy was categorical and gave them priority on the accommodation waiting list, in the end their networking relations and lobby with the then authorities did the deal.

In the coming paragraphs I will present two personal stories about on housing policy in socialist Albania, as counterpart of the legislation I have studied. I will refer to the cases of some of the divorcees who mostly testify that they did not receive housing accommodation; only four of them have received it thanks to family connections with nomenclature people in the local institutions, but not under suitable conditions.

In case the divorced mothers had lived with their children and in-laws before the marriage dissolution, and could not return to their families for economic reasons, the government would try to accommodate them after the first year of divorce. Some of them were brought to accommodation already housing another family. They did not have privacy to form a single family. This solution created problems because people had to share a toilet and kitchen with another family. Dajana⁴⁹ a divorced lone mother in 1988, in the city Elbasan (Central Albania), who is currently 55 years old, remembers what kind of support she received from the state regarding housing during and after the divorce:

“My parents took my divorce very badly. I was crying all the time and I was too ashamed to go to work. My parents took me and my son back home. My brother was married, and his wife and his children were also living with my parents. The conflicts started. I stayed with my brother and my parents for two years and a half. My brother’s children and my children were eating at the same place. I gave my monthly salary to my parents.

After two and a half years the government gave my father a bigger apartment, with three rooms and a kitchen. The Neighborhood Council told me that I would be given a room in the neighborhood of my former husband. And they gave me and my son one room. It was in the house of another family which had three children. I was told that that they would

⁴⁹ In light of interviewing ethics, I do not reveal the names of the informants and I keep them anonymous in the appendix by adding a number to them. Here in the text I present them with fake names.

give me this “house” now, that I would suffer a little in the beginning, but ‘you will be thankful to me afterwards’.

When the new flats were built, the municipality gave me a state house, we were placed there provisionally. When our flat was built, I was asked to choose whether I wanted to continue to stay there or live in the new apartment, and of course I came here, where I continue to live until today”, (Appendix 1.4., interview no. 86) .

Sofika, A lone mother from Peshkopi (North-East Albania) who divorced in 1988 has not received housing support from the government due to her family having a political flaw. She looks back at her story and the support which she never received from the government:

“The government did not give me anything. I only received 2000 All for the court session. I finished the divorce case, and I received nothing from the state but the divorce money. My mother was a cooperatives’ worker, my father was a “hoxhë” (Islamic preacher in the mosque). He was imprisoned, and my mother raised five of us and later me and my son. Although my mother had many children and she could have taken the decoration for women with many children and the family allowance, we were given nothing as a family, because of my father’s religious predication and practice”. (Appendix 1.3., Interview no. 15).

Tereza, a lone mother from Korçë city, divorced in 1977, has not been supported with housing either. When asked what she would have wanted from the government of that time she states:

“With regard to housing I would have liked to be supported to a greater extent. The problem with divorced mothers at that time was housing”. (Appendix 1.3. Interview no. 26) .

In the Shushica commune of the Elbasani rural area, Burbuqe, a divorced mother from the communist period (75 years old with 7 children) was an orphan at that time and had no parents to return to. The judge decided in the court that she would be staying in the same house with her husband and in-laws. Her story represents life after divorce in rural areas in the socialist period:

“The reason we divorced was that he wanted me to abort our child when

I was 8 months pregnant carrying twins. At that time the abortion was done secretly, at home, with a metallic chord, in bed hygienic conditions. I was afraid to die, as a neighbor in the village had died this way.

So, I had to tell to the authorities what was happening to me; I did not want to die. They imprisoned the midwife. My husband protected her and did not tell anyone that she was going to perform the abortion on me, but another woman from our village did say who she was.

The court decided that I would continue to stay with my seven children at his home with his parents. He left the house and built a bad hut in another place. (Appendix 1.3., interview no. 7).

Analyzing from these life stories by divorced women of the socialist period, it is evident that it was almost impossible to find accommodation in a house from the government unless you had the right connections. However, it would not be right to say that this was the case for all the women. Their histories testify that not everything written *de jure* was applicable *de facto* when it came to housing.

Another set of information comes from two other interviews, two women who were part of the Women's Union during communism. I interviewed them as lone mothers and as representing women's organizations after 1990. When they revealed during the first interview that they had been engaged in the Women's Union, I decided on the spot to change my questions to be able to make notes on their experiences with housing and other government policies for lone mothers and the role of the Women's Union in them. During socialism, Sanije Batku⁵⁰ was Chairwoman of the Albanian Women's Union, for the Peshkopia branch (today she is the chairwoman of the local women association "The Women, mother and educator"). When asked about housing policies, she told me about the good work of the Women's Union and the government with regard to the housing of divorcees:

"The Party had special regulations to give divorced women separate

⁵⁰ I interviewed Sanije Batku as the chairwoman of the "The Women, mother and educator" and she told me that she had been head of the Albanian Women's Union branch for Peshkopia city, although her father was imprisoned mistakenly under the early socialist government. Hence, we did another interview about her life in the socialist period, the history of her father's imprisonment and of her family ever since, as well as her role in and the work of the Women's Union Branch in Peshkopia. (Appendix 2.3, interview no. 8).

houses. As Union we took care of employing divorced women. Before the 1990s I personally took care to regulate and arrange housing for three divorced mothers and their children”. (Appendix 2.3., interview no. 8).

The interview with Sanije Batku confirms that the housing policy was in place before the decree of 1989 I referred to earlier. Based on what the divorced lone mothers revealed regarding the degree of this service and this interview, it can be concluded that the socialist government offered a *de jure* housing policy to divorced lone mothers. The *de facto* application of this policy, although categorical in its nature, became limited in reality.

Kostanca, a widow mother I interviewed in Saranda city (West-South Albania) on October 2012, whose husband died in 2008, explained to me how they supported divorced mothers during communism. During 1980-1985 she held the position of the Council Secretary in the City Council. For 8 years she also was a member of the Women’s Council in her city, and member of the Plenum of the Women’s Union in Tirana. To my question about the decision-making power she had and the nature of the policies for lone mothers at that time, she answered:

“In my position I had direct decision-making power. We drafted project orders, we gathered complaints and requests from the citizens and we had to verify everything within a limited time frame. We followed the problems of employment, housing and the functioning of kindergartens and crèches, which were dependent upon the Council administration.

Special laws for widow women did not exist during communism, but we did know how many people a household consisted of. With regard to widow women we were concerned with their employment, not with their housing. Families who were living in larger households with more than 3 or 4 crowns in it had priority on the housing list”.

For divorced women, despite the legislation which favored their employment, it also gave priority to their housing. There was a list which needed to be executed by priority, for transferred families, divorcées and people without housing. Divorced women could get priority on the housing list based on their volunteering contribution to community housing construction work and based on the housing percentages available from the State Construction. The bailiff order was immediately taken under consideration, especially in cases where there were conflicts in the household due to the number of people living together”. (Appendix 1.4, interview no. 210).

The narration of Kostanca as a lone mother and former activist of the Women's Union and the City Council during communism testifies to the ways in which widowed and divorced mothers were supported by governmental policies and by the women's union. It also indicates the solidarity of women who were volunteering in the Women's Union with lone mothers under communism and how they found ways to empower them, also through mediating for housing. There was no written housing policy for widowed mothers during socialism. They continued to stay in the same house with their in-laws and their children.

2. Employment and social protection policy (child-care, maternity leave, sickness leave, pensions)

The country economy of the late 1940s was based on the development of several parallel sectors which required the participation of men and women as a labour force. New industries started in 1946, such as the sugar factory, fish and fruit conservation, brick plant factory, cotton factory, rubber factory and so on (Law 580, *On State General Planning for the year 1948*, OGPRA, 26 September, 1948, no. 25, p. 5). The existing industries were given high investments and needed a labor force (I am referring to the electric, chemical, constructing material, wood, food, textile, footwear and leather, tobacco and graphic industries (Law 580, *On State General Planning for the year 1948*, OGPRA, 26 September, 1948, no. 25, p. 6)). The oil, copper, chromium and charcoal mine industries already existed before the Second World War and they were also given an essential place in the budget investments. The development of state farms and the increase of fruit, vegetable and livestock production were seen as the most important areas to provide food for the entire population (Law 580, *On State General Planning for the year 1948*, OGPRA, 26^h September, 1948, no. 25, p. 6). Even without mentioning the health-care local centres, hospitals, educational institutions and other branches of administrating labour, it goes without saying that the request for a labor force was huge.

The increase of the working population reinforced the need for the organization of labour force, drafting a Labor Code and the establishment of the Institute of Social State Insurance. The first Law on Social State Insurance was drafted during 1946, two years after the succession of the People's Labour Party. It was decreed a year after, on 26 August 1947 as no. 528. The first Labour Code in Albania was drafted in 1948 and the organization of the Institute of Social Insurances started legally with decree no. 1146 (date 11.09.1950). The Institute of Insurances was obligated to formulate and suggest regulations and decisions to the Ministry of Finances regarding several types of insurances, including the people's voluntarily contributions (p. 11, *Official Journal of the People's Republic of Albania* (OGPRA), 5 October, no. 65, 1950).

The earliest law on Social State Insurance I had access to⁵¹ was law no. 4171 (date 13.09.1966). Its first article highlights that:

“the law is inspired by the lessons of the LPA and relies on the constitution. It recognizes and guarantees to its citizens in employment relations, and others specified in this law, material means for living in cases of incapability to work and in retirement”. (OGPRA, 29 September, no. 6, 1966, p. 152)

Its third article mentions that:

“All the citizens of Albania enjoy the right to free health care. Workers and civil servants can also enjoy protection: a) during temporary sicknesses, accidents at work, pregnancy and maternity leave; b) medication in thermal and hydro-mineral waters when they work in heavy industries, relaxation in recreational holidays homes for them and their children, extracurricular activities for their children, economic aid for labor rehabilitation, for child-birth and burial expenses; c) retirement, invalidity, family, seniority service and special merits pensions” (OGPRA, 29 September, no. 6, 1966, p. 152)

I will now continue to read this law with two specific perspectives in mind: finding social protection policy articles which have been designed categorically for lone mothers and looking at these policies with a gender eye concerning the care aspect. I have read and analyzed this law through the prism of Kremer and Knijn’s suggestion (1997) to organize the welfare state by considering care both as a right and as an obligation for every individual. The 11th article of law no. 4171 (13.09.1966) on Social State Insurance allocated to family members the obligation to care for each other when sick and to working women the right to care for their children. The rights were restricted to those working people who had other family members in the house to take care of the sick and when the care was

⁵¹ To research the laws of the socialist period, I have been working with the Official Gazettes from 1945 to 1991 in the Durrës City Library and the National Library of Tirana. In both libraries journal pages which contain the laws, decrees and codes of the communist period are torn apart. Both libraries have one copy to be used by readers which can be ordered more easily and another copy which is in the archive. I would ruefully like to mention here how badly misused by readers these journals were. I ordered several journals and only a few times could I successfully trace the chronology of a law development due to this phenomenon.

provided by public health care institutes. This right was limited in time (three days for family members who were ill and ten days for children) and reduced the earning power of people who offered care to 60% (OGPRA, 29 September, no. 6, 1966, p. 154).

Although the language of the law is neutral in that it created the idea that both men and women could take care of sick family members, in the end the mother was expected to do the caring, especially for younger children. A second noticeable regulation of this article is the obligatory aspect of care for every family member. The care aspect was also legislatively introduced in the Family Code of 1965, which indicated the significant role of each individual in the family and the care and financial welfare obligation of every working individual towards those who for certain reasons could not work. Applying the work of Kremer and Knijn (1997) as mentioned before, it can be noted that the socialist government did recognize the care *de jure* as a right. Most importantly, it considered it as work, however it was seen as less valuable than public work.

Care aspect was recognized in the Labor Code of 1972, the Code of 1980, and the last one of 1987 before communism collapsed. The amount of time working mothers could take off to take care of their sick children could go up to three months per year until the child reached the age of three. This out- of- work care time leave was, however, not paid (article 31, Labor Code 1972, p. 18). Article 32 of this Code regarded the period of child care after maternity leave as: "A woman who has finished maternity leave and was not able to secure a crèche for her child can receive a three months non-paid leave" (*ibid.*, p. 19). Only in the Labor Code of 1980s was the non-paid leave for working mothers acknowledged as part of their labour history for the purpose of social state insurance (*ibid.* p. 17).

Taking all this into account, it can be concluded that in the first two decades the welfare state recognized care as a right; however, as a type of work performed by mothers for their sick children it was less highly valued than their labour work. In the third decade of socialist welfare, the care dimension disappears from the legal policy vocabulary. It becomes implied indirectly and, moreover, it loses even its reduced economic value. In the fourth decade, until 1990 the caring time earns recognition as working time for the purpose of employment history in the social protection law.

The social state insurance stressed that workers and civil servants enjoyed special social protection and entitlements during socialism. In the coming section I will give an overview of the reconstruction of socialism, and I will reveal some data on the percentage of women workers in certain labour areas in socialist Albania, based on the publications of that time. Based on the interviews with lone mothers of the socialist period, I will subsequently indicate that despite the

family pension, after the husband's death none of them received a burial expenses fee, even in cases when the husband had died at work.

Article 15 of this law states that "in cases of the death of the worker, civil servant or the retiree of the husband or of a family member who has been in charge of maintenance, his closer relatives receive cash assistance for the burial expenses of 300 ALL". (OGPRA, 29th September, no. 6, 1966, p. 155)

The seven widow lone mothers I interviewed, whose husbands died while working (5 of them), or due to a deterioration of health, did not mention any receipt of cash assistance as a financial benefit from the government. However, the interview with the widow lone mother from Saranda, who has been involved in the City Council leadership and the Women's Union branch in this city, tells a different, contrasting story. She remembers she made sure that, as part of the financial payment by the state, widowed mothers could have more coffee packages to serve on the occasion of the death of their husbands. She states:

"A special thing we did to support widow women was on the 40th⁵² day after the death of the husband. We knew which widow had this event in the house and we provided her with one more coffee and dairy vouchers. We needed to inform the council before doing it, and once I had to answer to the council supervisors for favouring a widow woman" (Appendix 1.4, interview no. 210).

The retirement pensions were classified for categories of workers. For those with an employment history in the heavy industries, the first category of male workers would be retired at 50 with 20 years of employment history. The women would be retired at 45 with 15 years of employment. The second and third categories of employees could earn a pension with five more additional years per category, respectively 55 and 60 for men and 50 and 55 for women. (OGPRA, 29 September, no. 6, 1966, pp. 155-156)

Article 18 of the Social State Insurance Law referred to the pension of mothers with many children, a category which could also have benefited divorcees or widow mothers. This law evaluated child-rearing and caring for many children as equal to public labour performance for purpose of 'pay as you go' social insurance contribution type (OGPRA, 29 September, no. 6, 1966, pp. 155-156). Only in 1989 did women who worked in agricultural cooperatives receive this same

⁵² In Albania, society expects people to adhere to a certain tradition of mourning: to celebrate the memory of the deceased person on the 7th day, the 40th day, the 6th month, one and three years after he/she died.

right and after two years with the collapse of communism and the change of the social insurance system they could not claim it any longer (decree 7339, date 13.11.1989, appendance of the fourth article of Law no. 4976, date 29.06.1972 for *The Retirement Pension of the Members of Agricultural Cooperatives* (p. 78, OGPRA 1989).

Concerning this right, there are two resources which question its application for the agricultural women workers. The first resource is an article from Fatmira Musaj (and colleagues, 2012, p. 52) which stresses the differences of rights allocation and entitlements application for rural women. The second resource is the history of Burbuqe I quoted earlier, the divorced mother of the communist period who was 75 years old at the time of the interview. She is a mother of six children, who worked for 40 years in the collective state cooperatives and did not retire in spite of having raised seven children (one of them died) until the cooperatives dissolved.

Asked about the support she received during the communist period from the government with regards to child care, housing or other essential living benefits after divorce, she answered:

“At that time I was a farmer. All those years my children and I ate bread with peppers, onions and salt. My father died early and I had no brother to take care of me. I had worked at the farm from its beginning to its closure, for 40 years. The state did not give me housing or anything” (Appendix 1.3., interview no. 7).

This divorced mother did not know anything about the existence of these laws. Moreover, she hardly received any education (she only attended first elementary school), and therefore her attitude towards the law’s application to her situation was left in the hands of those who knew how to operate legislatively. In the communist period the information about women’s rights was provided by local branches of the Women’s Union of Albania (WUA). This was a women’s national organization, led by communist ideology with the mission to enforce women’s rights in the country and support the socialist policies on a community level.

The history of this anonymous divorcee testifies that this law for women farmers with many children did not apply in her case. The reason of the non-application of the law is a symbol of the differences that existed between the social protection of workers in urban areas and those in agricultural cooperatives. Moreover, since the right for women was allocated in 1989 and the Social Insurance System was reformatted in 1993, the former benefits ceased to exist.

Article 29 of the Social Insurance law was dedicated to the family pension⁵³, which granted orphan pension and family pension to the woman and children whose head of the family had died (OGPRA, 29 September, no. 6, 1966, p. 159). This article, drafted for widowed women and their children, was similar to the 11th with regard to the caring aspect. Like the other article, this one is neutral in language regarding the reference to the spouse (whether male or female). Nonetheless, within the same sentence the cash entitlement is related to the caring of children in the home without specifically indicating that this is intended for women, but obviously implying it. There was an intention during communism to legally acknowledge the caring regime of women as a right, although under certain circumstances.

The decision of the Council of Ministers of the People's Republic of Albania no 829, 02.10.1950 (with a proposal of the Ministry of Health to improve the health of children in permanent crèches and to reduce child mortality in pediatrics) acknowledged the right to women who have children out of wed-lock to be accommodated with their recently born children in permanent crèches. The non-married mothers were offered accommodation and a basic diet of food until their child was breastfed. When willing to breastfeed other children, they were paid an amount of 200 ALL (15 cent) per liter of milk and also a richer food diet (OGPRA, 18 October, no. 68, 1950, p. 2). This law did not mention the working hours that non-married mothers with breast-feeding children could perform somewhere; neither did it mention that they only have a caring task to perform. Due to the obligation of everybody to work in the communist period, and since it is not mentioned otherwise, it can be taken for granted that these lone mothers were both workers and carers, but due to a lack of housing and a male partner to support them they were offered accommodation and food. Health care was a universal right and was offered for free to everybody.

The first decree on the state economic aid for (married and widowed) mothers with many children and (non-married) lone mothers dates from 10.10.1950. This was a state cash-benefit for those lone mothers (non-married) who could not have child-alimony from their partners, and therefore the state covered this role. The same child alimony was also given to some widowed women who could not have a child pension because their deceased husbands did not have social protection. Both lone and widow mothers received the monthly child pension

⁵³ The articles 57-60 of this law are dedicated to those families which lose the right to family pension. They are the families with a breadwinner who is imprisoned for having being declared a country enemy or who has committed a crime against socialist property and has died in prison (OGPRA, 29 September, no. 6, 1966, p. 166-167).

until the child was 12 years. When these lone mothers had more than three children, they could also benefit from the child pension for mothers with many children. If these women would start an official relationship with another man who was willing to contribute financially for their children, they could choose to either keep his contribution or the governmental one. It should be noted how the socialist government treated lone mothers in its first decades. Until the regulation of the labour force took place and fathers were by law obligated to give child alimony via direct governmental withdrawal of the alimony from their salary, the state itself played this role. Later on this law ceased to exist also because of the regulation of every-day consumption. These welfare policies of the first two decades were greatly similar to the family and child allowance for lone mothers in the UK and the Netherlands (Kilkey, 2000; Rowlingson & McKay, 2002). The difference though resides in the provision of the caring right, which was not the case for Albanian lone mothers. Albanian welfare policies treated them as workers and then as carers.

Decree no. 1472 (29 May 1952) which adjusted some of the cash benefits for lone mothers was banned with the decree 4158 (8 of August 1966). Another law of the same period, which I suppose could have had a direct impact on suspending the monthly allowance, could have been the decision of the Council of Ministers (no. 43, date 15.07.1966): “On some changes on the monthly economic assistance for children”. This decision explained that the government had suspended the food stamps system and had reduced the prices of everyday consumption and as a result of these two measures the monthly economic assistance for children, which was initially done to replace the food stamps is not necessary any longer for workers and civil servants (OGPRA, 23 July, no. 4, 1966, p. 110).

In the 3rd chapter I traced the marriage and divorce regulation during communism. The policy which supported divorced lone mothers was the direct withdrawal of the child’s allowance from the monthly salary of the biological father, and its transference to the mothers’ salary. In the fourth chapter the data findings show that of the 21 lone mothers of the communist period only 9 continued to receive the child allowance after 1990.

In the 7th chapter, with regard to the child-care aspect for lone mothers during communism, I will present histories of lone mothers who disclosed how local government had special child-care subsidies in crèches and kindergarten for lone mothers. In order to avoid repetition, I offer here a summary of the child’s allowance and child-care policy during communism. Regarding the quality and the adequacy of both the execution of these policies, further research is needed into the needs that these services endeavored to ameliorate.

Until now, this chapter has analyzed how the socialist government regulated

housing and social protection policies. The coming section will observe how the welfare policies shifted after 1990 and what was at stake for lone mothers.

5.3. Social rights for lone mothers after 1990 in Albania

Background to the socio-economic and political situation after 1990

Albania after the 1990s faced the biggest political upheaval after 47 years of communists running the country. The political change had a direct impact on the organization of the economy; thus, a different demographic and societal re-figuring of the entire society continued for longer than two decades. The collapse of the centralized country leadership was followed by an atmosphere of political pluralism. The political isolation changed towards an open diplomatic attitude in creating political and economic partnerships with European and Trans-Atlantic international donors.

The preschool and elementary educational buildings in remote rural areas faced drastic closures. The same happened to local health-care centres. In 1999, 30% of existing health care centres were not functioning and the spending GDP on health-care by this year was 2.1 percent (Interim Poverty Reduction Strategy Paper (IPRSP), p. 4.). The centralized agriculture villages created in the mid-1950s with the land properties taken from individuals disappeared. Villagers who owned their properties before the Second World War had difficulties in claiming them back entirely, and others became land holders with the new law in place (Law no. 7501, date 19.07.1991, for privatization of state farms).

As a result of this economic chaos, more than 32% of female workers lost their jobs as compared to 22% of men (Xhumari, 2009, p. 79). Xhumari (2009), using data from a publication of the Ministry of Labour, PNUD and ILO, has exposed the unemployment level in 1993 for the North, Central and South Albania, as respectively 25, 23 and 18 percent (ibid. p. 82). Employment which was not an issue in the socialist period became the major concern of the period after the 1990s. The intelligence class of teachers, artists, civil servants created in the previous years lost its stable ground. Many of them emigrated and the rest became invisible. The class who continued to suffer the most and pay the hardships of the transition was again the class of the cooperativists. Although data from INSTAT (Labour Market, 2003, p. 12) in 2002-3 indicated the main employment area to be in the agricultural sector (57% of employees) as compared to the private (23%) and public sector (20%) the situational reality of the rural areas still leaves much to be desired. The Interim Poverty Reduction Strategy Paper of the Albanian Government in 2000 reported that "Per capita GDP in Albania is lower than

the average for South-Eastern European transition countries, and significantly below the average for Central European transition countries. UNDP's human development index places Albania 100th (based on 1997 data) out of 174 countries ranked, significantly below the rankings for other transition countries in South-Eastern (55–73) and Central Europe (33–47)" (ibid., p. 3). In the macro-micro economic report of 20 June 2013 a few days before the Parliamentary Election in Albania, the World Bank announced that 60% of Albanians live in poverty and 15% live on a subsistence minimum⁵⁴.

Cooperativists legally received a determined amount of land, which hindered the allocation of other benefits to the rest of the population. The Socio-Economic Aid Programme is a limited entitlement for rural citizens who own land. Meanwhile they have no machines to work the land, but their hands, and there is no facility law in place yet to regulate the trade production by cooperativists, a law which can account for a diversity of situations. Many of them who live in remote areas and do not have financial means to travel to sell their products in some defined areas, are not allowed to sell closer to their homes or villages, unless they pay high non-official taxes to the government⁵⁵. The Interim Poverty Reduction Strategy Paper of the Albanian Government in 2000 records this problem as "27 percent of farms do not sell products to market and only 50 percent of farms use machinery" (ibid., p. 3). Yet, judging from the same paper, which refers to a Living Standard Measurement Survey in 1996, the poverty is more related to age and education rather than the gender component. The families with younger head of households 16-35 have higher poverty than those above 60 (ibid., p. 3).

The lack of employment and the drastic poverty which hit the country created the four big migration flows, data on which I presented in the introduction and the third chapter. The positive part of emigration were the remittances emigrants brought home; the negative part was the creation of lone parent families led by women, especially in rural areas and bordering cities. This was the picture of the early years of transition in Albania. In what follows, I offer an overview of

⁵⁴ The online resource of this information was taken on 20 June 2013 from the World Bank mission in Albania: <http://www.vetemshqip.info/banka-boterore-60-e-shqiptareve-jane-te-varfer/>

⁵⁵ During the last years, for work purposes I have been travelling a lot around Albania. The joy of the trip was to buy fruits, vegetables, nuts, honey and dairy productions from the villagers of the districts I was staying, especially in the areas of Fier, Vlorë, Gjiro-kastër, Pogradec, Korçë, Berat (South-West, South-East, and South-Centre). The villagers were complaining that they had no facilities to sell their products. Basically they would produce for family usage, but they had no other incomes to buy other things they would not produce at their family farms.

the steps of the Albanian Government to reformat the social protection system (with a focus on female-head households) as a national policy and as a development pushed by international donations.

Reformatting social protection in Albania and position of lone mothers

The new political governments⁵⁶ which came into power after 1990 had, as a first priority, to reduce the poverty level and grow the country's economy. Taking into account that 1/3rd of the Albanian population was poor by 2001 (INSTAT, 2004, p. 7,) it was difficult to tackle the problem thoroughly. As highlighted in many reports⁵⁷ and the poverty reduction strategies prepared by the Albanian Government and UN Agencies, the poverty in Albania has a multidimensional nature. It is not only about a lack of employment and a resulting lack of incomes or zero power of consumption. It refers more profoundly to the social existence of an individual in society, to access to education, health care, running water, sewerage and social protection systems.

The Albanian government underwent three major phases, and developed three Programmes of Poverty Reduction for economy growth and International Cooperation Strategies in the period 2001-2013. The first one is the Poverty Reduction and Growth Facility instrumental programme 2001-2004; the National Plan of Socio-Economic Development 2004-2007 is the second one and the National Strategy for Development and Integration 2007-2013 is the third of the three strategic steps undertaken in these two last decades. The Social Inclusion Crosscutting Strategy 2007-2013 is a component of the last one. These pro-

⁵⁶ The power of running the country has been concentrated in the hands of the two largest political parties, the right and left wing until early 2000. Later each of the parties who came into power created coalitions with the other smallest parties which are positioned right of the left, thus creating the left and right-wing coalition of The Democratic Party (1991-1997), the Socialist Party (1997-2001), The Left Coalition (2001-2005), The Right Coalition (2005-2009) and the Right Coalition with the second bigger left-wing Party, SMI (2009-2013). From 2013 onwards most parliamentary seats have been held by the wide Left Coalition with the second bigger left-wing Party, SMI.

⁵⁷ About the poverty profile in Albania please read: Albania Interim Poverty Reduction Strategy Paper, prepared by the Government of Albania, on 3 May 2000; the Albania Country Assistance Strategy Progress Report, prepared by the World Bank in 2000; the Albanian Human Development Report, 2000, prepared by the NDP mission in Albania in cooperation with Albanian academics, scholars, economists and activists of the civil society; The Health Care System in Albania in the early 1990s, prepared by the European Observatory on the Health Care System.

grammes were drafted, implemented and supported in close cooperation, guidance and monitoring with the World Bank, the International Monetary Fund, UN Agencies⁵⁸ and EC bodies operating in Albania. The endeavors of the Albanian government to become a member of NATO and EU have influenced social policies with other major political, legal, financial and administrative transformations. In the following section I will summarize how these three instrumental programmes objectified and planned the social policies in the country for the needy and for social insurance contributors.

The three main elements of the first poverty reduction strategy were economic growth, human, urban and rural development and access to basic services. Human development integrated strategies in health care, education, and social protection and child poverty sectors. The social protection plan of the government included cash-benefit social assistance and social-care community programmes also for single mothers and children without parents (IPRD 2000, P. 8). After the implementation of the first National Strategy on Socio-Economic Development (NSSED), the Ministry of Finance of Albania, the International Monetary Fund (IMF) and the World Bank (WB) prepared a *Progress report to analyze the country situation after first intervention, and lay out the plan for the second one*. The report emphasized that during 2003 the poorest part of the country was the Northern and Northern-Eastern areas, notably Kukës and Dibër⁵⁹. In these districts “45% of the population falls below the official poverty line. 80% of family incomes in these districts are covered by social protection schemes, economic assistance and disability payments” (ibid., p. 50). Other significant results of the report draw attention to the higher poverty of households of female parents when compared to those led by male ones, on a ratio 35 to 1. It is, nevertheless, obvious that data resources from the Line Ministries⁶⁰ and INSTAT are still lacking categorical segregation.

The 2003 report pinpointed the effect on country demography and household economy of inner migrants who moved to the outskirts of big cities from the Northern and other rural parts of the country. From 37 percent of the popula-

⁵⁸ See for the un Agencies operating in Albania, the list of Abbreviations at the beginning of this dissertation.

⁵⁹ The Peshkopia district of Dibra qark was one of the cities in which I conducted research with lone mothers.

⁶⁰ Line Ministries is short-hand terminology used in strategic documents and reports from the Albanian government, international donors and civil society sector, which undermines the cooperation or task division between other national ministries. Instead of listing the names of ministries one by one, every time the implementing or monitoring aspects are at stake Line Ministries is used.

tion living in urban areas by 1990, by 2003 the number had grown to 48 percent. 80% of these inner migrants in peri-urban areas are poor. They have created slum neighborhoods with no access to infrastructure, pipe water, sewerage and they miss civil registration transference from their communes, and therefore have no access to social protection assistance schemes, education or health care (ibid, p. 51).

The social assistance in 2003 covered 19.6% of the entire population, according to the Ministry's report. There is no division, however, which refers to categories of families or female-headed families which are part of this scheme. On the other hand, in the coming section which contains a more extensive description of the Socio-Economic Aid Programme, I will also refer to the survey financed by UNIFEM (today UN Women). This survey analyzed the Socio-Economic Aid programme from a gender perspective, and took into consideration the different categorical approaches for this programme, in the cities of Kukës (North-East) and Elbasan (Central Albania). Social categories at risk represented in this report are poor families, children at risk (6700 working and street children, 5000 children emigrated without parents to Greece and Italy), children who leave school prematurely, children who are restricted to their house due to vendettas, young people at risk, the elderly, disabled persons, the Roma and Egyptian community. Even though the 2003 report does not specify, it can be said that a considerable part of these groups at risk are members of households led by lone mothers. In 2002, 133,000 families received social assistance; this decreased to 90,000 families in 2003. 42% of these families who received social assistance were located in urban areas; the rest (58%) were located in rural ones (NSED 2004-2007, p. 87).

The housing policy has remained problematic due to the large number of families who are homeless or have no adequate housing or the financial means to buy a new house or a better accommodation. The costs to cover this policy are too high and the objective of 2004 was "to devise relief measures for homeless families" (NSED 2004-2007, p. 87). Meanwhile by 2003, the social insurance scheme had introduced the new legal framework to handle invasion, lowering the business contribution from 42.5% to 38.5% in 2002.

The big leap of the NSED for 2004-2007 was its incorporation with the Millennium Development Goals (MDG), and the Stabilization Association Agreement (SAA)⁶¹. As stressed in the NSED, the poverty reduction strategies needed

⁶¹ The 2004 Conference "Towards European Integration and Achievement of MDG through the NSED", sponsored by the Ministry of Finance of Albania, played an important role in formulating the long-term objectives of NSED and its incorporation with MDG and SAA. The other conference "Towards European Integration and Achievement

to be maintained; however, they had to shift towards the EU goal. It meant adjusting the poverty reduction and economy growth strategy to EU criteria for political stability, economic development and *acquis communautaire*. The Albanian National Social Policy, therefore, should from 2003 onwards be looked at as a result of EU enlargement criteria, and World Bank and UN programme strategies on poverty reduction, democracy, institutional and administrative building in transition and towards development countries. As I shall elaborate in chapter 7 through the voices of lone mothers in Albania who have access or do not have access to these public policies, their experience has highlighted that *de jure* policies not always respond/ed to the overall reality of the categories at risk they try to ameliorate. Multilateral international organizations WB, UN Agencies, and the EU mission in Albania provide room in every strategy for cooperation with civil society stakeholders, for the purpose of strategy or law drafting. However, I demonstrate in chapter 6 that lobbying initiatives by women local NPOs in Albania are silenced by the state when their suggestions should be translated in respective state budget voices. Therefore, as in the communist period, policy making and policy decision takes place top down. Whereas under communism policies were drafted, implemented, monitored and evaluated by the government, in the aftermath of communism policies in Albania were drafted by the government with the expertise of International Representation Bodies in Albania and their funding instruments.

The National Strategy for Socio-economic Development 2004-2007 (NSSED) paid attention to families led by one parent, female-led households, and early child education and care. The elderly, disabled people, orphans, children from families in need and other categories at risk are part of this Socio-Economic development plan. Regarding early child education and care, which is a serious impediment for female employment in Albania, the report informed the setting up of future goals to build institutional and administration capacity of crèches and social-care services for children in the age group 0-3 years. The long-term goal included exclusively children from families in need, or families with more than 3 children (NSSED 2004-2007, p. 64). The Ministry of Local Government and Decentralization, the Ministry of Education and Science and the Ministry of Labor and Social Affairs were engaged into achieving this goal. In 2003 The Ministry of Education and Science, on the other hand, set a goal of aiming to bring 50-70% of children of 3-5 years, and 100% of children of 5-6 years old in a pre-school system programme drafted for the period 2003-2015 (NSSED 2004-

of MDGs through the NSSED”, organized with support of the UNDP, played a crucial role in formulating the implementation and monitoring strategies of NSSED.

2007, p. 62). In 2004 the Ministry of Labor engaged to revise its social protection and care system, focusing on cash-benefit assistance to women who are heads of their families, parallel to providing professional training (NSESSED 2004-2007, p. 64). Future planning goals entailed the establishment and organization of a statistic registration system for children up to 6 years old as well as gathering and organizing data on gender aggregation. Agreements with other member states to enforce one parent to give the child alimony to the parent who has custody are also aimed to be legislatively introduced (NSESSED 2004-2007, p. 62). The strategy mentions agreements with other member states, which are intended for the parents who have emigrated and do not give any alimony to their children in their country of origin (NSESSED 2004-2007, p. 82).

The NSESSED 2004-2007 aimed to reform the system and the content of education. The measures which would benefit lone mothers and their children were the delivery of free text-books for the compulsory education to 9 years, the establishment of programmes to increase access to compulsory and secondary education for poor children and improve the teaching conditions at schools (NSESSED 2004-2007, p. 82). The health-care policies aimed to reduce child and mother mortality during delivery from 41 deceased children in 1000 births in 1990 to 16 deaths by 2003 and to 10 deaths by 2005 (Ibid., p. 83, p. 100). The provision of basic health-services in remote areas and the reduction of the corruption for bribed services are other measures of several campaigns throughout the country (NSESSED 2004-2007, p. 83-84).

Social policy was a third aspect of life-quality improvement. The establishment of employment offices infrastructure, operation, and coordination with other institutions and companies, as well as monitoring was put in place during 2003 with the support of the Swedish National Employment Agency and ANPE-France (NSESSED 2002-2005, p. 87). There is, however, no indication how these offices would prioritize women who run one-parent families. During these years an emphasis was put on formalizing the labour market (NSESSED 2004-2007, p. 85). Its formalization would indirectly benefit lone mothers to increase contributing years for the retirement pensions and have a minimum level of social protection in case of sickness. Vocational training, as an alternative form of secondary education, in response to market needs employment and labour access promotion for poor groups at risk are yet other measures with regard to economic growth and out-of-poverty strategies (ibid., p. 118). Similar to other Western countries, especially regarding the welfare benefits for lone mothers (UK, the Netherlands), the Albanian government from 2003 designed as a long-term objective to “reduce public expenditure on unemployment benefits and social assistance and increase spending on active labor market programs” (NSESSED 2004-2007, p. 88).

The government aimed at drafting a legal framework which gave priority to social services over financial aid in cash. The Albanian government acknowledged that “economic aid is a passive policy with regard to the poverty reduction and as such needs to be continuously updated during the poverty reduction process” (NSED 2004-2007, p. 87).

The social protection system faced two major changes in 1993 and 2003. The social protection law of 1993 had introduced a new unemployment benefit for individuals who lost their jobs (1 year of unemployment assistance). However, the interviews conducted with lone mothers after 1990 demonstrate that not all of them who lost their jobs in that period benefited from this unemployment benefit, especially the women who had been workers of agricultural cooperatives. The law required a 42.5% coverage for the social insurance paid by the employer. Only state enterprises and institutions could pay this coverage. This was a high expense for the new private informal economies; therefore, most of the employees working in the private sector were not covered for many years. The social insurance system of 2003 introduced new forms of protection such as a voluntarily protection scheme, and a scheme for self-employed people. This law reduced the burden of social protection for the employer to 38.5, 11.7% of which was paid by the employer. Nevertheless, many people could still not pay their coverage percentage due to their low wage level and private employers were still unwilling to contribute their part.

From a gender perspective, when compared to the former codes of 1972, 1982, 1987, the Labour Code of 2003 offered a better maternity leave in terms of extension, financial incentives and acknowledgement as a contributive year. However, this code did not allow for reconciliation policies, which would ease the working and caring responsibilities for working mothers, lone mothers included. Moreover, mothers who had not been paying social contributions could not benefit from maternity leave. The Labor Code of 2003, nor the Social Protection Law of 2003, covered the caring aspect for sick children. The sick leave protection was possible only for working people but not for family members, which was allowed, though with limitations during the communist period. Due to different types of employment, such as seasonal jobs or part-time jobs, there is a need for flexibility in working hour arrangements, especially for lone mothers.

The two main goals towards the governmental programme for economic growth social security for the National Strategy for Development and Integration were the planning preparation, implementation and monitoring to become part of two big multilateral organizations: NATO and the EU.

The current phase of cooperation between the Government of Albania and the World Bank is the country Partnership Strategy 2011-2014 which points out

some big challenges for the Albanian government in the social arena: the validity and contemporaneity of the social protection system, the gender-bias in the labour market (where women appear to be more vulnerable, and therefore lack social protection commodity). From 1991 until today, the development partnership strategies between the Government of Albania and the World Bank have extensively highlighted the lack of quality and access to education and health-care public sectors. The design of a National Strategy for Social Protection, the Reformation of the New Pension System, the improvement of the Social Assistance Programme to respond to the Pensioning System were processes which to certain degrees were supported and implemented by NPOs. This means, that local women NPOs collaborated with the government and continue to in implementation of this programs.

The UNDP Aid Programme for Albania had another component of support to the Albanian Government in particular and Albanian society. The World Bank has been cooperating closely with the INSTAT to improve the methodologies of data collection and bring it in to an International standard. UNIFEM has been working with the MLOSAEO, and UNDP or “Delivering as One” programme of 2008. This has connected the efforts of the Government of Albania and the UN Agencies active in Albania (2011-2016). UNIFEM’s (today UN Women) support for Albania started by 2000. Its main strategies covered the support with expertise and finances to draft the Gender and Equity in Society Law (2004, amended in 2008), the National Strategy for Gender Equity and Domestic Violence (2007-2010), the Domestic Violence Law (2004, amended in 2008), The Law for Measures Against Domestic Violence (2006), VCM for Mechanism of Work Cooperation to Transfer Cases of Domestic Violence and its Proceedings (2011). The coordination of work between UNIFEM and Austrian Development to establish the network of local public gender focal points in all municipalities and communes of Albania was one of the major successes of international donors for introducing institutional mechanisms as a tool to achieve gender mainstreaming. The role of civil society in the 12 years of this programme implementation has been participatory and integral.

The public spending for education, health care in Albania, remains problematic, as we can see in these NSSEDS. By the year 2003, 2.9% of GDP was allocated to the health-care sector; 2.85% to the education sector (NSSED 2004-2007, pp. 82-83).

Local governments and welfare programmes for lone mothers

Based on the welfare services delivered by the local government, I will offer three

types of data in this part. The first one has to do with the information I received in the interviews with seven representatives of the Departments of Socio-Economic Aid in seven respective municipalities and one interview with the Director of the Directorate of the Implementation of the Law on Socio-Economic Aid and Disability pensions. The second type of data comes from lone mothers who have used these welfare services. I refer to their quantitative data, since I offer their qualitative comments on these services in the 7th chapter. The third type of data used here consists of studies or reports conducted and developed concerning some of the welfare policies offered by local government. Although there is a strong inter-departmental connection between the Socio-Economic Aid Department and the employment offices, the directors of Socio-economic and Social Support programmes within municipalities could often not give detailed answers about the employment services. Therefore, future research can take into consideration that interviews need to be done with employees who work for these respective services because they have more in-depth knowledge about the application of the law and needs assessment. The directors are more informative in terms of data quantity and cooperation and negotiation with other central sectorial institutions, non-governmental organizations, the business community and international donors.

The questionnaire directed to the representatives social state services and the local governments as the units which execute the decentralization policies intended to observe and describe the development of the welfare policies that are offered to lone mothers and their children. The questionnaire was divided into three parts. The first part contained general questions to the interviewee to understand the disciplinary background of the person who holds the post and also questions about the data gathering and institutional reporting and need's assessment of lone mothers. The second part of the questionnaire contained questions about the definition used or accepted by local government employees on the category of women householders/lone mothers and on specific policies undertaken to treat this category and their children. The third part of the questionnaire contained questions about the cooperation with the non-government organizations and the business community in support of lone mothers.

From the 10 districts in which the survey was undertaken, seven directors of the socio-economic aid departments answered the questionnaire (5 face to face interviews and 2 online questionnaires). It has been difficult to interview the representatives of the municipalities of Fier (South Albania), Pogradec (South-East) and Shkodër (West-North), although I did organize official meetings in their offices. (See appendix 3.3 for their names and positions).

The representatives of the socio-economic aid departments are in the age

group 29 to 56. They have between 5 to 7 years of experience in their current position as directors or social specialists and more than 10 years of experience in the local government administration. Their backgrounds are in economy, management and social sciences and they are continuously trained on issues they work with daily.

All interviewees declare to be fully dependent on the state budget to deliver their services, especially regarding the socio-economic aid programme and disability pensions. Asked about the families of lone mothers in their Socio-Economic Aid Programmes from the local elections of 2011, their statistics represent these rates:

- Korçë (South-East) municipality is treating 1164 families of which 345 are headed by women or 29.6% of the total.
- Elbasan (Central) municipality is treating 2464 families (the number of women-headed families was not known to the employer at that point).
- Vlorë (South-West) municipality is treating 950 families, of which 260 are women-headed families or 27.3% of the total.
- Sarandë (South-West) is treating 211 families of which 92 or 43.6% are women headed families..
- Peshkopi (North-East) is treating 900 families of which 84 or 9.2% are women-headed families.
- Durrës (Central) is treating 537 families of which 158 or 29.4% are women-headed families.
- Berat (South-Central) municipality is treating 1034 families of which 233 or 22.5% are women-headed families.

The families headed by one woman have become visible from the census of 2011 onwards. During the interviews with representatives of the socio-economic aid departments in municipalities (see appendix 3.3 for their names and positions), it became evident that the families of women households were not segregated further into sub-groups such as widow mothers or divorced mothers. It would be important to use this data in the future when segregating them into respective sub-groups of types of women-headed families.

Sociologically speaking, the data presented here are a reflection of the family typologies per region but also of the employment level. For example, in the center of Albania, especially in Durrës, where the employment of the population is high and the population number is higher. Compared to other cities, the number of families receiving economic aid is small due to a higher employment rate. Peshkopi city is known as the poorest region of the country, although the population number is lower compared to other areas. The number of families treated with socio-economic aid is higher due to poverty and low employment levels. In my sample, the South of Albania is represented by a larger number of women-headed families, which as we saw from the data gathered concerning the creation of marriages, shows a larger representation of marriages with the consent of both spouses. Therefore, this area has also a higher tolerance towards divorce, also caused by the emigration of the male population to Greece, since Saranda and Korca are border areas with Greece.

Overall Albania has 11,651 women-headed families who received Economic-Aid, or 11.22% of all families during January-June 2013 (appendix 3.3., interview 8). The number of women on the country level is revealed by Leonard Strazimiri, the Director of the Directorate of the Implementation of the Law on Socio-Economic Aid and Disability pensions. When asked how many families are women-headed families he refers to the last report of the Social State Service of January-June 2013 which shows that 71,019 families receive partial socio-economic aid assistance and 32,736 families receive full economic assistance.

The delivered welfare programmes for lone mothers

The social programmes and services provided to lone mothers by the local government I researched are: Economic aid programme; Employment service and vocational training programme; Health care for mothers and their children; Family pension and retirement as programmes of the social protection scheme; Unemployment benefit; Social housing and housing with soft loans from banks; Disability pension for lone mothers and their children; Subsidy for school-text books for their children; Pre-school educational child-care programmes; Free legal assistance for mothers undergoing divorce in cooperation with international donors and local women NPOs. For each of these services I have tried to combine statistical data from my survey, what percentage of women use what kind of service or not, with comments mothers have on that type of service. Parallel to this, I try to look at the *de jure* legislation in order to see its practical application in reality. When possible, to these two types of data and information are added UNDP and WB reports on these services, reports of the former Ministry of Labour and

Albanian and international scholars who have previously researched the target and the impact of these services.

1. Economic-Aid Programme

The law on ‘Economic-Aid 1993’ (Ndihma Ekonomike) was the first strategic step of the Albanian government to assist poor families in urban areas, formerly industrial, and a few rural ones with a cash benefit. In 1995 this law was amended and became more inclusive on the base of means-tested incomes (Mangiavacchi & Verme, 2011, p. 4). Data from WB and scholars who analyzed the impact of this cash benefit on the welfare of households reached the conclusion that the cash benefit of social assistance did not lead family members out of poverty, due to the insignificant amount delivered (WB, 2006, p. 169 quoted in Mangiavacchi, & Verme, 2011, p. 4).

As a result of the country agreements, UN Women has played a strategic role in research provision, data collection, gender segregation of data analysis, and policy drafting. In 2009, the UNIFEM funded research to analyze Economic-Aid and Gender Equality in the municipality of Elbasan and the Commune of Rrethina in Kukës. The research in both these localities aimed for individual and group interviews among women-headed households and men-headed households, parallel to interviews with local and central policy stakeholders and desk analyses of the policy provision. This research reached similar findings as other research conducted by the Association of “Women-headed families” in Tirana, previous research on the effects of the economic aid and my own research on lone mothers, namely that the economic aid programme is not designed to lead households out of poverty.

In the second chapter I presented some gender criticism of welfare policies for lone mothers in Europe, amongst which Lister (2006) and Kilkey (2000) who pointed out that lone mothers do better when cash benefits they receive from the government are designed in terms of individuals and not in terms of households. The same outcome and recommendation can be found in research financed by UNIFEM:

“To truly eliminate the gender disparities in the Economic Aid Programme, NE Law must target individuals in need (and their dependants) and not households [...]” (ibid, 2009, p. 2).

One of the recommendations of the UNIFEM research was that the law on economic aid must be revised to expand the categories of beneficiaries in need by including women as ‘head of households’. Based on the interviews with female

heads of households (widow, separated, abandoned, non-wed women) my research recommends the inclusion of all these types of women-headed families, even in cases which law drafters did not foresee as fitting the criteria of heads of households. Similar to the findings of my research with lone mothers which indicate the reasons why lone mothers cannot qualify for receiving the Socio-Economic Aid benefit the research of UNIFEM lists the same issues. The lack of documentation to prove that the ex-husband does not pay child allowance when he is working inside and outside Albania and the problems related to household-property documents during and after divorce are the main problems women heading households have addressed when interviewed by researchers financed by former UNIFEM. Since my research addresses different types of social welfare programmes of the government, it intends to create a broader view on this issue. Moreover, it involves more interviews with lone mothers who receive this economic aid and it was located in 10 districts of Albania. Therefore, the list of reasons why lone mothers cannot qualify for an economic-aid program is larger.

The UNIFEM report relates to the debate about neoliberal and non-neoliberal policies of the World Bank and UN agencies in Albania. The cooperation programme of the government of Albania and the United Nations 2012-2016 is in line with the National Strategy for Economic Development and Integration (2006-2013) which connects the Albanian government development strategy with the EU. Due to EU directives on social inclusion and reconciliation policies for one-parent families the supportive strategy of the “Delivering as One” Program to Social Services in Albania by UN agencies was more pro-solidarity and pro-inclusion than neoliberal. The reports financed by UNIFEM picture the Albanian reality and suggest pro-welfare mechanisms for female-headed households, they suggested alternatives for neoliberal policies. This is not to say that international donors are against neoliberal policies. While the World Bank and IMF support neoliberal structural policies in other countries, they can also adopt a similar stance in Albania. However, the role of the UN in Albania has until now been pro human-rights development and pro Millennium Development Goals and takes on a different nature with regard to welfare policies. Thus, I suggest that we distinguish between different policies, those of the World Bank and the International Monetary Fund and those of the UN agencies in international human development.

From 2001 onwards the delivery process of the economic aid for poor families was organized on a different level when compared to the first decade. The decentralization process, with the localization of central programmes in Albania, started in 2000. Until this year, the application of the law on ‘Economic Aid’ was managed by the Social State Service. With the decentralization process it became

easier to target the needy, the categories at risk and poor families in the localities due to the employees of the economic department who were institutionalized in local governments. Targeting the needy was more successful in small cities where local employees could have easier access to the community and identify the real poor (Mangiavacchi & Verme 2011, p. 4). However, as the NSEED 2004-2007 objective for social assistance indicated, local employees would not be given a free hand and the authority to identify the needy in the community. Rather, the list of documents the poor family members need to fill in to show they belonged to the means-tested category. This measure was taken because more than 47% of families who received this social assistance did not belong to the category of the poor. Despite the intention to improve the targeting and reduce the non-poor category which received this service, the WBS report, which has been supported by the Albanian government in all the stages of NSEED, raised the issue of exclusion rather than inclusion of the real poor. Due to the large number of documents to be provided, or the lower cash-benefit in rural areas, members of poor families cannot access this service.

Of the 101 divorced lone mothers I interviewed for this research, only 20.6% receive economic aid from the Economic-Aid Programme. Of separated lone mothers, 3.75 receive this aid; 17% are widowed who are also involved in this scheme; 57.1% of abandoned lone mothers and 25% of lone mothers undergoing divorce receive this aid. Of the group of divorced lone mothers, 5% received this assistance from more than 10 years, the rest have become part of the programme over the last 3-5 years. Support from Economic-Aid Programme dependent upon different criteria, such as the number of years the lone mother has been divorced; education level; age of the children; number of people she is living with and the earning ability they have; child alimony from her former husband; willingness to find work and be informed by the local employment office continuously.

In 2011 rules for Economic Aid were loosened, women with husbands in prison, or with husbands disappeared in migration could be entitled. Also widowed lone mothers who do not receive a child pension or family pension after the death of the husband (because he either had a few years of social contribution or because he has been working on the black market and therefore never had the possibility to have social contribution) could in principle apply for Economic-Aid. The presence of widowed lone mothers in this scheme is proof of the fact that the existent policy was executed; nevertheless, not all widowed lone mothers could access this support as I reflected in the 7th chapter.

Recently more divorced women have been able to access this assistance when compared to years ago. This has to do with the attention of local employees and policy-makers to the fact that the major part of divorced men does not pay child

alimony. Education plays a role because have to be able to read or understand all the documents.. In the last years local women NPOs have helped lone mothers to gather such documents. (see 6th and 7th chapter) The lone mothers who use this service are not satisfied with this aid as it does not help them to cover the basic expenses of only bread making or buying for all family members. They receive 2,400-3,600 ALL per month. In euro this amount can be 19 to 25 euro per month. Their comments on their assessment of this service and their future expectations I elaborate on chapter 7.

The emigration of the mostly male population, towards Greece and Italy, has increased the number of lone mothers in Albania. Many of them have been unable to get a divorce, because they do not have telephone contact with their husbands. Their in-laws also maintain a distant relation with them. These women have difficulties to prove to the local government that their husbands do not contribute any child alimony for their children. The perception that immigrants bring remittances to their families jeopardizes the real situation of women. 30 percent of lone mothers or 72 interviewees have husbands in immigration. 75 percent of these men have emigrated for more than 10 years from Albania, 25 percent have a history of 1-5 years. From 2005 onwards, this category of abandoned lone mothers has been acknowledged in the National Strategy of Social Services (2005-2010) drafted by the (MLSAEO) and in the National Strategy on Gender Equality and the Eradication of the Gender Violence and Domestic Violence (2011-2015). The presence of this group of lone mothers treated by economic aid also [this is unclear: presents an application of the laws]; however, the demand of the abandoned lone mothers is higher than what is covered by the local government.

Within the category of lone mothers I interviewed there is a category which deserves special attention, namely Roma and Egyptian women. In the National Strategies the Roma and Egyptian population are treated together, nevertheless, there are stark differences between these two ethnical groups regarding their countries of origin, the language they use and their life style. During the socialist period and still today the Egyptian community enjoys citizenship rights. The members of this community are registered in the localities they live in. They live in properties they have earned through their work, have access to schools and basic health-care services. The Roma community, on the other hand, gained public visibility when communism collapsed. Only in the last decade, declared as the Roma decade in Albania, the local authorities, Roma NPOs and civil society in general committed to register this community in civil registries. Until recently many of them lived in temporary tents on the shore of rivers, or in the outskirts of town areas. In the last 10 years the UNDP has emphasized in their Roma strat-

egies that it wants to educate children from this population group. I have interviewed 18 lone mothers who belong to the Roma and Egyptian community. Four of them were Roma and 14 of them Egyptian. The Roma women I interviewed were living in the old ruins of the archeological Museum of Durrës city. The Egyptian women were introduced for this research by local women NPOs in the cities of Korçë, Durrës, Berat and Vlorë on my request. Eight lone mothers from the Egyptian community receive economic aid from the municipalities they live, but none of the Roma has this opportunity because they have not been registered yet as residents in the localities they live also due to the reason that they have mobile tents and they move to different cities every year.

The Economic-Aid Programme is paid from the annual budget which is allocated to local governments from the central budget, based on yearly demands from citizens who qualify for this aid. However, since there are more demands filed for this aid, as compared to citizens who fulfill the documentation criteria and become part of it, judging from the interviews with representatives of socio-economic aid departments some municipalities have organized yearly programs from the budget of the municipalities to support other types of families who live beneath the poverty line. Within these families those headed by women householders are the most prominent category which receives support. These type of programmes were developed in Korça (South-East), in Durrës (Central), in Elbasan (Central), in Saranda (South-West) and in Berati (South-Central) according to the interviews with Ilir Zguri (Korça municipality), Meme Xhaferraj (Durrës municipality), Kadri Kruja (Elbasan Municipality) and Vjollca Hoxha (Berati municipality). Vlora and Peshkopia municipality administrate only the social fund allocated by the government.

I have asked the representatives of the local government about any additional fund that the municipality creates from the annual budget to proceed with the programme of economic aid to support poor families or whether they are always dependent on the state.

Meme Xhaferraj, who is the director of the Directorate of social Service, wrote in her answer:

“The annual budget of the Durrës municipality has a special fund for poor families which cannot benefit from the economic aid scheme which is paid from the state budget for legal reasons (even though they are poor families). Since they are excluded from this scheme, in the Municipal Council we have approved other criteria for economic aid which benefit these families and every year we plan a special fund. For the year 2013 this fund was 6.000.000 ALL; 158 families benefited and the major part were

women-headed families (divorced, violated, widowed and non-married women) whose age is not favorable to work access. This practice started from 2008 with a fund of 300.000 ALL with fewer families and it faced an increase due to a larger demand”(Appendix 3.2, interview no. 2)

Vjollca Hoxha, director of the Directorate of Social Service in Berat municipality, says about the modest programme they have in their municipality to support poor families who do not qualify for the economic aid scheme: “There are 20 families that our municipality treats as special cases. Of them 9 are headed by women householders”. (Appendix 3.2, interview no. 5)

A testimony of this special programme is an Egyptian widow lone mother with 7 children, 37 years old, whose husband had died 3 years before the interview took place. He did not have social contribution years; therefore, the municipality of Berati had included her in the annual municipal scheme. (Appendix 1.4., interview no. 197). I write about her evaluation of this program and her worry about its short-term application in chapter 7. Thus, such programmes are greatly dependent on the annual budget of the municipality. This is of course different from the state’s Socio-Economic Aid scheme which can continue for more than 18 years when families can testify that they continue to be in the same situation and comply with the community work obligations. Meme Xhaferaj for example states that some families were excluded from the Economic-Aid scheme for months or years because they could not keep up with the obligation to perform community work.

The conditionality enforcing and moralizing character of the welfare state is a topic which is reflected in the gender scholarship of Waaldijk (2006), Lister (2006), Lewis (2002), Kilkey (2000) to mention but a few. In the second chapter I gave an overview of how Kilkey has grouped the positions of lone mothers within the welfare state based on the in-work, out-of-work and in-between jobs incentives they receive to care and earn for their children. Seen from the gender perspective developed within this gender scholarship, the Economic Aid programme of the Albanian government does not have the power to position lone mothers as either workers or carers in-between periods of caring or moving in-and-out of work. The economic aid programme’s payments are limited in time and conditioned in the form of a monthly remuneration. Therefore, as I indicate in 4th and 7th chapters, lone mothers can use it for a limited period of time but it does not enable them to escape poverty. From its inception this law has been unable to tackle the obligation and right to care, especially for the categories of women householders. The welfare state in Albania does not give the lone mothers the right to choose caring over work or to combine both when they need to do so.

The municipality of Saranda has found a different way to support lone mothers with their children: “In the daily children’s centre, which is under the administration of Saranda municipality, we have included 15 children from lone mothers’ families” (Appendix 3.2., interview no. 4).

To summarize, the new law for Economic Aid has been more open for the categories of mothers undergoing divorce and who have experienced violence and are in possession of a protection order. The delivery of this service shows that some types of mother-headed families can benefit from this entitlement, either through the state law and budget or through the yearly programmes from the municipalities (especially divorced mothers, abandoned mothers and those whose husbands are imprisoned or have emigrated, and a few teenage mothers). The reasons why some lone mothers cannot access this service are listed in the 7th chapter 7.

Although the Economic Aid Programme could be seen as insignificant, its value resides in the fact that it exposes lone mothers to the employment service and to the possibility of receiving a subsidy for the school books of their children. Since the economic aid is limited to people willing to work and to get registered as unemployed, I will spend the coming section analyzing the work of these offices. How do representatives of the local government see this service and how it is institutionalized and organized? For the Albanian case it needs to be clear that although lone mothers are registered as unemployed, they do not receive unemployment benefit, since they are unemployed for many years. Only those lone mothers who have been working the last year before remaining alone, and have been paying social insurance contribution, are entitled to receive unemployment benefit. The unemployment benefit is relative to the years of their work and to the salary they received the last working year.

2. Employment service and vocational training

The NSSD 2004-2007 settled the objectives for the establishment, institutionalization, administration, organization, monitoring and evaluation of the State Employment Service. Initially, it started as a pilot project, with the support of the French and Swedish governments, and the implementation of the French model, in three cities of Albania, in Durrës, Elbasan and Shkodër city. The mid-term and long-term goal of this state service was to institutionalize the coordination between lacking skills in the market as requested by private businesses with the organization or Vocational Training Programme to respond to these needs. Yet, these two elements would be closely linked with targeting and registering officially as many unemployed people of the working age population. The mediation of finding jobs for unemployed people and matching business demands with job

seekers was yet another objective this long-term project aimed at. Although data from the report of the Financial Ministry of 2003 showed that from 2002-2003 these offices surpassed the target they set up before, and it highlights the formulation of a new curriculum for eight different types of vocational training the lone mothers interviewed have a negative experience with the local employment offices.

All the mothers who receive economic assistance have to be registered at the local employment service as unemployed. The number of years they are registered corresponds to the number of years they receive economic aid. Since these two programmes are closely linked, it is a condition for each person who receives economic aid to register herself as a job-seeker. 58.3 percent of all the categories of lone mothers registered themselves in the local employment service. More than 70% percent of the lone mothers who are registered as unemployed are not satisfied with this service as they are never offered a job. The other 30% are offered jobs in local businesses, such as sanitary in hotels or restaurants, bar tenders or waiters in bars or restaurants, working in the sawing industry, cooking assistant in the kitchen and care for the elderly. The correlation between the age factor, the education level and the locality of origin of the unemployed lone mothers does play a role in their position with regard to job opportunities. The data shows that university-educated women are not registered in employment offices. As I have shown in chapter 4, they have better chances in the labour market as compared to less educated women. 74.8 percent of women with 8 years of education are registered as job seekers when compared to the other 25.2% that have a high school diploma. The survey shows that 95% of lone mothers aged 50 and above have fewer chances to find a job. From the observation of the data gathered, lone mothers in the age group 40-50 with a diploma from second elementary education have a 65% chance to find a job in catering, cooking, sawing, elderly care and tourism jobs in the season months. Lone mothers in the age category 25-40 with second elementary and high school education have higher chances to find a job as sanitary in business institutions, tailoring, and bars. The unemployed registered lone mothers themselves point out that there is an age limit to finding a job via the local employment offices. When they have small children, it is difficult for them to combine the care work and the paid job. The house location becomes another problem for these mothers, since they earn too little to spend those earnings on transportation costs, as I have shown in chapter 7 through the story of a divorced mother working as a sanitary in a bar in Durrës.

This programme is a derivative of the National Strategy of the State Employment Service, which set up clear mid and long-term objectives in 2004-2007. The vocational training is an empowering instrument to prepare job seekers to stand

better chances in the labour market. There are, however, two different approaches with regard to the category of students these programmes attract. The first one is the category of young students who chose vocational training as a professional alternative to high school. The other category are the job-seekers coming from the employment offices with a special orientation on the type of market request needs and the vocational training program the job-seekers should follow to become an employee in the future. Whereas it is easier to accommodate the first category of students with courses and jobs, it is quite difficult to accommodate the students sent by the employment office with the right course and the right job. These students are in a different age group and might have different preferences from what is suggested and offered to them.

In this respect the situation with lone mothers is quite problematic. The age group of mothers who are lowly educated and have never worked before is the most difficult to accommodate, since it is difficult for them to learn a new skill at that age (as they themselves say), especially when it comes to sewing. They also do not prefer to work in the sewing industry as this work is problematic for their back, neck and eyes. Therefore, the only jobs for them to do are in the maintenance of houses, buildings, bars, restaurants, hotels and in elderly care. These jobs are not well paid. The other category of lone mothers is the age-group 20-40; this group is more flexible in learning new skills and responding to the needs of the market; however, they have problems finding child-care during their training programmes.

The survey has shown that only one of the lone mothers who registered in the employment offices were offered a vocational training programme. For the sake of truth it should be said that some vocational training programs are offered to these women in cooperation with local women NPOs, but since women themselves are not interested to ask who offers this service to them they think it is only by NPOs. It is therefore necessary that, when these women enter vocational training programmes which are coordinated by the employment offices of the local government and the women NPOs, they are given this information several times⁶² until they know who is offering them what.

⁶² In my previous job as a trainer and programme manager for Partners-Albania, through a project supported by the Soros Foundation, I was engaged in some training programmes on CV preparation and interviewing skills for the students of the Vocational Training Institute and the Professional High School in Vlorë city. In the Vocational Training Institute I was surprised by the indifference to information on the part of the students. Many of them did not know the name of the school they were attending, or of the program they were following. I have found the same lack of information or disinterest while interviewing lone mothers regarding vocational training programmes they have followed. They

Of all the lone mothers I have interviewed, only two of them in Durrës knew that they are offered the elderly-care course by the Employment Office in cooperation with the Association for Women with Social Problems Durrës. One other mother informed me that her daughter was offered a secretarial course by this Office.

The survey with lone mothers and the interviews with representatives of the local government have revealed that employment offices and the vocational training programmes are more structured and organized in big and bordering cities, such as Durrës, Vlorë, and Elbasan. The other cities are not visible, also due to a lack of development of private businesses, especially the cities in the North-East (Peshkopi) and South-Central Albania (Berat).

This reality can be also be observed and assessed from the answers of the representatives of the local government. The representatives of the municipalities which do have in place such programmes are more informative in nature as compared to those who do not offer such services. There are municipalities which offer vocational training programmes, although a demand's assessment strategy to measure the business community demands for new skills is missing. According to the information received by representatives of the local governments, only the two municipalities of Central Albania, which are the biggest ones in terms of population service administration and the employed population offer vocational training programmes: Durrës and Elbasan. The other interviewees reply that their municipalities do not offer vocational training: Sarandë, Peshkopi, Berat and Korçë. Representatives of the local government have answered questions about their cooperation with the business community to employ lone mothers and their strategy to offer to them vocational training which responds to the business community needs but also to the caring needs lone mothers have.

When asked about the existence of any specific programme for lone mothers regarding vocational training and how the local government handles the child-care aspects for lone mothers with young children when they need to participate in training programmes, Kadri Kruja, specialist of the social programme department at the Municipality of Elbasan answers:

“There is not any specific program which is regulated legislatively for the vocational training of lone mothers. The city of Elbasan has the luck to have a vocational training centre. In the vocational training packages we

did not really know which organization offered what program especially when these were coordinated programmes, nor did they remember for how many months they had attended such programmes.

offered to different categories we also include the women householders. In the best cases there is coordination between the Municipality the Vocational Training Centre and the Employment Office for the people who follow vocational trainings.

As the municipality we have ensured that there are some funds to pay the crèches and kindergartens with or without lunch for children of women householders. Some of these children are also equipped with didactic packages and clothing in the beginning of every school year. For some of them we have also insured food packages” (Appendix 3.2, interview no. 1).

When asked whether there are specific vocational training programmes designed according to the demands for skilled labour from the business community, the representative of Elbasani municipality answers:

“The programmes have changed, we have started courses for social operators which are a new need in the market and we are planning to open a new training programme for animators based on the demands presented. But as you notice there is a need to shake the old list of vocational trainings offered, because evaluations show that they do not meet with the real needs of the market”. (Appendix 3.2, interview no. 1).

The representative of Peshkopi city, in North-East Albania, answered that vocational training is not provided by their municipality, but non-governmental organizations have programmes which inform lone mothers on their rights and obligations. She also writes that there is no cooperation between the employment office and the business community and that lone mothers find the jobs themselves (Appendix 3.2, interview no. 6).

The representative of Berati municipality, similar to the representative of Peshkopia municipality, writes that they do not have vocational training programmes but they do direct lone mothers to local women organizations who have their own training programmes for women. Vjollca Hoxha says:

“The municipality of Berati does not have vocational training programmes, but we have created the possibility for women households to become part of the training organized by women’s organizations. For example the directorate for Domestic Violence has organized three roundtables to inform women on their rights, we have also organized a meet-

ing in the shelter for Roma women” (Appendix 3.2, interview no. 5).

The municipality of Korça in South-East Albania also replies that it has no special vocational training or employment services for lone mothers:

“In our municipality there is only one employment program for youth. The students are employed for one month in different institutions, they get experience and they are granted a certificate at the end of their trial period. The working programmes should have as priority the category of women householders”. ((Appendix 3.2, interview no. 8).

The municipality of Durrës does not have vocational training programmes in its development strategy but in cooperation with the employment office and international donors they have offered vocational training to 20 Roma women as Meme Xhaferaj, the director of the Social Service Office of Durrës municipality, writes: “Looking at the needs of Roma and Egyptian women and girls, women householders and widow in cooperation with UNDP we organized a vocational training programme (courses of hair-dressing, cooking and tailoring)” (Appendix 3.2, interview no. 2).

Based on the answers of the representatives of the local government, I conclude that there is a need for a better analysis of the skills needed in the market and the preparation of lone mothers to become preferable candidate for such kind of jobs. Representatives of Elbasan and Durrës municipality say that vocational training programmes should be tailor-made based on real market skills demand. Another result of the survey regards the type of employment the employment service offers to lone mothers and low level of payments. Although it can help some of them to cover part of their monthly expenses, it does not allow lone mothers to escape poverty. Their concerns do call for attention to their caring duties for their children. Last but not least, the coordination for job-seeking university graduates needs improvement. Employment offices should expand their scope of work also for this category of lone mothers.

3. Health-care service

There are three ways of receiving health care in Albania: the public service, the private service and alternative medication. In my research I have been concerned with the first type of service, the public one. A universal public service offered to all women and their children in Albania is the free family doctor visit and some medication at a low cost. The other public services regarding health care have a defined payment. The only condition to receive this service for free is having a

health-care notebook for both mothers and the children. Although the health-care system in Albania is highly corrupt⁶³, because it used to be the lesser paid profession together with teaching after the collapse of socialism, women who have provided themselves and their children with the health notebook have a good chance of going to the family doctor for free. Mothers and their children can receive medication for free in every public or private drugstore, if they can their health-care notebook, the receipt and notification from the family doctor and, most importantly, the cost of the medication has to be low.

This service is highly problematic for the lone mothers (and their children) I researched in Albania. The prior health-care notebooks lone mothers had received during socialism became disregarded after 1990s since the system itself was differently organized. From a service offered for free, it became a paid service. Only in the last decade (with the NSSED 2004-2007 and the period after 2010), there were few regulations regarding free provision of the family doctor visit and medication. A new regulation on the equipment of every citizen with a health-care notebook was declared by 2005. The ways in which lone mothers have reacted to service is diverse based on their age, number of children, location and also education.

The first sub-group in this category are the mothers who receive economic aid. The economic aid office and employment offices requested the provision of health note-books to mothers and their children. Having a certificate from the economic aid service which proves that the mother has low income, a certificate from the employment office testifying that the mother is unemployed and a health-care note book create better opportunities for these women and their children to receive the family doctor visit for free for themselves and their children. Mothers are aware of this and mention this cooperation between the local government institutions and the public services in their locality.

On the whole, Albanians are quite indifferent to health-care. They receive health-care only when they need it and are in severe pain. The same kind of indifference is shown by the lone mothers I interviewed. The data gathered exemplify this attitude. 46% of all interviewed women have a health-care notebook; 58% have made health provisions for their children. These data reflect that the moth-

⁶³ Apart of the common knowledge of citizens living in Albania and their experience with the health-care system, read for reference regarding corruption in this system reports which emphasize this fact. It represents one of the main concerns for many years in Albania. The latest report of Transparency International Perception Index (2014) on corruption, ranks Albania the 110th out of 176 countries included in the report. Despite improvements since 2013 (where the country ranked 133) Albania remains the most corrupt country in the region of Balkans.

ers are more attentive to the needs of their children as compared to their own needs. This outcome varies, however, for the North part of Albania. In the North-West part, in Shkodër city, only 37% of mothers are equipped with a health-care notebook. North-East does slightly better with a representation of 42 percent of women who do use a health-care notebook. The mothers who use this service for themselves or for their children are satisfied when they receive a free visit to the family doctor. However, more than 87% percent of them refer to the fact that they cannot take the medication for free for themselves or for their children unless the medication is really cheap. Of the categories of mothers who do not use this service, those located in rural areas, especially in the South and of the North, are not equipped with health-care notebooks (for themselves or for their children). Lone mothers in the rural areas are also not informed about the benefit and entitlements they can have to use this service.

The representatives of the local government were not asked about the health-care service, because this is a service which is not covered by them. The only institutional responsibility they have is to oblige lone mothers who receive economic aid to prepare the health-care note-book for themselves and their children. The administration of health-care note-books is done by lone mothers themselves and until now there has not been any specialized local institution which gathers information on the number of women who receive this service and the quality or relevance of this service.

4. Disability pension for the child or the mother

The legal framework to treat people with disabilities as full citizens in the country enjoying constitutional rights, developed positively from 2004 onwards. The National Strategy for Persons with Limited⁶⁴ Abilities 2007 (NSPLA) was the first national policy document which created the ground for the reformation of the health-care system for this group of people: for the first time in the welfare history of Albania a monthly allowance for carer of the person with disability was introduced. The NSPLA offers some data regarding the size of this group (disabled people and their carers) in order to translate these numbers into policies. In total, 75044 individuals receive an invalidity pension in Albania. 8788 people physically care daily for this group (NSPLA, p. 10). With the new legislation of 2004 some categories of disabled individuals who need intensive care, have the right to select a carer, who will be paid for the services offered by the government.

⁶⁴ The term 'limited' has been replaced in the last years with 'special', and very recently with 'different' by policy-makers, in order to not discriminate these people verbally, since limited has a straightforwardly negative connotation.

Another group of individuals who are not able to work and do need a carer, will receive a 15% on top of the invalidity pension they receive, but they have no right to choose or be paid a carer.

I spoke with 14 lone mothers who are using the disability pension for their disabled children. They do receive the invalidity pension for the child, but they do not receive payment for them as carers. Factually, they cannot go to work because the child needs intensive care, and they have no other person in the family who is willing to perform this task daily.

Judging from the answers of these mothers, some have heard from other people about the existence of another type of service, which gives them the option to be paid carers. However, they are not well informed legally and they do not know the limitations or the categorizations applicable to this type of benefit. Therefore, there is a need for information. Although it is information that can be found online on several webpages, the low education level of these women does not allow them to form the right opinion regarding the rights and entitlements they can or cannot have.

The most important fact regarding working time, be it for care or paid employment outside the house, is the social protection system and the years a person has gathered to be able to receive a retirement pension. The amended social insurance laws of 1993, 2006 in Albania, were followed by another draft-law of 2014 which reorganizes and reformulates the contributive logic in Albania. In this draft law it is stated that only the carers who receive a governmental payment are recognized by the social insurance system. Their contributive years do count for the retirement pension. All the other women who have been caring at home for many years, either for their children or other people of the family and could not therefore have a paid job, do not earn additional years in the social insurance register. In the next section I will explain another type of protection within the social protection system, namely the family pension and retirement pension.

5. Family pension and retirement pension

The family pension for widowed mothers, and children of a deceased parent until they finish education or enter in labour relationship (18-24 years old), took another direction after 1990s as compared to the socialist period. Children or partners of fathers who lacked sufficient years of contribution, or did not have a contribution over the last decade, could not be covered. This became problematic for widowed mothers and their children after the 1990s.

High numbers of mothers who are covered and have reached the age of 50 and have enough working years decide to give the family pension for their children rather than using it themselves. 92% of widowed mothers when they can receive

the family pension decide to give it to their children, as compared to the remaining 8% who keep it for themselves. These mothers actually have adult children, who are able to take care of themselves; however, these children are not always employed.

At least 87% of all women who represent the period after the 1990s have problems in the contributive years for their future retirement pension. 62 percent of these lone mothers are not insured for more than 10-15 years. The other 25% percent have never had any contributive year because they have been working in the black or grey market, and 13% have never worked. This lack of contributive years impedes them to access other social protection rights, such as sick leave for themselves or their children, unemployment assistance, quality health care, disability pension in case of accidents at work and less or no retirement pension when aged.

The positive news about the widow mothers is the new adapted law on economic aid of 2011 which recognizes them as a new category for benefit, as I earlier mentioned when describing the economic aid service. The representatives of the local government in the municipalities of Durrës, Berat and Elbasan were very aware of this category of women and, therefore, they have included them in annual economic aid programmes which are dependent on annual budgets of the municipalities.

6. Subsidy for the school books for children

From the year 2004, in the NSSED 2004-2007 objectives, the Ministry of Education and Science aimed at increasing the number of children who attended obligatory education and reducing the number of children who were leaving school prematurely. One of the measures to reach this objective was the free distribution in the first elementary school. This measure received legal approval by 2010 when all local governments, in cooperation with the Local Education Directories and first elementary schools, started to apply this service. However, this entitlement was not universal as it was promoted a decade ago. It became a categorical entitlement, which was connected to other beneficiaries' measures, such as economic aid, free health-care family doctor visits and vocational training. It is understandable, therefore, that the same category of mothers who could not receive the economic aid could not become part of this programme either. 11.2 percent of interviewed lone mothers with school age children do not bring their children to school because they cannot afford to dress them properly, or give them food to school or buy their books. It is also very expensive for them to bring them to school and to take them from school. They do not have anybody to do this for them.

Apart of the subsidy for the school books, which according to the interviews with the representatives of the local government, is offered in the municipalities of Korçë, Elbasan, Vlorë and Durrës and based on the survey with lone mothers is also offered in Shkodër, the representative of municipality of Durrës told me that the government has a special scholarship programme and the municipality too. When asked about the presence of education programmes for children of lone mothers she says:

“We give scholarships to those students whose families have no incomes or they live with low incomes. The scholarships come from the state budget as a treatment measure. For example, last year we treated 20 second-elementary and high school students and 37 university students from the Durrës municipality. The municipality itself gave yearly payments to the excellent second-elementary, high-school and university students”. (Appendix 3.2, interview no. 2).

7. Social housing and housing with soft loans

One of the decentralized services that have caused dissatisfaction among lone mothers is the possibility to receive social housing or, alternatively, to acquire soft loans to buy a new house (since 5 years). The alternative of soft loans is a housing programme in urban areas. It is the result of cooperation between the banking sector and the local government. Both the public and the private institutions have their own criteria for this process. As hard as it is for lone mothers to fulfill the local governmental criteria, almost all of them fail to meet the banking criteria. The banks have set up a high salary level for people who want to receive a loan and they demand formal jobs which pay insurances to women as a guarantee for the stability of employment history of the person receiving the lone. Only lone mothers who are university graduates or post-graduates with high salaries or two jobs can satisfy the banking criteria. The other lone mothers with their employment histories and informal jobs have almost null chances of meeting these criteria, unless their family network can help them and arrange it somehow in a different way.

Social housing, on the other side, is a programmatic service which has been existent for more than 15 years in Albania. It is a programme and entitlement designed for the real needy who are jobless and homeless and have no further chances of improving their situation due to their inherited poverty over the years. The people who need to become part of this programme can apply for the status of homeless person. The budgeting of this programme has remained problem-

atic for many years. The local government has difficulties in dealing with buying land to build social housing apartments, or renovate the ones already built. Very few people in need of these houses get them. The general perception in Albania, but also that of the lone mothers as the interviews show, is that other people who do not deserve this type of service become part of this scheme and get these houses before them.

From the survey with lone mothers the data show that 49% of lone mothers have filed the documents for social housing, but only 4.5 percent of them have been able to enter into social housing. 26.2 percent of lone mothers want to but cannot apply for this service because either it takes a lot of time for them to fill in all the documents, or they know that they will never get something. About 8% of lone mothers have applied for a house with soft loans and are still waiting for a reply. The rest of lone mothers have solved the housing situation; therefore, they do not need it.

I asked the representatives of the local government about the presence or absence of specific social housing programmes for lone mothers or families with one parent. I asked whether they could offer me the exact number of families, lone mothers and children who are benefiting from this programme. How do they evaluate the difficulty lone mothers have in complying with the criteria for this social housing program? The interviewees express awareness of the issues citizens have with this programme and they told me about their institutional struggle with this service. For example, Meme Xhaferaj from Durrës municipality states:

“In the social housing programme this category of women in the point gathering system is treated with plus 10 points. The point system includes categories, such as: elderly, disabled people, families with one parent, nomadic families etc. As a municipality, we have 60 social houses to deliver but they have not been delivered yet because in the meetings of the City Council we did not agree on the list of the people who deserve such a house. Therefore, we have postponed the delivery for the future when a consensus will be reached in the city council. For the year 2014 we will build 40 apartments” (App. 3.2, interview no.2.)

The other municipalities said they had given this number of lone mother families with social housing: In Peshkopia (North-East) 10 lone mother families, in Korçë (South-East) 359 women householders applied for social housing but none of them received it, and Berat municipality has delivered 48 social houses 5 of which are occupied by lone mothers.

The situation of Egyptian and Roma lone mothers is even worse. The condi-

tions and housing situations they have is desperate. Bruna, an Egyptian widow mother of 7 children, I mentioned earlier lives in Uznaja village closer to Berat city. Going to her house took me 10-minute bus ride plus a 20 minute walk to her house. She currently lives in the house of her brother who has emigrated. She is afraid that when he, his wife and his children return she would have nowhere to go (Appendix 1.4, interview no. 197).

8. Inclusion of citizens/lone mothers in consultative participatory processes

Local governments from 2011 onwards have created the mechanisms of Citizen's Councils in order to include them in consultative processes while drafting programs and taking decisions on annual budget for issues of their daily concern. This is happening in response to consultative participatory processes introduced as democratic tools by the European Union and United Nations cooperation strategies with the Albanian government. Some local governments have created this mechanism to listen to citizens and include them in participatory budgeting, based on the council's interest groups. The municipalities which have become more active as a result are Elbasan (Central Albania), Durrës (Central Albania), Peshkopi (North-East Albania), Korçë (South-East Albania). Other municipalities, of Vlorë (South-West Albania) and Berat city (South-Central Albania), have interest groups from citizens who come to the informative and consultative meetings organized by the municipality or to public hearings.

Kadri Kruja, representative of Elbasan municipality, explains her experience in the municipality she works for:

“We organize participatory budgeting meetings, which we organize in administrative regions where citizens are invited to receive information. The Citizens' Council functions three months during a year, mostly during the participatory budgeting, and they are selected persons which represent their neighbourhood in drafting the list of priorities during the annual budgeting of the future year funds. In a parallel way, we also experience a continuous presence of citizens in the monthly meetings of the city council”. (App. 3.2, interview no. 1)

Meme Xhaferaj from Durrës municipality writes on the experience of the municipality she represents:

“In the framework of the decentralization process and of the inclusion of civil society in participatory processes and decision-making, Durrës municipality has welcomed the financed programme of USAID on the Planning Project of Local government. In December 2012 a cooperation

agreement was signed between the Durrës municipality and the Durrës Civic Consultative Council which is a group with wide representation from many groups of interests. This council is represented by local NPOs, the business community, youth, women and marginalized groups of the community. The representatives of local NPOs and citizens receive continuous periodic information on the decisions of the city council. The influence of the Civic Consultative Council is for different issues, such as participatory budgeting, the fiscal annual package, territorial planning, and local services and so on. The Council has a consultative and canceling function". (App. 3.2, interview no. 2).

Both these representatives of the local government talked about participatory budgeting and city council presence in participatory processes. However, my research ability has been limited in scope on this subject when it came to asking citizens about their experience on whether they felt they were heard or whether they felt their suggestions influenced decision making and execution. Since my research is focused on lone mothers, I asked them for their evaluation of services and their expectations for future services or improved ones. None of them seemed to have been part of city council meetings or citizens' councils or participatory processes. Important information revealed by local governmental representatives is the financial support they have in organizing participatory processes. Durrësi is the only municipality which has signed an agreement and it would not be too much to conclude that the signed agreement has happened due to the presence of USAID as international donors. The latter must have asked for this as part of the development of the project. Therefore, the role of UN agencies resides in pushing forward local agendas through participatory processes, a role that they also play with central agendas and the inclusion of local women NGOs in participatory processes.

9. Communication with the citizens and community needs assessment

In all the interviews with representatives of the local government I was informed that they do not have written, approved municipal communication strategies. However, they do offer information through their information desks, through community meetings on different themes such as information on different services offered within the economic aid programme. Both the representatives of Durrës and Elbasani municipalities said they organized informative meetings with the non-governmental organizations and community liaisons. Other communication tools that all municipalities use are their monthly journals, official websites and cooperation with local media when they have special communications to direct to citizens.

When asked on what basis the municipality drafts and develops the programmes offered to one parent families headed by lone mothers or how they conduct their need's assessment, the representatives of local governments say they have different channels through which they gather the information on the needs of lone mothers. Vjollca Hoxha from Berat municipality answered:

“The database is mainly the scheme of economic aid we have. In the framework of domestic violence in the family, the municipality organized many meetings with women, but the main focus was on Roma and Egyptian women and their needs, among them women householders”. (App. 3.2, interview no. 5).

The representative of Vlora municipality replies that “Every objective and priority has its respective departments which execute the service delivery based on legislative policies. Our strategy or the way how we have worked is based on the requests we receive from citizens”. Kadri Kruja from Elbasani municipality refers to their approach:

“We gather the data from many resources. First there all the resources we receive from all the local institutions and from the Instat office from the prefecture. We gather all the written complaints we receive from citizens in the municipality and as the main resource we have the verification of the needs assessment we do in the field. We have also started the organization of the citizen's card to gather their comments on the usage of the services and the needs they have”. (App. 3.2, interview no. 1).

These answers indicate that the local government has its ways and channels of gathering the numbers of the groups in need in the community and the citizens's complaints, in our case also lone mothers. However, they do not talk about surveys that they organize with their constituency. They make priority lists for issues which are specifically problematic in their constituency in order to draft annual programmes of an immediate nature. The need assessment and policy drafting based on the data they gather from the answers of the local representatives is done by the Ministry of Labour, since they administrate in their localities services which used to be central. Thus, local governments are dependent on the governmental budget in order to perform their services. Through their annual budget they decide to give priority to lone mothers included as poor families with other groups, as I mentioned earlier in the part on their annual projects.

10. The cooperation of local government with international donors

The international donor community is active with different projects in Albanian municipalities. In all the municipalities the cooperation with the UN agencies and World Banks is evident. In Durrës, Meme Xhaferaj told me on the project of the World Bank to improve the performance of social services. This project is also mentioned by Leonard Strazimiri, Head of the Directorate of Economic Aid and Disability. From what Leonard Strazimi says in his interview, and from what can also be seen on the website of the World Bank, this is a project which aims to build an online system of the economic aid programme in order to avoid giving aid to people who do not deserve it. The municipalities of Durrësi and Elbasani have the piloting regions where this project was executed. In the economic aid schema more than 50% of lone mothers interviewed received this programme. Therefore, in the future through this project they can have the opportunity to being served on a higher standard. Meme Xhaferaj mentions the cooperation with UNDP for the project of giving free psycho-social and legal assistance to violated mothers who are going through divorce. This is a project which I also mention in chapter 6 through Bajana Cevoli, the Director of the Association of Women with Social Problems in Durrës, whose organization was implementing this project in cooperation with UNDP and Durrës municipality. UNICEF is another donor which is supporting Durrës municipality, as Meme Xhaferaj refers to in implementing the project friendly schools, which offers school food to children from families in financial difficulties.

In the municipality of Elbasani, the European Commission, the Emilia Romagna region in Italy, Soros Foundation, and USAID have been the international donors which have supported services of the women shelter “The new moon” on how to have a healthy pregnancy, a non-public kindergarten for the category of children of Roma women householders, and methods of contraception (App. 3.2, interview no. 1).

5.4. Discussion and conclusions

This chapter dealt with the socio-economic rights of lone mothers in the welfare system in communist and post-communist Albania. I have combined information from published sources with personal narratives, memories of lone mothers who used or could not use the welfare services provided by the Albanian government before and after 1990.

Both in the communist period and after the 1990s period lone mothers were first considered as workers and then as carers. In Albania lone mothers were not offered the opportunity to choose between mothering and working. Legislatively speaking, they are expected to work while also caring for their children, unless they are on maternity leave. The reconciliation policies which entail arrange-

ments for flexible working hours, caring policies for child and elderly care and the maternity and parental leave for younger children have had different historical trajectories.

In both periods lone mothers earned welfare legislative attention through the creation of the categorical entitlements. From 1950-1966 lone mothers received cash benefits for their children and they were treated in a similar way to mothers with many children. After 1966, the provision of economic aid for their children ceased to exist due to a reduction of the prices of consumption goods. The Labor Code and the Social State Insurance law in communist Albania in the first two decades recognized limited time for child-care and elderly care as a right. However, as a type of work it was less valued than labour work. In the third decade of socialist welfare, care disappeared from the legal policy vocabulary. It became implied indirectly and, moreover, it lost even its reduced economic value. In the fourth decade until the end of the collapse of communism, time spent caring, like working time, earned credit for employment history in the social protection system.

The socialist government in the first decades offered accommodation and basic food provision to non-married abandoned mothers and their children in crèches. After regulating and taking control over the institution of the family through the Family Code of 1965 and after regulating the automatic withdrawal for the child-alimony from the fathers of children, it stopped offering this service. The lone mothers with children at a school age had to arrange the care aspect with their children or family members during the hours children would go or return from school. For lone mothers with adult children, the government provided jobs for their children. With regard to housing, the socialist government played a biased role. It gave privileges to those lone mothers with connections in the government. As for benefits for lone mothers in the rural areas, their situation did not differ due to a different social insurance regulation of the work in agriculture.

The second part of this chapter engaged with the transformation of the social rights and welfare protection system in Albania after 1990. This section contained a summary of the Albanian Government's National Strategies to Reduce Poverty and Boost Economic Growth. While overviewing the social policy parts of three main strategies developed in Albania from 2001-2013, I emphasized the fact that drafting these strategies, implementing, adapting while implementing, monitoring and evaluating them was led, advised and financed by the World Bank, International Monetary Fund, UN agencies operating in Albania and the European commission. As a result, the reformation of the social welfare system, and the application of social rights to lone mothers was dirigented internationally and implemented locally.

The Albanian government created new welfare packages and a social protection system for its citizens after 1990. The centralized services of the early 1900s were decentralized after 2000 and local governments were responsible for delivering the economic aid programme for the poor families. The economic aid programme, the most debated poverty scheme in Albania, has an exhausting list of documental provisions which cannot be filled, especially by many sub-groups of lone mothers. The new adapted law of economic aid in 2011 has introduced the categories of violated, divorced mothers who are undergoing divorce and have a protection order, the mothers whose husbands are in jail and the widow mothers whose husband has insufficient social contribution years to receive economic aid. Since local government representatives know that many other groups of lone mothers for certain reasons cannot comply with all the documentation criteria although they qualify for economic aid, the municipalities of Durrës and Elbasan in Central Albania, the Korçë municipality in South-East Albania and the Berat Municipality in South-Central Albanian have create annual programmes with a municipal budget to include the categories of lone mothers who otherwise would not be able to receive any economic aid.

The representatives of the local government express the need for a reformation of vocational training programmes confirm the demands for new skills from the business community. Based on the survey with lone mothers and the information I received on the lacking cooperation between the central government and the business community to reach unemployed lone mothers, the chapter concludes on the need for institutional legislations and mechanisms to establish or increase the cooperation between the business community, the economic aid programme and the employment office.

Child-care services are mostly absent from the survey: there are no lone mother who bring their children to public kindergarten or crèches. However, according to the municipality of Elbasan information exists about a programme which assists some lone mothers in bringing their children to crèches and kindergarten.

The public debate over the interpretation of the needs discourse at the time of communism was forbidden, since these needs became political without having been public first. After the 1990s the needs interpretation by the local government institution, as the place where needs start to gain visibility and enter the political realm, is organized via a communication strategy with the community and participatory processes with communities and women's non-governmental organizations. Like women's organizations and the central government, the local governments in Albania cooperate, sometimes intensely, with international donors.

This chapter dealt with the way Albanian central and local governments address the needs of lone mothers. With Fraser (1989) one can see the policies and practices as different ways to interpretation and distribution of needs. In the next chapter of this dissertation I discuss the advocacy and lobby strategies of women's organizations with the local government.

Chapter 6: NPO support for lone mothers in Albania 1990-2013. Women activists, international donors and religious organizations.

6.1. Researching the work of women's organizations in Albania after 1990

Research into women's organizations in Albania after 1990 needs to observe in three main dimensions: the missions and strategies of these organizations; the leaders and employees of these organizations, and the constituents they offer their services to.

The first dimension introduces gender debates on women's rights application, advocacy and service delivery, which Fraser (2009) calls issues of recognition, representation and re-distribution. The human rights debates in Albania after the 1990s involve the governmental spectrum, the human rights international frameworks represented by the spectrum of international multilateral and bilateral institutions/donors, and the spectrum of the civil society, of which women organizations are part. The key issue here is the financial resources of women's organizations in Albania, which have always been internationally donated. After 2011, with the Establishment of the State Agency for Civil Society which financially supports the civil society organizations, the donor can also be the state, though with insignificant levels of support compared to internationals. Thus, factors of financial dependency and mission and service-delivery dependency of women's organizations have raised questions about their representations and advocacy matters.

US feminist scholars (Duggan, Joseph, Bernstein 2013) define neoliberalism as a set of economic policies introduced in the last 30-40 years to Latin America and countries in transition, via the loans given to these countries by the World Bank and the International Monetary Fund (IMF). The imposition of these economic policies paves the way for the practice of trans-locating the social welfare policies once offered by the state to the free-market sector. As a result, it makes individuals more responsible and independent since the state is no longer the provider of services, but rather the former services can be bought in the market if the individual has earned enough through work to cover himself/herself for these services. These processes go hand in hand with the increase of unemployment; hence the creation of new bargaining power of highly skilled workers from the third world and developed countries towards the post-industrial ones. All these policies together are called IMF or World Bank Structural Policies, or "the mod-

el". Over the last decade US gender scholars (Ghodsee, 2004; Fraser, 2009) have raised the issue of the relationship between women's organizations and neoliberal structural policies represented by multilateral agencies such as the World Bank and the International Monetary Fund. Both Fraser and Ghodsee (2004) are blaming feminism produced in academia and feminist activism exercised in the field for offering tools to the neoliberal⁶⁵ exploitation of women as a labour force with less financial value (Fraser, N. 2009, 2011; Ghodsee, Ch. 2004). In this chapter I will address the influence of the international framework on mission and strategies of women NPOs in prioritizing local agendas on women's rights and gender equality. In a parallel way, I will also point out the role of women's organizations in pushing the government to adapt legislative measures in facilitating gender mainstreaming in national agendas.

The second dimension of researching the work of leaders and employees of women organizations touches gender debates on the gendered nature of civil society and the relationships it has with other engendered spheres of family, market and the state (Howell, 2007). Howell argues that, on the whole, civil society theorists do not pay attention to gender and that there is an absence of gender scholarship debate on civil society (2007, p. 416). Therefore, she invites both civil society and gender scholars to create a dialogue for a gendered research analysis which connects them both. Pinpointing earlier work on gender and welfare, and the work of male philosophers which define civil society as a male public domain, Howell (2007, p. 421) emphasizes the importance of defining the space where civil society belongs. Also considering other philosophical debates which associate the concept of civil society with solidarity in the family, Howell clearly asks for a definition of the specter of civil society with regard to the state, to the family and to the private market. In response to this question, she suggests that we see civil society as a different site from the family, from the state and from the private market, though a realm whose inside and outside functions have a gendered nature (ibid, p. 426). My definition of civil society has a similar stance as Howell. I define the women's organizations as a different operating domain from the state, the market and the family. I understand civil society to be the private sphere for public activism. This activism has different directions (such as environmental, cultural, social, human rights, security, migration and so on) and which is regulated by laws (laws on civil society and laws on social movements). I want to draw attention to the difference between civil society activism and social

⁶⁵ For a larger debate on us feminist analyses and criticism of neoliberalism see these video presentations online offered by the Bernard Center for Research on Women. See bibliography for online resources.

movements for Albania. In the Albania of the period after 1990 social movements are ad-hoc gatherings of people with the same goals and interests, whose activism is not regulated institutionally (publicly or privately). When the goal is or is not reached, after a few days or weeks, social movements dissolve. Leaders of social movements though do have to ask for permission from the government to use the main piazzas, squares or roads of a city for their free and peaceful gatherings. There are also social movements initiated by non-governmental organizations, or by groups of citizens which invite leaders of NPOs to communicate with the public as more experienced persons. Such initiatives in the last years in Albania are the environmentalists' movements. Civil society activism is exercised through the dimensions of non-governmental or non-profit organizations, think-tank institutions, foundations and charity institutions, to mention the few. In this chapter I address women's activism in Albania in support to women's rights and in particular to lone mothers rights and needs.

Through the interviews with leaders and employees of women organizations, in this chapter I will show their transitional employment history and area of expertise. The reader will be presented with women who worked as teachers in communism, and who became social workers or experts on civil society after 1990. Another generation of employees of women's organizations are younger social workers, lawyers and psychologists who graduated after 1990. The findings are similar to what Waaldijk (2006, p. 70) has noted for the beginning of the history of social work in Western European countries, as started by middle-class activist educated women. However, I do suggest that Albanian civil society or women's organizations after 1990 can be seen as employed by an international employer, and in a few cases (time and financial-limited) they have a national employer. This chapter draws on the individual representation of women's activists in Albania, and on their consultative power and influence on the state agendas. The chapter refers to the gendered nature of women organizations as dominated by women who advocate for their constituents with males in decision-making power.

The third dimension addresses the constituency to whom services are offered. This chapter focuses on the services provided to lone mothers. These services are divided into services provided by women's non-profit organization and by religious institutions⁶⁶. The description and analysis of these services is inspired by the work of gender scholars, who analyze welfare policies offered by the state and welfare programmes offered by civil society. The reconstruction of

⁶⁶ The religious institutions in Albania operate under the same law which is functional for the civil society sector; they are also considered non-for-profit organizations.

welfare state policies in many EU countries, to respond to care as a labor activity with monetary validity, and as a social right for both men and women has had its impact on civil society or the third sector. By the late 1990s gender scholars (Daly & Lewis, 1998; Ostner, 1998; Knijn & Ungerson, 1997) in their analyses of welfare policies through gender care lenses incorporated the civil society sector as part of public alternatives to care. They indicated the interconnectedness of the welfare provided in both the state and the non-state domains. From late 1990 to late 2000 other gender scholars (Morgan, 2006; Waaldijk, 2006; Bimbi, 1997; Bussemaker, van Drenth, Knijn & Plantenga, 1997) pointed to the role of religious institutions in the provision of care, services for children, widow and remarried mothers in terms of its disciplining and moralizing role.

To research these topics I have used four types of resources. Apart from the survey of post 1990 lone mothers, I have conducted a survey with 26 representatives of women NPOs and religious institutions. In this chapter I give the percentages of lone mothers of after 1990 who use/d the non-governmental services. I conducted 17 interviews (nine face to face and eight online) with structured and open questions with representatives of national and local women NPOs. The same structured questionnaire⁶⁷ used for face to face interviews was sent via email to other women NPOs online. eight of them (leaders or other representatives of these organizations) sent back completed questionnaires. I conducted nine interviews with structured and open questions⁶⁸ with representatives of Muslim, Catholic, Evangelical and Orthodox religious Institutions and organizations. In appendixes 2.1 to 2.5 the questionnaires and lists of organizations can be found.

The second type of material I used consisted of the online websites of these organizations and other international donors operating in Albania. The third sources of information were country reports from international donors such as UNDP, OSCE, World Bank, ONEUN, UNIFEM and EC, and national reports prepared by NPOs and Line Ministries. The fourth type of resource material is the field observations on the work of local women NPOs in the headquarters of the organizations where I conducted the interviews and which supported me to get access to lone mothers (in their former or current constituencies).

In describing the services for lone mothers offered by women organizations and religious institutions, this chapter points to the differences between the social services offered by the governmental and non-governmental sector in Albania. It does argue that welfare programmes offered to lone mothers by

⁶⁷ See annex 2.1 for the structured interview prepared for women NPOs.

⁶⁸ See annex 2.2 for the structured interview with representatives of religious institutions and organizations.

women NPOs and religious institutions are located in a public sphere, in the so-called third sector which is financed internationally and which is different from state public and private businesses. Since the services offered to lone mothers by women organizations are part of an ‘Albanian women’s movement’ (I would call) for the development of women’s rights in Albania of the period after 1990 this chapter starts with a modest attempt to outline this history. The services offered to lone mothers will be better understood after grasping the situation and context of the work of women’s organizations.

6.2. Albanian women’s activism after 1990 and the influence of International Donors on prioritizing local agendas

The women’s movement in Albania after 1990 started out as private initiatives of those women who were visibly more active politically, publicly and community wise during communism. Apart from their high education privilege⁶⁹, some of these women were a step ahead of society because they knew foreign languages such as English or French and therefore had information on women’s rights movements in Western Europe and North America. After 1990, it was easier for these women to communicate the pressing issues of rural, working and middle class women of Albania to foreign donors, due their grasp of problems and language communication. This interpretation of the initial start of women’s movement was presented to me by Diana Çuli, President of Independent Forum of Albanian woman (IFAW) during an informal meeting in August 2010. She remembers that it was not easy in a patriarchal society to go public and build a discourse in electronic media on different forms of violation Albanian women were suffering, especially in a country where women’s rights were taken for granted⁷⁰. The moment had come to reveal the unspoken problems women, children and elderly had suffered from ever since socialism and even more so at the start of the transition period.

Civil society in Albania has been a potential space where educated women could exercise their knowledge and power to inform, protect, serve and advocate on behalf of those with fewer resources, mainly women, children and elderly without other supporting networks. The data gathered from the 17 interviews

⁶⁹ Girls and boys from families considered to be the former bourgeois class or from families of declared dissidents who were sent to concentration camps or were deported to underdeveloped rural areas were forbidden to attend higher education during communism.

⁷⁰ Informal talks on women’s activism in Albania with Diana Çuli during an informal meeting in August 2010.

with leaders and some social workers and project coordinators of local women organizations show that leaders of these organizations performed different types of jobs before engaging in civil society. The age representation of the leaders of women organizations varies from 40 to 65 years. During communism, the leaders of women organizations of the age group 50-65 years were teachers of math and biology for second-elementary and high school students, teachers of history and geography and political sciences for high school students, engineering geology, teachers of French language in high school and in Military Academy. The 50-65 age group of women leaders has been engaged with civil society for 10 to 15 years. The second age group of 34 to 45 years of women leaders represents women coming from professions of journalism and publishing, social work and private businesses. The project coordinators are of a younger age; they were educated in journalism and social work (respectively 29 and 24 years old). Only two project coordinators (42 and 46 years respectively) were educated in law and agricultural economy. Due to the brain drain of civil society leaders and employers over the years, it is important to look at the longevity of the position they held in the civil society sector, which varies from 8-15 to years.

The data demonstrate that women who were teachers before 1990 and who were more involved with community life through the meetings with parents of the children they taught, or through going door to door to follow the progress of problematic students, were the first to engage with problems within the community after 1990. Their image in the community had already been created: they were seen as educators of the future generations; therefore they could be trusted with other issues. The age-group division and positions held within women's organization show a hierarchy amongst positions held. Most women's organizations employ three to five employees: in this sector women occupy positions as leaders, project coordinators, social workers, psychologists and lawyers. It is a sector created and managed by women for women, children and elderly in the communities in which they work.

In this chapter I trace the work of women's organizations over the years as a form of activism and as a women's movement in Albania. However, female leaders of these organizations express two types of opinions when asked whether they would consider the work of women organizations on gender issues as a feminist movement. Seven out of 17 are against this idea, six others embrace it and the four rest do not express an opinion about this subject. For example Diana Çuli, President of the Independent Forum for Albanian Woman, replies:

“The engagement of the state makes for the non-existence of a feminist movement, because the Conventions were supported by the state, and

thus the state becomes a partner. The previous feminist movement held that you should be against the state to achieve something, while today everything happens in cooperation with the state, because there are parliamentary commissions for this work, such as the commission I used to take part in with Lajla Përnaska, Vali Leskaj and Majlinda Bregu”. (Appendix 2.3, interview no. 1).

Bajana Çeveli, president of the Association of Women with Social Problems Dur-rës, also argues against a feminist movement. She states:

“It does not have the concept of a feminist movement. Today we do work for women in order for her to change her status in society, but I do not think it is the right moment for Albania to have a feminist movement. We are talking simply for non-for-profit organizations which protect women’s rights, depending on the proposed projects and donorship they raise” (Appendix 2.3, interview no. 2).

Shega Murati, Leader of the Association ‘The Voice of Children calls us’ registered in Tirana city, with activity in South Albania, replies:

“No, it is not a feminist movement, because men do not become part of it. Movements are a phenomenon which can also turn into a movement, but women should create partnerships with men, because they are in decision making”. (Appendix 2.3, interview no. 7)

Flutura Xhabija, president of the Association of Professional, Business and Art-craft Women of Albania, writes:

“No, this is an old theory, because men today are also suffering economically and women are not finding solutions, by simply thinking that their illiteracy and poverty come from men. The best thing would be to make use of the advantages of both sexes”. (Appendix 2.4, questionnaire no. 2)

Ghodsee (2004) argues that Eastern feminists or Eastern bourgeois feminists reject the concept of feminism as radical or anti-men. The Albanian women of NPOs are careful to argue for already existing rights, without a need for a radical feminist movement. However, they do highlight a need to empower those in vulnerable situations, who used to be helped by the state. So, in Albania women say you cannot talk about a movement, since is not directed against the government.

Some of the women activists interviewed in Albania object to talking in terms of a feminist movement, because according to them feminist movements are directed against the state, whereas they have the state on their side. They also point to a partnership with the state (Diana Çuli or Luljeta Hysa) and with men in decision-making power, also representing the state (such as Shega Murati). This is part of the debate that Waaldijk (2006, p. 65) raises on social work as both resisting or collaborating with governmental policies. We shall see later, leaders and lawyers of women's organizations do try to suggest policies to the Ministry of Labour in Albania. Whether these draft laws and strategies drafted by women's organizations become applicable is another discussion which I will address later in this chapter.

The cooperation with the state and with men at all levels is also addressed by another leader in Berat city (South-Central Albania):

“I would rather consider it a social movement more than a feminist one, because in our daily activities we cooperate with all the governmental institutions which can help us in resolving the problems women face and we have never excluded men and their support in this cooperation. Moreover, the clients of our centre are in need of support to find solutions for their daily needs, which require an application of social policies supported financially from the state through the collaboration of all institutions and the society at large. Thus, I cannot call it a feminist movement”. (Appendix 2.3, questionnaire no. 7).

Some other women NPO leaders, such as Luljeta Hysa, leader of the Association of Women's Householders, does consider her work as part of a feminist movement. She answers:

“Yes, I think huge work has been done in this direction. In the schools that I managed projects on the education for the eradication of domestic violence have caused a revolution in the mentality of mothers and their children, especially guys in schools and I am surprised by the evolution of youth mentality for their gender understanding. [...] this tells you a lot about the future possibilities and also for the huge work done by civil society and the women sector in the Ministry of Labour. I also saw this change in the communication with teachers. It was a radical change if you compare it with the time when we were young” (Appendix 2.4, questionnaire no. 3).

Although all organizations work to protect and defend the rights of women with social problems and have projects on delivering education programmes in schools on the eradication of domestic violence in the family, their leaders have different opinions on the question whether the work they do for their communities can be part of a feminist movement or not. One of the reasons why the promotion and protection of women's rights is not considered part of a feminist movement may be the negative connotations of feminism as a terminology and a movement for Eastern Europeans. Ghodsee also observes this aspect in her work. Based on my experience in civil society in Albania, I would add a point and remark. The role that each leader plays in the organization, whether on a leadership level or in field work. The leaders who only have management, advocacy, public relations and fundraising roles are part of organizations with more than three employees; therefore, their answers are more relevant to questions on relations of power, representations and communications. Organizations with fewer than three employees also require leaders to be active in field work; therefore, they have a closer cooperation with their constituency. This is clear from the answer of Luljeta Hysa who relates the feminist movement to examples from her field work. Another leader thought that their work "started as a feminist movement and later on softened due to the transition to gender equality" (Appendix 2.3, interview no. 7).

Whether the representatives of women's organizations want or do not want to use the word 'feminism', as an activist of the civil society in Albania and a gender scholar I see what Howell calls a dialogue for the incorporation of the gender dimension in theories of civil society and gender scholarship. I believe in a gendered dimension of women's organizations in Albania which is part of a women's movement represented by activists and not yet targeted by academics. And since the root of women's organizations in Albania is based on social work and principles of solidarity work, I am in favor of what Waaldijk has argued: "It is therefore impossible to describe the rise of a professional social work without writing about the history of the women's movement and the struggle for women's emancipation" (2006, p. 71).

Let me now make a first modest attempt to write a history of the women's movement and the women NPOs strategies and missions after 1990 in Albania, based on the interviews with representatives of women organizations and on reports these organizations delivered for donors and based on some international reports written by multilateral donors working in Albania.

First decade

In 1990 the civil sector in Albania was established under a vague legal framework. The previous socialist constitution acknowledged the gathering of individuals with common beliefs and ideologies in mass groups and forums, such as The Association of Professional Unions, The Union of Writers or the Union of Albanian Women. However, these unions were ideologically and politically dependent on the state orientation and their work was a lever in the hands of nomenclature to reach and persuade the citizens.

The first organizations of the 1990s were not experienced to turn project ideas into successful implemented projects running through donor aid. Even more so, they needed to learn by doing how to perform project management, to think strategically, to hunt for donors, to be accountable to their communities and, last but not least, to build financial sustainability for the continuation of their services. According to a Report of Euclid Network (2009), the civil society sector in Albania has gone through four main phases: 1. Early transition period (1991-1996); 2. Crisis Period (1997-2001); 3. Post-crisis and NPO maturation period (2002-2005), and 4. NPO slippage period (2005-2009). As part of the civil society sector, I can name a fifth period from 2010 onwards as the sustainability and participatory one. In this last period, organizations with a long history and financial sustainability became more credible for bilateral and multilateral donors. With the participatory processes pushed ahead by multilateral donors, such as UN organizations and European Commission, representatives of the NPO sector earned more credibility in their constituencies by becoming their intermediary with the government. Women's organizations had their own history within this periodical circle, which I will briefly introduce in the following part.

The initial start (1991-1995) of women's organizations in Albania claimed women's rights in a new epoch, the Albania of the period after 1990. Their starting agendas revealed problems of the past, tackled problems of the present transition, and prepared a societal environment for the new challenges political democracy and open market principle business posed. The new government after communism's collapse failed to keep up the public services women, men, children and elderly used during socialism. Rural women and their families were left behind in terms of health services, higher education, social protection, and an experience of belongingness in another societal ranking, although the socialist government "aimed and claimed a classless society". The transition period revealed the high level of poverty Albanians were living in as the cost of years and

decades of self-isolation⁷¹. The trafficking of women and girls became an immediate problem of the early years of transition. International migration flows of Albanian men towards Greece, Italy, Germany, US, Canada and else created many female-headed families, a problem which hit the Albanian villages in large numbers. Rural women, therefore, found themselves financially and physically abandoned. The inner migration flows from rural areas towards urban cities created high rates of unemployment of rural women by new comers in the cities. They had a low level of education and were not prepared to respond to the new technology of work required in office spaces (Ikonomi, 1994; Fico & Whyte, 1995). Due to the closure of many state enterprises, high numbers of women lost their jobs in the textile and agriculture industry (Musa, Rama, Pandelejmoni, Prifti & Vinjau, 2012, p. 51). Women and girls were not sexually educated; a culture of family planning did not exist and many local health centers for women and girls were closed or (Ikonomi, 1994; Gruda, 2007) decreased their health services. Most of the public kindergartens and crèches were closed, which created generations of grandparents as prior grand-child rearing, and sent many women back in to the home (Gruda, 2007). The representation of women in parliament in the legislature of 1992-1996 decreased by 5.7% as compared to 30% in the legislature of 1987-1991 (Assembly of Albania Publication, 2003). This was the atmosphere of social, economic, civic and political rights under which women activism started in the early 1990s. In the following part I will give a description of the ways in which women's activism responded to this situation in the early 1990s and how the donor community financially and strategically supported this activism.

The first decade of mission/strategies of women's activism (1991-1995) in Albania was concentrated on improving labour rights, promoting a culture of small medium enterprises, drafting a new abortion law, introducing family planning, improving health services after the closure of daily centres for women and children, increasing women's political participation in decision making, fighting the trafficking of women and children, fighting domestic violence and empowering women's presence in art, sport, literature, education and so on (Ikonomi, 1994; Fico & Whyte, 1995; Katro & Shimani, 1999). To employ Fraser's analysis (2009), I call this phase the phase of the recognition of women's rights. This is because practical services to women, or the distribution issue in Fraser's terms,

⁷¹ Until 1961 the socialist government of Albania was led by Russian Ideology. After interrupting diplomatic relations with Russia and former-Yugoslavia in the period 1963-1976, the diplomatic, ideological and economic relations with China were strengthened. In 1978 the end of these relations with Communist China was declared closing the country in self-isolation.

were difficult to re-establish due to a lack of administrative infrastructure, political willingness and to certain degree also a lack of financial resources from both state and international donors. Although the recognition of rights was the main activity at the early start, observing what their leaders told me (interviews with Diana Çuli and Suela Kurti) only the Independent Forum of Albanian Woman (the main umbrella organization in Tirana) and the Elbasan branch were engaged in delivering sacks of flour to poor families in the urban and rural areas where they operated. The rest of the organizations, as their history will demonstrate, were created after 1997; therefore, they became part of other types of activism.

The interviews I had with representatives of women NPOs and reports prepared in 1995 on the *Status of Women NGOs* by women groups show that multilateral donors such as UN and EU (through UNDP, UNFPA, ACSF, PHARE DEMOCRACY Program of the European Commission) and the international organizations CRIC, OXFAM and NOVIB were the first International donors to play an important role in the development of the women's movement in the country. Two reports were prepared at that time. One report was conducted by Dhurata Ikonomi in 1994 for the preparation phase of UNDP to establish the *Women in Development Program* in the country. The other report *On the Status of Women NGOs in Albania*, coordinated by the Women Centre (the contemporary Gender Alliance for Development Centre) was prepared by an expert group for the purpose of the participation of Albanian women NGOs (today NPOs) in the NGO Forum on Women, Beijing, September 1995. From these reports resulted that:

“from late 1991 till 1994, there were 11 women organizations operating in Albania. 4 of them were political organizations (“The Republican Women Organization”, “The Socialist Women”, “The Democratic League” and the “Anticommunist Persecuted Women”), one of them Religious Organization “Family, - the Heart of the Nation” and the rest were independent women groups organized in associations or organizations under specific topics of concerns” (Ikonomi, 1994, p. 7).

From the *Report on the Status of Albanian Women NGOs 1995*, prepared for participation in the Beijing Conference resulted that:

“The first women organizations in the country were: “Independent Forum of Albanian Women” (IFAW) with president Diana Culi, Association “Useful to Albanian Women” (UAW) with president Sevim Arbana, Women's Association “Refleksione” with president Valdet Sala, Association “Women in Development” with president Jeta Katro, “Tirana Federation

for Business and Professional Women” with president Liri Mitrovica, Association of Professional Women and Women Entrepreneurs with president Flutura Laknori, and the “Women Centre” in Tirana supported financially by Soros Foundation” (p. 6).

In these first five years in Albania, Women NGOs cooperated with each other in a positive spirit. They created two informal groups called the “Legal Group” and “The Health Group”. Through their “Women in Development Program” UNDP financially supported the work of the Legal Group. This group was strongly financed by the ‘Central & Eastern European Legal Initiative (CEELI), International Republican Institute (IRI) and National Democratic Institute (NDI)’ (Preparatory group report on NGOs, *ibid.* p. 8). They had prior gatherings at UNDP headquarters, and with the establishment of “The Women Centre”, regular meetings were formally taking part once every two weeks in there. “The Legal Group” gathered around itself women from law and humanity with experience in the field, who were responsible for offering Parliament and Ministries suggestions to improve the Labour Code, and who also worked on the first abortion law in the country. The “Health Group” was represented by doctors, psychologists, nurses and academics who aimed to improve mother and child health in the country. They started with the preparation of TV programmes on family planning, reproductive health, safe motherhood, breast diseases, and genealogical disorders. This group received financial support by the Women Centre, The Albanian Health Centre (ARCH), The UNDP project “Women in Development” and the Ministry of Labour, Emigration and Social Protection⁷². In 1995, the Open Society Foundation for Albania (OSFA), with direct participation of “Refleksione” Association in Albania and Kosovo initiated and financially supported the opening of the Women Centre in Tirana (today the GADC). The mission of the Women Centre as to unite Albanian women NPOs (at that time NGOs) to strengthen their voice in lobbying and advocating initiatives for the protection of women’s rights in Albania. Two other important objectives of this organization were to connect Albanian women NGOs with International Networks, and organize a Centre for women documentation and archive in the country. From 1991 until 1995 the Independent Forum for Albanian Women (IFAW), Useful to Albanian Women (UAW), Refleksione, and the Women Centre became the leading organizations of the women’s movement in Albania.

Two years after 1995, in 1997, the Albanian Civil Society Foundation (OSFA)

⁷² The expert group consisted of Delina Fico, Rolanda Dhimitri, Nafije Ciu, Arjana Haxhia, Sinead Whyte. The special consultants were Valdet Sala and Rolanda Dhimitri. The work for the compilation of this report was co-ordinated by the WomenCentre.

published a *Comprehensive Albanian NGOs list*. Women NGOs accounted for 23 in numbers, excluding the political women's for a and associations. As umbrella organisations IFAW and UAW established branches in other cities around the country: IFAW established branches in 14 cities according to the interview with Diana Çuli; UAW established them in 7 cities according to the report. The list provided by OSFA accounts for 16 foundations and agencies assisting NGOs, and 34 for the foreign organizations for development and aid. Just when the first women NGOs started to undertake stable activities, such as seminars, round tables and campaigns to promote women's rights, Albania entered a difficult phase: the collapse of 'financial pyramidal schemes'⁷³. This phase was accompanied by a lack of safety on the streets for both women and men. In this period 2000 men lost their lives, thus creating new widow families and orphans in the country. Thousands of families lost their life savings because of these 'financial pyramidal schemes'. The remittances of the first flow of emigrants were put into these schemes and were lost as a result. Other families sold their houses and put the money into these schemes hoping that in a few years they would be able to have some more money and enjoy a proper accommodation standard through buying a house. Poverty once again shook Albanians to the core. Another emigration flow occurred meanwhile, and again more men than women left the country. Many others lost their lives while trying to pass the borders illegally via the Otranto Canal in the Adriatic Sea on their way to Italy (HDPC, *Human Development Report Albania 2002*).

In the second phase (1995-1999) new women organizations were founded, providing new services such as shelters to host trafficked and violated women with or without children for a certain period. New counsel-assistance centers and telephone-lines offering counseling and information were introduced to provide online and face to face legal or social support to violated women and children. Tackling trafficking and domestic violence, improving child and mother health, legal support, elderly care, women representation in politics, and the creation of employment possibilities through improving women's skills through vocational training in tailoring, secretary, cooking and hairdressing were the new ap-

⁷³ For more information on the collapse of 'pyramidal schemes' in Albania see: Pettifer and Vickers "Çështja Shqiptare. Riformësimi i Ballkanit" (Albanian case, the reformation of Balkan), pp. 3-29. You can find this material online: <http://www.gazetakritika.net/Forumi/index.php?itemid=113> Skreband Kraft, (2002), *Krizat financiare në Europën Juglindore. Shkaqet, tiparet dhe mësimet që duhen nxjerrë*. (Financial crises in South-East Europe. Causes, features and lessons learned). *Kumtesë e përgatitur për Konferencën e Bankës së Shqipërisë, Tiranë*, or the online resource: http://www.bankofalbania.org/web/pub/markoSkreb_evanKraft_217_1.pdf

proaches of the women's movement to these problems.

In 1999 UNDP published the NGO directory in Albania containing 14 women's NGOs, thus showing less vitality and resistance of some organizations (reference to online resource in bibliography). However, it should be mentioned that NGOs faced fiscal problems because of the badly organized civil society law in Albania. Many of them had not registered their activities and therefore it was impossible to include them in the official lists published by donors or other interested NGO Forums.

The main international donors in Albania (UN agencies, World Bank, PHARE Democracy, OSFA) responded through their means of strategic donation to the 1997 and post-1997 political, social and economic situations in the country. UNDP donorship to women NPOs in Albania prioritized programmes which had to do with women's political participation, their security in the community level and domestic spheres. The implementation of new practices in rural areas to boost family farming and women's entrepreneurship were yet other programs that gained UNDP interest.

In this period we also observe the first services created for and offered to 'women householders'. Two of the organizations I interviewed representatives of, offered services in the second period for 'women householders' or 'lone mothers': the Independent Forum for the Albanian Women established in 1991, and the Association of Women Householders established in 1997. Women leaders I interviewed were asked which activities they prioritized in the first years of their establishment based on their mission as well as the donors who supported their projects and services. The interviews show that the Independent Forum for Albanian Woman (led by Diana Çuli during this period) opened three social enterprises in Vlora, Durrës, and Tirana. Altogether these enterprises employed 70 women workers, organized as cooperatives, where women produced and sold clothes and decided in the group how to share and distribute the incomes. As Çuli says "One of the main goals in opening such enterprises has been the creation of social services near the enterprise as for example kindergarten for children etc.". The main donors who financially supported such enterprises have been NED (US), UNDP, NOVIB. Furthermore, about specific programmes for women householders Çuli says that "Women householders have been part of all the projects we had in urban areas for employment and vocational training. Unfortunately, we did not have programmes for their children". (Appendix 2.3, interview no. 1).

In her answer Luljeta Hysa the chairman of the Association of Women House-holders, writes about the social, psychological and economic services for these women to alleviate their poverty. (Appendix 2.4, questionnaire no. 3). Her

organization has also offered computer courses, cooking and tailoring courses to increase women's vocational training. Health education and awareness programmes on pap-test examination to reduce health problems in families and the fight against illiteracy among ethnic minorities (Roma and Egyptian women) in rural areas were part of their programmes, also when these women suffered from mental incapability. The international donor which supported the first years of this organization was the Open Society Foundation for Albania.

The activities of women's organizations and their cooperation with international donors should also be seen as collaborative with or as a response to the programmes of the government as these women themselves pointed out. The international donors were not only the ally of women organizations but also of the Albanian government. The women's organizations were not only responsive to international donor strategies but also to the Albanian government. In 1997, in response to the appeal of Albanian authorities 'to a group of countries for assistance in resolving the security situation in Albania', the Permanent Council of the Organization for Security and Cooperation in Europe decided to establish an OSCE presence in Albania, with the mission of providing "the co-coordinating framework within which other international organizations can play their part in their respective areas of competence, in support of a coherent international strategy, and in facilitating improvements in the protection of human rights and basic elements of civil society" (1997 Mandate Permanent Council decision no. 160). Democratization, media, human rights, and election preparation and monitoring were the areas the OSCE presence in Albania was mandated to regulate. Boosting women's participation in local and central decision making in Albania and saving women's vote from 'family voting customary attitude' in rural regions was the area that OSCE offered financial and strategic assistance to local women organizations in reaching these long-term objectives. As a country which faced a new flow of poverty after the 1997 crisis, Albania became part of the World Bank and the IMF initiative on Poverty Reduction Strategy⁷⁴ at the end of 1999 (IMF and WB: 2005, p. 1).

Albania was the poorest country in the region, and in the two first periods 1991-1995 and 1995-1999 women's NGOs were involved in the provision of basic necessities such as food and clothing delivery projects through the aid of the international donor community (World Bank and UNDP reports 2000, 2002). Since the main donors of these distributions of material goods and services came from Europe and a good part of them were religious organizations, the structural neoliberal policies of the World Bank and IMF were not part of this type of stra-

⁷⁴ More information on this strategy and its followers can be found in chapter five.

tegic support. They assisted, as I have argued in the fifth chapter, the Albanian Government in establishing a socio-economic programme to fight poverty via a distribution of cash-benefits of insignificant levels. It should be mentioned that the provision of basic living goods was and performed also by Religious Institutions such as the Albanian Catholic Relief Services (ACRS), the International Aid Taibeh Association, the International Islamic Donor Organization, Albanian Caritas, the Malteser Hilfsdienst in Shkodra, and the Catholic Fund for Overseas Development (CAFOD) (UNDP, 1999, NGO directory). Some of them such as Albanian Caritas and the Malteser Hilfsdienst still continue to offer some food provisioning as the interviews with lone mothers have shown.

The Kosovo crisis in 1999 or the 'last genocide of Serbians towards Kosovar people' marked the start of the third phase of women's NPOs 1999-2005. According to the data of the European Observatory on Health Care Systems, the UN Country Report for Albania in 2002, that 400,000 Albanians of Kosovo (EOHCS: 2002, p. 3) were hosted as refugees in Albania. The report of the World Bank 2000 shows an even higher number of refugees of about 450,000, or equal to one third of the Albanian population of that time, hosted initially in Albanian families and later on in camps built temporarily to respond to their basic needs for food, accommodation, clothing and psychological assistance (Ibid.: p. 4). The budgetary cost for the Albanian government of the Kosovo crisis was estimated to be 85 million \$, an amount fully covered by international donors (World Bank Progress Report: 2000, p. 4).

Analyzing from interviews with women of NGOs (with Diana Çuli and Suela Kurti, see appendix 2) and my analysis of their online sites, Useful to Albanian Women and the Independent Forum for Albanian Women played a crucial role in offering psycho-social assistance to the Kosovar people in the campuses built around Durrës and the Tirana districts. The interview with Bajana Çeveli (Association of women with social problems in Durrës) reveals that this organization had its root in the Kosovo crisis. It was created ad-hoc to help the Kosovar families with psycho-social assistance and delivery of basic goods and after the crisis it continued to attract women in need, such as divorced women or those who were touched by the trauma of the 1997 civil war. At this time new donors entered Albania with their own priorities. One was Kvinna till Kvinna Foundation, which started to support Albania and Kosovo from 1999 in dealing with trauma after war. In 2002 Kvinna till Kvinna opened a new office in Tirana and until 2011 financed seven local women's local organizations under the headings of domestic violence ("Vatra" Center in Vlorë, "Women's Association for Social Problems Durrës", "Women Forum Elbasan", "Me the Woman" Pogradec, "Woman to Woman" Shkodra, "Agritra Vision Centre" Peshkopi and GADC). Another Inter-

national Aid Organization that entered Albania at that time was the World Food Program (WFP), the largest humanitarian aid UN organization. It started its operation at the end of 1998 and the beginning of 1999, to provide basic food needs for poor families. The Association for Women Householders, supported by the Red Cross and WFP, was involved in distributing food to poor families, and to women-headed families. In 2000, Partners-International in US was allocated an USAID fund to establish a new branch in Albania, Partners-Albania - Centre for Change and Conflict Management, which administrated and managed a Grant-Giving programme for about four years. Women's organizations were prioritized by Partners-Albania during 2000-2004. In 2004 this organization offered one of the first Women Leadership Programmes in the country.

Growth 1999 to 2005

From 1999 until 2005, the women NPO sector grew rapidly. From the women NPOs that I was in touch with, the "Association of Women with Social Problems Durrës" was opened in 2000, "Different and Equal" in 2002, "Women Forum Elbasan" started as an independent branch of IFAW in 2000, "Women Centre Berat" in 2002, "The Voice of Children calls us" in 2000, "Mothers, Children and the Future" in 1999, and "Vatra Association" in 1999. With the approval of the new civil society law by 2000, and the renaming of non-governmental organizations as non-profit organizations due to fiscal regulations, many women's organizations could be registered in their localities; hence, they were no longer obliged to be registered in Tirana.

The civil right of being and feeling secure and safe in private life and public spaces continued to be the priority agenda in the activities of mission and strategies for many women NPOs working in different localities in Albania. The international donors started to be identified based on services they were providing for. The first opened shelters on child and women trafficking received full financial support by IOM, CAAHT, USAID, UNDP, and the US Embassy Albania. The domestic violence was a service covered mostly by bilateral donors such as Western and Nordic European Embassies in Albania, or international organizations from the same countries. The donors who supported civil rights in this period were the Royal Netherlands Embassy in Albania, the Ministry of Foreign Affairs of Norway, the King Bedouin Foundation, Kvinna till Kvinna. Psychological services offered in shelters to trafficked and violated women were part of the strategies of the British Embassy, SNV, IOM, UN Gate and OSFA. Brikena Puka, the director of the "Vatra" Centre, in the interview I conducted with her in January 2012 (Appendix 2.3, interview no. 3), named Save the Children as the first donor

which financially supported the first Albanian trafficked girls' shelter in Vlora city in 2001.

Other donors, such as OSCE, NDI, UNIFEM (today UN Women), the Royal Netherlands Embassy in Albania, and the European Commission presence in Albania had a strategic agenda to push forward the participation and representation of women in politics.

The start of the negotiations between Albania and the EU for the Association and Stabilization Agreement in 2003 was a new phase in the road towards gender equality and gender-mainstreaming strategies. As I elaborated in the Introduction and in the fifth chapter, one of the main criteria to join the EU is the adaptation of *acquis communautaire* (the EU legal corpus) into a national legal framework. In 2007, as a result of these negotiations, the government of Albania drafted the National Development Strategy to implement the Association Stabilization Agreement, in which social services and gender equality received considerable attention.

The legislative international framework introduced legal and institutional objectives concerning gender equality, which were incorporated in the bilateral and multilateral agreements of the International Donors with the Albanian Government. The international conventions ratified from the Albanian government in 1991, 1991, 1994, and 1995 respectively are: The International Convention for Civil and Political Rights, The International Convention for Social Economic and Cultural Rights, The Convention for the Elimination of all forms of Discrimination against Women (CEDAW), The Socio-Economic and Cultural European Convention on Human Rights. Local women NPOs used these international frameworks and especially UN financial support and experts to push the Albanian Government to approve the Law on Gender Equality in Society (2004), the New Family Code (2003), The Law on Domestic Violence (2004), The Law for the Protection against Discrimination (2010). These laws addressed directly and indirectly women's civil, social, economic and political rights in the country and introduced for the first time the necessity of institutional infrastructure for the implementation of these laws. However, monitoring incentives still needed to be adjusted in the coming years.

In the years after 1999, activism signified also a new era in the self-promotion of Women NPOs in Albania as think-tanks, research centers, and training institutions with regard to gender equality and gender mainstreaming on the micro, meta and macro levels of society. Although the language of gender instead of women has been used since the 1995 reports by women's organizations, after 2000 it became a favoured and sexy terminology to use. For example, the Women Center changed its name into Gender Alliance for Development Centre in this period. Other organizations were called Different but Equal; Gender and Devel-

opment Union; Association for Development, Integration and Gender Equality. I believe that the “gender era” has been a result of the Association Agreement with the EU in 2003, which was cleverly used by women organizations to push the government to approve new laws to comply with *acquis communautaire* of the EU. Training programmes, training manuals and training modules on gender equality and gender mainstreaming were a new mission associated with intensive activities, used by women, gender activists and experts to introduce and change a societal mentality on other forms of gender practices and rights.

It is difficult to find statements on the impact of the EU priorities on gender equality on activities of women NPOs in Albania. Gender research Weiner (2009) has shown that EU directives on gender equality itself have remained in the hands of national agendas of EU member states. I have come to observe that although in EU member states gender equality has taken different forms in terms of its level of mainstreaming, in countries such as Albania which strived to enter the EU, it has been taken seriously at least by women NPOs. Albania has experienced a similar path as other Eastern European countries which joined the EU in the last decade. As Weiner (2009) explained, their gender equality agendas were supported strongly by local, national, political decision makers who wanted to fit their governing model and adjust it to the EU sample and level. Weiner has pointed out that national women activists used the positive effect of this transferability utilizing EU directives to push the government to reframe national legislation on gender equalities and mainstreaming instruments, most of which are part of their agendas. However, much of these EU directives were drafted for Western realities; therefore, a good part of them could not fit Eastern realities without further local alterations. This way the geo-political meanings of these EU directives lost their prior intentions in local strategies. As Weiner states:

“I conclude that while legal norms – gender equality or potentially otherwise – may move across national boundaries, the motives and interests enabling such crossovers can simultaneously disable their utility and endanger the larger political and economic aims which such mechanisms seek to advance” (ibid.; p. 307).

I will address that the Albanian government and women NPOs are facing difficulties to have an allocated budget for each gender mainstreaming action. Until this phase, the women NPOs are still mainly engaged with issues of recognition and representation, to use Fraser’s (2009) division of feminist activism.

The decentralization process in 2000, which localized central services, and the EU and UN appeal for participatory processes after 2000 played a role for the

incorporation of civil society organizations in service delivery. In the first meeting of 2004, the Ministry of Labour drafted a list with the licensed civil society organizations to deliver social services in their locality. The organizations I interviewed 'Vatra Association' in Vlora (South), 'The Association of Women with Social Problems Durrës' (Central), and the 'Association Another Vision' (Central), were the first 3 of 13 organizations licensed to offer services. 'Another Vision' was licensed for the shelter services offered to violated girls and women, the shelter for 7 abandoned children in family houses, offering free lunch to 50 children from very poor families, socio-economic assistance for 5 poor families, and school books for 90 children from poor families. The Vatra Association was licensed to offer shelter services to cases referred by the Albanian and European police to Albanian and foreign trafficked girls or women or under risk of trafficking. The Durrës association was licensed to offer socio-economic services to women and girls with social problems. This strategy to include NPOs in the decentralization of services and delivery provision by the central government marked the beginning of what Nancy Fraser (2009) calls the redistribution of services this time acknowledged by the state. The licensing meant that these organizations kept their missions of their activity and the local government would refer to them women with socio-economic problems they were treating with socio-economic aid. For small scale and temporary projects of the municipalities, the local governments could tenderize local women organizations to offer these services.

2005 - present

The fourth phase of women activism from 2005 onwards started with the Parliamentary Elections of 2005, which resulted in no more than 7.10% of women representation to parliamentary seats for the mandate of 2005-2009. The data provided by the Inter-Parliamentary Union on 31 October 2008 showed that from 188 countries with National Parliaments, Albania occupied the 118th place. The Gender Alliance for Development Center became the promoter to design and draft training manuals and modules, and deliver training programmes introducing Gender Concepts, Gender Practices and Gender Budgeting to several audiences of different stakeholders on a national level.

Leaders of women NPOs, assisted and strongly supported by the Organization for Security and Cooperation in Europe (OSCE), former UNIFEM-Albania presence (today UN Women), UNDP, and the Ambassador of the German Republic in Albania (at this time represented by a woman) pushed Albanian parliamentarians to approve the new Law on Gender Equality in Society in 2008. This law

introduced the gender quota of female representation in local and central decision making in the country. Its approval marked a new moment in creating the legal space for the establishment of new administrative structures to enhance gender opportunities in Albania. The National Strategy on Gender Equality and Domestic Violence 2007-2010 was a first successful strategy approved by the Albanian Government and drafted with the full participation of representatives of women NPOs and gender experts and activists. This strategy could have not been drafted and implemented unless fully supported by UNDP and UNIFEM (“Delivering as One” program), the Austrian Development Cooperation, Indevlop IPM through SIDA. These achievements were transitional points to the fourth phase of women activism which started by the late 2005. It showed a better cooperation of women NPOs in coalition and pushed the Albanian Government to improve legal framework on gender equality and equal opportunities in Albania which I shall explain in the next section.

Other participatory processes where women NPOs were present and gave their contribution are: the Amendment of the “Employment Boosting Law” where women occupy a special place; the Action plan to implement the Employment Sectorial Strategy; the Intra-Sectorial Strategy for Social Protection 2007-2013, and the National Strategy on Gender Equality 2010-2013. In 2010 women NPOs delivered the third CEDAW shadow report. Its work was coordinated by GADC and presented to the CEDAW Congress in US by GADC and “Reflections” organizations. For the first time in the CEDAW Congress participated a representative of LGBT rights from Albania, Mrs. Meri Pone. She represented the Pink Embassy (the organization of LGBT rights in Albania, fully financed by the Matra Program of the Ministry of Foreign Affairs of the Netherlands).

Having been part of the civil society, I think that the period of after 2010 signaled a culture of more unified cooperation between women’s organizations. The reasons behind this are the efforts of the International Donors, such as the European Commission, in putting organizations within the country, within the Balkan region and within Europe in coalition projects if they wanted to qualify for financial support.

One of the questions I asked leaders of women’s organizations referred to the relationship they had with other national or international organizations with the same mission as theirs, and whether they were part of any national or international coalition? The findings showed that only two organizations, one in the North-East and another one in South-East Albania, are not part of national coalitions.

The other 15 organizations demonstrated an active attitude towards coaliting with National Networks. However, only five of these organizations were part of international networks, such as: Balkan Network of Human Rights, Associa-

tion of Inter-Balkan Women, Anti-trafficking European Network, Femmes Chefs D'Enterprises Mondiales (FCEM), NetWork & European Info Centre against Violence and the Anna Lind Foundation. The non-representations in International Networks and the lack of connections with international organizations creates a culture of isolation of activities in the communities these organizations operate in, which does not allow for the exchange of experiences and ideas, joint cooperation and an improvement of the services provided.

Analyzing the answers given by the interviewed women and basing my arguments in the history of their establishment and activities, I can give three reasons why the women organizations have coaliting difficulties. One of the reasons is their location. Since the majority of the national and international coaliting activities take place in Tirana, the organizations located in the North and South do not have financial resources to cover the travelling and accommodation expenses, unless they are covered by international donors. The coalition with international networks is missing in the organizations which are not located in Central Albania. Only the Vatra Association in Vlora, located in the South of Albania, is part of international coalitions due also to its international oriented activity narrated earlier in the text. Another factor of this miss-representation in international networks is the years of contribution to civil society. The organizations established during 1990-2000 earned more financial credits in the first years and exposure to the International Networks. Having connections abroad creates access to international coalitions. The small number of international networks that the organizations I interviewed are part of, indicate a lower chance of Albanian women NPOs to become part of the Western European Women Networks, or Global Women Networks, which have a powerful voice on the EU level and other global multilateral donors. It is crucial to understand such strategical moves in coaliting, from the perspective of women activists in order to create a practical view of the processes of needs's representation and interpretation which Fraser (1989) has pointed out. The coalition women organizations become part of are the other public spaces that they make their voice heard, the public spaces which together can be able to turn a domestic need into a political one.

Until now I have offered a historical overview of the women's movement represented by the development of activities which are part of the mission of women's organizations in Albania. My overview was based on the organizations interviewed, their websites and international and national reports. How do women NPOs and International donors in Albania work within the legal framework and social policies described in chapter 5 for supporting lone mothers? In the next section I move on to the services provided by women NPOs for lone mothers in Albania.

6.3. Services provided to lone mothers by women NPOs: information and advocacy

Regarding the services provided to lone mothers, from the 17 interviews and answered questionnaires by leaders and project coordinators of women NPOs, the findings show that few of them have explicitly in their mission the provision of services and empowerment of lone mothers. Only one organization out of 17 (The Albanian Association for Women Householders in Tiranë city) that I researched had as its mission “to provide services for women householders”. All the other organizations have temporary projects for lone mothers as an inclusive part of their programmes for the work with divorced women, women undergoing divorce and their children. From 12 organizations that I have cooperated only the Association for Widow Women in Peshkopi had in its mission “work with widow mothers and their children”. The Youth Association of Fier, during the period that I was conducting the interviews, was running a six-month project for widow mothers in this city. This project was supported by Vodafone Albania, a national donor and aimed at offering psycho-social assistance to widow mothers and their children. Increasing their chance in the labour market through vocational training was part of the long-term objectives of this project.

There are different services offered to lone mothers by women NPOs in North, Central and South Albania. The services changed in time based on the prior strategic missions and diversified annual objectives due to the social and economic development situation in the communities these organizations are operating. The services provided are donor dependent. Only recently few NPOs have the community and local business support. There are services which are more directly connected to lone mothers. Other services though directly target lone mothers, the latter do not see or feel its beneficence at first hand. Indirect beneficent services are the so-called participatory processes for the local government, and lobbying and advocacy services for the civil society or women organizations. During the interviews representatives of women NPOs did not provide detailed information on the services they offer, but the lone mothers I interviewed did provide me with valuable information to group the services and divide them per region, and per sub-group of lone mothers. There are different types of services lone mothers can receive from women NPOs. I will group them together in three: services of recognition, representation and redistribution to use Fraser’s (2009) definition. The first group of services of recognition concerns assessment and recognition of lone mothers’ needs. The second group of representational services offers lobbies with the local government for employment and Socio-Economic Aid and fundraising activities. The third group of redistributive services has more direct beneficial services, respectively: basic provision for food and

clothing; psycho-social and legal assistance; career development and vocational training; shelter services; Information outreach and consciousness raising services; assistance with the preparation of documents; and employment mediation with the business and the local community. To describe these services, I will use different data settings. Some information from the interviews with representatives of women organizations, the data gathered from the survey among lone mothers, my own observation on the working methodology of women organizations where I held the interviews. I will also make use of my own background of 10 years of working with civil society organizations in Albania.

The assessment and recognition of lone mothers' needs is the first step of every organization in order to grasp the multidimensional, socio-economic background of lone mothers living situation. This is the first step which leads to many other steps and the overall activity of women's organization is dependent on this service. The assessment of needs, as part of the recognition phase, is directly connected with this representation. Unless an organization knows the situation of its constituency, its arguments for drafting short or medium term projects and programs becomes impossible. Long-term projects are only possible in the cases when an organization has a continuous strategic donor willing to invest for many years in one project or service. It is a service which until recently has been financed by international donors. Local women organizations have received funding from different bilateral and multilateral donors for need's assessment surveys and reports in order to justify the activities and services their community needs. One example of this need's assessment activity for lone mothers is the survey conducted by the association of Women Householders I will elaborate on later, which has been used to develop a report to present to advocacy processes with the Ministry of Labor.

Over the past years accountability has been highly valued and supported by international donors for funding. The accountability of data raises the profile of organizations in meetings with its constituency and in meetings with policy stakeholders to talk about its constituency. Ghodsee (2004) has problematized this very service and how the need's assessment for purpose of international donor reporting or project proposals have created a negative image of women. She (i.e. on p. 734) argued that in reports produced by local women NGOs and UN agencies, UN and Western European experts used discourses of 'cultural feminism' which created a negative image of women in Eastern and Central Europe. This image installed the idea of feminization of poverty in former communist countries, thus stereotyping all women in one category as the losers of democracy (i.e.; p. 735, p. 748). Moreover, Ghodsee draws a parallel between the communist ideology and international donors, stating that they were not different

from one another but both focused on imposing their order and rules:

“Finally, NGOs divert women from social movements and co-opt their potential leaders. Participation in NGOs that are entirely dependent on foreign funding breeds both cynicism and opportunism in the few committed women leaders who genuinely believe that free markets and liberal democracy are more desirable alternatives to communism. In informal conversations, Bulgarian women activists complained to me that capitalist civil society was really not too different from its communist counterpart. Being forced to digest the rhetoric of international organizations and propose only those projects that support American or European interests was really no different than being forced to regurgitate the Marxist propaganda once required under the old regime. Women’s rights and women’s issues were once again used as tools to support the dominant political and economic system” (ibid; p. 748).

In this paragraph, noting similarities of ruling between ‘former-communist’ and ‘international-capitalist’ regimes, Ghodsee finds a similar instrument these regimes use to maintain their power, - women rights. If we look at this in more detail, both ‘former-communist’ and ‘international-capitalist’ regimes referred to the degrading situation of women and thus formulated strategies to ameliorate it.

The communist system of political economy, at least in Albania, used women’s work for lowly valued jobs, although the Labour Code contains an article on ‘equal pay for jobs of equal value’. This is the problem Ghodsee has with the ‘cultural feminism’ imposed by the West and the way in which it was connected to the strategies of the World Bank and IMF. The effect of cultural feminism in liaison with neoliberals has also been examined by Fraser (2009). She claimed that feminists by trying to analyze the gender inequality ingrained in society remained trapped within the grip of cultural feminism, forgetting the political economy, thus the institutional change (ibid., p. 99). Fraser continues her analysis by stating that by being concerned with the family wage, feminist were against androcentrism, by asking a double wage. According to Fraser, this double wage is used by neoliberals to give women fewer paid jobs, non-secure employment and moreover withdraw public services from them. For the Albanian case, the argument of ‘state-organized communism’ is that it used women’s labour force but it also regulated child-care services and it offered job security. The neoliberals on the other hand use women’s labor, do not provide employment security and delegate child-care services to free markets.

Going back to the subject of the feminization of poverty, in her article Ghodsee carefully calls to do justice to other categories of women in Eastern Central European countries: women from the middle classes, who earned more than their partners and showed they could cope quite well with the challenges of new democracies. Nonetheless, Ghodsee also reminds us that there were intellectual women from the middle classes in the post-communist bloc who worked enthusiastically with UN agencies and Western experts to create an image of lesser educated women coming from vulnerable situation as losers within their nations.

Following Ghodsee's argument, we can ask whether middle class women activists are to blame for descriptions of poverty that harms poor women in post-communist countries? Since the women's organizations in Albania are also donor dependent (UN and Western organizations) would she indirectly be blaming women who work with international donor organizations in general? Based on the situation in Albania and its history of donorship and work of women NPOs, I would argue differently. Indeed, in Albania poverty among unemployed and rural classes was and still strikingly high. Therefore, I would not blame middle-class women who established women NPOs, aiming to represent lesser educated women in vulnerable situations, as creators of a false image women as the victims of transition.⁷⁵ I would partly agree with Ghodsee that missions of multilateral donors, such as the UN, have mainly been on issues of recognition and representation. Therefore, in many cases women NGOs could not submit proposals on redistribution of services which would have responded better to the needs of their constituencies, but rather had to submit proposals for services of recognition of situations and rights and representation of needs and rights. After decades of need's assessments, reporting and information gathered, I believe that on the whole the situation in Albania is known. As a gender scholar and gender activist who always fought for serious data collecting, I believe that it is time to stop reproducing what is known and leave data gathering to public institutions which are specialized in this (rather than each organization working with its own data) and focus on real needs and ways to politicize and serve a need. Women in need are better served with services instead of reports and surveys, or arguments which define their level of poverty. In the end what would be the direct impact of hundreds of reports being produced by different organizations and donors when

⁷⁵ During phases of grant acquisition, Albanian Women NPOs often used the term "vulnerable groups" or "vulnerable situation". Translated into Albanese vulnerable situation means "situatë jo e favorshme" (not a favorable situation), which is used for those groups of people who are deprived of welfare to lead a normal life. This term has entered civil society vocabulary from early 1990s and was not used as such during socialism.

for example lone mothers know nothing about them, or when they have to wait decades until a benefiting policy is approved or a programme is financed. Thus, there are two topics for future research: when will donors limit information retrieving from different sources and when will the Albanian government itself, the civil society and the business community find national paths to serve the needy?

The needs' assessment surveys and reports are the main tools used by women's organizations when representing their constituency in fundraising participatory processes/advocacy processes, such as we will see in the case of the report on 'women householders' in the advocacy processes from the Association of Women Householders.

Fundraising is therefore a form of representing needs of a group. It is located in between internal procedures of an organization to survive and the strategic programs for lone mothers. Without funds there is no service to provide and no continuation of a constituency to serve to. While in Western civil society and US states the funds are provided by the government, the community itself and the business community, Albania is far from reaching that practice. In the last decade with the opening of the Agency for Support for Civil Society in 2009, with the EU Financial Assistance on the Instrument for Pre-Accession I and II coordinated in cooperation with Ministry of European Integration in Albania and with the delivery as ONEProgram of the UN, the financial support by international donors is moving in the direction of coordination between the international donors and the central and local governments. This has been the case for the UN funds allocated to the local government of Durrës for the programme on domestic violence. The Durrës municipality cooperated with the Association of Women with Social Problems to deliver psychological assistance and legal assistance to divorced women. Also, the UN funds are going to the state public shelter for violated women instead of continuing to support the local shelters, which is a problem raised during informal meetings with representatives of women shelters. Looking at this trend of donorship, the future of women organizations funding might become dependent on the financial cooperation and administration between the Albanian government and the international donors. Therefore, issues of neoliberalism blaming women activists as executors of these funds, if they will be administrated by the government and the international donors will not ring a bell for the Albanian context. This shift of funding administrators can entail a blaming from an alliance of women NGOs with international donors (Ghodsee, 2004; Fraser, 2009) to an alliance with both international donors and the national government in producing cheap women labor force.

Fundraising is a procedural activity provided voluntarily by employees who are knowledgeable about funding procedures and proposal writing. In my expe-

rience as a volunteer at Dutch organizations, fundraising in Western Europe is a department on its own, and employees with an international business and marketing background can be employed in such positions. In the last decade the European Commission in Albania, through the TECHNICAL Assistance for Civil Society Organizations (TASCO), has organized ongoing free training programmes on proposal writings for EU pre-accessions for the civil society and the local government alike. Therefore, recently more staff of women organizations are able to write and present relevant proposals for the pre-accession funds.

Fundraising activity in itself requires an involvement of many steps until it comes to the final results. It does require donor identification per service, knowledge of donor mission and strategies, needs assessment, research on the work of other organizations and other donors, negotiations meetings with the stakeholders that will be involved in the future project, advocacy and defense of the project to the international donors and, last but not least, project proposal writing which is the breath of the sector. In all these steps donors have an impact on women's activist thinking.

Of the 12 organizations with whom I cooperated to get access to lone mothers in 10 cities of Albania, only 6 of them have raised temporary funds for some of the sub-groups of the category of lone mothers, in the cities of Durrës (Central Albania), Elbasan (Central Albania), Vlorë (South Albania), Shkodër (West-North Albania), Peshkopi (East-North Albania) and Fier (South-West Albania) respectively. The other 6 organizations did not have specific proposals or fundraising for this category of women, but divorced, widowed, teenage, separated or abandoned lone mothers have been part of their ongoing programmes when they came to the center.

From the other 17 organizations I encountered via interviews with representatives, only the Association of Women Householders had specific programmes for all the sub-groups of the women householders category of women and had raised continuous funds for this service. Representatives of women organizations were asked how difficult they thought it would be to lobby with international and national donors for funds for the lone mothers category. Some of them thought that donors are sensitive to this category of women, others thought it is rather difficult because it is a forgotten category in need for services from both the government and the civil society.

Both lobbying and advocacy on behalf of lone mothers and constructing the category of lone mothers, are part of representation. Those who work in civil society are familiar with the start of an advocacy process with the first steps one has to take to in order to be able to represent a group and advocate its interests. The construction of a category and the language and terminology which are used to

describe a category is crucial in seriously thinking about the procedures and activities of representation. This is therefore the moment to describe how women's organizations in civil society represent lone mothers.

May (2004, 2009) and Fraser (1989) whose work I referred to in the second chapter highlight the importance of how a category gets constructed and who constructs what. May and Fraser both address the influence in welfare policies of stereotyping discourses which construct a category. When Fraser subsequently furthers her argument, she is more concerned with need's discourses which travel from the category under concern to the domain of the politics. And May looks at the construction of a category not only from the side of policy-makers, but also from lone mothers themselves by creating serial collectivities of their identities. May's argument and her approach I have developed in more detail in the seventh chapter with the case of the identity construction of lone mothers. Here I will look at what Fraser (1989) calls the construction of need's discourses in the public domain of civil society and its travel to the political domain of policy and decision making.

Before coming to this point, I will discuss, based on my interviews, how leaders, social workers and project coordinators of women's organizations in Albania construct the category of women householders and how they define the category of lone mothers. When asked how they would understand the terminology and category of 'women householders' and 'lone mothers', their definitions are inclusive for some women groups, others mix the boundaries between single and lone mothers which is also reflected in academic debates (Kilkey, 2000). And yet it can be observed that this is a more favorable approach to the terminology of 'women' over 'mothers' because they think the term 'women' involves more sub-categories of women in one category as compared to the category 'mother'. Here are some of their answers:

"With women householders I understand a divorced or widow woman who has custody over her children. With 'lone mothers' I understand a woman who has children whose father has not acknowledged fatherhood, or a woman who has unwed children, thus mothers who do not live with the biological father of the child" (Appendix 2.4, questionnaire no. 4). "As a terminology we use 'women in need' which includes many categories of women. 'Women householders' are understood to be women which are divorced from their husbands or women who have children out of wedlock" (Appendix 2.3, interview no. 5). For us "'women householders' are widowed, divorced and teenage mothers. But 'women householders' are also those women who have their husbands in emigra-

tion, and they have to face everything themselves, starting from houseworks, family property, elder parents of the husband, taking care also of kinship issues, everything they face on their own, these are also called women householders” (Appendix 2.4, interview no. 8).

The answers of these women leaders are in line with the definition of ‘women householders’ used by the government, a terminology developed in 2000 for those women who can receive economic aid under the criterias defined for a women householder. These leaders also like to talk in terms of ‘we’, which can be taken as a feeling of belonging to a network or group which has developed its own language of talking and categories. And last but not least, many of these women equate to lone mothers the same meaning as the socialist government (a non-wed abandoned mother) or the commonly used terminology single mothers. What I have referred to as the difference between single and lone, is the explanation and definition used by Kilkey (2000, p. 68: single refers to non-wed mothers and lone is a more inclusive term, which includes formerly wed-mothers and also all types of non-wed mothers, under the condition of raising their children alone. My definition of lone mothers rests on the fact that women are first mothers and second are raising their children without a partner. According to these answers, it is clear that when leaders of women NPOs are invited in participatory processes or are lobbying and advocating on behalf of ‘women householders’/ lone mothers they prefer to speak on behalf of wider categories. In their definitions they include sub-categories of women such as divorced, widowed, unwed teenage mothers, and women whose husbands have emigrated.

A unique advocacy and lobbying initiative with central and local policy-makers in Tirana was performed by the *Albanian Association for Women Householders (AAWH)*, in cooperation with law experts from the *Centre for Civic Legal Initiatives (CCLI)*, also in Tirana, during March-August 2011. The National Agency for Support of Civil Society granted a sixth months project to this organization under the title “Knowing and strengthening the status of women householders in Albanian society”. The main aim of this project was to “draft a project-law, which accepts ‘women householders in need’ as a group with a specific status in Albanian population. This project-law therefore should address ways to resolve their problems according to European standards, contextualizing it with economic and social development of the country” (reference) Luljeta Hysa, leader of the AAWH, in cooperation with CCLI conducted a survey with 900 women householders in six suburban areas of Tirana. Its findings were made present to local and central policy makers in Tirana, and representatives of the civil society sector. The aim of this project and the report they realized was to analyze

Albanian Legislation on the provision of rights for women householders and to monitor its application in six regions of Tirana. By giving statistics on how many of the women householders who answered their questions were in a vulnerable situation due to unemployment, high rate of poverty, low level of education, low payment of economic aid, lack of the basic means of living, AAWH and CCLI tried to raise public awareness and policy-makers consciousness on the importance of a recognition of women householders as a group of women with special needs. In their report of May 2011, they offered some suggestions women householders themselves raised in group-meetings for improving their situation:

- “the socio-economic assistance for women householders should increase at least into a minimum of 5000 ALL (38 euro per month)
- Widow householders should be exempted from high education tax for their children.
- Women householders should be exempted from local taxes, in cases when they are unemployed and have no housing possibilities.
- Recommending emergent measures for the housing accommodation of one parent families.
- Recommending a more active role of local governmental units to offer social services for families head by women, via the role of the social worker and the psychologist.
- Free medication offered to women householders and their children.
- Interventions in the schemes of social assistance for women who came to Tirana after 1992, have no immovable property and do not benefit from the *socio-economic aid programme*.
- It is recommended that women householders who are benefiting from family pensions for their children after the death of their husbands should not be exempted from socio-economic aid”⁷⁶.

⁷⁶ The results of this report were given to me by some participants who were present at the round table in May 2011.

Three months later, on 1 July 2011 AAWH in cooperation with CCLI organized a consultative round table, where they invited representatives from the MLSAEO (today's Ministry of Welfare and Youth), the Ministry of Finance, the Ministry of Education, the Ministry of Health and the Ministry of Defense. The Executive Director of CCLI, Aurela Anastasi presented in this consultative round table for the first time ever in Albania the 'project-law on the status of one-parent family'. Unfortunately, I have so far not been able to find a copy of this 'project-law'; however, in an interview that Luljeta Hysa gave into electronic media in Albania she said:

“According to this project-law, the economic aid for one-parent families should reach the minimal amount of 5000 ALL per month [...] many one-parent families are living in a difficult economic situation and they have no possibility to cover education for their children. This status leaves aside women-head of householders who are Albanian citizens but living abroad as emigrants of seeking asylum elsewhere. As stated in this project-law women-head householders lose this status when their child becomes 18 years old, and in cases when they marry another person”. (Appendix 2.4, questionnaire 3).

The webpage of AAWH also contains a 'Resolution on the situation of single mothers and one-parent families'⁷⁷, which steams certain considerations from the European Parliament. In the Albanian translation in this page for 'single mothers' as annotated from the European Parliament, 'nëna të vetme' equates the Albanian translation for lone mothers. The title of this women association corresponds with their mission as having women-heads of households as their objective. Due to the language of the European Parliament for 'single mothers', they have translated their resolution in Albanian by using the terminology of 'nëna të vetme' (lone mothers) from Albanian to English. Therefore, this women association uses four terminologies with regard to the category of women who raise their children without a partner: "women-head householders", "single-mothers", "one parent families" and "lone mothers". Although there is not any definition on these terminologies from this association from the finding of its report and the terminology 'women-head householders', this has created an ambiguity with respect to the women targeted concerning the presence of a partner in their life, or the presence of a child. Moreover, it does not clearly address the issues they have when living in

⁷⁷ <http://shshgk.org/2011/08/28/resolution-on-the-situation-of-single-mothers-and-one-parent-families/>

joint households. What is more important in this project and its advocating goal is the serious consideration women NPOs are giving to the status of 'one parent families' and 'women householders' or 'single mothers' as part of it. Although there is a need for some legal rather than social definitions of 'single mothers', 'lone mothers', 'women householders' and 'one-parent families' in Albanian legislation, this is a first positive attempt to introduce the problem and the urgency of a much needed status for this group of women which is at social risk. More importantly, another positive attempt of this project-law is the recognition of fathers as lone parents, although their numbers are insignificant numbers when compared to lone mothers. Based on these findings it can be stated that women NPOs in Albania recognize the role of both lone parents in raising the children, and try to do gender justice for both men and women alike.

During interviews with NPO leaders I intended to find out whether women NPO experts are invited to participate in consultative participatory processes with the Ministry of Labour or other line ministries in Albania. The participatory processes are one of the few platforms women organizations have to advocate for the needs of their constituencies. I found out that 9 out of 17 representatives of local woman NPOs did have consultative experiences in the past, also for violated divorced women. The Ministry of Labour has been a promoter of initiating such processes and has invited local women organizations to its round tables, also circulating draft-law proposals or strategies for local feedback, as some women told me. The Ministries of Defense and Education have also organized participatory processes but not as often as the Ministry of Labour. The Department of Gender and Equality in this ministry drafted a list of women's organizations (published online) which work on women's rights and gender equality and were involved in participatory processes or were referred to for cooperation with local governments.

For example a leader from Tirana and a project coordinator from Elbasan lists the experience of their organizations in participatory processes. I asked Marjana Meshi, Director of the "Different and Equal" Association, whether she or other members of her NPO were part of participatory processes from the Ministry of Labour or other Ministries to draft project-laws and strategies which concern directly the groups of women they represent. She answered:

"I have personally been part of the working group to draft the National Strategy on Gender Equality 2007-2010. I have been invited from the Ministry also for the law on the Standards of Social Care. The Ministry of Defense as well made me part of the consultations for the Anti-trafficking National Strategy". (Appendix 2.3, interview no. 9).

Luljeta Qose, project coordinator of “Another Vision Association” in Elbasani city, lists the consultative-participatory activities they (she and her colleagues) as representatives of their organization were invited to and participated in with the Ministry:

“The leader and employees of our organization were part of drafting:

- State standards for offering shelter services for women;
- Anti-trafficking National Strategy;
- National Action-Plan for the Fight Against Trafficking of Human Beings
- National Action-Plan for the Fight Against Children Trafficking and their Protection as Victims of Trafficking 2011-2013;
- The law on Protection of Children’s Rights;

We have also given recommendations in our annual report to improve and amend the law on Children’s Rights”. (Appendix 2.4, interview no. 5).

Their answers testify to a cooperation between women’s organizations and central government. Nevertheless, it should be taken into consideration that international donors have financially supported these processes between Albanian government and women’s organizations and international experts have been engaged seriously in every step of draft-laws or national strategies. Their involvement and supported is acknowledged by women’s organizations.

Fraser (1989), on ‘interpretation of needs,’ outlined how the needs articulated in the private domain become public through socially constructed discourses, and how from the moment they become public they resist other discourses until they become political. Deploying her concept of political representation of needs, I asked NPO women whether they conducted need’s assessment for their constituency they are serving and how they do so. Moreover, I asked them how difficult it is to lobby with international donors to fund projects for lone mothers. Their answers show that the needs assessments were gathered daily from the complaints and needs addressed by lone mothers who would come to ask for their services. Once every few years some of these organizations conducted surveys on the socio-economic problems in their communities to grasp the situation and assess what was really needed. Some others referred to reports they formulated after the implementation of every project, which helped them to get feedback from the women they offered their services. This information gathered and the results of the survey were used by them in round tables during participatory

processes, such as the case of the Association of Women Householders shows.

Regarding their needs representation becoming political, thus gaining political power, I asked the interviewees how much they thought their opinion or advocacy was taken into consideration by policy and decision makers⁷⁸. Five out of nine women who participated in participatory processes think that their suggestion and recommendations are taken into considerations, one of them thinks the opposite, and the rest of the interviewees did not answer this question. Aurela Bozo, project coordinator of the Center for Civic and Legal Initiatives thinks that the interpretation of women's needs has a chance to become political and be included in policy. She states:

“For Gender Equality issues our consultative participation has been very successful. The Ministry of Labour sent the Draft-Strategy to our organization and to some others and this method has proved efficient. Our organization has proposed in the draft of National Strategy for Gender Equality and the Eradication of Gender Violence in the Family (2011-2015) some changes related to ‘women who head their families’ and these have been taken in consideration”. (Appendix 2.4, questionnaire no. 1)

Luljeta Qose, project coordinator of “Another Vision” writes on her experience:

“The organizations which are working on gender issues participate in strategy drafting and later on in the action-plan of line ministries. I say this based on the fact that our organization was invited by the Ministry (I was also a participant) and I worked in working groups to draft the strategies I mentioned before. I think our interference have been effective because in the end we have seen that our opinions are reflected in strategies or action-plans drafted by the relevant ministries” (Appendix 2.4, questionnaire no. 5).

The interviews show a positive and effective cooperation between women's orga-

⁷⁸ Until recently the Albanian Government did not have any political-legislative documents to arrange the cooperation between the Line Ministries and the CSOs for participatory processes. A policy document of the cooperation between the Government and the Civil Society in the form of a cooperation card has been drafted in 2009 and approved by 2010. In September 2010 Partners-Albania published a *Practical Guide for Consultative Participatory Processes*, in the framework of the project ‘Building the capacities of civil society organizations to promote participatory consultation in policy formulation processes in Albania’, financed by BTD.

nizations and the Ministry of Labour. Women feel they are being heard by the central policy-makers. However, it should be noted that this is the experience is narrated by local organizations that are very active in their cities. The organizations with fewer institutional records do not have the historical experiences of cooperating on a national level with central policy makers. Two women leaders of organizations in Tirana and Korçë had the impression that they were being heard also due to the presence of donors. They thought that when donors are involved the ministries have more resources to perform participatory processes. Marjana Meshi, Director of “Different and Equal” says:

“I think our recommendations are taken into account also through the support of internationals. With a strong support of internationals they give priorities to things. For example, the financial support of UNDP and UNIFEM increased their interest to include more organizations in consultative processes”. (Face to face interview with Marjana Meshi, January 2012, Tirana, Albania). (Appendix 2.3, interview no. 9).

If we were to see these participatory processes financed by international donors, specifically UN organizations, and their support to socio-economic aid policies for ‘women householders’, I can say that it is not the same as the structural policies of neoliberalism via the World Bank and IMF in Latin America. Thus, if neoliberalism was imposed via multilateral international organizations as Ghodsee and Fraser claimed, the examples from the Ministry of Labour and women’s organizations indicate that in these cases other consequences of international donorship can also be seen, such as advocating pro needs of lone mothers.

What about the local level? Are women organizations active with the local governments after the decentralization processes? The lobbying and advocacy by women organizations has a stronger cooperation in the communities they are working with the local government. Of the 17 NPOs which answered my questions, seven (“Vatra” Association, The “Association of Women with Social Problems Durrës”, “Different and Equal”, “Women Centre Berat”, “Me, the Woman”, “Women Forum in Elbasan” and “Another Vision” also in Elbasan city) have cooperated strongly with the local government and the police to deal with cases of domestic violence with the shelters around Albania. Three of these organizations offer shelter services, in addition to other services, and I will indicate in the coming section which services they offer to lone mothers who are undergoing divorce and are experiencing domestic violence together with their children. From 2010

when focal gender points⁷⁹ were established in each municipality of Albania, the cooperation between civil society and local government has improved. Lefteri Kosova, project coordinator of “Women’s Centre” in Berat city, when asked for the cooperation her organization has with the local government states:

“There is an employee in the municipality who is directly responsible for dealing with domestic violence issues and the issues of gender equity. She gathers the materials concerning some domestic violence cases and also the materials for some women in need which are being assisted in our centre. We have a good and positive cooperation with the municipality. We are continuously invited to expose our needs; however, financial support to resolve concretely women needs has been impossible. Meanwhile we continuously invite to our activities representatives from the municipality and state institutions, where we explain the activities of our centre and the services we offer to women in our region”. (Appendix 2.3, interview no. 7).

As we can read in their answers, services on recognition and representation offered by women’s organization are welcomed by the local government. However, support for redistribution services is missing due to a lack of annual budgeting resources for the municipalities to offer to lone mothers,

From the answers of these leaders of local women NPOs in Albania is noted that the active organizations, which have the ability and human resources to do fund-raising, are invited to and present in consultative participatory processes. The ability to acquire funding creates projects and enables them to continue their work in the constituency they operate in. Having more projects and more constituency increases their credibility in the public sphere. Few of them, such as the women’s organizations of Elbasan (Central Albania), Berat (South-Central Albania), Sarandë (South Albania) and Shkodër (West-North Albania) have a closer cooperation with the local government, whereas the other organizations located in Tirana and those most active in their localities are invited in participatory processes organized by the Ministry of Labour. Their participation in consultative participatory processes increases their influence in representing their constituencies, and talking on behalf of lone mothers, or as Fraser (1989) would describe

⁷⁹ Gender focal points are specialized employees in municipalities, which gather information on gender issues and evaluated strategic and practical gender needs of men, women, girls and boys in the region they cover and present gender segregated data from their region for purpose of policy-making.

it, it helps society's stereotyped groups to politicize their needs.

In the coming section I will be addressing the types of social services that local women NPOs offer to lone mothers. I will discuss sources of income (international donors) which finance individual services.

6.4. Individual social services for lone mothers

The social services that offer direct benefit to individual lone mothers can in Fraser's term be seen as forms of redistribution. I distinguish six forms of redistributive activities by local women NPO's.

Provision of food and clothing

The first type of service is a basic provision of food and clothing consisting: a sack of flower per month, two liters of sun-flower oil, two kg of rice, two packs of spaghetti, two packs of sugar, one pack of coffee. From an observation of my interviews with lone mothers who have received this service, it can be concluded that this provision was offered in larger amounts in some years and in some communes depending on donors and the economic poverty of the region. This service was more prominent until 2010, and entirely dependent on donors to be offered almost every month. The Association of Women with Social Problems Durrës, Central Albania has offered this service to 10.4% of its constituency or only 5 lone mothers and Another Vision Elbasan offered this service to 33.3% of its constituency or only 11 lone mothers. The Vatra Association in Vlora, South Albania, has offered this service to two lone mothers or 7.6% of the lone mothers interviewed. The Women Centre in Berat, in South-Central Albania, used to offer this service to two lone mothers (of all I asked about this) or to 9.5% of women. The data from lone mothers interviewed indicate that in Central and South Albania they could access this service via women organizations. Currently it is a service offered by women organizations that have shelters such as Another Vision in Elbasan and Vatra in Vlora. The Durrës organization can offer this service only once a year for religious festivities or the New Year, due to lack of interest from donors to continue to finance this service. From the moment Albania entered the phase of pre-accession funds from EU, other donors have withdrawn from Albania as it is no longer a country in an emergency. For example judging from my online research, the International Organizations in the Netherlands are more interested in MENA countries, Anglophone and Francophone Africa, the Americas and Asia. Despite the donor short-cut the organizations who offered this service in the past provide it now once a year for New Year's Eve or religious festivities. The clothing service has been offered in cooperation with religious

organizations with local women NPOs until recently. In the past years, what is observed in social media such as Facebook, the community in each city is playing a more active role to bring used clothes to local women NPOs. Employees of women NPOs themselves become part of this service. During my interviewing work in some of these organizations I observed that some women brought used clothes to the centre and asked all their kinship and friends to become part of this programme too. Of the 17 organizations I interviewed eight of them offer this first type of service.

The interviews with lone mothers and representatives of local women NPOs show that the provision for food and clothing is a service that is provided to all sub-groups of lone mothers and there is no discrimination or favoring one group of women over the other. Due to emigration issues, there are existent cases when grand-parents are taking care of the children of their daughters. Therefore, this category of care-takers of children is eligible for these types of services.

Psycho-social and legal assistance

The second type of service women NPO's provide is psycho-social and legal assistance. The costs of this service are almost entirely covered by international donors. The psycho-social assistance service is also offered as a voluntary service by the organizations which have employed social workers and psychologists. Types of psycho-social service are: face to face counseling, telephonic line counseling, online-counseling. Counseling services are also information oriented services. They try to provide women with the information they need to handle the situation they are in, inform them about the possibilities they have to improve their situation and when they have cases of domestic violence they coordinate the actions between women, policy, court and shelter services. This service is offered to women who are undergoing divorce or separation, are violated or are teenage mothers. The psychological assistance is offered for children of these women until they are 14 years old and if women or children themselves want to receive this service.

Eight out of 16 organizations I approached provide this service in the cities of Durrës (AWSPD), Tirana (CCLI, D&E), Vlorë (Vatra), Elbasan (AV&WFE), Berat (WCB), Pogradec (MW). Psycho-social assistance services have mostly received support from Italian, US and Swedish donors. The international donors who have supported this service in Durrës are: IRC, CRC, UNDP, SNV, WV, Act-Donation (British), Novib, Kvinna till Kvinna, Soros and Aid Europea. In Elbasan the international donors are: CEFA (Educational and formation center in Bologna-Italy), CIES (Information, education and development center in Rome-Italy), MAE

(Ministry of Foreign Affairs of Italy), IPA cross-border, Kvinna till Kvinna, US Embassy in Albania. In Vlora city the International Donors are Save the Children, IOM, SNV, WB, PA, British Embassy, US Embassy, UNDP and Kvinna till Kvinna. In the city of Berat most prominent donors are: Soros Foundation, Amnesty International, PA, US Embassy, Kvinna till Kvinna. Me the Woman in Pogradec city lists as the main donor Kvinna till Kvinna for face to face and telephonic counseling. From my observation and leaflet information the Light Steps Association of Shkodra also offers psycho-social and legal assistance to lone mothers undergoing divorce. Apart from psycho-social services for divorced, abandoned and teenage mothers, from interviews that I conducted with widow mothers in the age group 28-60 there is a need for psycho-social assistance to be offered to this category of lone mothers to handle the loss of their husbands with more ease. Widow mothers and their children in a younger age are exposed to a social risk at that moment. Widow mothers who are unemployed, or have a low education background are at risk of facing poverty in the first years after the loss of the family head.

The interviews with lone mother contain some comments and offer statistics about the usage of this service. The service has been provided to eight or 57.1% out of 14 divorced mothers in Shkodër (North-West Albania). This service is not in place in Peshkopi city (North-East Albania), because there is no women organization that provides this type of services. The low number of women who receive this service in the North of the country shows that not all divorced mothers in need of this service can access it. This is also the case in Central and South Albania. With regard to the inability to access this type of service, lone mothers undergoing divorce or separation or teenage lone mothers list some reasons. The lack of information on the existence of this service and not knowing where to seek help is mostly given as a reason by women living in the rural areas. They also refer to a lack of money to go into the city to meet with women from NPOS. As reported by both lone mothers and also representatives of local women NPOS another reason why not all lone mothers can reach this service is also due to lack of financial resources from the women NPO to offer these services for longer periods of time and for all categories of lone mothers in need.

Free legal assistance is offered to women who are undergoing divorce or are violated. The most voiced need women have is legal assistance with the preparation for the court to file for a divorce. Women who are violated are accompanied and assisted by local women NPOS in the Court of First Instance and police when asking for a Protection Order or an Immediate Protection Order. The free legal assistance is a limited service and few lone mothers undergoing divorce can benefit from it. In cases when organizations such as Vatra in Vlorë city, AV and WF in

Elbasan, Light Steps in Shkodër, AWSPD or UAW in Durrës have three yearly or ongoing programmes the role of the lawyer is well-defined in the project and the lawyer is part of the NPO staff. When free legal assistance is part of a six-month or one year programme, independent lawyers are hired by a local women NPO. For example in Durrës, the lawyer was lowly paid. She received 200 euro per month from the UNDP fund in cooperation with the Municipality of Durrës and AWSPD. The amount of working time a lawyer has to put in to handle a divorce case does not justify the payment she receives to handle more than 5-8 cases per month. Therefore not all the needs of the lone mothers undergoing divorce could be met. The same situation of short term legal assistance projects, was relevant also for Shkodra in the North-West of Albania. In Peshkopi no women NPO was offering these types of services. Therefore, the free legal assistance is absent in North-East Albania.

Lone mothers undergoing divorce who profit more from these services are in the age groups 16 to 55. In total 24.5% of lone mothers benefit from this service, and the urban areas of Shkodër (North-West), Durrës and Elbasan (Central) have the organizations that provide this service the most. The representation of this service in the South is lower as compared to other regions. It has very insignificant distribution in the rural areas of South and Central Albania, but it is not present in the North rural areas. In the seven out of ten districts where I conducted interviews, there are the category of women who could not divorce because they did not have financial resources to pay a lawyer, and in many cases they could not pay the government fee of 10.000 ALL (82 euro) per divorce. When mothers undergoing divorce had younger and teenage children (5-16 years old) who needed to be interviewed by a psychologist on the relationship with their parents and which parent they would like to live with, the payment for the psychologist is 35.000 ALL (300 euro). Most lone mothers could not afford the psychologist's fee. This issue came up in Durrës where I interviewed many lone mothers. Local women NPOs have fewer chances to pay these fees through their projects because international donors are also not willing to invest money into it. These problems can be suggested to the central government to offer exemption for unemployed, poor and internal -migrant women from rural areas to urban areas of the centre from these fees.

Career development, vocational training and employment services

A third type of individual redistributive services, career development, vocational training and employment access, has three components: 1. helping lone mothers to be registered as unemployed with the Local Employment Office and lobby for

access of lone mothers to socio-economic aid; 2. Training, after evaluating their skills and education, lone mothers can be offered courses on elderly care, tailoring, hair-dressing, professional-cooking, computer use and foreign languages.; 3. coordinating with local businesses and community families for jobs in elderly care or house-keeping. All categories of lone mothers can benefit from these services. Women with a low level of education and who have been unemployed for many years are given priorities.

Transport for lone mothers to be registered as unemployed with the Local Employment Office and lobby for access of lone mothers to Socio-Economic Aid is a service which is provided to all types of lone mothers who are unemployed and have no other incomes of living, nor do they receive child-allowance from the father of their child/children. From the interviews with lone mothers and representatives of women NPOs, show that women's organizations, at the request of lone mothers, mediate and lobby with the Employment Office to find jobs. The type of provision can also take the form of written letter or accompanying lone mothers when they file for the Economic Aid Program, in order to support their application and testify for the situation lone mothers describe as financially difficult. This assistance is, not always successful, as it depends on the annual budget of the municipality and the commune, and also on the fulfillment of other criteria for this economic assistance. This type of service is not paid by international donors; it is a service offered by local women NPOs. 4% of the lone mothers I spoke with benefited from this service and they are mostly located in the Shkodër (West-North), in Durrës and Elbasan (Central) and in Vlorë (South). The presence of this service indicates for a need which might become more required and therefore this service need to be included in project proposals.

Vocational training and employment mediation programmes are not part of the programmes of NPOs in the North. This can be explained by the high rate of poverty in the region, the absence of private or family businesses, the low employment possibilities of state and private institutions. In general a very small percentage of lone mothers receive the vocational training courses and enhance their skills and find jobs. Hair-dressing courses in the city of Elbasan and Vlorë are coordinated with the possibility for some women to also open a private business and buy for them the first working supplies. The rest of the mothers use these skills for their personal and family usage purpose, but they cannot earn an income from it. The tailoring course is more present in the cities with tailoring enterprises such as in Durrës, Shkodra, Berat, Vlorë dhe Elbasan. Computer courses are mostly offered to adult children of lone mothers, when they are 15 and above years. Altogether 6.25% of lone mothers are provided this service.

To sum up, although many lone mothers who receive vocational training

mostly do not use it. Most of them are only offered house-keeping and elderly-care jobs for different families in the community. Some of the women NPOs do have a large network in the community and they have a database with families from middle or higher income social classes who are in need of such services. Some other NPOs are in touch with different business communities and are also known in the community they operate. Whenever they are asked by the business community to help them find a sanitary for maintenance, or waitressing they have the list of their constituencies (lone mothers) they can inform about a possible job. Local women organizations, like the employment offices in the municipality, have their own list of women who are job-seekers.

For those who would read about this type of service offered by women NPOs in Albania and would immediately think of Fraser (2009) and other scholars writing on neoliberalism, who argue that women activists are allying with private markets to secure low paid female labour for them. Their statements are less relevant to the Albanian situation in this specific case. The labour market in Albania is hardly comparable to the international private market. The local private labour market where lone mothers can be employed through the mediation of women's organizations, consists of sanitary or waitressing jobs for small family businesses of the community, where there are no more than three or four employees that are related to each other. Their earning power is lower and therefore the wages are very low. However, if we were to speak about jobs in large scale international leather or underwear tailoring enterprises, located in Durrës, Berati, Tirana and Shkodra, then the neoliberalism issue would be at stake. The main problem with jobs for lone mothers in domestic settings is that social insurance is not paid by the families. I refer to this in the 4th chapter where I point out the employment history in years and the lack of social security. Even though the Albanian legislation has introduced the obligation of families who receive private care in their homes to pay social insurance contribution for their employees, this rarely happens. Overall, the interviews indicate that there is a need for a better coordination between the skill preparation for the requirements of local businesses job descriptions and the actual education of lone mothers in order to prepare them for jobs which are needed rather than providing them with personal skills they cannot make use of. Only two lone mothers interviewed in Durrës city, and three others in Elbasan have benefited from this service.

Shelters

The fourth type of service local women NPOs offer is the shelter service. In the majority of cases a shelter works and operates like a big family for women and

children who escape from violence. The accommodation in a shelter can be offered for a period of three months to one year, depending on the situation of the lone mother, whether she has suffered severe domestic violence or is a victim of trafficking. Lone mothers and their children staying in shelters are provided with accommodation, food, clothing, and health care for a period until they are able to lead independent lives. Many of them are offered hair-dressing courses, tailoring courses or foreign languages courses and are introduced to local business to work. In general, all of them need psycho-social assistance and legal service. All types of services an organization can offer are included as a package in the shelter. Of the 240 women interviewed, nine have received shelter services. They suffered extreme violence and two of them were trafficked.

In the second chapter I have addressed the value that gender scholars attach to the creation of independent households and independent incomes for lone mothers Millar and Rowlingson (2000), Kilkey (2000), Lewis (1989; 2006). I have also addressed how Lewis (2001), Millar and Rowlingson (2001,) in the same research on welfare policy direction for lone mothers in the UK, have indicated that the only road for lone mothers to get out of poverty is to have a job and personal incomes. This is also valid for the services women's organisations offer to lone mothers. I interviewed two leaders of shelters, one in the South and one in Central Albania, and although I did not refer to independent income for lone mothers, both of them highlighted economic independence as an important contribution to getting out of poverty. For this reason I see a connection between the ideals of gender activists in Albania and the recommendations of gender scholars in Western Europe.

When asked what types of services they offer women in their shelters, Brikena Puka, the Executive Director of the Vatra Association, which also has a shelter service, replied:

“Teenage mothers are assisted in shelter, together with their children, especially on child education. The trafficked mothers have been engaged in gaining incomes from trafficking, and providing basic food and clothing needs for the child. We educate them on how to manage their daily time, how to give emotional care to the child, how to manage their incomes since their incomes previously were managed by somebody else. Some trafficked mothers we assisted in the shelter had children from Italy or England and we offered these children Albanian language courses, and psychological assistance to cope with the different life styles of their mothers. We have also mediated for a trafficked mother to return to her family. There were cases when the kinship members influence the par-

ents' decision to take back home their daughters and their children. They wanted the kinship members to see them as victims and not as prostitutes. After the women lived in the shelter we also provided them a six months trial period in work, during which time we were keeping their money safe in a saving box in the center. When we were able to help them with rented apartments, we gave their savings back to help them pay part of their rent and make them feel independent. Many of these mothers and their children we supported with medicines from our Centre. The Municipality of Vlorë does not have special welfare policies to assist lone mothers. They only give socio-economic aid to those who are unemployed. (Appendix 2.3, interview no. 3).

Luljeta Qose, coordinator of the Another Vision Association in Elbasan city replies to the question about shelter services:

“Our organization offers daily and residential services for women. I personally coordinate the women centre, and part of our activities is the work with divorced women, women who are undergoing divorce, teenage mothers and their children. Our services start from the basis we offer in the shelter, such as accommodation, food, clothing, health care, free legal service in cooperation with a Lawyer Office in Elbasan. We also offer psycho-social service, socialization and entertaining activities, vocational training, informing and education seminars and a library to read books. Furthermore, we accompany them towards leading an independent life and most importantly we help them to be informed and evaluate which services are best for them. For their children we organize several different entertaining activities, we mediate with first elementary and second-elementary schools to enroll them and similar services we offer to their mothers. As the municipality is concerned I do not have any information which shows that they offer any special services to lone mothers”. (Appendix 2.4, questionnaire no. 5).

Outreach and consciousness raising

The fifth type of service information, outreach and consciousness raising is an every-day service provided by local women's organizations to lone mothers, introducing them with the rights they have by law. Lone mothers who go to the women centers are provided with information leaflets and receive face-to-face

information. This is a service which has gained stability over time. Initially the information outreach was organized via consciousness raising campaigns, where representatives of NPOs organized community meetings with women in their constituencies. However, from the interviews with lone mothers it became clear that in remote rural areas this information outreach and consciousness raising campaigns were difficult to be performed regularly or at all. Transportation costs for social workers, a cost which is rarely covered by international donors. During the first consciousness raising projects in the 1990s many leaflets were published, which needed to be updated with the respective law adaptations. For two of the women's organizations I interviewed with branches in rural areas it was easier to organize community meetings and information sessions with women. The Association of Women with Social Problems in Durrës had two other local offices in rural areas, and it was easier for them to reach the women living in remote areas in the district. The lone mothers I interviewed from rural areas did not receive this service. In urban East 45% of the interviewed lone mothers have had access to this service.

Assistance with the preparation of documents

The six type of service assistance with the preparation of documents is offered to divorced lone mothers or lone mothers undergoing divorce. Women's organizations have had to assist these two sub-groups of lone mothers to prepare the documentation folders for the purpose of receiving socio-economic aid from the municipality. Social lawyers of women's organizations assisted lone mothers who are inner migrants from remote rural areas to deregister after divorce from the city they were registered as married, in case they and their former husbands had not transferred the marriage registration in the city they currently live in. Four lone mothers I interviewed in the cities of Durrës, Shkodër, and Elbasan were advised to use the service for a de-registration of documents. Representatives of NPOs interviewed in the cities of Durrës, Tiranë, Elbasan and Vlorë and my observation and informative talks with the social workers and lawyers of the Light Steps Association in Shkodër show that also mothers undergoing divorce in other cities have been given this assistance with their documents. There is a future need for women organizations to assist separated mothers or divorced mothers who cannot get proof of non-payment of child-allowance by the fathers of their children, to be provided with documents which acknowledge this problem, in order to apply for the economic aid in the municipality or the commune. This can only happen only if in the future the law on economic aid will include these types of documents as alternative proofs. This service is a non-profit assis-

tance offered by local women NPOs and there are no financial resources generating projects which can be supported by international donors.

In my overview of activities by Albanian women's organizations on behalf of lone mothers I have used Nancy Fraser's distinction between recognition, redistribution and representation as forms of activism for social justice. This overview shows that the focus of women NPO's in their women's activism for lone mothers has been on activities that recognize and represent lone mothers. This form of activism is sponsored heavily by international donors. The provision of basic needs and services, redistribution in Fraser's words, is no longer a concern of international donors. After Albania has access to pre-accession funds of the EU. Services of recognition and representation continue to be financed by international donors though, whose strategies focus on information gathering.

The interviews with lone mothers about the services they receive from local women NPOs in Albania, and the interviews with representatives of local women NPO's constructed a history of women's activism on behalf of lone mothers, ranging from redistribution of basic needs (food and clothing) and services (employment support and training) to representation and recognition (advocacy and legal assistance and support in documentation matters). The stories about services for lone mothers and women in general in Albania, are mostly connected to services of recognition and representation and very little is done by women organization in terms of service delivery due to a lack of finances for this sector. The interviews with lone mothers living in rural areas clearly indicated that they do rarely profit from any form of these services of local women organizations.,

6.5. Services and programs provided by religious institutions and organizations to lone mothers

Gender analyses of charity organizations from the nineteenth century to the mid-1950s and 1960s portrayed a disciplining character of support by religious institutions for non-wed and abandoned mothers (Rowlingson & McKay, 2002; Waaldijk, 2006; Bimbi, 1997). The provision of basic means of living for these women and their children by religious institutions entailed punishment and re-education for out of wed-lock children and had a disciplining character for non-wed mothers. In England and Ireland the religious institutions supported more widow women and their children, and children born of out of wed-lock. Unmarried mothers had to fence for themselves (Rowlingson & McKay, 2000; Mary & Lewis, 2002). In Italy after the Second World War widowed mothers were also supported to a greater extent than other groups of lone mothers (Bimbi, 1997). In France, the Netherlands and Sweden (Morgan, 2006) the role of religious support of lone mothers and their children had as its aim re-education and 'moral

improvement'. Ishkanian and Lewis (2007) refer to a study of Ghodsee on the role of Muslim women organizations in Bulgaria, whose disciplining and moralizing character has jeopardized the intentions of women empowerment that international donors and local women organizations have tried to achieve over many years.

My research on religious institutions in Albania intended to provide information on the welfare programmes they offered to lone mothers, based on a common knowledge that different supportive programmes exist per city. During the interviews with lone mothers I encountered many positive references to the work of religious institutions. I also intended to find out whether the widow mothers receive more support as compared to other categories of lone mothers such as divorcees and abandoned mothers. Another aim was to observe the difference in service provision between religious organizations and the women organizations and local government. Finally I wanted to find out the impact of religious support on income packing by lone mothers, since many lone mothers I spoke with mentioned support from religious organizations. However, I must stress that my research on religious institutions is modest and limited in many respects. Nevertheless, it offers a picture of what currently exists, and it creates spaces for new research topics for future research.

In Albania the role of religious institutions after the 1990s consisted in offering material goods, health-care and cash allowances to mostly children of widow women and divorced women. Nevertheless, as the interviews with representatives of local religious institutions show the children of separated and abandoned mothers are not excluded from this service, though the children of widows have priority.

The right to religious belief was banned from the Albanian Constitution in 1967. Churches and mosques were destroyed; Catholic and Muslim leaders were deported to concentration camps. Religious rituals and festivities were secretly celebrated in Albanian houses until 1991 when communism collapsed. Despite 24 years of atheism, devoted Albanians maintained their religious belief in private spaces. North-West Albania is known for its strong connections with the Catholic belief, the North-East has a high percentage of Muslim believers, the South with the Orthodox and Central Albania have embraced the three beliefs and recently also Protestantism, Jehovah and Bahai. From the survey with lone mothers, data show that religious support is more present in the urban areas of Central, North and South Albania. Although the number of lone mothers questioned in Central Albania is higher than it is in South and North Albania, due to a larger population living in this area, the percentage of religious support in central Albania appears to be lower than in the North and the South. However,

this does not mean that religious support is non-existent in Central Albania, as becomes clear from the interviews with religious representatives in Elbasan city. The rural areas have a presence of religious institutions, but taken the low number of women interviewed in these areas further research is required to estimate the religious support in these areas.

The nine interviews I have conducted in five Albanian cities, in Sarandë (South), Vlora (South), Elbasan (Central), Shkodër (North-West) and Peshkopi (North-East) shed some light on the work performed by the Catholic, Evangelical, Orthodox and Muslim community in Albania to support poor families, and lone mothers' families. It is a simplistic effort and it does not aim to cover the entire country, nor the history of religious donations after the 1990s in Albania. What distinguishes the religious relationship amongst leaders and communities is the inter-religious harmony, which is unique in Europe. In 2009 the four main religious leaders, the Muslim, the Catholic, the Orthodox and the Shia was established the Albanian Inter-religious Council, which aimed at fostering a culture of tolerance and dialogue amongst religions in the country.

The religious institutions in Albania are registered under the same legal framework which regulates the functioning of the civil society sector. There are five official religious entities in Albania, and each of them has its own code of conduct. Like women's organizations, the religious institutions are dependent on international religious donors. However, they are not as open and as transparent compared to women's organizations when it comes to listing their donors. Therefore, the religious strategies of these types of funding are not known, despite the charity provision role. Similarly, from the interviews it becomes clear that the lobby and advocacy are not part of the agendas of local institutional religious branches, but like a diplomatic chorus all religious leaders when asked give the same answer that lobby and advocacy is part of the main National Branches. The consultative participatory processes with the local government only happen in case of local emergencies, such as the North-West floods or North-East winter temperatures and house isolations due to snow (Appendix 2.5, interview no. 6, 7).

It is often taken for granted that religious moral codes prohibit support for divorcees and that therefore widow mothers and their children receive more attention from religious organization.. From the interviews it is clear that the theological theory may be like that, but the practice and the reality pose a practical need which they cannot avoid. When I asked the leader of the Evangelical Church in Peshkopi city whether there is a distinction in their religion between the charity that can benefit widow mothers as compared to divorced ones and their children he replies:

“The Bible treats the issue of widows as a special category, and every church has the list of widows to offer charity. From the religious side this requires our maximal dedication. Until now we did not have the possibility to take a mature stance for this and I cannot testify our position. What can I say from my practice is that we do not encourage divorce, which today has become a first choice. There have been cases when I have intruded for a divorce to occur; likewise I have also encouraged it when it has been mostly needed. So to speak theologically this is the answer but practically we do not have enough cases to mature our position. Of course we try to support them”. (Appendix 2.5, interview no. 6).

The Mufti of the Muslim Community in Peshkopi city told me during the interview that they do have a strategy of a child pension to assist the orphans of widow mothers; however, they have not formulated a strategy yet to officially support the divorcee women and their children. Nevertheless, they do give cash support to these families. More expressively he says:

“People bring a *sadaka*⁸⁰ in the mosque. Because the widow women receive the economic aid for their children from the Muslim institutions, we do support with this money we collect during prayers the divorced or violated women and their children. We try to give this economic support in hand. From the religious point of view the widow women is given more priority. He, who guarantees an orphan, wins the ‘*xhenet*’. We do not have a strategy yet for divorced women”. (Appendix 2.5, interview no. 7).

These interviews offer a picture of the theological and practical perspective that is used by the Evangelic and Muslim community in the North-East of Albania. None of these leaders deny that theologically speaking widow mothers are more favorite for receiving charity; however, due to the present situation in the area they operate, and due to the presence of divorced mothers and their children they try to find ways to support this group of women. I did not find any hesitation in their answers to questions discussing divorced women or put them in a stereotyped

⁸⁰ *Sadaka* in the theological Arabian language is called a fee people leave in the Mosque for poor people when they come to pray or hear the communal talking. It is not specified how much people should give. This is left to their own will. When they have the means they do leave a *sadaka*; when do not they are not obligated to leave anything.

corner and the interviews with divorced lone mothers also referred to the support they received from the religious institutions. Therefore, the picture I present in this modest research is positive from the charity perspective and does not offer much argument about the moralizing or disciplining attitude of the religious institutions towards separated or divorced mothers in Albania. Further research is needed to look at the moralizing framework or the educational character on divorced women and their children from religious women's organizations in order to be able to shed light on this aspect and bring the Albanian case into the European scholarship debate on religious charity and its moralizing character.

Orthodox and Catholic Institutions in support of lone mothers and their children

The Evangelical, Orthodox and Catholic churches in Albania have shown sensitivity to poverty in many cities. Their programs to support poor families are organized in each district based on the needs of the community. The religious leaders I interviewed say that they do not have a specific strategy to support lone mothers. Widow, divorced, violated and abandoned women and their children are part of the economic and education aid they give to poor families. The five interviews with representatives from institutions of this community and from the interviews I conducted with lone mothers show that there are six types of services offered to them and their children. Daily centers where children of widow, divorced, violated and abandoned women can spend their day, and doing homework after school. Provision of food and clothing and educational courses and cultural activities for children are offered to all groups of lone mothers. For specific cases they offer house construction services, temporary accommodation in family houses, and health-care provision mostly when children of lone mothers have severe health issues.

The first type of service, day centers, are of two kinds: for children at kindergarten age (3-5 years old), and for children of first elementary and second elementary school ages. In daily centers children receive care for their well-being and they socialize with other children. They are also assisted in doing their homework until their mothers come to pick them up. The food, health care and learning facilities are daily provided. The survey showed that 8% of lone mothers could benefit from this service for their children. This service is offered to lone mothers in South and Central Albania. It might be expected that this is a service from which widow mothers can benefit more than divorced or abandoned mothers, also due to the morality of the church on the importance of marriage as the main institution which reinforces the family. However, in Albania other challenges than religious beliefs are faced by religious organizations and churches.

They have adapted their services and have made them more inclusive to different types of families and children.

Blerta Ranxha, director and educator of the Kindergarten of Autocephalous Orthodox Church in Elbasan, which is constructed in the headquarters of this church, says about the categories that can benefit from these kindergarten services:

“The kindergarten is an initiative of the Archbishop Anastas and a group of women in Tirana. It started initially in Tirana, to come to help to working mothers, divorced mothers, widow mothers with orphan children, and mothers with a low education level. The idea was to open a day-care center where children would spend a part of their day. Children of the Roma and Egyptian community are part of this kindergarten. This initiative was later on expanded in other cities. Here in Elbasan it has been open since 1999.” (Appendix 2.5, interview no.5).

The second type of service, food and clothing provision is provided for lone mothers and their children at home and in churches. In interviews with church leaders I was told that they usually operate with a list of poor families they have for the community they work with and they deliver different material goods either during religious festivities or every time somebody knocks to their door. This is also a service which does not have a preference for widow mothers and children versus divorcees. This service is well organized in the North of the country where poverty and the level of unemployment is higher than in other regions. In Peshkopi, Ermal Lushi, the leader of the Evangelical Church “Alfa Omega”, told me that in the North of the country, where it gets really cold during winter, and the temperatures go way below zero (-10 to -21) the North region enters in emergency situation and schemes. The North-East part has problems with the snow and blocked streets and the North-West part has problems with floods (the peri-urban and rural areas of Shkodër city have been flooded twice during the last five years for two or three months). In this period the charity organizations played a crucial role to deliver first basic survival aid to poor families. When asked about the food and clothing provision their church provides the community with Ermal Lushi answers:

“We have tried to become part of emergencies with food packages for about two years. We do not distinguish between the poor or families led by widows, we have aimed to select the poor families in the extreme sense of poverty situation, and you have to know that here 70% of the population are poor. We have also provided many families with underwear.” (Appendix 2.5, interview no.6).

Almost one quarter (24%) of the lone mothers I interviewed have received this service.

As to health-care provision, from what lone mothers have said in the survey comes in the form of medicinal packages for them and their children. Five lone mothers in North and Central Albania, and three in the South said during interviews that Catholic sisters have coordinated with Italian institutions to receive the children of lone mothers for surgical intervention when they had major complications and no incomes to support them. The interviews indicate that this support is given in Shkodra, Durrës, Elbasan, Fieri, Vlora and Berati city.

House-construction service is offered mostly in the North-West of the country where women's houses were flooded, or were not "anything like a house but a tin and plastic wall which would bring everything falling outside inside" as Elo-na, a divorced mother from the peri-urban areas of Shkodër said. (Appendix 1.4, interview no. 127). Other women in Durrës, Shkodra or Berat referred to the construction of entire houses, but women I interviewed have only been assisted with the reconstruction of their roof, or replacement of the gate-door, or construction of door-steps to prevent the water from flooding the house. It is a service offered under very severe circumstances. From 240 interviewed lone mothers of the period after 1990, four said they had received this service.

Educational courses and cultural activities are mainly offered to children from five to 22 years old. Educational courses of foreign languages, on religious beliefs, for computer or musical instruments are offered to children of lone mothers, but foreign language courses or a computer courses can be offered to lone mothers as well. The religion knowledge course is an additional course which is offered in some cases as obligatory to participate in the other courses and in some other cases is left free of choice to children. The percentage of lone mothers whose children have benefited from it comes down to 18% in total.

In Shkodër city in North-West Albania I came across a unique project, which is temporary accommodation in family houses. There are eight houses in the form of villas which are constructed and run by Catholic sisters of Shkodër. They bring adults together in these villas, or elderly or teenagers with no means of survival for a period of time, educate and teach them how to be a big family together. The idea behind this service is to lessen the poverty barrier for unemployed, houseless and handicapped people. Only one divorce violated mother received such a service in Shkodra city. Currently, she lives in Elbasan and I have referred to her story and to this service in the 7th chapter.

Muslim organizations supporting lone mothers and their children

Muslim organizations and institutions offer four types of services for mainly widow mothers and based on the context also to divorced mothers and their children. Child-pensions for children of widow women, food delivery, cash payments for several reasons and education activities are the main services mentioned by lone mothers.

Muslim organizations and institutions are more oriented towards widow mothers and their children. They have organized in the entire country the socio-economic aid for children of widow mothers until they are 18 years. The criteria that widow mothers should fulfill, except applying for this child-pension as they call it, is that 'mothers must be employed', as Muis Kurtalla explains. (Appendix 2.5, interview no. 7). This service is regulated via Muslim communities and in Berat city this service is entrusted to a local woman NPO. Widow mothers are very satisfied with this service, because it is a real help to them; however, they say that it is only in rare cases they can receive benefits for all of their children. Widowed mothers interviewed in Berat claimed that the application procedures were very bureaucratic and very often mothers would get no response at their application.

Food delivery is organized during the religious festivities for big and small Bajram and sometimes during Ramadan months in the families living in poverty. Either packages with oil, flower, sugar, spaghetti, soap, sault and basic food ingredients are delivered or portions of meat. This is not a service distinguished per categories of lone mothers but it maintains the criterium of being Muslim belief of the recipients. (Appendix 2.5, interview no. 7). The percentage of families who benefited from this service reaches 21% of women.

The cash payments have to do with the release of sadaka, as I explained earlier during praying sessions and community lead service. The release of "vitra" is another form of payment charity Muslims give during Ramadan for the benefit of poor families. Via gathering money which is released from community in boxes, the leaders of community use them for different members of the community, where divorced and violated women and their children are included. A widow mother in Pogradec city received payment for her rent for more than a year after her husband died by the Muslim leader of her community.

Education activities are organized through Medrese Institution for girls or boys. Medrese are religious private schools for children of widow families mostly. They are organized in the form of first elementary-and second-elementary or high schools for boys and girls. The teaching programs can be compared to those offered by public schools; the only difference is that students have teaching hours for the Arabian language and Muslim Theology. In some institutions

computer courses and the reading of the Koran are offered to children of families who are interested. Only one widow mother in Durres city had her children teaching in the Medrese of Durrës for girls and received economic support by the director and teachers of Medrese for her daughters.

Dutch Catholic and Protestants support to lone mothers in Albania

The Dutch aid to Albania has been an ongoing resource of funding. Whereas the bilateral agreement between the Dutch government and the Albanian one for the Socio-Economic development of the country is known, through the Dutch Embassy in Albania, the Dutch religious though very active is less known in country reports and international aid research. I was surprised that almost in every city I was going for interviews there was indication of Dutch religious support (Sarandë, Korçë, Fier, Elbasan). Therefore I modestly researched where I could, while interviewing other groups, the initial start of the Dutch religious support in Albania.

Dutch Protestants have played a supportive role in Albania in the first decade after the 1990s. Lone mothers in Korçë city referred to the help they receive from a Dutch lady called Annete. Annete is the director of Terres des Homes in Korçë. Terres des Hommes in Korça city has economically improved the living level of Roma and Egyptian families and has given education courses to children of poor families. Widow, divorced, abandoned and separated mothers are part of the Terres des Hommes programmes in city of Korçë.

From the interview with Ibrahim Bajrami, director of the “Lydia Foundation” in Saranda city, on the border with Greece it appears that Dutch Protestants were quick to bring their support to South Albania on many levels. Ibrahim Bajrami when asked for the start of this program in Saranda city says:

“The Lydia Foundation started its activity as a religious association called “Come over and help”, an organization of a Christian-protestant community in the Netherlands. They were part of a big organization with branches in many countries called Dorcas International. “Come over and help” was established in 1991 and continued until 1998. Later it created Albanians for Albanians and then it was named “Lydia Foundation”, as a reference to the biblical name of a business woman called Lydia, who was selected for her successful ideas as a business woman years ago. The idea behind this name was to motivate women to be successful in business and family life.” (Appendix 2.5, interview no. 2).

In his interview Ibrahim Bajrami refers to another Dutch religious centre operating in one of the rural areas of Saranda and to the services it provides. He informs:

“One of the most helpful services to lone mothers is a daily centre in Delvina, a village closer to Saranda, where 60 children are given lunch and are assisted to do homework and then they go home. These children come from socio-economic assistance in the municipality. Many of them are children of divorced parents living in poverty.” (Appendix 2.5, interview no. 1).

Fieri city, during 1991-2000 has been assisted by Dutch Protestants from a city in the Netherlands called Uithoorn area. A former widow mother who received packages from Dutch families informed me during a friendly meeting about the existence of this economic support for 400 families in Fier. I had the opportunity to meet with Lydia de Vries and Bas de Baarn in Uithoorn, in January 2012. Lydia, a former journalist, could publish an article in Dutch magazines about the poverty of Albania when the country was open towards foreigners. She received many phone calls and interest from Dutch Protestant families and decided to run the economic aid program in Fier-Albania until 2000. Lydia remembers that of the 400 families that were supported 40 families were of widow mothers and their children. As she recalls it was the time “when Albania did not have in place regulations for export-import transportation and entrance of tracks with packages of food and clothing from the Netherlands was a mission impossible at that time”. We had a long talk with Lydia and Bas, at Lydia’s house, and they shared with me all the struggles they had to go through for many years to enter in Albania the tracks with clothing and food aid. Thus, for researchers endeavouring to analyze the history of religious aid in Albania, one shall take into consideration the difficulty of providing basic needs via international import. (Appendix 2.5, interview no. 11).

6.6. Discussions and conclusions

Theoretically speaking, this chapter emerged from two strands of feminist debates. The first one is a critique of feminist activism as an ally of neoliberal structural policies in Latin America, the Third world countries and Eastern Europe (Fraser, 2009; Ghodsee, 2004). The second strand has to do with the role of the civil society and religious institutions in providing social welfare and the place this occupies with regard to the welfare provided by the state. By interviewing representatives of local women NPOs after 1990 in Albania, I was able to determine the background of leaders and social workers of women’s organizations. In the first part of this chapter I offered a profile of how two generations of women,

differently positioned in organizations, look at their own work in terms of a feminist movement. The leaders of the women's organizations after 1990, who used to be teachers of foreign languages, Marxist-Leninist philosophy, mathematics or other subjects do not consider their work as part of a feminist movement because they are not opposing the government and they involve men in decision making pro their rights. The other, younger generation of social workers and lawyers of women's organizations do consider their work as part of a women's movements because it promotes different gender norms and roles in and to society.

To talk about the development of women's rights in Albania and services offered by local women organizations to lone mothers, I have used Fraser's (2009) division of recognition, representation and redistribution of rights and services. In the second part of this chapter, I dealt with the start and development of women's rights in Albania by local women's organizations. I traced how their local agendas on the recognition and representation of women's rights have been influenced by agendas of international donors, mostly multilateral donors (UN and EC), and bilateral ones (OSCE and Western embassies in Albania). Other international organizations from the Netherlands, Italy, England and France, the World Food Program and religious organizations have financially assisted women organization with redistribution services of basic goods until 2000.

I looked at phases of the development of women's movement in Albania and asked whether local women's organizations have allied with international donors to institutionalize neoliberal policies which make use of women's non-privileged situations, by constructing an image of poor women, and making use of their labour for cheap (Ghodsee, Ch. 2004; Fraser, N. 2009). The situation of Albania, as the poorest country of Europe, does not lead me to blame women's organizations for creating a false image of women's poverty. Albania was, is and continues to be poor, thus the poverty does not need to be created because it is already there. In this chapter it could not be argued that the low wages and the non-regulated employment without social insurance can be attributed to local women's organizations. As I have shown in the third part of this chapter, representatives of local women NPOs try to mediate with the local state employment services, business community and families in need of domestic labor or child and elderly care, to find job opportunities for lone mothers who are unemployed. Small private enterprises and elderly care in families are both private and domestic sectors with low incomes or profit, the private employment of lone mothers through the mediation of women organizations cannot be of high economic value. The blame for this lies not with women activists but with the governmental strategic economic growth agenda.

A major finding of this chapter is the full reliance of women's organizations

on international donors. This poses questions on how their local agendas stay true to the realities of the constituencies they represent. The chapter argues that women's activism in Albania has not been free of influence, since the financial resources for representation or re-distribution services were dependent upon governmental and international policies. I argue that the significant focus of international donors on recognition and representations services for women in general and lone mothers in particular, reinforces the need to leave information gathering to national institutions or a few specialized women's organizations which have adequate expertise in this respect. In Albania, donors such as the UN and EC have played a crucial role in legalizing and instituting CEDAW, the EU Gender Equality directives and the Gender mainstreaming strategies. The development of the women's movement after 2000 shows how local women NPOS have used these international agendas and strategies in pushing the Albanian government to incorporate the legislative framework into the Albanian Constitution and have supported the Ministry of Labour in drafting national strategies for gender equality, combating domestic violence, and social protection. However, as the third part of that section shows, their local and central policy suggestions and decision-making power, when advocating and representing the needs of lone mothers is limited in participatory processes. The third part contains a picture of advocacy efforts, and needs representation of lone mothers on the part of local women NPOS, respectively the Association of Women Householders and the Legal Association for Civic Initiatives. I also offered an outline of all the recognition, representation and redistribution services provided to lone mothers by local women NPOS.

Overall, the overview of services provided to lone mothers portrays women's organizations solidarity with lone mothers. This solidarity takes form via their volunteering activism and the services they offer. This supports my argument that what Ghodsee concludes about Bulgarian women's organizations or what Fraser (2009) says about women's activism, does not do justice to the approach to lone mothers in Albania of women's organizations. Some welfare services offered by women organizations are provided voluntarily, such as assistance with provision of documents and negotiation with the local governmental employment offices for job searches, and with socio-economic aid departments for the provision of this cash benefit. Fundraising is an indirect service for lone mothers, because it is provided voluntarily in women's organizations, and it is one of the tasks required to execute. Since the days are full with different projects, the proposal writing is done in the house after the official hours. Thus, volunteerism can also be seen as a sign of solidarity of middle-class women in Albania with those who are less privileged.

In the fourth and fifth parts of this chapter I listed the services provided by local women organizations and religious local institutions to lone mothers. The services provided by women's organizations, although more frequently used by lone mothers when compared to the religious ones, are more connected to recognition and representation of rights, and to advocacy. Services provided by local religious institutions, on the other hand, are more distributive in nature. They cover basic goods, cash benefits, day-education centres for children, health care and sometimes also partial house reconstruction.

My most important conclusion in this chapter is that both national and local women's organizations in Albania and the local religious institutions are supportive factors and actors for the provision of welfare programmes to lone mothers. They do cover what the state cannot offer. Neoliberal policies in Albania have taken a route which is connected with the former socialist welfare policies. The road of women's NPO's has been impacted by the presence of the EC in Albania, the European Social Charter and the EU directives on socio-economic development, social welfare and social inclusion. Whereas the neoliberal structural policies in Latin America and Third World Countries are focused on diminishing the 'nanny state', the EU resolution on single mothers I referred to in the second chapter, clearly states that it the EU does not want to follow US policies for lone mothers. These are two reasons which may explain why the structural neoliberal policies of the US in Latin America did not have the same effect on women's activism in Albania.

Chapter 7: Voices of Lone mothers: identities, differences, needs and agency

Introduction

In many countries there are stereotypes concerning lone mothers. They are perceived as needy and to be raising delinquent children due to the absence of men from their households. They constitute non-normative families that deviate from the coupled family image (McIntosh 1996; Phoenix, 1996). By voicing lone mothers' histories, service experiences, expectations and needs in communist and post-communist Albania, this chapter explores their identities, and argues that lone mothers are women of power and agency. Lone mothers in Albania are women who did not have the choice between motherhood and work. In communist and post-communist Albania, as I have shown in the 5th chapter, lone mothers in Albania were treated as workers and then as carers. In a country, where motherhood ideology perceives mothers as both earners and carers, their identity evolves around these two activities. I will show that the needs of lone mothers in post-communist and contemporary Albania in their eyes are best met via paid labor.

This chapter offers a platform for an examination of the struggles of lone mothers to earn an income for their children and to combine this with caring responsibilities. By using the voice of lone mothers to tell us about their lives, I intend to show to society and policy makers that their life is more than what financial resources make of them. I endeavor to demonstrate that their lives are about the choices they create for themselves and their children, and about their power and self-belief. In difficult financial times, through the sorrow of losing loved ones, in their struggle to educate future generations they find the power to go on. I therefore argue that lone mothers in Albania have agency; they are agents of change in their own lives.

There are two conceptual gender theories I use to narrate the self-identification of lone mothers and their needs discourse. First, I will use May's examination of the identity of lone mothers based on their self-narratives and on working with this category of women from the perspective of practice (*ibid.*, 2010, p. 429). The second one is Fraser's theory (1989) on the politics of needs talk.

May (2010), whose work on lone mothers is concerned with their identity as a category, has employed a three-step approach to their category analysis. In the second chapter I explained that she analyses how people in power create ste-

reotypes for the category of lone mothers, how these stereotypes influence lone mothers, how they think of their own identity and their position vis-à-vis the categories others have put them in (*ibid.*, pp. 430-431). May's working methodology situates the identity of lone mothers in their self-narratives, that is, she analyses their biographies that reflect their every-day living practice. She suggests that social scientists may work with lone mothers as a category of 'practice', more than a category of analysis. May's elaboration of the category of 'practice'⁸¹ involves the narratives of the every-day lives of lone mothers while the category of 'analysis' concerns the observation of lone mother's behavior and lives from the view of the categories and stereotypes already constructed by those in power.

In the first section of this chapter, I describe how lone mothers narrate their identity formation. I employ May's biographical approach to analyze the identity of lone mothers, in particular the self-identification of lone mothers (this is May's second step). I do not employ her third step of analysis that investigates whether lone mothers feel affinity with the category they are ascribed to. In this section, I create a space for lone mothers to narrate their life story (including the most important moments of their lives). They let me know whom I was listening to, how they wanted me to know them, and how they wanted others to know their story, their identity. In each of these stories the support of the family network was part of their life narration. The power and agency lone mothers exhibit is closely related to the approval and support their family network gave them after their misfortune. The supporting family net is a domain, which has received attention in gender scholarship, especially in discourses which examine lone mothers' income. In the fourth chapter I engaged with gender scholars who address income packaging from family support (Lewis & Hobson, 1997), including the statistical estimation of this support by lone mothers. Lone mothers describe the support they receive from their families and how important and life determining it is to them and their children.

⁸¹ In the introduction I examined how gender scholars work with the category of lone mothers, by looking at it as a category of 'practice' (May, 2010) and as a category of 'analysis' (Kilkey, 2000). May understands this category of 'practice' as the every-day lives and narratives of lone mothers. Therefore, she suggests that we observe lone mothers as a category which should be based in their practical ways of dealing with life, in their negotiations with their family members and communities as lone mothers. In contrast, Majella Kilkey, working with lone mothers as a category of 'analysis', examines their use of welfare policies which enables her to analyze these policies. Thus, she looks at lone mothers as a category of analysis. I use these two categories ('practice' and 'analysis') to present the lives of lone mothers and their comments on and assessment of their use of the services provided by governmental and non-governmental actors.

In the second section of this chapter (7.2), I invite lone mothers to comment on their experiences with local governments and their provision of social services. In the third section (7.3) I look at their experiences with welfare provided by local women NPOs and religious institutions. The second section of this chapter directs attention to what May (2010) and Fraser (1989) state as categories constructed from those in power which influence the lives of those who are categorized and stereotyped. By giving lone mothers a voice about the experiences they have with the services they receive by local governments, I offer to policy makers the possibility to evaluate the effects of their services. I provide for policy makers a space to monitor and evaluate their services in terms of efficiency and necessity. In the fourth section of this chapter, I show the way lone mothers describe their needs. This section creates a new space for lone mothers to voice what Fraser (1989) calls the needs' talk, which starts in de-politicized institutions, such as the family. According to Fraser, this needs talk is socially constructed and has the power to move between social domains, from non-politicized to politicized spaces. Her analysis resonates with what gender activists call agency or empowerment of women. The new vocabulary of International Women Networks after the Beijing Conference and the Millennium Development Goals has set a new benchmark for women's agency (*Voice and Agency*, World Bank Group, 2014). Women's voices have travelled from the private sphere to Houses of Parliaments. The fourth section of this chapter therefore creates a space for the construction of a needs discourse (Fraser, 1989), for the embracement of lone mothers' agency (*Voice and Agency*, World Bank Group, 2014; De Silva de Alwis, R. 2014).

The fourth section (7.4) of this chapter is based on Young's theory of the political power of difference (1990) and Fraser's argument on the power of needs talk discourse voiced in de-politicized institutions. Listening the expectations and needs of lone mothers, I address their differences through a construction of groups of women with different needs. At the same time I offer governmental and non-governmental policy makers a discourse of lone mothers' needs which is not constructed in politicized spaces by people in power positions. In this way, this chapter presents another discourse to policy makers, academics, and international donors. It offers the space to the needs talk of lone mothers in Albania, in the different locations where they live, within different serial collectivities and groups.

This chapter is based on the voices of lone mothers and invites policy and decision makers in governmental and non-governmental sectors and gender scholars to research lone mothers from the latter's own positioning and needs. It is a chapter which suggests that lone mothers cannot be stereotyped based on the services they use. Their lives and experiences are more complex than what servic-

es offer, and their identities go beyond what society makes of them as outsiders.

7.1. Identities, differences, society prejudice and family support

In this section I introduce the histories of lone mothers, their own voices, and their self-narration in the construction of their own identities. As I will further show, in this research I emphasize personal identity instead of categorical identities. In the different sections of this chapter, I also demonstrate the existence of different groups and sub-groups of lone mothers, who share with each other the similarity of location, age, the reason for their lone motherhood, or educational background and employment history.

At the beginning of the questionnaire, and the interview, in order to create an idea of the self-identity of lone mothers and the person I was interviewing, I asked every lone mother to briefly narrate her life story. The questions I asked them were: How old were you at the time of your engagement and marriage? Did you know your former husband/partner/lover, or was he introduced to you via your family or other people? Which area did you and he live (urban/rural) at the time you began your relationship? When did you and your husband/partner move to this city? When you created your family, did you stay in an extended household with your in-laws or did you create a nuclear family? For how long did you stay with your in laws and with how many people did you live together? What was the housing situation at the time? What is the reason that you became a lone mother?

In consideration of May (2010), who uses Somers's work on examining how locations, ideological modes of parenting, family and social networks can make a new identity, I explored the lone mothers life stories in a new light: the light of self-perception untouched and detached from authoritative outside influencers. As I have explained in the methodology section, my interviewing persona was built on the need to create a trusting environment for lone mothers, and to make them aware of the fact that I had no intention to influence the services they were receiving from the local government, or videotape them and make their stories public. For the sake of my analysis I needed them to trust me and feel at ease while they disclosed their identity. The stories in this chapter are anonymous, the names used are chosen by me in order to refer to stories by names. They were free to give or withhold their names and to choose which open questions they wanted to answer if any.

In view of how lone mothers told their life stories, their self-identity is shaped by life events, as a chain of episodes. Support by family members, their life struggles, upholding their self-esteem and agency, as I will further show via lone mothers' stories, all contribute to the identity power they gain in their everyday life while earning money and caring for their children. Parallel to asking

questions about their life stories, I was also interested in personal agency and personal characteristics of each woman. Question 20 asked lone mothers: What do you think are those special qualities of your character which make you stronger in front of your child/children, former husband/partner, parents and society in general? What personal qualities which make you go on do you value most?

As you can tell from these questions, initially I started researching the agency and power of lone mothers apart from family support. The questions I asked them concerning their power and strength were separated from questions on family support. However, as I was reading the lone mothers' answers separately in the questionnaire, it became abundantly clear that their sense of power and self-esteem is related to and dependent on family support. I subsequently decided to bring these two types of answers together in a joint section.

An additional element which also plays a role in the identity and every-day practices of lone mothers, is the ways in which society prejudices divorced, separated or widowed, who raise their children alone. To understand the opinion of society of lone mothers and how they are affected by it, question 17 asks: "Please choose the optional answer and explain your experience. 17.1. I feel prejudiced by society. 17.2. I do not feel prejudiced by society".

At the beginning of the interview lone mothers were given the chance to tell who they were and slowly enter into the specific details of what it is like to raise children on one's own. Divorced, separated and widowed mothers told me their life stories in connection to the support they received from their parents, their in-laws, their brothers and sisters and their brothers-in-law. Those lone mothers who have had continuous financial support from their own parents and parents-in-law, and their close family network were more self-confident in their choice to remain alone after their divorce or the death of their husbands/partners. Those lone mothers who have missed out on the support of their families have had a more difficult struggle, although in some cases they were provided services by women and religious local NPOs, displaying different forms of agency.

I have selected five lone mothers' histories. Three of these lone mothers live in the West and North East of Albania. The fourth mother is located in South-West Albania; the fifth one lives in South-Central Albania. Their stories show the influence of the marriage and family ideology prevalent at these locations, and the socio-economic history of Albania over the last three decades. The names of these women are made up by me to refer to them with a name, rather than pointing to them as anonymous 1, 2, 3 and 4. In the other parts of this chapter when lone mothers reflect their experiences with using the services by local government I will present them with anonymous names and additional numbers attached to them, accompanied with the group of lone mothers they belong to and the city.

The story of Zamira

Zamira was 32 years old when interviewed in October 2013. She is originally from Urban North-East Albania (Peshkopi City) and a divorced mother of three 10-year-old sons. At the time of the interview she had been divorced for five years (her children were five at the time of her divorce). Zamira belongs to the category of women who migrated from the North-East to the capital of Albania after her marriage, and returned to her parents' home and her city of origin after divorce. Her story is interesting in terms of her own agency. When the employment service in Peshkopi did not offer her any jobs, Zamira managed to find her own job by writing a letter to the then prime-minister (Sali Berisha). After the interview, she asked me to have a drink with her and waited for about three hours until I had finished the other interviews for that day. For Zamira it was important to share with me in an informal talk (outside the interview setting) how strong and independent she is as a woman.

When I asked her who she is, which area she and her husband are from, the age of her marriage, the continuation of her life after marriage and why she is a lone mother today, Zamira answered:

“I was 20 years old when I got engaged; it was an arranged engagement. My parents decided it without my will, without my consent. He was 26-years old. At that time I was a teacher at a primary-school. After our engagement he did not want me to work. We were engaged for one year, then we got married, and after 8 months we had three sons. [...] During the first months of our marriage we migrated in Tirana, in the Bathore⁸² area. We built one room and we stayed there for 5 years. Gradually we extended the house construction with one more room, a toilet and a corridor. A year after building the proper house we divorced. He was very jealous and he resolved everything by shouting. He would scream around the house all day, to the point at which my sons were becoming autistic”. (Appendix 1.4, interview no. 161).

When I asked her about her employment and education history Zamira answered:

⁸² Bathore district is a new neighborhood which was created in the peri-urban areas of Tirana city (the capital of Albania) after 1991. It is populated by migrants from the Northern areas of the country who used their own resources to build houses. Initially, these houses were built on non-populated lands without basic services such as running water, sewages, and roads.

“Immediately after finishing high-school, I started working as a teacher in a primary school from 1999 to 2004. After marriage I stopped working. When I lived in Tirana, I volunteered at the World Vision and I also sang voluntarily in the Evangelical Church in the Bathore commune [...] When I came back to Peshkopi five years ago, I returned to my parents’ home, together with my three sons. I stay at my parents, and I give them my monthly salary so my mother can cook for my sons and myself. I have never used my salary to drink coffee with friends; I only use 3000 ALL (21 euro) to pay for the bus from my parent’s home to work and back again. I registered myself as unemployed in the employment office of Peshkopi. Meanwhile, I started economic university in Peshkopi, because I want to give to my sons a better future than I had, and I also want to find a job with a higher income. That is only possible through education. [...] When I was without a job, I waited every morning in the municipality gate to meet with the mayor and with everybody working at the employment office, with people who could help me to find a job. To no avail. I then decided to write a letter to the prime-minister and his secretary called me after a few days and said that I had to go to the employment desk. I was offered a job as a sanitary in the sport’s institute under the management of the municipality”. (Appendix 1.4., interview no. 161).

When I asked her whether she feels prejudiced by society, she said:

“No, I do not experience prejudice. I work, I attend higher education and I answer to the needs of my children and of my parents who take care of my children”. (Appendix 1.4., interview no. 161).

Zamira’s life narration creates the identity of a self-confident woman, who has the agency to follow what feels right to her and who is able to overcome life barriers. Although her husband did not allow her to work, in the new community she moved to she found ways to feel useful to herself and to society, by singing in the Church choir. She also volunteered in a humanitarian organization. Her story indicates that she went through a divorce and did not despair but went back to receive her parents’ support and used all her power to find a job to financially maintain herself and her children. Divorce has not stopped her from doing what she wants and to believe in herself. Zamira is aware of her capacities and she is confident that she can reach more in the future by attending higher education and thus offering a better life to her family. Zamira leads an active life, which fulfills her as a woman, enabling her to earn a living and provide for her children.

Looking toward the future by attending higher education does not make her feel judged. She has no time to feel prejudiced. She is also highly appreciative of the role her parents and her brother play in providing her with housing and taking care of her children while she goes to work. Therefore, her identity formation did not stop when her marriage ended; judging from her life-narrative, we see that divorce is a life event in the big chain of marriage, child-birth, migration, re-location, education, and employment.

The story of Mirjeta

This life story belongs to Mirjeta, a 55-year-old widow mother of three children. She wanted to be anonymous during the interview, and I gave her the name Mirjeta for this chapter. At the time of the interview, these children were 28, 27 and 23 respectively. Her husband died 22 years ago (in 1992) when her children were six and an half and two years old, right after the start of democracy and the transition period of the country. This widow mother continuously struggled to find work to financially support her family, but because of her courage and persistence, she has been able to raise three successful children with only 3400 ALL (24 euro) of a family pension. She has had moral and physical support from her own family network and some financial support from her husband's first cousins.

When I asked her to give a brief description of her life, the moments that influenced her most and the reason why she is a lone mother, she needed time to tell her life story in many details. It was important to her to show that she had succeeded in life in spite of the struggles she had had to go through. This is what she told me:

“After nine years of marriage my husband slipped and knocked his head on a stone. He died within 18 hours. I was 32 years at the time, and my children were six, five and two years old. It was the year 1992, the start of democracy. I was unemployed and homeless. I took my eldest son with me to the hospital when I received the news that my husband had been hospitalized. From that moment on he became aggressive; he wanted to be left alone, and did not allow anyone to cuddle or talk to him. He did not want to be with me, he wanted to be in the house of my sisters, his aunts. [...] My children were little; they could not understand. They were very close to their father. My husband has been a very dear father and a respected person in society. In our relationship he was the ideal partner. [...] When he died I received only 3400 ALL (24 euro) of family pension for four people. He died young and did not have enough years to cover properly for us as a family. I did not know what to do with that money, to

feed my children, to bring them to school and educate them, or to start looking for jobs and for housing. [...] When my husband died, I was living in the same household with my mother-in-law and my brother-in-law and his family, my husband and our three children. So there were 10 people living in the same household, with only two rooms, a toilet and a small corridor. The decision of the City Council to give us a new apartment for our family could not become a reality for us. My husband died and tradition required me to stay home for 40 days to wait for people who would come to offer their condolences. I was unable to go to government meetings to receive the keys to our new apartment. Our place was occupied by another person, so I remained homeless.

I moved to the palestra of the elementary school “7th November”. We had one ten-square-meter room for the four of us. When we sat down to eat, mice were running round. I was very scared but my children were little and could not understand. Due to my hygiene, things started to get better. [...] Later on a friend of mine asked me to sell things in the market with her. I could only buy chewing-gum on the amount of money I earned. Because my husband and I both had good jobs before, I was ashamed to go and sell things in the market every day but it became the only income I could earn. Some days I was also soldering wash-tubs to earn a bit of money. Then I met a friend of mine, I did not know that our husbands used to be friends. They wanted to help me and my children out as they did not know that my husband had passed away. My friend’s husband was a cloth-trader of materials traded from Turkey. They asked me to work with them.[...] I started bringing my children to my sister and my mother, then to my parents-in-law. I could not afford to eat all the meals, from 85 kilos I went to 40. My friend’s husband was giving me good materials and clothes to sell with the price he was buying in Turkey and I started earning enough to regulate the house. [...] At my mother-in-law they were really limited in space and not in a good financial situation themselves. My brothers-in-law could not help me financially. But, the sons of my husband’s uncle have helped me with money, with everything, many times. With my mother and brothers in law, I still have very good relations.[...] I had my father, my mother, my two brothers and two sisters. Emotionally they supported me every day and stayed closer to me. My children were taken care of by them. Financially they were in difficulties themselves. They could give me 500 ALL (3.5 euro) every now and then but no more. Many times I had to take my children with me to the market.

I prepared small sandwiches for them, and often I kept them with me all day long. My aunt has also been a widow, and raised five small children on her own. Her words have remained in my memory and have accompanied me daily. She used to say: Vera, if you have no bread to feed your children, take them to bed to sleep. Do not borrow from neighbours as tomorrow you never know what they will request in return for that favour. [...] I took a little kiosk, and I started selling all sorts of things in order to earn some money and not borrow or have debts to anyone. I wanted to do everything on my own. Thank God my children were obedient and self-disciplined. I did not have to help them with their studies and exams; they were skilled at learning and received high grades at school". (Appendix 1.4., interview no. 201).

This life-story of a widowed mother of three children shows how difficult was in the early 1990s to lose the male head of the family and be without a job at the time. It also paints a picture of a non-regulated labour market and non-regulated households, especially for women who had the responsibility to both earn and care for their children. How this mother negotiates first with herself the living space, which was normally used as a closed play-ground for school children during gym hours, demonstrates power and courage in moments of crisis. Her efforts to combine several jobs in the non-regulated market, and her every-day struggle to bring her children to family members while she earns a living, bespeak of her spirit and sacrifice. This story offers a panorama of the strength of the formal and informal network in providing assistance of all kinds when needed. This woman did not have governmental support, because the government was unprepared to deal with the new needs of citizens in the transition period, and also due to the transformation of the social services system, as I have explored in the fifth chapter. However, as her story shows, the financial welfare and social services for her children were provided by her family, her husband's family members and an informal network of friends. Therefore, judging from her story, her identity formation has nothing to do with perceptions of lone mothers as victims of life events, or as raising delinquent children, or as being dependent on state support. It is an identity that shows power, agency and self-esteem although it is also strongly connected with the support provided by family and friends. Otherwise, this widow would have been unable to combine earning and caring responsibilities for her three children.

The story of Violeta

Violeta has a nine-year-old son. She herself is 31-year-old, divorced lone mother

from the High Mountain areas of Upper-Shkodra (North-West-rural Albania in Dukagjini), today living and working in Elbasan city (Central Albania). I referred to The Cannon (Kanun) of Lekë Dukagjini in the third chapter, to trace back the sociology of family characteristics in Albania. It was created in the area where Vitore grew up. Her family tradition and the lives of her family members have been heavily determined by the norms established by the Kanun of Lekë. Her life story is about her identity formation during inner migration as a child, and as a violated mother, emigration, violence, divorce, work and survival. She is a lone mother who is very proud of what she has accomplished, although her family has abandoned her. When I asked Violeta about her life-story, she says:

“I was born in Dukagjini. I was nine years old when we migrated to Shkodra. We were four sisters and three brothers. As a teenager I started working in a tailoring enterprise. A friend of mine introduced me there to a guy. He was also from a mountain area, like me. He was living in Veli-*pojë*⁸³. We married pretty soon after we were introduced and immigrated to Greece. At that time I was influenced by my mother who told me and my three sisters that “when somebody asks for your hand in marriage you should go”. I found out that my husband had borrowed money to pass customs at the border. He had no other money with him. [...] He violated me all the time that we were there. We stayed in Greece for four years and then we returned to Albania, then we went back again to Greece for another two years. During this second time in Greece my son was born. We were caught without documents and deported back to Albania. Here we did not have jobs; we constantly had conflicts because of this. Once he beat me hard and my parents took me into their home for a while. After a few weeks my parents started complaining that they were ashamed to leave the house and go out to do something, because they had a daughter who was separated from her husband. My husband came back to beg me to return to him. He promised me that he would not touch me ever again. Due to family pressure I went back to him. But the second time he beat me up even harder. This second time my family did not take me back. My mother said ‘you have to be submissive, to endure’, because this is what she had also done. [...] At that time I decided to go to a Religious Women Association in Shkodër (North-West Albania), named “Stigmatias

⁸³ Veli-*poja* is a touristic area in the peri-urban areas of Shkodra. It is surrounded by Veli-*poja* Lake. During communism it was not an inhabited area. After the 1990s many inhabitants from the surrounding mountains migrated there.

sisters”. I stayed there for 10 days with my son, until they prepared the documentation and the protection order for me to be transferred to the “Another Vision” shelter in Elbasani city. Meanwhile he had gone to my family and had told them that I was staying in an association which was keeping women as prostitutes, and they believed him. I stayed at the Elbasani shelter for five years with my son, until I found a job, and I rented a small apartment. During my stay here I thought my family would come to look after me, but they never did. I have tried many times to get in touch with my family but they do not ask for me anymore. Neither my brothers nor my sisters came to seek me. They think I have become a prostitute”. (Appendix 1.4, interview no. 66).

When I asked her about her employment history, Violeta replies:

“I have worked as a sanitary in a bar-restaurant for 18 months now. I also clean houses. My rent is 4000 ALL (28 euro) per month. My monthly salary is 8000 ALL (56 euro). I don’t pay any taxes. My house is a 30-minute walk from my work place. In the morning I walk there, but in the evening I take the bus, as it is dark and I am afraid. I try to save some money on the morning bus, but then you need to buy shoes as the road is very bad”.

Asked whether she feels prejudiced by Albanian society, Violeta replies:

“Yes, I am prejudiced by my family members and his family members, I am also judged a lot by my sisters and brothers. When your own family judges you, the world does it for sure. But I am a fair person and I believe in justice, because I live from my shoulders”.

When I asked what features of her character which make her stronger in the eyes of her children, her family, her former partners and society, she values herself, Violeta replies:

“Courage, braveness and honesty” (Appendix 1.4., interview no. 66).

Violeta’s life story accounts for an identity formation influenced by the locations she lived, family patters she was used to see as models and labor-market alternatives closely related to her residence. Although these external factors affected her way of being and living, especially in connection to other people, they could not affect her character and her braveness, two strong elements of her agency, as she

herself notes. Her story telling is exemplary of the agency in women similar to Violeta, who is not in agony despite the prejudice of her family and society. Believing in herself and her qualities is what counts for her; stereotypes and prejudicing attitudes do not affect who she is and what she does in her life.

The story of Loreta

Loreta is a 30-year-old divorced lone mother of four children, originally from Dukagjini (Mountains of upper-Shkodër) who lives in the commune areas of Shkodër (North-West Albania). Loreta's four children were ten, nine, four and one at the time of the interview (October 2013). She tells her life-story and her identity formation through a number of events: her arranged marriage when she was still a teenager; a blood-feud her close cousins were involved in; her emigration to Italy due to her marriage with an Albanian emigrant; the difficulties within her marriage; the return to her parents in Albania and recently her divorce. In contrast to other lone mothers, she did not touch upon education and employment in her story, because she has never worked. She married young and had four children in ten years; her work has been as a domestic wife and mother inside the house.

When I asked her about her life story, Loreta responded as follows:

“My parents arranged a marriage for me when I was 18 years old. I am from Dukagjini, and my husband from Shala. He was an emigrant in Italy from 1997. After three weeks of marriage, I had to return home because my 17-year-old brother was murdered in a blood-feud. Due to tradition I could not be at my parents' home, but I needed to stay with my parents-in-law. My husband arranged the documents for a family re-union after 18 months. He was in Italy when I was living with his parents. After three months in Italy I became pregnant with my daughter. I did not understand many things because I was not a well-traveled girl. He was drinking a lot and gambling, and it took me some time to understand this. When he had money he bought food, but he never bought clothes for any of us. Our clothes came from Caritas in Italy. [...] My parents' family was in blood⁸⁴. My uncle had murdered three people because of property, water and wood issues. The family of one of these two brothers took revenge for the blood of their members and murdered my brother in 2002. He

⁸⁴ To be in blood, is an English translation from the Albanian “jam në gjak, kam rënë në gjak” which means that a family is involved in a blood feud with another family.

was 17 at the time. After this murder they gave us faith⁸⁵ for one year and a half to work in the field. My father is 65 years old. After they took the blood of his son, they allowed him to work outside in the field⁸⁶. My brothers and cousins were afraid and were hiding as the other family want to take revenge over a young blood and not over an old one like my father]. Therefore, because of this situation in my family, I could not tell to my parents about my situation, as they had their own problems. [...]When I was breast-feeding, my ex-husband made me stand up with my son to bring him 'konjak' to drink. He never allowed me to leave the house. I had to stay inside, getting pregnant and raising my children at home. When my son became three years old, he brought him to kindergarten. I was not allowed to go to the kindergarten or meet with his teachers. He was the only one who would do that. After a while, he remained jobless and received unemployment assistance in Italy. When visas were open⁸⁷, my other brother came to visit me. I had not been to Albania in 4 years. My brother saw how my husband behaved. I did not tell him that my husband was beating me and was violent. I was afraid they would get into a fight. My brother asked me to separate from my husband but I was ashamed to do so [...].

After her story about her treatment at the hand of her ex-husband, Loreta wanted

⁸⁵ To give faith (jap besë) refers to the decision by a male family head, whose turn it is to take back blood, to waive the blood revenge in reaction to a request by the other family. The latter should have good reasons to ask for faith, or for time. Community mediators are involved in this process.

⁸⁶ During a blood feud, the male family members whose turn it is to take back the blood from the other family's male members, have to stay at home. They stay away from the windows and the door of the house as they can be murdered. For that reason, they are not allowed to go out and work in the field. Some of these men leave the house to hide in the mountains. In 2004, when I was working as project coordinator for the Albanian Foundation for Conflict Resolution and Reconciliation of Disputes, I acted as a translator for a journalist and a cameraman from CNN-Austria, who made a documentary on the blood feud in Albania. I know five families, whose men were isolated in their houses due to the blood feud. In two of the families the men of the house were hiding in the mountains. The women had to find reliable men in the community or their kinship who would bring them food.

⁸⁷ She refers here to the three-month Schengen visa that the European Union granted to all Albanians in December 2011. Before this period, Albanians were not allowed to move freely in the European Union area, unless they had official, professional, family or health issues reasons which were documented and fully covered financially.

to address the role of her family in law and their position in all this:

“I told everything to my ex brother-in-law though. When I was pregnant with the third child, my ex beat me up really badly and his brother took me into his home with my two other children. The maximum of time that he would not hit and beat me was one month. Every few weeks I had bruises around my eyes and on my body. [...] When I was a mother of three kids, the police kicked us out of the house. My husband hadn’t paid the rent for many months which I didn’t know. The commune brought me and my children to a hotel which helped out, Barbarino di Mogello in Firenze. After a few days they brought us to a home for the elderly in a village, owned by farmers with all sorts of life stock. We could sleep and eat for free there. There were altogether 15 other people in the same situation in that family. We stayed there for one month, and in the meantime my husband was also receiving his unemployment benefit of 1800 euro. He was not eating there; he only came there to spend the night. I was trying to help the lady of the house with different things, until one day my husband came there heavily drunk and he found me in the kitchen preparing the lunch. He took me to our room and he beat me up badly. After this happened, we went to his brother and stayed there for five months. Afterwards he found a house with a rent of 420 euro per month. He continued again with his bad habits and I became pregnant again my fourth child. He was beating me again and kicking us out of the house with the children. I was always going to the Church nearby, until one American lady of the Caritas saw my bruises. The next day they brought me and my children to a Women Association in the region where we were living and they made me talk with a lawyer. [...] During these talks about my experiences, I was afraid that he would kill my brother or my father. One of those evenings he hit me again so hard that I lost my senses and I was covered in blood. I was pregnant. The women of Caritas brought me to hospital and they returned me to Albania, to my parents’ home. [...] I returned last year in January, on the 29th. One of my aunts who is also divorced, brought me to Drita⁸⁸. Drita and her association helped me with the court case and the divorce. My father, together with four men from our kinship, went to pay a visit to his father. He said he had nothing to say. After a few days four men came to our home and took my two eldest sons. My sons did not want to see their father because of his violence, but

⁸⁸ Drita is the social worker of the Light Steps Association in Shkodër.

my brother-in-law paid a lot of money to arrange this. I haven't seen my two children since then. (Appendix 1.4., interview no. 123).

Loreta did not answer my question about her sense of power and her strength or whether she feels prejudiced by society for being a divorced woman. However, in her story-telling she mentioned that when her brother told her to divorce her husband she said that she was ashamed to do so. Her identity formation, thus, has been influenced by societal norms concerning marriage, whereby a woman is more valued when she is married. In contrast to other women who earn their own living and provide for their children through their work, Loreta has never worked in her life. Her self-esteem is low when compared to other women who are not entirely dependent on their family members. Loreta's life story resembles that of the typical North-Albanian girl from upper Shkodër, who marries when her parents decide that she should do so and who is submissive to her fate. The marriage pattern in Dukagjini (her birth place) and the unwritten laws of the North Kanun determined the fate of her family members and her life. Her story is exemplary of the ways in which the rules of the Kanun in the North part of the country are stronger than the country legislation. As I explained in the third chapter, until the Second World War, the North Kanun in Albania did not give women any rights in the family; therefore, children were considered as property of the husband. Patriarchy and patrilineality were the main characteristics of the Albanian family, which communism tried to erase, although without much success. After 1990 this influence of Kanuns has not disappeared. During communism the blood-feud was forbidden as I demonstrated in the third chapter. However, as I indicated in the same chapter, with the communist collapse and lack of legislation application in transition time, the blood feud returned again, especially in the North of the country. Loreta says that although her children did not want to see their father and they should remain under her custody, her brother-in-law paid a lot of money to arrange for the custody of her two eldest children by her husband. Although by law representatives of the government should have been there when her sons were handed to her ex-husband, no person from the government showed up. Instead four males from the family of her parents-in-law came to her family and took her two sons without any information, without asking, without any consent. For them, the male line of the family belongs to them and the mother of the children had no rights over them. Loreta's identity seems not self-guided, but rather has been an identity shaped by locations, circumstances and societal rules, which Loreta had no negotiating power to overcome. Instead her parents and family mastered the fate of her life.

The story of Irena

Irena is a 49-year-old divorced lone mother with two children in the communist period and abandoned after the 1990s, from Fieri city (South-West Albania). She has two children with her first husband. These children were 31 and 30 at the time of the interview (October 2012). She had two abortions with her second partner which affected her psychological state and has made it difficult for her to let go of this period. Asked to tell her life story, Irena narrates:

“I fell in love when I was 15 years old, with a guy I met occasionally in my life. At the time I was in the first year of high school. I left school and after our engagement I became pregnant when I was 17 years old. That is why I had to commit to him. He pressurized me to stay with him. He was my age. Right after the birth of my son I became pregnant again with my daughter. He became a soldier when our son was born, and left the military service when our daughter was born. After his military service we started to live together. He did not treat me well. He gambled, and was violent. Many times he had conflicts with the police and he was imprisoned for three years. During the time he was in prison, I started looking for jobs. The person at the employment office happened to be my high school teacher. I started work in wood refinery. After he finished his three years in prison, he returned home and continued his old habits. He was imprisoned again and I filed for divorce in 1987. [...] They gave me child custody and he had to pay 1000 ALL per month in child allowance. But he never worked and my parents took care of me and my children financially. [...] At my work I was introduced to a new guy and we developed a relationship. We stayed together for 15 years, but we never lived together. Only my parents knew about him. After 15 years, I was told that he had married another woman. [...] Twice I became pregnant by the second man and I had two abortions, because he did not support me and could not take responsibility for his children. I aborted because I could not tell society that I had children out of wed-lock with a non-married partner. After the second abortion I became depressed. The public enterprise I was working was shut down and I became a domestic woman. I continued to stay with my parents and have not been able to find a job, because of my depression. I now receive ‘kemping’ (disability pension) from the government to cure my depression. After 16 years of taking care of my children, I could not take care of them financially so they went to live with their father. I am still living with my parents”.

When asked about the characteristics which make her stronger in front of her child/children, former husband/partner and society in general and which make her go on, Irena answers:

“I value the knowledge I received in school, I test myself very often with quizzes and I read a lot of books”. (appendix 1.3., interview no. 10).

Irena’s story is the story of women who were raised and formed their personality under a communist regime, but had to live their adult life in a transition period. She showed courage and persistence when she had a job and a partner, her children and her family. At the moment she loses her job and is unable to support her children, when she has two abortions in order to avoid being stereotyped as a non-married mother and loses her partner, she loses her self-confidence and becomes fully dependent on her family and on the government. Nevertheless, she still finds peace and confirmation of her self-esteem in the knowledge she has received in school and in many books she reads daily. Although she had the support of her family throughout her life, her self-esteem suffered due to her negative experiences with irresponsible men. Irena’s story is located in two times in the communism and after. Her story is an example of how women were offered jobs when divorced under communism, and how they remained unemployed despite having to raise children without a partner after communism collapsed. The story indicates how social morals on married mothers versus non-married mothers twice hindered her from giving birth even without the consent or the support of her partner.

These five life stories of lone mothers present the diversity of women’s lives, in terms of location background, age factor, number of children they have, education and employment history and the family support they receive. Their stories not only tell us about the personal events in the lives of lone mothers, but they also reflect the transition period Albania went through. The return of patriarchy and the return of blood feud, especially in the North part of the country, the three big emigration flows of Albanians after 1991, the massive inner migration from rural areas towards urban areas, the closure of public enterprises and high level of unemployment are all events in Albania which are reflected in the life stories of Zamira, Violeta, Loreta, Irena and Mirjeta.

Moreover, it is evident from almost all the stories how marriage, education and their employment history have impacted their lives. The life histories from North Albania, the histories of Zamira, of Violeta, and of Loreta are histories of three women with more or less the same age. They are from the poorest part of the country (low employment and lack of private business) and their stories tell how

the cultural traditions and family norms of patriarchy, patrilocality and patrilineality (as I elaborated in the third chapter) are intertwined in their everyday struggle. Violeta's mother advises her daughter to follow her example, to be submissive and endure the pain caused by her husband. For them as a family, patriarchy (and the power and authority of men) is absolute and still remains the norm. Patrilocality is evident from every story: all the lone mothers have moved from their locality to the house of their husbands and have had to emigrate and migrate as a result. Zamira has migrated in the capital of Albania. Migration became a widespread phenomenon after 1991. The population from North and South Albania moved towards Central Albania in search of a better life and economic growth, but instead they faced enormous problems as newcomers in urban areas. Violeta and Loreta both emigrated, one of them to Greece and the other one to Italy, for economic improvement and better lives with their former husbands. The history of the 55-year-old mother, Mirjeta from Berati (South-Central Albania), and the 49-year old Irena from Fieri (South-West Albania) manifest the impact of public enterprises and loss of work in Albania after 1991. These stories reflect the effects of the socio-political transition of the country on the lives of lone mothers.

Patrilineality has to do with the inheritance of family through the male line. Loreta tells how her male in-laws came to her parents' home and took two of her children in Italy. In the unwritten laws of Albania, the children born from a woman were property of the male line of the family and women had no rights over them. As Loreta's history shows, this is still happening in 2013, in North-Albania.

These social norms, unwritten laws, marriage ideologies, living conditions and economic locations have determined and created the identity of lone mothers over the years. They mark the differences between lone mothers. These factors also mark their similarities. As the histories of the five women show, divorce, separation, and the death of husbands are events that have an ongoing impact on their lives. However, these events have not changed their character, their force, their strength, as the histories of the Mirjeta, the widow mother from Berati, Zamira from Peshkopi and Violeta from Dukagjini show. Although Irena and Loreta display a less powerful character, it cannot be argued that they have no agency or that they do not have the qualities or values other women display. Both women have been successful mothers in their life, which requires action, devotion, self-sacrifice, time, energy and care. I suggest therefore that we look at their identity not only at powerless moments, but on a continuum of what they can give, what they can be. As mothers and daughters these women are part of the communities they live in. Loreta's integration into the elderly care house they were brought to as a family for few months worked well. She helped the lady of

the house to cook for everybody. Irena narrates how she found a job when her first husband became imprisoned for the second time, and with what power she filed for divorce. Even though these women look powerless, they have always carried a forceful belief in what they are and what they can do deep inside them. Loreta is currently mothering, and Irena is reading lots of books but she has also taken care of her parents since living with them. Domestic care is a job, which should not make these lone mothers less powerful, or less confident than those mothers who earn their own living.

Lone mother's ways of feeling, being and living might be affected by the prejudice meted out to them by society. This prejudice is present in what they have learned in or heard from their families (as the story of Zamira shows). They might be ashamed at being a divorcée or a non-married mother (as the story of Irena shows). For a while Zamira continued her unhealthy marriage because of her parent's shame at taking her in again and her mother advice to be submissive. Loreta recalls that she was ashamed to get a divorce when her brother asked her to do so and therefore she kept silent and endured the pain and violence for a few more years. Irena regrets that she had two abortions and points her finger at society's prejudice against non-married mothers. In the third chapter I asked whether lone mothers felt prejudiced in communist and post-communist Albania. In this chapter, through their 'thick narratives' (May, 2004) I discover how society's prejudice impacts their identity. These stories reflect the aggregated numbers of lone mothers who feel or not prejudiced by society. The lone mothers researched were also asked whether they feel prejudiced by the society and why do they think that they are prejudiced? The results show that 29.2% of lone mothers feel prejudiced, as compared to 71.8% who do not feel prejudiced. This indicates that in Albania of after 1990 being a lone mother and being divorced as lone mothers told themselves is a sign of them being strong and therefore being respected in the society.

As the stories testify, parents' support plays an important role in the lives of lone mothers. In every story the parents have a leading role in the lives of lone mothers, either at the moment of their marriage or after divorce. Parents become important actors in the lives of lone mothers and their children and have a crucial influence on the self-confidence and agency. Zamira is empowered to go to work because her parents take care of her children; otherwise she wouldn't be able to. Loreta's parents, Irena's parents and the parents of Mirjeta take care of their children and also provide a house for them, share caring activities in the lives of lone mothers. When lone mothers share child caring with their parents, the parents play an enormous role and have a great empowerment impact on the identity formation of lone mothers. They feel secure and accepted when their

parents become part of their life after marriage. Violeta who does not have the support of her family, although by character she is a very strong woman, is constantly mentioning that they prejudice her and they do not search for her or ask for her. Therefore, she does not have a feeling of belonging and she does not feel accepted by her own family.

After examining how lone mothers think about themselves and their lives, how they think others see them, and how their parents impact their life narratives and identity formation, I will now move on to reveal to readers their comments on their use of services provided by local governments and local women NPOs and local religious institutions.

7.2. The assessment by lone mothers of the welfare policies offered by the state

In the fifth chapter I gave an overview of the social welfare entitlements and services offered to lone mothers by the socialist government during communism, by the government during 1991- 2000, and by local governments from 2000 onwards. In addition to the use of these entitlements by lone mothers I provided an overview and analysis of the respective services offered by the Ministry of Labour, Social Affairs and Equal Opportunities (MLSAEO, today the Ministry of Social Welfare and Youth) or International Multilateral Agencies working in Albania (The World Bank, The International Monetary Fund, The European Commission Delegation in Albania, UNDP). I also sketched how representatives of the Economic Aid Department in the Municipalities view the services they already offer and how they cooperate with local NPOs, the International community and business sector operating in their region to create specific annual programmes. Moreover, I discussed their objectives for future policies in the respective regions. In this section I give space to lone mothers to express their experiences and give their comments on the services they received from the government in the communist and post-communist period. I will especially focus on comments of lone mothers about the services they have used after 1991, because these comments and experiences can create room for improvement in the future.

The lone mothers who raised their children during communism answered to two questions regarding the support they received from the government during and after divorce or death of their husband. The fifth question of the questionnaire asked lone mothers: “What kind of care, housing, health-care or other support did the government offer you and your children”? The 11th question asked lone mothers: “How difficult has it been for you to combine work outside the home with domestic work as a lone mother”?

Dilja, a 75-year-old retired lone mother, originally from Përmet city (in

South-East-Albania), today living in Durrës, when asked about her marriage, her divorce and the support from the government narrates:

“My grandmother and my parents arranged a marriage for me when I was 16 years old, in Malçovë village. I went to live with my husband in his house and we were four people living together: me, my husband, my widow mother-in-law and my husband’s uncle. We moved to Durrës city (Central Albania) in 1961 when I was 21 years old. [...] In Malçovë village I worked as a farmer in cooperatives. In Durrës I did not work until I got divorced. After eight years of marriage we divorced because he fell in love with another woman, and after three years of their history I filed for divorce. He beat me up and brought his lover in our house, as he had no other place to go. [...] After my divorce, the state gave me a job in communal services and they gave me 2500 ALL as the child pension they were taking from his salary. They also gave me a house. The first secretary of the Central Council in Durrës, Muho Asllani came to meet with me. I was the niece of the martyr of the Second World War. The state could not abandon me in the street”. (Appendix 1.3., interview no. 1)

When she got divorced in 1966, her children were eight, five and three years old respectively. She was the only one to take care of her children, as she was not supported by the family due to the divorce. She told me about the care for her children and having to combine work and care:

“My mother told me to leave my children and go out to find a husband. But I did not have an appetite for a husband; I had appetite for food. My parents never came to visit me; they did not support my choice as they wanted me to remarry. [...] So, I raised my children on my monthly income and the child alimony the government was receiving from the father of the children. I could do the school run for my first daughter. The other one I gave a key necklace that she could go to school and return again on her own. My little 3-year-old son was in kindergarten. For families like mine, with low incomes, the state reduced the subsidies we needed to pay for kindergarten.” (Appendix 1.3., interview no. 1).

Evgjenija, a 62 years old lone mother at the time of the interview, was divorced in 1978 when her daughters were 11 and eight years old and she mentions the support she received at the time from the government:

“I was given a letter to work as a sales person, in order to access the labour market. I was privileged to were educated and to have finished high school. Without this background, it would have been more difficult to find a job. [...] I started work immediately. In that period right to divorce was given to women, but it was difficult to secure a house. Since I was in my city, and my cousins were in good positions in the government they secured a room for us in another house. I lived together with my little daughter with another family until I was given an independent house. My ex-husband took the eldest daughter and he took care of her in another city, in Vlorë. At the time it was better that I took custody of one of the daughters and he of the other one, in order to avoid higher spendings”. (Appendix 1.3., interview no. 9).

From these stories of two lone mothers who remained alone during communism can be drawn some conclusions. The socialist government in the communist period did provide lone mothers with work and also with child-care when they had children of a pre-school age. The lone mothers with children of a school age had to arrange with their children or family members who would take care of children during the hours they would go to or return from school. As housing is concerned, the socialist government played a biased role, because it privileged lone mothers with connections in the government. The housing situation is important during communism and after, because it allowed lone mothers to package their incomes from different sources. As elaborated in the second and fourth chapter, gender scholars (Lewis and Hobson, 1997) find it important for lone mothers to be able to have enough incomes to maintain an independent household. Therefore they argue that lone mothers can package their incomes from different resources in order to be able to maintain an independent household. This in Albania is not the case, especially for those lone mothers without access to employment or housing rights after marriage dissolution.

In what follows, I will present some qualitative commentaries of lone mothers who have used services offered by national and local governments from 1990 to 2013. The quantitative analyzis of usage of these services and the satisfaction of lone mothers regarding these services was presented in the fifth chapter.

7.3.1. The comments of lone mothers on the usage of the Economic Aid programme

I discussed in the fifth chapter that the Economic Aid program is not designed to drag families out of poverty, or to assist them in dealing with poverty and social exclusion. Now it is time to look at what lone mothers say about this service. All

of respondents who receive this aid consider it as an insignificant financial governmental contribution to their families I have selected few stories. Among the stories of lone mothers and their usage of the socio-economic program, some positive remarks of this cash-aid benefit were heard. The benefit was granted because these lone mothers lived in severe circumstances. There are specific cases which have had the attention of both the governmental and non-governmental actors. These are mainly cases of mothers who have been using shelter services where social workers have worked with the local government to provide these mothers with socio-economic aid cash-benefit. In what follows I will list some considerations of lone mothers who use or have used this programme. For most of the cases I provide a situational background which explains why this cash benefit has been allocated to the lone mother.

Daniela 34-year-old divorced mother, formerly from Durrës city, due to extreme violence from her husband, stayed in the shelter “Tjetër Vizion” (Another Vision) in Elbasani city for 18 months, with her four children. She has two daughters and two sons (at the time of the interview they were 13, 11, nine and seven respectively). Hers is a unique case where the local government of Durrës, the Durrës police, the Elbasani local women NPOs and Elbasani municipality jointly coordinated a set of programmes to help her and her children. She and her children were victims of domestic violence. The shelter of “Another Vision” normally offers shelter to violated women for 6 months. The programme managers, directors and social workers of this shelter are also able to offer long-term services to women and children who are not capable yet to form an independent household. In this way they hosted Daniela and her four children for 18 months. Parallel to the shelter services, they offered her a cooking course for 6 months and currently she works as a chef assistant in the kitchen of a village restaurant, a job which was found through the “Another Vision” Association. This organization also helped Daniela to transfer the registration documents for her and her children from Durrës city to Elbasani. Another women NPO in this city, the Women’s Forum Elbasan, lobbied for her with the Socio-Economic Aid Department of Elbasan city to allocate her cash benefit assistance for herself and her children. For two years she received 5400 ALL, or 42 euro. When asked about this, she says:

“They⁸⁹ have really done me a big favor, and I feel respected. But I have four children, what do I do with 5400 ALL (42 euro) per month? I cannot even feed them. I work all day long, more than 10 hours per day, but I re-

⁸⁹ With ‘they’ she refers to local government representatives.

ceive only 11.000 ALL (85 euro), per month. I have a rent to pay, electricity, water. I have to bring them to school and dress them". (Appendix 1.4., interview no. 72).

Another mother from the Bradasheshi commune (Shijon village in the Elbasani district) is Blerina, also a 34-year-old divorced mother. She has a daughter of five. Currently Blerina is living with her parents and her two sisters at her parents' house. For her daughter she receives social assistance of 1000 ALL, or seven euro from five years. When I ask her how satisfied she is with this cash benefit Blerina replies:

"It does not even cover the expenses for my daughter. They pretend they give this assistance for her, because they tell me that I am part of the land property of my father, so I have part in the property of my parents. This is only for my daughter". (Appendix 1.4., interview no. 79).

Donika from Durrës city, who became divorced under socialism, in 1986, has a son of 26 years old. She has received substantial support from Durrës municipality, after socialism collapsed. She has received three types of services from the municipality: 1. Housing; 2. Social-economic assistance for herself for two years, and 3. Disability pension (or "kemp" as it is called in Albania) for her son from 2005 onwards. The disability pension of her son has increased over the years: from 6000, to 7000, to 85000 and is now 95000 ALL (67 euro) per month. Despite the attention that local authorities have paid her, she is not satisfied with the cash benefit she receives for herself. She complains:

"I only receive 3000 ALL (21.18 euro) from the state. I do not know what to do with this. I cannot even pay electricity with this. I am considering asking for a disability pension myself". (Appendix 1.3., interview no. 2).

The stories mentioned above belong to the group of lone mothers who are divorced. Another group in this study consists of abandoned lone mothers due to emigration or the imprisonment of their husbands. The emigration of the mostly male population towards Greece and Italy has increased the number of lone mothers in Albania. As demonstrated statistically in the fourth chapter, many abandoned lone mothers cannot be divorced, because they do not have any contact by phone or other means of communication with their husbands. Their former parents-in-law maintain a distant relation with them. These abandoned lone mothers have difficulties to prove to the local government that their husbands

do not contribute any child alimony for their children. The reason is the non-formalized remittances or the low level of bank users in urban areas. In Albania, there are still no local banks in rural areas and only a percentage of employers operate through banks. Although an enforcement law or Decision of the Council of Ministers (DCM) to push the central governments to raise the budget of GDP for this category of families is not in operation, in the local governments the employees of the Economic Aid Programme are aware of this fact.

I have selected the history of an abandoned lone mother, whose partner was an emigrant when she met him. He continuously lied and fooled her about his employment in Italy. He was imprisoned many times. When I interviewed Stela, he had been in prison for 3 and a half years. Stela is 28 years old, a mother of a six-year-old autistic son. Stela comments on the Economic Aid she received for seven months:

“I received it under the category of women head of households. My son was not registered until he was two and a half. Last year I registered him under my name. He deserved to receive a “Kemp” pension, but the doctors who have to provide me with a status for this benefit wants me to pay lots of money under the table. It is a cash benefit of 3200 ALL (22,5 euro) and there is nothing I can do with it. I am very dissatisfied”. (Appendix 1.4, interview no. 17).

Lone mothers who fit into other categories and do not fall into the category of ‘women-headed families’ and are targeted from local government to become part of the Economic Aid programme say that they want to be part of this assistance scheme but that they cannot for many reasons. More problematic is their situation in rural areas. This scheme also excludes the widowed lone mothers, because it assumes that they receive a family or orphan’s pension. However, a lack of employment characterizes a transitive Albania. Therefore, people are incapable of gathering contributive years in the social insurance scheme, as I have indicated in the fifth chapter. The loss of employment registers in different localities and communes at the country level has also caused a lack of protection via the social-insurance coverage. This situation effects the orphan’s and family pension of widowed lone mothers and their children.

Inva, a 42- years-old divorced lone mother of two children (aged 20 and 17), living in rural areas of Vlora. was abandoned by her husband 15 years ago when he immigrated to Greece. They divorced 10 years ago. She says about the difficulties of not becoming part of the Economic Aid Program:

“My ex-husband should give me 10.000 ALL but he never does. I also do not have any social assistance aid from the commune. We do not have it, they⁹⁰ tell me. The wise man of the village gave me a certification letter that I was in need of social assistance, but in the end he did not do anything. My younger son needs 4.000 ALL to travel to high school everyday. To become a sanitary in a restaurant in another village close by you are paid only 3.000 ALL, while you need 2.000 ALL to pay for transport to go there every day”. (Appendix 1.4., interview no. 183).

Evisi, a widow mother of 39 from Shtërmëni village, in the Elbasani district, has two daughters of 18 and 11 years respectively. Neither of her daughters can receive the family pension or the orphan’s pension, because although her husband had worked in the state farm all his life, his contribution was not registered. He also did not have other contributions to the social insurance scheme when socialism collapsed; therefore, this family receives no kind of assistance from the state. Evisi says when I ask her whether she receives any social assistance as a family with no income:

“I do not receive social assistance, because they tell me I have land in the village, but this land that my parents and I own can neither be worked, nor can it be sold. This land has done much damage to me. Nobody wants to buy it as it is not in the working fields in the village. It is closer to the road, and there is also no irrigation water”. (Appendix.1.4., interview no. 80).

For this research project I have interviewed 18 lone mothers, who belong to the Roma and Egyptian community. Four of them were Roma and 14 of them Egyptian. The Roma women I interviewed were living in the old ruins of the archeological Museum of Durrës. The Egyptian women were introduced to me for this research by local women NPOs in the cities of Korçë, Durrës, Berat and Vlorë on my request. The introduction to this dissertation and the fourth chapter offer background information about this sub-category of women. Their relation to government support differs from the other women I interviewed as the following example shows.

Here I will present the history of one Egyptian woman from Berat city, Bruna, to look at how she evaluates the Economic Aid from the local government. She is an Egyptian mother who became a widow three years before. She is 37 years old

⁹⁰ By ‘they’ she means the representatives of the commune.

and has seven children, aged 17, 15, 14, 12, 11, seven and four respectively. She has six daughters and one son. She has been severely violated by her husband. She cannot gain family pension for any of her children because her husband did not pay the social insurance contribution. Although the legislation for widow mothers and their children differs from ‘women headed families’, as I have explained in the fifth chapter, in cases such as this one exceptions can be made, depending on the local government’s specific programmes. Berati municipality, as I have described, has created a special annual programme, depending on yearly budgeting, to help families that are in need of socio-economic assistance but do not fit the categories targeted for benefit. Because she cannot benefit from her deceased husband’s coverage, has seven children and is unemployed, the local government of Berati has made her part of this annual programme, giving her and her seven children a Socio-Economic Aid of 4000 ALL (28 euro). Bruna says about the cash-benefit she receives:

“We are eight people living on 4000 ALL (28 euro). I am told they will give me this assistance until December. After that I do not know where to go, unless I drown myself in the river”. (Appendix 1.4., interview no. 197).

These were few of the comments I selected from lone mothers to show their dissatisfaction with the delivery of the Socio-Economic Aid Program. Judging from their stories, it is insignificant amount of aid. However, 12.5% of lone mothers I interviewed, who are not part of this entitlement say they want to access it. These lone mothers want to be part of this socio-economic scheme because they fall within the category of ‘women headed-families’ who can qualify to receive this aid.

There are several reasons lone mothers give as to why they cannot access this Socio-Economic Aid Program. By presenting their voices I will also give and list their reasons, which explain their difficulties to access this economic aid.

Redona, a lone mother undergoing divorce, originally from rural areas of Elbasani, currently living in Durrës, at the time of the interview was 45 years old, and had three children aged 22, 18 and 12 respectively. She is a victim of continuous financial and psychological violence from her partner, and in the process of divorce. She comments on why she cannot be part of this programme:

“A private lawyer requested 70.000 ALL (493 euros) for the divorce procedure. After this request the girls of Bajana⁹¹ assisted me with the divorce

⁹¹ Bajana is the president of the Association of Women with Social Problems in Dur-

and I only had to pay the governmental fee of 10.000 ALL (70 euro for the court case). However, there was another fee I needed to pay to the government, the child psychologist fee of 20.000 ALL (141 euro) and I could not pay this. Therefore, I can't show my divorce papers nor can I apply for the Economic Aid benefit". (Appendix 1.4., interview no. 18)

This lone mother says that she has no financial income to file for a divorce, and even when women NPOs assist her with a free legal procedure to file for divorce, she cannot afford the money she has to pay for the psychologist who has to ask her child/children about their parents' divorce and their preferences for the custody. Therefore, this lone mother falls in the category of those who cannot access the Economic Aid Programme because she has no income to prove that she is divorced.

Olta, is an Egyptian lone mother, originally from Fier city (South-West Albania), married in Vlora (South-West Albania) city, and migrated to Durrës (Central-Western Albania) 10 years ago with her family. She is separated since two and a half years. Olta trained as azoo-veterinary. She is a hard-working woman and has been subjected to severe domestic violence from her husband. Olta is a mother of two children (17 and 12 respectively). She comments on not being able to receive economic-aid benefit:

"I can't file for a divorce. I have no time to go to Vlora. My ex-husband is still the family head by law. He does not give me a letter where he approves that he agrees for me and my children to transfer the documents in Durrës. Without a divorce letter, I can't ask for Economic Aid" (Appendix 1.4., interview no. 23).

This other voice testifies that after divorce in the city where the lone mother and her ex-husband used to live, she still needs to go back to this city and do the administrative procedures to deregister from there and transfer the identity documents for her and her children to the civil registry of the city she is currently living. This reason is more prominent in the histories of lone mothers who are inner migrants, and have migrated from Northern areas towards the central area, or from South areas towards the central area.

Elida, a 47-year-old divorced mother of three daughters (aged 28, 26, and

rës. During the interviews many lone mothers addressed the social workers, lawyers and psychologists of this center as "the girls of Bajana", meaning the girls who work for this organization.

22 respectively), originally from Durrës, married in Fushë-Krujë (Central-North Albania), and emigrated for ten years in Turkey with her ex-husband. At the beginning of 1991, when she and her husband were both unemployed, they used to have Socio-Economic Aid assistance until they left for Turkey. In these ten years that she returned to Albania, in Durrës, she worked with her daughters. Now she has been unemployed for two years and lives with her younger daughter in a rented house. She explains why she cannot access-Socio-Economic Aid:

“Many years ago in Fushë-Krujë I used to receive this aid, but then I did not transfer the documents from there to Durrës. I don’t like having to deal with these people, it is a huge bureaucracy. I rely on my own arms and feet. Even if I am sick, I work, I need to have a job. I have no time for this”. (Appendix 1.4., interview no. 27).

The reason that this lone mother cannot deliver all the required documents is that it takes a lot of work and she cannot find time to go to every office to gather all the certificates as she needs to work. Other lone mothers in this situation also have to take care of their children and they cannot leave their children alone to spend time chasing after documents.

Saimira, a lone mother undergoing divorce, a mother of two children aged 8 and 5 years, married to an Albanian emigrant in Italy, an orphan from a very young age, says about the Socio-Economic Aid Programme: “I went there four times, I needed to deliver a lot of documents. I completed the folder with some documents, but I did not feel supported and I needed to work, did not have time to finish everything. It is very difficult to receive this aid when you have no support and when you do not know anyone”. (Appendix 1.4., interview no. 50).

Violeta living in Elbasani, who received shelter services from the “Another Vision” Association explains why she cannot receive this aid: “I do not receive this Socio-Economic Aid because in the municipality they told me that I needed to be a citizen of Elbasan from 2010, and I am not”. (Interview conducted with Violeta, in Elbasani city, on 16 November 2012).

Ornela, a 51-year-old lone mother of eight children, abandoned by her husband, says that when she lived in the Central-North of the country she used to have economic aid, but now that she migrated to Durrës she cannot: “I used to have it in the village I was living in Pukë for about seven years, but here in Shinovlash of Durrës I don’t have it. I have asked for it but they tell me that my eldest sons are grown up and that my husband who is an emigrant in Greece should bring money. But my sons have no job and I haven’t heard from my husband in many years”. (Appendix 1.4., interview no. 26).

The histories of these two lone mothers show that they could not access the Socio-Economic Aid program because they migrated from other cities. Each district has its own regulations with regard to the citizens and families who can access this aid. Also, lone mothers might still be registered as married, while they do not know where their husband is. Therefore, they cannot prove to the municipality that they have no other income in order to fulfill the criteria for receiving economic aid.

Other reasons lone mothers give in their interviews reveal that they have a low education. Hence, it is difficult for them to understand everything they need to do to be able to become part of this programme. In rural areas the lone mothers also have the problem that the commune building is too far from their homes, and going there to receive only 800 or 1000 ALL (four or five euro) is useless, because they would spend 200 or 300 ALL going back and forth by a private minibus so they would lose half of the amount anyway. The Economic Aid in rural areas is also inaccessible to those lone mothers whose parents or former husbands own lands. Therefore, these mothers are told to work the land and feed themselves and their children instead of becoming part of the programme.

When they do receive aid, the commentaries of lone mothers show that all of them are dissatisfied with the cash assistance benefit they receive. The amount does not help them to get out poverty; it basically keeps them in the same situation. However, the Economic Aid introduces lone mothers to the employment service and to the possibility of having a subsidy for the school books of their children. As I indicated in the fifth chapter, one of the conditions lone mothers need to fulfill to become part of this programme is the condition for 'women-headed families' to be registered as unemployed and look for work. I will now move on to the comments of lone mothers who are registered as job seekers in the local employment offices.

7.3.2 Lone mothers' voices in commenting employment service

In the fifth chapter I gave an overview of the history of the development of the employment service in Albania before and after the 1990s. I also offered the statistical results of my research survey on the number of lone mothers using this service. In this section I will present the voices of lone mothers on this subject and I will provide the readers with selected comments from the interviews. These comments by lone mothers (who are registered as unemployed) contain information about their experiences with the unemployment services and suggestions for improvement.

Brunilda, a 43-year-old Egyptian divorced lone mother originally from the

rural areas of Durrës, with three children aged 26, 23 and 16, is registered in the employment office of Durrës. She says about this service: “There are only job in bars and restaurants, but they do not want us Egyptians, they are racists”. (Appendix 1.4., interview no. 3).

Durime, A 30-year-old divorced lone mother from Durrës has a ten-year-old son. She is registered at the employment office and wants to find a job. When she is asked to comment on this service she says:

“They have tried to find a job for me but all the jobs they find are with social insurance. I want to work for a few hours to be closer to my son. My current job is at Vollga (in one of the coastal areas of the city) and I need to walk from and to Spitalla⁹² which is like two hours or even more per day. I cannot take the bus as it is expensive and I want to spend that money on the rent. Now I do not have a second job and I cannot afford the rent and food”. (Appendix 1.4., interview no. 29).

Among lone mothers there is a category who wants to find an informal job, which does not register them as tax payers under the social insurance scheme. The reason behind this need is that they already have an informal, badly paid job and therefore they need a second one to cover their expenses. In dealing with this problem they prefer to have two or three jobs which can cover up their monthly costs. A formal job would restrict their flexibility. They need jobs which are time flexible and allow them to combine other jobs as well.

Bardha, a 52-year-old divorced lone mother, used to be a mother of two children (aged 25 and 24). Unfortunately, one of them died while swimming in the sea. Her son is currently in prison and she needs to work for both her son and herself. She is registered at the employment office in Durrës and has also received vocational training from this office in cooperation with a local woman NPO in this city. When asked about the services she receives from this office, she says:

“I was told once to take care of an elderly woman, because I have finished the course for care for the elderly organized by the Association “Women with Social Problems Durrës” in cooperation with the employment office of Durrës. But I was unlucky, because the woman died within an hour”. (Appendix 1.4., interview no. 54).

⁹² The distance from Spitalla to Vollga is 10 km. Kujdesa needs to walk 20 km per day and she loses 2 hours or more going back and forth.

Job offers do not always fit the needs of lone mothers. For example Besa, a 41 years old divorced mother, is an national migrant from Puka (North-West Albania), who moved to Durrës 12 years ago. She is a mother of four children, aged 20, 16, 13 and ten respectively. Two of her children are very ill with respiratory problems. She has been registered as unemployed for the last five years. Besa comments on the employment office:

“Yes, I have been interested to find a job; I have come once in three months to the office to ask if they have something for me. They have offered me work in bars and restaurants, but I had small children at the time and I needed to take care of them.” (Appendix 1.4., interview no. 53).

In other cases lone mothers have certain expectations from state institutions: they expect their job back or to be offered other solutions while they are employed in the state sector. Such a case is that of Katerina, a widow lone mother who became a widow 11 years before, from Fier (South-West Albania), 55 years old at the time of the interview, a mother of three daughters (aged 36, 31 and 20 years respectively). She had been without a job for five years. Her two first daughters are married but her other daughter still lives in the house with her. Her youngest daughter is a student. She has a high school education and because she lost her state paid job she has no hope that the employment office can do something for her. Her employment history is as follows:

“I worked for 19 years at the Public Enterprise of Carpet Embroidery (NPN) and after its closure I remained jobless at home. After my husband’s death, his governmental enterprise offered me a job as a sanitary. I was paid a low salary of 10.000 ALL. After eight years of working there, I was told that they would reduce my salary to 7000 ALL, or I could go to work in TEC (Thermo-Electric-Central) for 1000 ALL per month. Three times I asked them to help me out. I went also to the Ministry of Labor in Tirana, because I was not given unemployment assistance. The employers wrote that I left the job of my own will; therefore I had no other rights. It has been five years without a job. For two years I have worked as a sanitary in the bar of my cousins, but I do not pay social insurance. I earn 18.000 ALL and I spend 6000 ALL on electricity each month. I have 27 years of work history, but I will burn myself out for retirement as I can’t fill another ten years. (Appendix 1.4., interview no. 98).

Katerina is not registered in the employment office as unemployed because she

is convinced that: Who gives you work in Fier my sweetheart? You tell me the Municipality will do so, but I do not know where I can search for a job. Who would employ a 55-year-old woman?" (Appendix 1.4., interview no. 98).

Sevimi, an abandoned lone mother, from the Shushica rural area in Elbasani (Central Albania), 45 years old, is a mother of three children (two daughters and a son of 22, 20 and 18 years old respectively). Her husband has been in jail for 17 years, and he has 8 more years to go. He has murdered two brothers of a family from the same village due to a loss of temper in the local elections, between representatives of the Democratic Party and the Socialist Party. She has a high school education. During communism she worked as a saleswoman in the fruits and vegetable sections of the village. When socialism collapsed she remained unemployed and was not granted unemployment assistance for one year by the commune. For more than 15 years, she has been working in her house farm to feed her children and her husband in jail. In the last four years, she has worked as a sanitary in the second-elementary school of the village. During these years she has received two types of services from the commune, Socio-Economic Aid for a few years and has been registered as unemployed at the employment commune desk. Her experience with employment service has been as follows:

"My children were growing up and they needed more food. I went there to seek work and they were saying ok, ok we know it. And they gave work to those women whose husbands already had work and I received nothing even though my husband was in jail". (Appendix 1.4., interview no. 87).

The comments of lone mothers show that the services offered by employment offices are better structured and organized in big cities, such as Durrës, Vlorë, Sarandë and Elbasan. Lone mothers living in other cities have less experience with the employment service, also due to the lack of development of private businesses, especially in the cities in North-East (Peshkopia) and South-Central Albania (Berati). Therefore, employment offices in these other cities do not have many jobs of offer. In the bigger cities lone mothers are also offered employment in elderly care. In cities where the unemployment rate is very high, families perform elderly care themselves, while in other cities where family members are working during the day, they prefer to hire somebody to do their household, and also take care of their elderly parents.

The answers of lone mothers show that there is a need for the organization of job employment which allows for flexibility, especially for lone mothers who have to take care of pre-school children. Moreover, lone mothers are con-

cerned about the lower economic value of the jobs they perform. They think that if they have two or three jobs of that economic value they will be able to cover their monthly expenses, but they do not ask to be trained in order to have higher paid jobs. Although the jobs offered can help some lone mothers to cover some of their monthly expenses, it does not allow them to get out of poverty. Thus, unemployment offices need to evaluate the labour skill of lone mothers, and train them for jobs which are acquired in the local market. Estimating the lack of labour force from the private and state market and preparing a skilled army of new labourers in the respective localities can lead to valuable programmes which can both help lone mothers and their children to get out of poverty and also increase the economic standard in the district.

So far I have looked at the Socio-Economic Aid Programmes in correlation to job seekers. In the coming section I will discuss the voice of lone mothers with regard to the usage of health-care services offered through the health-care notebook.

7.3.3 Lone mothers' comments on the usage of health-care service for themselves and their children

The fifth chapter indicated the quantitative data regarding the usage of the health-care note-book by lone mothers and their children. It also showed how this service, which was offered for free by the socialist government as a universal service, was banned and exempted for many categories after 1991. The fifth chapter stated how 60% of lone mothers who have a health-care note-book are obliged to have it because of other services they receive from local government. Those lone mothers who receive socio-economic aid benefit are obliged to register as unemployed in order to receive employment services and are also obliged to have a health-care note-book in order to benefit from free visits to doctors and subsidy for some medication. In this section I will let lone mothers speak and describe their experiences with the use of the services based on the health-care notebooks for themselves and their children. Lone mothers who do not own a health-care notebook will also be included.

Nevila, a 52 years old lone mother, divorced for 14 years, and living in the village of Radostin Vadhiza in Fieri (in South-West Albania), and is mother to a daughter of 23. She owns a high school diploma, which is rare in rural areas. When asked whether she had any health-care notebook and how she makes use of it for the visits to the doctor Nevila answers: "Why do I need it when I have no money to pay for anything? They give me some injections, and I have a hot feeling inside me, I become like an oven inside. Only this injection is good for me"

(Appendix 1.4., interview no. 99).

Irena, a 49-year-old divorced mother of two daughters aged 31 and 30. She became a teenage mother at the age of 17 during the communist period. Irena is satisfied with this service as she has used it for many years: “I take tranquilizers for my illness. With the doctor’s recommendation I have free visits to the hospital when I need them. Also the pills, I take them for free. I have this good benefit at least”. (Appendix 1.3., interview no. 10).

Dajana, an Egyptian divorced mother, 32 years old, has a son of seven. This mother went to a secondary school and has never worked in her life. Her parents and her brothers have maintained her. She is from the Mlizë village of Elbasan (Central-Albania). When asked how difficult it was for her when her son was sick:

“I have used the notebook, because my son suffers from ‘the foreign flash in his noose’. I do not think this service is reasonable. I paid money for surgery on my son. I gave the doctor 5000 ALL (38 euro) and he was not satisfied. Plus the nurses, I had to pay each one of them myself. Plus I have bought medication for many years. I do not understand why I should have this notebook if I cannot use it or it is of no use to me?” (Interview conducted Dajana, in Elbasani city, 11 November 2012).

Lulieta, a divorced mother originally from South-Central-Rural Albania (Velçan village in Berat city), today 48 years old is a mother of two children, a daughter of 31 (now married), and a son of 28 (living with her). Her son divorced and his wife got one of the rooms in the house. She herself was married at 14 and had her first child when she was a teenager. She divorced her first husband in 1989 and married a widower from Berat city and moved from a rural area to the city. She is separated from her second husband, because he was aggressive due to alcoholism and unemployment, but he lives in the same house with her, her son, and the ex of her son, because he has nowhere to go and they have no income to afford a divorce. She says about the health-care notebook:

“We buy the medicines with our own money, we do not have any support. What sort of satisfaction are you asking about; when my son was very sick I could not bring him to hospital. I had to bring him to a private doctor who asked high prices. The medication cost 5000-6000 ALL (35-42 euro), he had a heavy cold. We cannot afford these prices, it is impossible for us; we have a very difficult life. We are not satisfied with anything. When I am at home I’m crying all the time for no reason. What my son would like to

eat, I cannot give him. You never know what surprise God has in store for us, my son tells me often. When you do not have the minimal things, when you cannot have the normal meals of a day, when you cannot find money to buy bread, what are we going to eat? When you cannot eat, you cannot discuss clothes either. We are dressed in clothes that my sister gives me. When we are in this position, and think that we worked some years of our life, what about our children who have no future? I want to find a job, but there is not job if you search for it". (Appendix 1.3., interview no. 19).

Analyzing from comments of lone mothers, there is evidently a high dissatisfaction with the health-care system which is currently operating in Albania. During communism, as I elaborated in the fifth chapter, health care was free of charge for everyone. Lone mothers from the period of socialism did not refer to the health care system in their life stories and comments. Legally they did not have to pay for it as I explained in the fifth chapter. There might have been dissatisfaction with the quality of services, but this dissatisfaction was not expressed for that period. Lone mothers' comments show that after 1991 they have lost faith in the public health-care system, due to corruption. The privatized health-care system is characterized by high prices and lone mothers cannot access it. Lone mothers also complain that in moments when they can have a visit for free, the medication is so expensive that they cannot afford it. Others who are offered subsidized medication point out that it is of a low price and for general usage, whereas for specific medication which is expensive the subsidy is not offered.

To give a fuller picture of the health-care services for children and women, I will present the voices of lone mothers who comment on the disability pension they receive for their children or for themselves.

7.3.4 Lone mothers' comments on the usage of disability pension for their child or themselves

In the fifth chapter I explained the regulations to receive a disability pension, the legal framework which was developed over the last two decades, as well as the number of people receiving disability pensions. These data are not segregated in terms of the age of the beneficiaries or their sex. In the same chapter I referred to the numbers of lone mothers interviewed who cannot work because they are taking care of disabled children at home. Here I present the comments of lone mothers on using this disability cash-benefit for their children. As they say they are very grateful that this service exists, but their daily caring activities do not al-

low them to earn any living or be employed elsewhere.

Xhuli, a divorced mother of 5 children, originally from Peqini, married in Durrës (Central-West Albania), 46 years old with one disabled child (one of the twins). This mother has 3 biological children with her husband and two twin children of her own. The age of her children is 30, 26, 23 and her biological children are 15 years old. She herself has only second-elementary education, and has never worked in her life. She has received an invalidity pension for her daughter for 8 years. The mother comments on this pension: “It is 9000 ALL (63 euro), ‘breqarvers’⁹³ Thank God we have this payment, but only the medication for my daughter is this much. I stay with her all the time to take care of her and I receive nothing” (Appendix 1.4., interview no. 49).

Lediana, who is undergoing divorce, originally from North-West Albania (Laçi), married in Burreli (North-East Albania), today living in Durrës city, 47 years old, has four children, aged 12, 11 (twins) and six. Her twins are disabled. When asked about the use of this service she says:

“The son has received it for 11 years ever since he was born. My daughter has received it for six years. My children suffer from retarded development, they have many issues. Each of them receives 9300 ALL (65.4 euro). For my children this is not bad, but they need a special food diet, and medication and I am in the house all the time, taking care of them. Then it is not enough”. (Interview conducted with Lediana in Durrës city, 15 November 2013). (Appendix 1.4., interview no. 56).

As lone mothers reveal in their comments, they are pleased with the existence of this service, but taking into consideration that medication is very expensive, this cash benefit is insufficient to cover other expenses. Moreover, lone mothers raise the issue that their full-time care is not paid. Caring for their disabled child at home is a full time job for them, one this is not paid. They cannot leave this private space and search for a job or another way living in the public domain. Their fate is connected to the domestic and the domestic does not offer proper means of living. The last assessment of state services will concern the family pension.

⁹³ ‘Breqarvers’ is an inherited word from the Turks, during the Ottoman invasion. It means thanks God for what we have.

7.3.5 Lone mothers' comments on the family pension or child pension after the death of their husband

In the fifth chapter I offered the quantitative data on the number of lone mothers and their children with a child pension or family pension after the death of their husband. The data show that half of the lone mothers interviewed and their children could not qualify for the child or family pension, mostly because after 1990 their husbands could not work with regular contracts and they were undocumented in the social insurance system. The non-formalized private sector and the loss of jobs after the closure of state enterprises had their impact on the social insurance contribution of working men. Therefore, widowed lone mothers and their children could not qualify for family or child pension, or when they qualified, they received very little.

As the comments of lone mothers disclose, both the working history of the husband and of the lone mother after 1990 has remained problematic in terms of gathering social-insurance contribution years. Due to the presence of the non-formalized private market, and due to insufficient documentation during the transition period, lone mothers and their husbands were not able to have enough contributions to claim full family/child pension or retirement pension.

Valdete, a 52-years-old anonymous mother of four children who lost her husband four years before, migrated from Valëz of Cërrik Commune, in Elbasani city, to a rented apartment from the moment her husband became sick, in order to be closer to hospitals and to take care of him. The age of her children is 31, 29, 27 and 15.5. She has the three children at home, except the eldest son who is married and lives elsewhere. Due to low contributions of her husband she could not benefit from the child pension for her youngest child, at that time ten years old. Therefore, she could only arrange access to a family pension for herself. She tells me why she was not able to get a better family pension:

“From the early 1990s my husband worked in construction. He did not have contributions for more than 12 years. Therefore, his working years could not make it for a child pension. From the first month after he died I have received a family pension of 5000 ALL (36 euro) per month. It does not really cover anything; I cannot pay electricity and water together, let alone other things. My rent used to be 7000 ALL (49,2 euro) per month so I could not pay it any more. After I was kicked out of that house because I could not pay the rent my brother took me in with the young child. But I cannot stay here forever” (Appendix 1.4., interview no. 88)

Vjollca, a 60-year-old, widow lone mother from Durrës city, a mother of two children of 38 and 34 has received the pension of her husband for ten years. In this period she tried to prepare the folder for her retirement pension and has to choose between keeping her husband's pension or taking her own. She comments on the family pension and future retirement pension she has to receive:

“Until last year I received family pension from my husband's contributions, I am now waiting to receive my own retirement pension. I have worked as a quality technician, in the fruits and vegetables section. Because I was a distinguished employer I was member of the Union of Professionals and I was also a Congress representative. The problem is that many folders and documents in the Institute of Social Insurance were lost in a fire and therefore my social-insurance-contribution note book is problematic. I have to see which of the pensions to keep, mine or of my husband's?” (Appendix I.4., interview no. 66).

Until now I have brought the voices of lone mothers who single-handedly raised their children during socialism and after to comment and assess the governmental services they have received. In the coming section, I will present the voices of lone mothers who comment on the welfare programmes they have received from local women NPOs and religious institutions.

7.4. Assessment by lone mothers of services provided by local women NPOs and religious institutions

In the sixth chapter, I offered a map of welfare programmes provided to lone mothers and their children by local women NPOs and religious institutions. Moreover, I presented the results of the survey, which indicate how many lone mothers used each of these services. In the fourth chapter, in the section on income packaging, I included these services as a kind of cash contributions from which lone mothers could package their income after 1990. The difference between the usage of services offered by the local government and the services offered by local women NPOs and religious institutions is not very sharp. The percentages show that the roles of the civil society sector and the local government in Albania are almost equal. These results of the survey have pushed me in the sixth chapter to claim that the role of welfare offered by the civil society sector positions the latter in line with the family, the market and the state for welfare delivery. Whereas the difference in usage is not very sharp, the difference in comments is significant. The comments of lone mothers on the usage of services they receive from the government are hardly positive; in general they say that it does

not solve any problems. In contrast, the comments they have on the usage of services from local women NPOs and local religious institutions are highly positive. Lone mothers have relied on local women NPOs and religious institutions in the most difficult times of their lives.

The second part of the questionnaire for lone mothers in the period after 1990 contains questions on the services they receive from the local government and from the local women NPOs and religious institutions. The questions are organized around a list of services (free legal and psychological assistance for the mother and the child, cultural and education activities for the child, shelter services for the mother and the child), each of which have multiple-choice answers about lone mothers satisfaction. The questionnaire ends with an open question asking for comments on the regarded service. The last question is not specified as a service but rather allows lone mothers to describe the type of service they received from either the local women NPO or the religious institutions. These answers contain more information, as lone mothers have received different type of services, depending on temporary projects through which these institutions were funded.

I have selected two narratives of lone mothers who comment on the support they received from local women NPOs and religious institutions. Services from local women NPOs is more present in big urban areas, such as Durrës, Elbasan, Vlora and Shkodra. Religious institutions on the other hand are more present in the smaller cities, such as Peshkopia, Saranda, Korça, Pogradeci and Berati.

Nadire is a 46-year-old divorced lone mother of four children aged 15, 14, 12 and 11. She has been divorced since nine years. She is originally from the small province of Durrës named Shijak and has been working in cooperatives for 13 years. Nadire has had an arranged marriage with a man from Kalaja e Dodës (rural area in North-East Albania), who was an inner migrant to the peri-urban areas of Durrës. After an endless housing odyssey, they ended up living in an empty train wagon left somewhere near the railway station closer to Shkozet, another commune of Durrës. Meanwhile her parents were feeding her and her children, until they build two rooms for her family closer to their house. It did not work out with her husband due to his violence, jealousy and non-financial commitment to his family. For 9 years Nadire's children have received care in a religious center. She has finished only eight years of school (second-elementary education). Although she cleans restaurants, does dish-washing or works as chief assistant, and sometimes works in greenhouses, the income she earns with these part-time or seasonal jobs cannot feed her children. Nadire comments on the centre where her four children are staying:

“For nine years my children have stayed at Betania Centre⁹⁴. The centre is located in Fushë-Krujë, në Bubq. I go there every now and then to visit my children. They are provided with education, food and accommodation. I have had to provide the centre with their certificates, and also do health control before they took my children. It was a procedure of two to three months to finalize this documentation. At that time I did not have water or electricity in the two rooms my father built for me. The rooms are in the middle of the field with no access to water or electricity. Some representatives from Betania Centre came to verify my living conditions in order to decide to take my children into care. I am told they will keep my children until they become 18 years old”. (Appendix 1.4., interview no. 28).

Elsa, a divorced lone mother from Elbasan, is a 47-year-old mother who has been divorced for eight years. She has four children aged 24, 22, 20 and 15. She and her ex-husband are originally from the rural areas of Elbasan. Elca was engaged at 17 via her parents’ arrangement and married at 20. Her husband received heavy mental medication to escape his soldier time-service, and he has been mentally disturbed ever since. She lived with her sick and aggressive husband for 14 years and with her parents-in-law and with the daughter of her sister-in-law. After ongoing assaults and physical violence directed at her and her children, she changed her view on her situation after watching a women’s rights programme on television. One evening she saw a phone number, which she called from a neighbour’s house. After that call she took her four children and stayed at “Another Vision” shelter. Elsa told me about the support she received from the shelter services:

“When I decided to dump him nobody trusted me. I had gone many times to my parents’ home and I was always returning back to him. Me and my children were beaten up regularly. One evening I hardly succeeded in saving one of my sons from him. He wanted to throw him into the stove. I ran to the neighbor and I called the center. They gave me an address closer to maternity hospital in town. I did not know where the maternity hospital was, but I asked people and I found them. I told them about all my problems and they said they could bring me to the Shelter in Tirana if I wanted to. They were also asking my children in another room. I said I wanted to inform my brothers. I stayed for one month at my brother’s,

⁹⁴ Betania Centre, is a non-public residential centre for children in Bubq of Kruja city. It is a Catholic religious Albanian branch institution of the Betania Centre in Italy.

then for a few months in some houses until in October the shelter was open. I got my life back in this shelter. Without these girls; I would have drowned myself in a river with my children. I will forever be grateful to them and I will never forget. [...] I was a skeleton when I came to this shelter, it felt like I was a walking dead person. I could not remember where my children's clothes were. Little by little, I started coming back to my own self, I started hand-crafting. My children started going to school and we were provided for by the center for nine months. The girls of the centre arranged for me to start working as a sanitary in an elderly center. In a few weeks, I was able to rent a house and I also started looking for another private job. I had some difficulties with the children because I needed to leave them alone to go to work, I needed to bring them to schools. The situation made me really strong. I made myself come back to life. Today I woke up at 5am and I return home at 10pm in the evening. There is only one-hour break when I have to go home and eat lunch. The girls of the shelter asked the municipality for a house with soft loans as a homeless person. I only have difficulties to pay off the loan every month, as I earn only 19.000 ALL per month (133.5 euros) from both jobs. (Appendix 1.4., interview no. 70).

The voices of Nadire living in Durrës and Elsa living in Elbasan tell us that welfare programmes provided by local women NPOs and religious institutions offer a life alternative for a while to lone mothers and their children, at times when neither the government nor close family members could assist. Especially violated women and their children who are in the process of divorce are provided with every means of living. As lone mothers explain, they have also received also vocational training in the shelters and have been offered job opportunities to start a new life.

The voices of lone mothers tell us that Catholic religious institutions have become mediators for violated women to connect them with local women NPOs shelters, such as Violeta, currently living in Elbasan, and Vileta, living in Shkodër, mentioned earlier. In this section, the voices of lone mothers show that in a time of economic crisis, and no income power to feed children, religious institutions for children become residential and educational sources of living for children of women in need. The shelter which is offered by local women NPOs and the multi-dimensional services received in these centers become life savers for lone mothers and their children. For abused lone mothers and their children, when they have no life security, no psychological rest, no housing, no income to live on and no family members capable of supporting them, shelters of local

women NPOs are residences which offer a second life chance. Despite the fact that the services received in religious institutions and the local women NPOs are temporary, and provided within limited periods, they are crucial in supporting lone mothers in the most critical times of their lives. Moreover, these are services that the government has no economic power to provide. These institutions are non-profit, and their services are financially supported by international donors, which enables their existence. The criticism lone mothers have towards the state as compared to their positive comments on the services offered by the non-for profit sector can be historically explained. Since lone mothers and their mothers lived and worked under a socialist regime where the government provided every service and when no service was provided by other institutions, they are highly appreciative of every kind of service from resources other than the government.

Yet, in other comments, which I as well reflected in the 6th chapter the Muslim religious institutions, mostly local mosques in respective districts offer welfare programmes and economic aid to children of widowed mothers until they are 14 years old. While local women NPOs and Catholic institutions are considerably supportive of divorced, separated and abandoned lone mothers, for widowed lone mothers and their children the Muslim institutions have become a secure source of income for a decided period of time. However, the interviews show that this is a much wanted programme by widowed lone mothers, and not all of them can access it, and most of the time not for all of their children. Let me now move on to present the voice of lone mothers in expressing their own needs in their own words.

7.5. Lone mothers' expectations from the state, NPOs and business community

Lone mothers' voice their expectations through their own words. In Nancy Fraser terms (1989) this is the moment when politicized needs that are articulated and institutionalized by those in power become de-politicized to leave space for non-politicized needs articulated in non-politicized spaces. Fraser argues for attention to needs talk in non-politicized institutions such as the family or the workspace. The talks articulated in these spaces from people with no power deconstruct the political discourses created by those in power. The negotiations between political and non-political power of spaces and debates, and the way needs travel from a non-politicized space to a politicized one for Fraser create the social, cultural and political structure of a need's talk. Therefore, this is the space in this dissertation, where lone mothers voice their needs, and earn agency.

When lone mothers were asked what they expected from the government, 78,4% of them expected the government to do something to remedy their situ-

ation, as compared to 22,6% who believed that the government would not do anything for them. The expectations of lone mothers are connected with their opinion about what they think the government can support them with. Thus, their expectations connect with their opinions, and with the needs they have.

However, not all women expect government's policies to make a difference. When asked whether they thought that social policies by the government at large and from local government in particular would influence their personal life choices or their employment in a considerable way, only 43,5% of interviewees of the period after 1991 said yes. The remaining 56,5% do not think that governmental policies would have an impact in their life to the point of influencing their life choices.

When asked whether they would prefer more assistance from the government, the NPO sector, employers or the family, lone mothers responded as follows: 40,1% preferred government support; 18,9% preferred the NPO sector; 37,2% preferred the family, 2,9% preferred the support of the employer. The answers of lone mothers indicate that their preferred first source of support is the government, the second one is the family, the third one is the non-governmental sector and, finally, they prefer a joint effort of all these actors. In their narratives, lone mothers are highly positive about the services obtained from the non-governmental sector as compared to the services they receive from the government. Services offered by non-governmental sectors are limited in time and dependent on external factors such as international aid, lone mothers think that governmental support is not limited in time. Some lone mothers are aware of the fact that the programmes local women NPOs offer them are dependent on international aid; others are not interested to know how and by whom they are supported.

As regard the question whether they think that women NPOs and religious organizations can support them to ease their situation 33,3% believe in civil society support, versus 66,7% who do not believe that organizations can play a role in their life, or who have never heard about the existence of organizations that can support them. As concern the question whether they would prefer more services and support provided by government or by civil society organizations, 31,7% of lone mothers chose the women organizations and religious institutions, 68,2% of them chose the local government.

For example, Nevila a 52-year-old widow and lone mother of two sons, aged 21 and 18, who lives in the Spitalla Commune in Durrës district and who is registered administratively as living in Shkozë (another Commune of the Durrës district) comments on the type of aid she receives from the non-governmental sector:

“At the Christian Church they helped me and my children with cooking

oil and pasta for three months after my husband died. At the Mosque I received 2500 ALL (20 euro) every month for my younger son, but then they removed my name. At the Bajana association they gave me flour and cooking oil for two years, but then they did not have projects any more. We were told that the money coming from abroad stopped for this project". (Appendix 1.4., interview no. 19).

In what follows, I will list some expectations and needs of lone mothers in different cities. I have tried to present voices from each representative city in the survey. Although in the introduction of this dissertation and in the fourth chapter I elaborated on the differences between the economic and social background of the region of North Albania versus the South and the Centre, the need for employment is similar and prevalent in every city.

In their narratives, the needs are mixed with what they want. Their needs are mostly expressed with words such as want. Thus, in the vocabularies of Albanian lone mothers needs and wanting are expressed as being the same. The lone mothers who are less educated and lack the basic needs of survival are not able to make the distinction between a need and a desire. They mostly articulated needs concern housing, jobs, facilitation to school attendance for their children, or children's employment after finishing education, and a basic coverage of everyday living expenses, including electricity payment.

Lone mothers in Durrës (Western-Central Albania):

"I need protection from the government because tomorrow that man can do many things and my son is in God's hand. I told you, my life has become impossible. You cannot live in a house that is drowning in water. I need help for too many things, I cannot tell now which of them I need more. My son is very educated, if they would give me at least 3000 ALL or 5000 ALL (21 or 35 euro) to be able to bring him to school. He goes to school but I have no money to buy his books. He goes without money in his pocket. My son never drinks a coffee outside. He is a good boy". (Appendix 1.4., interview no. 14).

"First of all I expect more from the government, because my husband gave his life for this state. From the municipality I expect everything that I need because I am houseless; I can expect a housing arrangement from them. We are the family of a police officer who was murdered while on duty. I expect more from this government because my husband was employed by this state". (Appendix 1.4., interview no. 2).

"I expected to have Economic Aid, or a sack of flour, or money to pay part

of my electricity bill. I know that other people are receiving cash benefit because they have given money to receive it. Some of them came after me to ask for it and could take. You need to give, to have friends to arrange it. We who do not have friends remain behind. I am young, I want to work, to provide my children with everything they need". (Appendix 1.4., interview no. 3).

"To create some conditions for my children to go to school and to offer them a job, where they can show who they are, without having the stress that they cannot earn any money". (Appendix 1.4., interview no. 13).

"Work for my eldest son, then the youngest one will continue in education. The government can help me to find a job for them". (Appendix 1.4., interview no. 19).

"I expect a housing arrangement, an apartment, at least for one of my sons who wants to get married. And hopefully I can open my eyes in a house like everybody else and stay there. The evaluation housing commission has never come to visit our house and evaluate our need" (Appendix 1.4, interview no. 16).

Elbasan city (Central Albania):

"When I registered my son after his birth, they did not give me the payment of 5000 ALL the government gives for a born child. They told me to come and ask for it every now and then until it comes". (Appendix 1.4, interview no. 91).

"The government and women associations have supported me a lot. I need a little more help for the school books of my daughters who are at university, as the teachers do not allow them to enter exams if they have no books. I cannot pay all the bank loans as with the two jobs I have we can buy food and clothes and pay for electricity and water. For the rest I need help". (Appendix 1.4, interview no. 70).

"What can I say; I want to feed myself and my daughter. Now my father is feeding us all. But when my father has no job, who will support us?". (Appendix 1.4, interview no. 79).

"Yes I expect a lot. I have no house, I am on the streets, and the socio-economic aid is very little. I want to find a job which also pays my social insurance. I want school books for my children. I expect a lot, but hë tell me". (Appendix 1.4., interview no. 85).

Fier city (Western-South Albania)

"I do not ask for anything, just simply a housing accommodation. I want to work and I am still powerful. I will earn some money to eat a little today and a little tomorrow. I cannot survive economically. From the state I only need a shelter where

I can sleep, nothing more”. (Appendix 1.4., interview no. 101).

“Any support, any job as sanitary, something. My son has a daughter who is sick with diabetics. My youngest son is pale from the lack of vitamins. Today you need 1000 ALL to buy a liter of olive oil. We take the food with a list in the market. My son has to pay (87.5 euro) 12.000 ALL to the market here in Fier. He receives his salary and pays his debts to the market each month and then he buys food again with a list. Nobody puts their hand in the heart my sister xhani⁹⁵, no (S’ta vë kush dorën në zemër motër xhani jo)”. (Appendix 1.4., interview no. 97).

Shkodër city (Western-North Albania)

“I need to find housing and I need monthly financial support. I earn 20.000 ALL (140 euro) per month, but I need the government to pay me at least the 15.000 ALL (105) euros that my ex-husband has to pay for his children”. (Appendix 1.4., interview no. 137).

“I need help with housing. I need a sofa where my children can sleep. I need something for my children to dress up, any washing machine, any economic aid as I cannot work, or at least a little support”. (Appendix 1.4., interview no. 125).

Peshkopia city (Eastern-North Albania)

“I only need a family pension to continue with my life, as you never know I can remain in the street. My father in law committed blood revenge, and the other family took the blood of both my husband and my other son. Now I only have the other son and my 16-year-old daughter, but soon she will get married and go her way”. (Appendix 1.4., interview no. 165).

“I only want to register the house in my name. I have one room and one kitchen but I want it to be mine. I want to work”. (Appendix 1.4, interview no. 162).

Vlora city (Western-South Albania)

“I need socio-economic aid until I find a job. I have been divorced for 21 years but I never received any alimony from the father of my children. I need jobs for my children; both of them are finishing higher education. I need a job for myself, as the retirement age is coming and I do not have all the years I need for the pension”. (Appendix 1.4., Interview no. 179).

⁹⁵ Xhani is a Turkish word, inherited in Albanian language, meaning somebody who is closer to your heart, or is a family member and to you.

“Me and my daughters are living on the pension of my mother. It’s 2000 ALL (14 euro) per month. What can we first do with it, pay the electricity or eat. Any aid coming in the commune is taken from the village headman. Would be great if they would deliver a sack of flower, but nobody gives that to you. At least I would want a job to feed my daughters, nobody gives you sister?. Where can I find a job, where can I go to work, I have no job”. (Appendix 1.4., interview no. 172).

These were some of the needs and expectations lone mothers in different cities have from the state and the local government⁹⁶. When it comes to their choice between support received from the local government and the NPO sector, lone mothers can be divided into two groups: about one third of them would prefer the NPO sector and more than half of them the local government.

The social responsibility of the business community is still a new notion in democratic Albania. Employers are not seen as a source of facilitating the reconciliation policies that took place in Europe over the last decades. As demonstrated in the fourth chapter, flexible hours are a reality for those lone mothers who are self-employed and clean carpets, houses or new flats for very little money. These lone mothers hold non-formal jobs, which are dependent on the willingness of the people in the community to ask somebody to perform these tasks for them for a low price. The business community has not yet formalized the flexible hours for mothers with small children or other family care needs. I have hypothetically asked the lone mothers with children up to five years whether they would be willing to spend part of their salary on crèches and kindergarten for their children when created by their employers in the workplace. While 88.8% of lone mothers with children from 1-12 years old would like their employer to create policies for flexible hours to allow them to combine work and care, 78.8% of them agree on a possible reduction and the rest do not because they think that their salary is already low.

Conclusions

This chapter was filled with the voices of lone mothers. Through their life narratives, lone mothers create the opportunity for policy makers and politicians

⁹⁶ As I indicated in the fifth chapter with the decentralization of services in 2000, some social services are reliant on the annual budgeting per municipality, and other state services are dependent on the governmental budget. Therefore, differences exist in services dependent on the state or on the local governmental budget. Because all types of services are administered by local governments for lone mothers it is unclear which institutions offer which service. Therefore, they are called state service.

and for scholars in Albania, in Europe and elsewhere to visualize and understand their identities, the differences and similarities of their personal histories based on certain locations and given periods. The chapter showed in what terms lone mothers speak. This should be relevant for both policy makers from the governmental and non-governmental sector in Albania, and for international donors, to reflect on the efficiency of the services they establish and deliver. Last but not least, this chapter created a space for lone mothers to formulate a new discourse on their needs in Albania, unveiled by political, social strategies. The needs lone mothers voiced were based on their individual conditions, experiences and practices.

In the first section of this chapter I worked with biographical narratives, about the everyday lives of lone mothers. They revealed their life stories as a chain of related events, which have influenced their lives until this moment. They narrated stories related to their marriage, co-living with parents in law, moving from a rural area to a city, or from small cities towards bigger ones, emigrating to another country, child-birth, education, the labour market, divorce, separation, the death of husbands, husband emigration or abandonment, the education of children, their return to their parents' home, their search for places to rent. Through their narrations, they show how powerfully they passed through every life stage with its ups and downs. They also show tiredness and hopelessness, and a few of them are caught in moments of exhaustion. Such moments are expressed in the silence of Loreta when asked about the qualities she values in herself, or in the narrative of Irena who raised two children with her first husband, and went through two abortions with her non-official partner to avoid social prejudice as a non-married mother. In most of the stories, the joy of children and the power they gain from having a motive to live and work for their children, becomes the leading source of their narration. That is why this section does not talk about lone mothers from the perspective of policy makers, decision makers, gender scholars or gender activists, but instead let the lone mothers to be the masters of their own life and have power over their own story-telling. In the first section I looked at the similarities between the narratives from women located in the North of Albania (the histories of Violeta, Loreta, Zamira). Influenced by the same family and marriage ideology, lone mothers demonstrate their differences in identity. What they made out of marriage ideologies and out of their lives is mostly based on their own beliefs in life and in themselves, rather than on other people expecting them to comply with certain norms.

The identity of lone mothers in Albania is built on their strength, on the support they receive from their family networks. The five narratives tell a life of handling lone motherhood and being able to care and earn for their children via the

support of the family, both in the case of divorced, separated and abandoned lone mothers and in the case of lone mothers who lost their partner and received support from their family of origin and parents in law.

The images of lone mothers as 'needy benefit scroungers who raise delinquent children, are not encountered with lone mothers in Albania. They do not suffer from this image. They are confident, they are honest, they work hard and they never give up. Lone mothers are also caught in difficulties and despair sometimes, even when their family members or non-governmental institutions take charge of their life. However, as I have indicated and explained, although when they are empowered from other people rather than themselves, their life narrative speaks of an agency that needs to be pushed a little from time to time.

In the second section of this chapter, I have given lone mothers the opportunity to evaluate the services they receive by local government. Economic-aid, employment service, health care, family pension, disability pension are commented on by lone mothers in light of their experiences to access and use these services. Every story speaks of a clear dissatisfaction of lone mothers with the services they receive, whether they can access these services or not.

The second section, on the services offered by the local government, raised the issue of combining care and paid employment performed outside the house. This issue was specifically raised in connection with lone mothers with disabled children at home, who could not perform any other job outside the home, because of intensive daily care their children need. Gender scholars Knijn and Kremer (1997) have suggested that care as a right ought to have the same value as employment rights. Albanian lone mothers voice their willingness to care for their children, with the same strength as they voice their need and willingness to work.

While the support received by family members is considered as empowering lone mothers, the support they receive by the local government is not perceived as boosting their agency.

In the third section of this chapter lone mothers shared their experiences with using services provided by local women NPOs and local religious institutions. The stories selected are voiced by lone mothers who have used shelter services when experiencing domestic violence and institutional religious centers for child education and maintenance when they were unable to offer nutrition to children due to poverty. Analyzing from these stories, the work and services performed and provided by local women NPOs and religious institutions have a high value for women and, hence, they are not dissatisfied with them.

While services provided by local governments are hardly assessed as useful by lone mothers, the services provided by the non-governmental sector (local

women NPOs and religious institutions) are positively appreciated. These services efficiently resolve their situational problems temporarily.

The fourth part of this chapter presented the voice of lone mothers on their expectations from the state, the local government, the non-governmental sector and the business community. I have listed mothers' expectations from every city. By articulating their needs, as Fraser argues, these women construct a new discourse, the discourse of needs when presented in non-politicized spaces such as the institution of the family. Lone mothers in every region of Albania are concerned with employment, with social insurance contribution, with housing and with the education and employment of their children. They are women who consider themselves both earners and carers. Not because the welfare state positions them as such, but because they were never given the choice of choosing caring over earning. In the second chapter I quoted work from Lewis and Hobson (1997) and Kilkey (2000) who concluded that welfare states position lone mothers as either workers or carers. Moreover, Lister (1997; 2006) has taken this positionality further by arguing that lone mothers should be given a chance to actually choose whether they want to care or to work when they have young children. Analyzing the life narratives of lone mothers in Albania within these gender welfare frames, it can be concluded that the welfare state in Albania did not provide lone mothers with the position to choose between earning and caring. Their life stories indicate that they had to do both, and when not able to work, the first welfare, the support that allowed them to feed their children and was always there for them, was provided by their families.

Chapter 8: Conclusion, discussion, recommendations

In the synthesis of this research I would like to open up the conclusion by stating that lone mothers in the Albanian context have much to say about welfare policies and social programmes provided by state and non-state actors. The agency that these women embody is a source of power for them, for their children, for their families, for the communities they live in, for me as an activist and academic researcher, and, I believe, for every woman in the world who can read their stories and has the skill to recognize differences and power when they see it.

This study on ‘welfare policies for lone mothers in Albania’ gave me the opportunity and the power as a researcher and activist to bring together voices of different women on the same topic. This research has observed and analyzed the needs of Albanian lone mothers on the basis of three kinds of women’s voices, from three different positional perspectives of women. The first is the voice of lone mothers whose needs were, are and will continue to be politicized. The second is the voice of women working in the non-governmental sector, who are the facilitators and mediators between lone mothers and the state and have the (legal and sectoral) position and power to lobby and advocate with local and central policy and decision-makers to make the needs of lone mothers public and political. The third voice came from women working in local policy-proposing and policy-making positions who have the power to lobby with decision-making bodies and institutions to politicize the needs of lone mothers. This chain of voices makes the socially and politically constructed nature of needs (Fraser, 1989) visible and causes a need to travel from the domestic realm to the political one (Fraser, 1989). This reflects the process of ‘needs interpretation’ as described and developed by Fraser (1989). Interviews with lone mothers, with representatives of women’s organizations and with representatives from local governments enabled me to disassemble the three constituent links of this chain.

When lone mothers speak about their life experiences and conditions, as a researcher I felt stripped of prejudices of discourses on motherhood and mothering ideology, of national cultural ideologies on family types and of the culture of enduring violence and irresponsibility in relationships. When a researcher and an activist asks lone mothers about their experiences with the use of and attempt to access welfare services provided by the government, and social programmes provided by local women’s organizations and local religious institutions, he/she gets to know viewpoints that the reading of legislative policies does not offer. Asking questions about life situations and experiences, and about service usage

and service assessment gave to me the power, through the experiences of lone mothers, to look critically at how the state and non-state actors support them. I was able to voice their experiences and their needs and, thus, lone mothers were able to speak out for themselves and for women who will be in a similar position in the future. Lone mothers are not only able to inform future policy-making about their own category, but they can also shift policy logic towards their dual roles of caring and earning, a position which has not been considered by policy and decision-makers in Albania so far.

Before and during the interviews and the analytical phase, a mutual interaction took place between my current position as a researcher and my former work as an activist. The activist side of my former work in the civil society sector in Albania supported my attitude to lone mothers before the interview in that I wanted to be inviting and informative to them. My role as an academic researcher was my leading spirit during the interview, accompanied by empathy. As an activist I tried to think of ways I could network between these women and other local actors and women's organizations that could support them in one way or another. My role as a researcher within academic discourses of gender theoretical frameworks dominated the analytic stage of my research. The negotiation between these specific research and activist positions constituted both a moment of reflection and of power, which created the niche for understanding and analyzing lone mothers and representatives of governmental and non-governmental institutions from two perspectives. The perspective of an Albanian and European activist and the perspective of a gender researcher trained by gender studies scholars in the Netherlands were in an ongoing dialogue and conflict at times with each other.

Giving my former experiences in Albania, my interviews with representatives from local women's organizations seemed like a collegiate endeavour. I had a stable role within the sector which gave me credit for being trustworthy and open to talk to. The researcher in me was fully engaged in understanding what I knew were struggles within the sector. Research discourses on Western feminism versus Eastern European feminism have critically observed and analyzed the services the sector provides to women, and the ways women working in non-for-profit organizations lobbied and advocated for the needs of lone mothers (or other constituents) they represented. Ghodsee for instance critically envisaged that cultural feminism, as a discourse produced in Western Europe, does not fit gender roles discourses in Eastern Europe. She has argued that the latter have more to do with social class than with opposition to the state. The interviews with leaders and women activists working in the non-for-profit sector in Albania have decisively shown that, for them, the state and men (both in the house and in politics and decision-making) were their allies. In the communist period they

did not have to fight for their rights because the state already gave them their rights. Thus, the state was their ally. After communism, the activist leaders again saw the men in decision-making as their allies when they had to lobby for their rights as women in a democracy, rights which had not been addressed legislatively in the communist Constitution. Also, after 1990 some women activists saw that men suffered from the same poverty as women due to high unemployment levels; thus, the poverty did not have only a female mark but was relevant for Albanian men as well. To use Nancy Fraser's division (2009), interviews with women's organizations revealed a hierarchical level within organizations and within the sector between those leaders committed to representation services and the social workers engaged in recognition and redistribution of services. Whereas social workers, psychologists and lawyers who work daily with lone mothers see cultural feminism as empowering to women, the leaders created a discourse of gender empowerment and gender development, which is more connected to the discourses of international development studies and the role of gender within these studies. Thus, Ghodsee's findings for the Eastern European context show two different perspectives within the sector regarding cultural feminism in an Albanian context.

Other findings within the gender scholarship framework concern the debate on the position of women activists versus the state. Waaldijk (2006) calls them 'intermediaries' or social workers who mediate between their positions as service executors and providers and the state as the policy-maker in the history of welfare provision in Eastern Europe. In the Albanian context I would call them women/gender activists who facilitate or mediate between the citizens (lone mothers in this case) and the state. Moreover, the Albanian context of women's organizations displays a diversification of actors who engage in activism and service provision. In Waaldijk's findings the service provision and the opposition to or cooperation with the state before and after the Second World War appears to have been performed by social workers. In Albania, there are two generations of women at work in women's organizations with different backgrounds. The first generation (50 years and older) are the leaders and founders of women's organizations and teachers of math, Marxism-Leninism and philosophy, literature and foreign languages. The second generation of women (25-45 years) were educated in the communist period or after 1990. They are lawyers, psychologists, social workers, and academics who hold the positions of project managers. The tasks they perform are directly connected to their background and discipline. The position of Albanian activists as service-providers towards the state is suggestive through lobbying and advocating processes and cooperative through provision of decentralized services.

Unlike the earlier social workers described in Waaldijk's work, over the last decades Albanian activists have had to position themselves vis-à-vis international donors who are the main financial generators of their salaries and of the services they provide. In the Albanian context, the state is the provider of the operational legislative framework for women's organizations. In rare cases the state is also the legislative and financial provider of the services women's organizations provide lone mothers with. The international donors, in the Albanian context, are the financial providers and the institutions women's organizations report to for the provision and execution of the services they deliver to lone mothers. The role of women's organizations towards international organizations is collaborative to their international and local agendas. Very recently women's organizations role towards international donors is becoming suggestive through consultative participatory processes that are organized amongst the civil society, the state and the international donors.

My position toward female local administrators and policy proposers I interviewed sometimes was blurred, in between me being their former trainer and gender activist, and today me interviewing them as a researcher. In both aspects was a position of power which acknowledged the knowledge and experience between colleagues but also realized and shares the concern about the situation of lone mothers. The research questions for the local government were framed by gender discourses on needs interpretation (Fraser, 1989), and on social-welfare provision for lone mothers (Lewis & Hobson, 1997; Lister, 1997; Kilkey, 2000; Millar & Rowlingson, 2001; Rowlingson & McKey, 2002). The interviews with women with more power in policy-suggestion proved to be beneficial to an understanding of the problematic position of lone mothers in Albania, in terms of housing, employment, vocational training and welfare benefits. The interviews with women working in the local governmental sector and women working in the local non-governmental sector demonstrated that both these groups of women with different powers acknowledge the position of lone mothers and condone improved welfare policies and social programmes which address the employment and vocational training of lone mothers. The findings of this research project lead to the most important question when it comes to the future of lone mothers: will the Albanian government, and the non-governmental sector, heed the voices of lone mothers and diversify the services they offer them, in order to allow them to combine their caring and earning tasks, and thus create independent households?

Let me introduce you to the main findings of the survey I conducted for this research and lead the way to possible recommendations for future policies in both the governmental and non-governmental sector in Albania.

Being a lone mother in Albania, is not the same as being a lone mother in the UK, in Norway, in the Netherlands or elsewhere in Europe. The organization of family life in Albania has been determined by a number of factors: Albania's geographical make-up (low lands, high mountains, and a coastal area); past invasions by the Turks, Germans, and Italians; the country's political ideology (from communism to an open democracy), and a shift from a state-controlled economy to an open market principle. In Albania, the extended family unit is larger in number than the single unit family (which is very much the norm in Western Europe). Therefore, lone mothers from extended family units in Albania are not similar to lone mothers from single unit families in other European countries. Moreover, international emigration has been part of Albanian identity for centuries, especially when 5 large emigration flows hit the country after 1990, as described in chapter three. Consequently, the number of abandoned lone mothers due to the emigration of their husbands, or divorced lone mothers due to husbands creating other families abroad, went up in this period. In the fourth chapter the data findings indicated that international migration has touched 30% of the 240 lone mothers I researched for the period after 1990.

In the second and fourth chapters I argued that while the divorce of parents, and children born out of wedlock are a growing phenomenon throughout Europe, and one-parent families headed by women are no longer seen as strongly deviating from the norm, individual ways of dealing with administrating an independent household differ, due to how governments deal with one-parenting households. As a gender activist, I want my research to draw the attention of policy makers in Albania to the category of lone mothers. This research has endeavoured to create a social category of women (the category of lone mothers) which has specific needs implied by the socio-economic, political, cultural and demographic character of a country in development.

The fifth chapter observed that the policy logics of policy makers in the Albanian context is informed by a perspective of supporting the 'needy', 'the vulnerable' or 'the poor'. This research, shaped by the methods of feminist action research, intends to change the mind-set of policy-makers to reconsider the identities and experiences of each of these women presented in the seventh chapter. A parallel purpose is to re-evaluate the socio-economic and cultural context these women live in. The socio-economic characteristics were presented in the fourth chapter, and the cultural context of marriage and family patterns was introduced in the third chapter. 'The needy', 'the vulnerable' and 'the poor' - to use the legal terminologies introduced in national strategies and legislative documents in Albania - are not always born with the mark of being poor. As this research has demonstrated, many lone mothers have become poor due to unemployment

(38.3%), financial irresponsibility of the father of their children (78.3%), the lack or non-existence of reconciliation policies, inadequate support from the government when women remain alone, as the fifth and seventh chapters have testified.

Therefore, this research invites policy-makers to politicize the social terminology of lone mothers, instead of using the pejorative ‘needy’ or ‘vulnerable’ categorical stereotypes in a legislative context. The legal terminology used by policy stakeholders, governmental and non-governmental alike, targets as categories of ‘women householders’ the divorced, widowed, abandoned and violated women which are undergoing divorce. This categorical division is not different in any way from my group divisions in researching welfare policies on lone mothers. The difference my research poses is in the terminology which immediately addresses the two main issues: being a mother means having exclusive care of children, and being a lone mother (without a partner), means having to earn a living to maintain themselves and their child or children. Problematizing these two core tasks in the life of a lone mother and diversifying the object of support by using the general term ‘women’ and the specific term ‘mothers’, would make the government more attentive to the immediate needs these lone mothers have in the first years of being alone. Thus, instead of using the legal terminology ‘women householders’, ‘gra kryefamiljare’ in Albanian, I propose the social terminology ‘lone mother’, or ‘nënë e vetme kryefamiljare’ in Albanian. At the same time, by using a social category such as lone mothers, the mind-frame of policy-economists can make the connection with missing reconciliation policies to balance the care tasks and the earning tasks of lone mothers in Albania.

The social category of ‘lone mothers’ in this research was proposed by Majella Kilkey (2000), who included married and non-married lone mothers in this category, thus enlarging the composition of the sub-categories of women. Deviating from Kilkey, I included the group of widow lone mothers, because they are still present in considerable numbers among lone mothers in Albania. Moreover, the welfare policies once designed for widow women changed because of the reformation of the labour code: this made it difficult for their husbands to have social contributions and cover their families financially after their death. The research findings indicated that only 62.5% of widow women in Albania can receive child or family pension benefit from their deceased husbands. Thus, this dissertation concludes that widow mothers in Albania are still in high numbers among lone mothers when compared to divorced and non-married groups of lone mothers in Western European countries (Lewis & Hobson, 1997; Rowlingson & McKey, 2002).

Moreover, Albanian widows and their children need other policies rather than only the social contribution of their husbands to support them, as can be

concluded from the statistical demonstration in the fourth chapter, the welfare policies conferred in the fifth chapter and the expectations of lone mothers revealed in the seventh chapter. In the communist period, the reading of Social Insurance Law revealed that for the cases of widow women of the after the Second World War, whose husbands had not been working for the public sector before the War, or had just started to gather social contribution years, the state allocated financial benefits inclusive to the categories of lone mothers and mothers with many children. Therefore, this dissertation concludes that widowed women whose husbands' labour could not provide for their families after death were recognized under communism, and in the two decades after 1990 regained legislative recognition in the amended law of economic aid in 2011, to be covered when no social contribution is provided for. The interviews with representatives from the local government also revealed that they acknowledge this phenomenon in their communities and at least in the Municipalities of Durrës in Central Albania and in Berati in Central-South Albania the annual programmes have included widowed women without family or child pensions for Economic Aid from the annual budget of the municipalities.

The gender analysis of welfare policies of the Albanian government for the period after 1990 helped to conclude that the aspect of care has disappeared from the legislative policies, which were present, albeit in a limited and conditioned way, during the communist period. The reconciliation policies raised by gender scholars and European Law scholars (Bleijenberg, 2006; Lewis, Knijn, Martin and Ostner, 2008; Hantrais, 2007; Caracciolo di Torella and Masselot, 2010), which consider the care aspect by introducing paternity leaves, flexibility timing and care services for children and the elderly, to ease women's employment, are not at the forefront of the policy-logic used by Albanian policy-makers. The gathered data show no evidence that any of the 240 lone mothers were provided with public child-care. Public child-care as a service was mentioned as being offered to some lone mothers (but none of which I interviewed), as inclusive category to other universal categories for an annual program only in the Elbasan municipality in Central Albania. Neither representatives of the local government, nor the National Intra-Sectorial Strategy on Social Protection take into consideration that 'women householders' have to reconcile their caring and earning tasks to maintain independent households.

The chapter fifth demonstrated that the state economic aid programme, the main programme some lone mothers can benefit from, was designed with the intention to lead families out of poverty. However, the de facto implementation of this programme, as assessed by lone mothers, revealed that this benefit is financially insignificant, and does not reach its initial aim. The suggestion of gen-

der scholars Lewis and Hobson (eds., 1997), that lone mothers need to be able to maintain an independent household through the support of the government is not relevant for the Albanian case. This dissertation concludes that the Albanian welfare policies, from their earlier conception in 1946 until today, as outlined through the historical development of social protection, were not designed for families that consisted of a male breadwinner and a housewife. Comparable to other communist regimes (Pascall & Kwak, 2005), Albanian social protection policy was designed for two earners/one carer families, where both the man and the woman worked but only the woman also performed the caring task. The Albanian reality, in difference from the dual earner/one carer model of the communism period, after 1990 with the closure of public kindergartens and crèches, presented the model of dual earner/dual carer. In this model the care for the child is provided by the grandmother and the mother. Especially after 1990, grandparents became important as main providers of care as the stories of lone mothers in this research show and, therefore, I want to argue for a detailed research into the role of grandparents in child-care in Albania.

Gender scholars have acknowledged (Lewis and Hobson, 1997; Ostner, 1997; Knijn, 1997; Kilkey, 2000; Daly and Lewis, 1998) that in Mediterranean cultures the family is a contribution resource for lone mothers. In Albania, families are one of the main resources for lone mothers by law and by culture (as demonstrated in chapters three, four and seven). The third chapter described the century-old family character when features of patriarchy, patrilocality, patrilineality and exogamy of the early twentieth century were loosened up during communism (although in moderation for the North part of the country). The third and fourth chapters argued and concluded that patrilocality associated with extended families remained a prevalent norm for women. They married due to these cultural norms and remained married due to a lack of financial resources to create independent households. While I developed this argument in the third chapter through the work of Albanian scholars from the communist period, in the fourth chapter I presented data findings from 28 lone mothers of the communist period and 240 lone mothers of the period after 1990. In the first group of women from the communist period, 67.86% created extended families during their marriages. Of the 240 women I interviewed who were lone mothers after 1990, 100 were married during communism. Of this second group, 42.1% created extended families. Of the remaining 140 women, who married after 1990, 28.4% lived in extended families. Thus, the extended families, and as a result the patrilocal character of Albanian families, is shifting towards the creation of independent households by young couples.

In chapter four the findings for the housing arrangements of lone mothers

showed that 55.8% went back to live with their parents, sisters and brothers or continued to live with their parents-in-law in 5% of the cases. This reality points to a financial dependency of lone mothers on their families of origin. Thus, the research has found that Albanian lone mothers have difficulties in creating independent households (only 23% of them), and therefore create extended households units with their families of origin or with their parents-in-law, which is evidence of the contested category of lone mothers as mentioned by gender scholars. Kilkey (2000) has raised the issue of whether national censuses count lone mothers as independent households when they live in composed families, a counting which directly affects their visibility through percentages as one parent families. Taking the fact that categorical needs can become politicized only when the number of people who yearn for this need is considerable in numbers, miss-counting families headed by lone mothers can result in non-designation of welfare policies from the state. This gender logic can be taken into consideration by policy-makers in Albania, and also by the applicators of the national censuses when counting the presence of lone mothers. For example the last census of 2011, gathered and analyzed by INSTAT Albania, defines a household for census purposes as: 'a group of persons who reside together in a housing unit and who partially or fully share a joint economy'. If lone mothers living in extended families in households unit with their parents, or brothers and sisters or parents-in-law are not counted as one parent families, since they live together with other people, this lowers their real numbers, and affects government efforts to design specific policies for them. Therefore, this gender based research problematizes the official statistics of one-parent families in Albania (i.e. 8.10% of the total number of Albanian families count as one-parent families).

The extended character of Albanian families and the high number of lone mothers going back to live with their families of origin or continuing to live with their parents-in-law is both the strength and the burden of Albanian families. The strength lies in the solidarity shown by Albanian family members, a characteristic that is connected with the organization of family life established centuries ago. Moreover, the Family Law under communism obliged parents and children and different generations in the house to take financial care of each other and, thus, these cultural norms were reinforced even further. Although after 1990 a more individualistic attitude came to determine family relations, solidarity between family members prevailed. Therefore, through this research I want to demonstrate that solidarity is necessary for lone mothers and their children to survive in Albania. As I have indicated, 45.8% of lone mothers and their children receive financial family support from parents; another 45.8% is supported by their sisters and brothers; 12.8% counts on support from their parents-in-law,

and 9.8% of the cases in the period after 1990 are financially supported by their sisters and brothers-in-law. Whereas solidarity is strongly needed and gratified by lone mothers, living together in a household unit of more than 7 people of three or more generations is a burden. It causes economic conflicts when only one person works to support these larger families. It also creates other problems related to the lack of personal privacy, or the presence of 7 or more people using one WC in the house and waiting in line every morning to have a shower. Thus, even though women need to return to their parents, brothers and sisters in the first 5 years of their lives as lone mothers, it is a temporary solution and cannot last forever. Many lone mothers refer to the difficulties of living together or the financial burden on the shoulders of their brothers who have to maintain their family, parents and the lone mother's family. 9.17% of lone mothers divorced after 1990 declared that extended families were a cause of their divorce. Therefore, there is a pressing need to assist lone mothers with access to employment and facilitation with the banks for soft loans programmes and loan credits so they can buy their own accommodation. Government support can help them with the documentation to prove that they do not have a house.

The second chapter outlined gender debates on the position of lone mothers in the welfare state; it emphasized that the only way in which lone mothers can escape poverty is through employment. The work of Jane Millar and Karen Rowlingson (eds., 2001), Ruth Lister (2001) in the same volume with Millar and Rowlingson, Majella Kilkey (2000), Jane Lewis (2006), Rowlingson and McKey (2002) about lone mothers in the European, Asian and English-speaking contexts demonstrated that they are in a better financial position when they have access to employment. The data finding in the fourth chapter demonstrated that only 82 (34.1%) of the 240 Albanian lone mothers of the period after 1990 have access to full employment. Of the 240 lone mothers, 92 (38.3%) are unemployed and the rest have seasonal, part-time jobs or are self-employed. Through the access to lone mothers provided by local women's organizations, I could mainly get access to lone mothers who were in need of a diversity of provisions. However, since women's organizations have a larger network, they could also give me interview access to highly educated lone mothers who have no need for any type of support, but sometimes need child care for their children, which they receive from their parents. The data findings also demonstrated their low wages and earnings. Only lone mothers with incomes of 350 euros and more who have no more than two children and have no rent to pay can lead decent lives. Those women constitute less than 8% of lone mothers interviewed, which supports the conclusion that access to employment in Albania cannot create a higher economic status for lone mothers.

Therefore, I want to point out in the conclusion of this dissertation that welfare policy analyses developed by gender scholars for different types of European welfare states cannot simply be used to analyze the welfare policies for lone mothers in Albania. Studies by Kilkey (2000), or Millar and Rowlingson (2001) who analyze in-work and out-of-work policies for lone mothers in Europe and English-speaking countries, cannot be used as research methodologies in Albania, because of the absence of such policies. However, information about and interpretation and analyses of the in-work and out-of-work policies can be used as recommendations for policy makers in Albania, which I shall list later. Research on the visibility of lone mothers in welfare legislation traced historically by Knijn, Ostner and Bimbi (1997) also contains useful research methodologies which I employed in the fifth chapter. There I traced the visibility of lone mothers in welfare legislation from communism to contemporary Albania. Moreover, the work of gender scholars (Lister, 1997; Knijn & Kremer, 1997; Daly & Lewis, 1998; Leira & Saraceno, 2002) on the implication of the care dimension as non-paid work for welfare states has tormented the organization of new welfare policies to respond to working mothers and fathers and responsibilities for children and the elderly. Lister highlights (1997) that care is work which should be valued as much as employment, if we are to see it as part of social citizenship, and Knijn and Kremer (1997) suggest a new form of social citizenship where care is considered a social right. They argue for the reconceptualization of welfare policies, reconciling dimensions of family and work.

Based on Knijn and Kremer (1997) who consider care as a social right with equal value to employment rights, my analysis of the welfare legislation for working mothers (including lone mothers) in communist and post-communist Albania took on a different analytical dimension in the fifth chapter. The chapter concluded that communist ideology tried to introduce working mothers' child care and the care for family members who became ill in the Labour Code (until 1980), albeit with time limitations and a financial gap when compared to a day's work. The Labour Code of 1980 introduced the acknowledgment of social insurance for the time of extensive child care under conditions of prolonged sickness of the child, though this caring time was not paid. After 2003, the new Labour Code and Social Insurance Law extended maternity leave for child care to about a year. There was a financial reduction from the monthly income when at work, and it was only made available to working mothers or those self-employed who paid voluntary contributions. The care dimension was also applicable to Albanian working women in communism (including lone mothers) who took care of sick children of 3 years and older, family members who were ill or the elderly but it disappeared from the Labour Code after 2003. Comparing the Albanian

legislation with the resolutions of the European Union on Reconciliation Policies, and with what European Union law and welfare gender scholars propose on having flexible working time, parental leaves financially rewarded, and services or cash allowances to pay child and elderly care, Albanian lone mothers have much to lag behind. This research concludes that Albanian lone mothers can only benefit from maternity leave if they have had insurance contribution for at least one year before the birth of their child. Based on the data findings that 63.7% of lone mothers have problems and periods of breaks in their social insurance contribution, they might not benefit from this law either. Flexible working times are absent from the Labour Code (my field work took place until 2013). So are cash allowances or services on child care either offered universally for working women or categorically for some women. This finding is another argument presented in this research concerning the quality and alternative of welfare policies for lone mothers in Albania as compared to other European or English speaking-countries. It also confirms one more time that being a lone mother in Albania is different and cannot be compared to the situation of mothers in other countries researched so far.

Two other main contributions of this research to gender scholarship in a European and English-speaking context has to do with the identity formation of lone mothers and the social programmes provided to them by non-governmental organizations. In the Albanian case the latter are local women's non-for-profit organizations and religious institutions.

The identity formation of lone mothers and the way in which cultural norms dictate their marriage and marriage dissolution choices were compacted in chapter seven through five selected stories. Stereotypes of lone mothers as 'misfits' in motherhood ideology and as 'benefit scroungers' in political and media discussions in US and the UK are examples of how the identity of lone mothers is shaped in public and political discourses (McIntosh & Phoenix, 1996). Whereas this stereotyping relates to lone mothers' use of citizens taxes to raise their children and maintain independent households for longer periods in their lives, this situation is not relevant to the Albanian context. The stereotypization in Albania has cultural routes which do not judge the parenting model of lone mothers, but rather the fact that they have no partner. In some cases, as lone mothers have narrated, they are asked or forced by family members or fathers-in-law to re-marry and not remain a woman without a husband. As the seventh chapter and the stories of lone mothers demonstrate, only 34% of them feel prejudiced; the others do not feel this way. On the contrary they are proud of themselves for raising their children alone and feel supported by society.

The identity discourses of lone mothers have attracted the attention of Van-

essa May (2004, 2010) who problematized how welfare policy makers design policies on the basis of categorization and stereotypes created publicly, without taking into consideration how the real identities of lone mothers are shaped through their daily experiences and the communities they live in. The histories of Albanian lone mothers were narrated via this perspective, which takes count on their self-creating and self-sustaining identities. The histories narrated in the seventh chapter reveal their self-perception of their identity as women with agency and power, aware of their inner strength and the choices they have in life. They also revealed how the influence of patriarchal customs in the North of the country (in Dukagjini) dictates and limits their power of life-choices. Yet, in another history a lone mother told the story of how the misfortune of creating families with irresponsible men affects the level of confidence some women have.

The other significant contribution of feminist and gender welfare analysts and historians to welfare studies has been the incorporation of women's organizations and religious institutions as providers of services and supporters to lone mothers. The moralizing attitudes of religious institutions towards non-married mothers have been described by many scholars: Waaldijk (2006) highlighted this for Eastern-European countries, Mary and Daly (2000) for the Catholic churches in Ireland, Rowlingson and McKay (2002) for Catholic institutions in the UK. Although these statements are based on desk-research methodologies, Waaldijk (2006) suggested that interviews with social workers and their every-day experiences in offering services to citizens, opposing or allying with the government, creates a new perspective on the understanding of the history of welfare. Her work motivated my decision to interview representatives of local women's organizations and religious institutions in Albania to offer a new history of the social programmes they provide to lone mothers. The sixth chapter offered a modest attempt to write the history of women's organizations from 1990 onwards in Albania. Chapter six describes the services they provided from 1990 until 2013 which were influenced by the socio-economic, political, and cultural developments the country went through and the financial support of international donors. The sixth chapter portrayed a women's sector collaborative with and suggestive to state policies. Advocacy services for lone mothers through the consultative participatory processes; provision of food and clothing; free legal assistance; psycho-social assistance for lone mothers and their children; support for the preparation of documents for access to Economic Aid; information delivery; consciousness-raising service provision; shelter services and daily protection for violated lone mothers are the main services offered to lone mothers in Albania. The findings from the interviews with lone mothers revealed that these services are not available for lone mothers living in rural areas in the North or

South of Albania, for they are mostly centralized in urban areas of Central, South and North Albania.

When I tried to understand whether the Albanian religious institutions (Muslim, Catholic, Orthodox, Evangelican) differentiate between widow and divorced mothers in Albania, they gave me diplomatically correct answers. They stated that, although widow women and their children are priorities, the poverty of localities does not allow for a differentiation between the children of divorced and widow mothers. Due to the freedom of and harmony between religions in Albania, there are no religious dogmas that have reached the political sphere yet. However, research needs to be conducted as regard the preaching attitude to family values that religious community promote in different localities in Albania. The interviews with lone mothers showed that religious organizations mostly provided child pensions for children of widow lone mothers until they reached the age of 14 years. They also provided lunch and a supporting environment for children of widow and lone mothers after their school hours until their mothers would get out of work, provision of day care centres for pre-school-age children of widow and divorced mothers, financial provision for severe surgeries for children of lone mothers and shelter and protection for violated women. The latter service was developed in coordination with local women's organizations and the police.

Observing and analyzing welfare services provided by the local government in the fifth chapter and observing and analyzing services provided by local women organizations and religious institutions, this research concludes that the non-governmental sector complements the governmental one. It also responds to what the families of lone mothers fail to support. In this research, I elaborated the gender model developed by Lewis and Hobson (1997) on income packaging for lone mothers in European countries based on the strong 'male breadwinner/ domestic housewife model', and I tried to apply it for the Albanian context. Hobson and Lewis (1997) presented four types of resources from which lone mothers could pack their incomes: the earnings of lone mothers who worked; the social transfers from the government; the private incomes of the biological fathers of the children and family resources. As the fourth and last category of income, they speak about 'other resources'. I suppose that the incomes from voluntary or charity organizations are included in this term. In this research I have differentiated between different types of incomes, some of which are mentioned by Lewis and Hobson. For the Albanian context, I suggested that the separation in four sources of incomes does not do justice to the situation of lone mothers living in North, South and Central Albania. Some sources of income are irrelevant or insignificant for lone mothers in that more than 4 types of resources are needed to

support lone mothers and their children. I also argue that all these resources taken together do not enable lone mothers to maintain an independent household in Albania, due to the low financial value they have. For example, Lewis and Hobson's concept of private resources of income as provided by biological fathers or families works differently in the Albanian context. Only 21.7% of biological fathers contribute financially for their children, 45.8% of parents and sisters and brothers, and 12.8% of parents-in-law and sisters and brothers in law (the latter are not even part of the Western composition of private incomes) contribute for lone mothers. Thus, in Albania this resource consists of different value and actors. Regarding the earnings of lone mothers, 38.3% of them are unemployed, and those who work as I earlier elaborated have very low incomes; thus, only the earnings of 34.2% of lone mothers who are in full employment can count as income. This income resource is thus again not relevant for the Albanian context. The other resource - social transfers from the government - is relevant to only 53.8% of lone mothers: it consists of insignificant economic aid, family pensions for children of deceased fathers or widow mothers, child disability pensions and lone mother disability pensions. The latter are insufficient to enable a lone mother to keep an independent household. Thus, this resource is not as valuable as the Western income resource is. The 'other resources' (provided by local women's organizations and religious institutions) count for only 41.3% and 26.2% of lone mothers. Thus, these resources do not sufficiently support lone mothers financially. Therefore, in this dissertation I suggest that resources for lone mothers need to be considered separately per service instead of collectively, since they differ for every lone mother, and every location in North, South and Central Albania.

Local women's organizations are fully funded by international donors who base their strategic agendas on global agendas. This raises questions about the connections between local and global agendas and the representation of local agendas by local women's organizations. This is why the sixth chapter also addressed feminist discussions (Fraser, 2009; Ghodsee, 2004) of the neoliberal influence of the World Bank and the International Monetary Fund in Latin America and Third World countries through loaning programmes. Fraser and Ghodsee blamed feminist academics and activists for allying with the World Bank and the IMF in installing structural policies in the countries where they operated. Ghodsee blamed both Western feminists and local women's organizations in Eastern Europe (Bulgaria, Hungary and Romania) for producing reports financed by the World Bank and UNDP which present a feminization of poverty and thus allow for the creation of a labour market which employs women's cheap labour. For women in rural areas it has created the agricultural loans service which both Ghodsee and Fraser interpret, not as stories about success, but as exploitation of

poor women in rural areas. To be able to offer the Albanian example and context of such an analysis, I quoted Ghodsee and Fraser and other American feminist scholars, because the Albanian government is also one of the strategic beneficiaries of the World Bank, the International Monetary Fund and UNDP. Therefore, in this research I analyzed reports of the World Bank and International Monetary Fund on programmes that operate in Albania, and also national UNDP reports on human development in Albania.

In the fifth chapter I looked at the technical and financial subsidiary or loaning assistance of the multilateral organizations to the Albanian government. In this context I described the influential and positive role the global agendas of international donors play in the advancement of legislation on gender equality, gender mainstreaming, women's employment and social programmes for women in Albania. Moreover, I have discussed that the role UNDP and the World Bank played in the National Strategy on Socio-Economic Integration for 2007-2013 between Albanian government and European Commission, and the social programmes in "Delivering as One" from the UNDP and the World Bank in Albania, present an inclusionary and solidary in nature role as regard social services. In this atmosphere the local women's organizations work together with the government and are responsive to and collaborative with international donors. What I conclude, therefore, is that women's organizations ally with international donors (especially with UNDP) on advancing the international agenda on the CEDAW application, Beijing Platform of action and Millennium Development Goals. I do not oppose the presence of neoliberalism in Albania, which is encountered by some lone mothers who work for international tailoring companies for very cheap labour prices. However, I invite feminist and gender scholars to instigate via qualitative research with international donors, women's organizations, governmental institutions, and conduct quantitative surveys to grasp the level of structural neoliberal policies in Albania and their sources. I believe that feminist academics need these three resources of qualitative and quantitative data for their claims. This research has suggested that structural policies in Latin America and elsewhere have not touched the Albanian welfare agenda the way it did there, because a strong valuable welfare did not exist during communism. Instead, after 1990, social insurance became stronger than it had been under communism. Nevertheless, the Labour Code still lacks instruments to adopt reconciliation policies. What this research has argued is that UNDP and European Commission programmes have supported the Albanian government and women's organizations in developing National Strategies on Social Protection and Service Delivery that are more inclusive and solidary in nature. Therefore, I argue that we need further research into the Albanian context for a critical evaluation of

the conclusions of other scholars who claim that feminist activism is to blame as a cause of cheap labour for women and fewer welfare services by the state.

Last but not least, while revealing the identity of lone mothers as subjects vested with power and agency, and sometimes also as victims of their conditions, and while informing welfare policies through their voice, this research has built a bridge between civil society and academia, between gender activists and gender scholars. A bridge which fundament is branched out with gender scholarship research methodologies and theoretical frameworks, and which arch and conjunctions are synthesized in gender activism. This research has contributed to gender academic scholarship in two directions. It offered a new empirical approach to data gathering which is multidisciplinary in the methodologies used: feminist methodologies of action research and sociological research methods. It provided the Albanian context to the multidimensional perspectives European and English-speaking gender scholars have offered in their work on lone mothers. This research has added to European gender scholarship the positionality of lone mothers in the welfare state, covering the period of communism and the period after 1990, and is a Western Balkan contribution to the research developed so far.

Scholarship by gender activists has added a valuable input to international development studies and global human development activism. This research wants to be part of this strand. While gender activism scholarship (like academic gender scholarship) advances and re-informs the state welfare policy-logic, thus creating a space for the joint accomplishment of an international feminist movement, it also creates room for debate on neoliberalism and feminist takes on it. Whereas feminist scholars have blamed feminist activists for allying with neoliberal structural policies, (Albanian) activists have been critical to the government and have embraced the international feminist movement.

Through this research I came to think more as a gender activist in a third World International Women's Movement which started globally after the Beijing Conference in 1995. Women activists and academics have their international platforms of action and human development; they have an action and analysis vocabulary which has been developed by both activists and academics. If policy economists worldwide read how feminist and gender scholars analyze their policy logics, if national and global stakeholders (politicians and non-politicians) involve feminist and gender activists in consultative participatory processes, the world of welfare would be different. It would be the world of human and economic development from a gender activist perspective, and the world of solidarity and inclusion from a gender scholarship perspective. Thus, following Jude Howell (2011) whose work I refer to in the sixth chapter, I want to invite feminist scholars to reach out to their activist colleagues and find ways for dialogues and

for a mutual interaction regarding vocabularies, analyses and networking experiences. Only then will theory and practice come together to contribute even more to women's empowerment globally.

As a final word to my feminist colleagues, for future research on lone mothers in Albania and elsewhere, I would personally argue for a human development strategy based on women's voices and agency, as freedom tools which allow women to form a family and to shape policy. These are voicing tools at the core of activism (De Silva de Alwis, 2014; Klugman, 2014).

Here I will also take the opportunity to draft some recommendations for welfare policies provided by central and local governments to lone mothers in Albania. I also will draft recommendations for women's organizations and religious institutions in Albania. I base my recommendations for both sectors on the voices of lone mothers about their experiences, conditions and expectations (as highlighted in the seventh chapter); my analysis of policy legislation and welfare services provided by the government; my identification and observation of the services and programmes provided to lone mothers by local women's non-profit organizations and religious institutions, and the strategic programs of international donors operating currently in Albania. My recommendations as follows are:

Since approximately 34.8% of lone mothers demand and expect support with access to the labour market, there is a need for a reorganization of employment offices to be able to create or to find jobs for lone mothers with low skills and a low level of education. The histories of lone mothers and my interviews with local government representatives show that there is an immediate need to consider the sector of employment for lone mothers of 50 years and older who have difficulties in following vocational training programmes which are not wanted in the market. Since some of these women have unemployed adult children in the house, for which they are financially responsible, lone mothers ask for the provision of labour opportunities for their adult children. Women's organizations, especially those in Durrës, have started to provide elderly care courses in cooperation with the municipality to prepare a group of women for jobs caring for elderly people in their communities. This programme can be replicated and scaled up in other districts in order to create community care jobs for this group of women. This programme needs to be accompanied by enforcement mechanisms for social contribution for private-care services paid by the families these women will take care of.

The lone mothers with school-age children refereed in 30% of the cases that they were not able to allow their children to attend second-elementary or high school, due to a lack of financial resources. Since local governments have a

programme to subsidize school books for children of lone mothers who receive economic aid, they can enlarge the categories of lone mothers who can benefit from this programme. The municipality (through its annual budgeting), the government, women's organizations and religious institutions can create social programmes for the facilitation of the education of children of lone mothers with low financial incomes. Some religious institutions are already providing day-care centres for children after school, such as in Berati, Vlora and the Elbasani district. Such services can be replicated in areas where there is more need for them on the part of lone mothers.

Lone mothers with children under three and from 4-10 years have described their problems in having to stay home in order to take care of their children, or to bring and take their children to and from school, especially in cases when their parents cannot support them with child-care. This asks for a reorganization and enlargement of public child-care in Albania, possibly with the option of kindergarten or crèche subsidy for lone mothers with low or very low earning incomes. Child-care services are only provided by the Lights Steps organization in the Shkodra district (North-East) to two lone mothers and by women organizations who provided shelter services in Elbasani (Central Albania), and Vlora (Central Albania). Both local women's organizations and local religious institutions can reconsider diversifying their services with respect to child-care for lone mothers in order to enable them to work.

Vocational training was a need addressed by representatives of municipalities and by some lone mothers themselves. Since local women's organizations have been providing tailoring, cooking, hairdressing, computer courses and foreign language courses so far, and very few lone mothers have been able to use these skills in finding a job, these organizations may develop new vocational training programmes which are tailored to the needs of the business community. These are trainings that can be provided by each sector separately or in cooperation.

What lone mothers need most is the facilitation by local government of social housing through a lowering of the ceiling of soft loans from the bank for unemployed mothers or those with very low incomes from part-time jobs. This is a service only provided by the state, but women's organizations and also religious institutions can lobby and advocate with the banking sector in order to raise its consciousness of the real need for their facilitation.

Lone mothers with disabled children expressed that they are confined to their home taking care of their children. The government can support them with a disability-caring provision which should also be raised to a minimum basic income that allows them to pay the bills at the end of the month. Since there are

community centers in many cities, either paid by the central government after the decentralization of services, or by women's organizations and religious institutions, the latter can reconsider an extension in numbers for those lone mothers who have lower incomes or who need to go to work in order to provide an income for running the house.

The Economic Aid benefit service was assessed by all lone mothers as insufficient to meet their needs and as inaccessible to some groups of lone mothers who have difficulties in accessing it due to a lack of documentation. Lone mothers in rural areas are not able to access economic aid due to the law which considers them as members of families with land property who can work their own land. This should be renegotiated because, when these mothers are divorced, abandoned or separated, they cannot prove their ownership of the property. A similar history of lacking documentation provision comes from abandoned, divorced, or separated lone mothers who cannot prove that they receive no child allowance from the biological fathers of their children. Therefore, the law needs to be amended and local women's organizations can support bailiffs to write letters of proof to the local government that these women receive no child allowance from the biological fathers of their children. In this regard, there could also be a return to the law under communism which obliged all fathers to provide children's allowance to the mothers of their children. For the group after 1990 this law can be adjusted for fathers who work in the private market (non-registered) or for those who have emigrated.

What I would propose ideally is the design of long-term policy provision, which offers a vision on the future by being responsive to the first 5 years of lone mothers who raise their children on their own. This needs to be a concerted policy provision, where local non-governmental organizations (women's local organizations and religious institutions) facilitate efforts of the state. Families can as well be invited in consultative tables to create a realistic view of what can they really support, considering that in the last two years the numbers of international migrants in EU is raising, due to high unemployment level in Albania.

Given that women's organizations and religious institutions are dependent on international donors, they need to perform advocacy processes not only directed at the state and government policy makers, but also at donors in order to problematize the situation of lone mothers in Albania. Although these are social concerns which many donors would perhaps consider as the problem of the Albanian government rather than their international and local agendas, I believe that there can be room for negotiation when lone mothers speak for themselves and when women's organizations speak for lone mothers.

Last but not least, the data analysis provided in this dissertation is limited

in terms of presenting out all possible variable correlations concerning the age, the region, the education, the employment the type of support and so on of lone mothers. The needs of lone mothers are grouped and presented and so are the recommendations, however it is been impossible to let each of 240 voices talk for herself. Therefore, this dissertation can remain as a first attempt in problematizing the situation of lone mothers in Albania, and can be used as an invitation to the Albanian government and Albanian tax-payers to consider inclusive and solidarity policies to this category of women and their children.

Appendixes

Appendix 1 Interviews and questionnaires for lone mothers

Appendix. 1.1 Questionnaire for lone mothers before 1990

Introduction

In the framework of the PhD research on “*Lone mothers and welfare policies in Albania. Conditions, experiences and expectations, 1944-2013*”, pursued at Utrecht University, the Netherlands, I am conducting a survey using face to face interviews with lone mothers in ten Qarks of Albania. This research on lone mothers is pursued in cooperation with the Independent Forum for the Albanian Woman and under the academic guidance of Prof. Dr. Berteke Waaldijk (The Netherlands) and Dr. Saemira Gjipali (Pino) (Albania).

This survey aims to give a clear picture of the circumstances and life experiences of lone mothers in Albania, during the period of the last 50 years, while the analysis of welfare policies goes back to 1944. It intends to show how these lone mothers, have been able to raise their children alone without husbands/partners, and how have they secured the material and social goods for their children through different resources. The time frame of this research is characterized by two governing systems, the communist one 1944-1990 and the pluralist of after 1990 onwards.

The interviews with lone mothers who raised their children during communism intend to highlight the social circumstances under which these women took care of their children through the support of the state, or their family members, or with no support at all, neither from the government nor from their families.

Parallel to this, this survey devotes questions (to what) trying to understand the difficulties of being a lone mother during the period of communism, and featuring the inner power and the beauty of resourcing energy by raising and educating successful children while remaining without support.

The welfare support provided by government, through housing, healthcare and education policies are part of the questions intended to create a clear context on the state behavior policy towards lone mothers during communism. The relationships with family members and financial and child-care support received by them are other questions which will be directed to lone mothers.

For reasons of professional ethics of conducting research, and the personal privacy of the interviewee, the names and surnames of the informant women will not be disclosed or presented in any documented or written paper, unless upon the request of the lone mother herself.

Questionnaire for lone mothers during communism

Part I. General information

Date of the interview

Code of the interview

Name, surname of the interviewee

The Code of the group where the lone mother belongs to, based on the route to lone motherhood

1.1. The age of the interviewee	
1.2. The age of the previous husband/partner	
1.3. Interviewee's parents' age	Mother Father
1.4. Number of children	
1.5. Gender of children	
1.6. Children's age	
1.7. Number of years that the interviewee is a lone mother	
1.8. Number of years that the interview is not alone any longer	
1.9 The age of the current partner if the lone mother created a second relationship	

2. Where are you originally from, and your former husband? At what age did you marry? Did you marry through an arranged marriage or you did you know your husband beforehand? Did you live alone with your husband or did you live together with his parents and family members? If you lived together, for how long did it last and with how many people did you live together in a household?

3. What was the reason that you became a lone mother in the period of communism? Can you tell me about your experience of that time, when you remained alone?

4. How did your family members experience the new situation you were in? Did you start a second marriage or relationship after the first one? If yes, after how many years after the first one and how did your second marriage flow?

5. What about your cousins, neighbors, colleagues, what attitude did they have towards you?

6. Do you remember how the state supported you at that time, regarding housing, health-care, employment or any other type of support?

7. What type of job did you hold during communism, and what about today? Did you lose your job after 1990 and if yes, what is your current social contribution state, do you receive contributions for all the years that you have worked?

8. At that time what was the fitting image of a good mother? Do you think people

thought of you being a good mother or were they prejudiced due to you raising your child/children alone? What characteristics of yourself do you value more in you?

9. What type of relationship did you maintain with your ex-husband after the divorce, what about your children? Did he contribute child allowance regularly? Did he support you in any way in taking care of the children?

10. After 1990 did the father of the child continue to take care of his children or they were they adults by that time?

11. How did your family or your in-laws support you and your children after you were divorced or your husband deceased?

12. What would you single out as key moments, either difficult or beautiful, during that period?

13. How difficult was it for you in that period to combine your work in state institutions with the caring or other tasks you had to perform at home?

14. What was the socio-economic and political background of your family during communism?

15. Do you think class differences existed in communism and if yes, can you characterize these differences?

16. What would you like to have been different during those times?

17. What do you think for about? Lone mothers who raise alone their children today? What do you think would be better policies and better support from the state and family members for them?

Thank you for your time and for answering to these questions,

Sincerely, Arla Gruda

Appendix. 1.2 Questionnaire for lone mothers after 1990

Introduction to the questionnaire

In the framework of the PhD research on “*Lone mothers and welfare policies in Albania. Conditions, experiences and expectations, 1944-2013*”, pursued at Utrecht University, the Netherlands, I am conducting a survey using face to face interviews with lone mothers in ten Qarks of Albania. This research on lone mothers is pursued in cooperation with the Independent Forum for the Albanian Woman and under the academic guidance of Prof. Dr. Bertheke Waaldijk (The Netherlands) and Dr. Saemira Gjipali (Pino) (Albania).

This survey aims to give a clear picture of the circumstances and life experiences of lone mothers in Albania, during the period of the last 50 years, while the analysis of welfare policies goes back to 1944. It intends to show how these lone mothers have been able to raise their children alone without husbands or partners and how have they secured the material and social goods for their children through different resources. The time frame of this research is defined by two governing systems, the communist government from 1944-1990 and the pluralist government from 1990 onwards.

This questionnaire is compounded of three parts. In the first part lone mothers are asked questions regarding their generalities, the education pursued, and the economic status of them and their former husband or partner. In this part lone mothers are also asked about the financial support they receive from family members, from the biological father of their children, from parents and brothers-in-law, and from local government and non-governmental organizations. The second part is focused on the role that state welfare policies and non-state social programs have played in the life of lone mothers and their children, where lone mothers are asked to give their assessment and comments on their experiences in using these services. In the third part the experiences of lone mothers with the relationships they develop with their family members, biological father of their children, ex parents-in-law, their siblings and the society are addressed. Their identity, self-evaluation in relation to the society and themselves are finalized with their expectancies from the state, non-state, family network and the business community.

For reasons of professional ethics of conducting research, and the personal privacy of the interviewee, the names and surnames of the informant women will not be disclosed or presented in any documented or written paper, unless upon the request of the lone mother herself.

Part I. General information

Date of the interview

Code of the interview

Name, surname of the interviewee

The Code of the group where the lone mother belongs to, based on the route to lone motherhood

Please describe briefly, without going into many details the history of your life: At what age were you when you got engaged and got married? Did you know your former husband/partner/lover beforehand, or was it arranged for you through your family or other people? From which area (urban/rural) were you and your husband at the time you entered into a relationship together? When you started your family, did you stay in an extended family, with your in-laws or did you start a new family, a cell family? For how long did you stay with your in-laws and with how many people did you live in how many rooms? What is the reason that you are a lone mother today?

1.1. The age of the interviewee	
1.2. The age of the previous husband/partner	
1.3. The interviewee's parents'age	Mother Father
1.4. Number of children	
1.5. Gender of children	
1.6. Children's age	
1.7. Number of years that the interviewee has been a lone mother	
1.8. Number of years that the interview is not alone any more	
1.9 The age of the current partner if the lone mother started a second relationship	

2. The reason of being a lone mother

2.1. Divorce because of (specify)2.2.a The husband deceased/2.2.b the partner deceased2.3. Teenage pregnancy due to:2.3.1. Personal choice2.3.2. Human mistake

2.4.a. **Abandoned by the husband/2.4.b.** partner/ **2.4.c.** lover due to: (please explain the reason) :

2. 5. Out of personal choice

2. 6. Out of occasional human mistake see 2.3.2

2. 7. Other reason (please specify)

3. Economic situation

3.1. The employment history of the interviewee. (Question for all the groups of the interviewees)

Within your reach please tell me briefly where you were employed before 1990 and in what profession and position? Where were you employed after 1990s? Is there a gap in your contribution years for the social insurance system and if yes how many and why? (Question for lone mothers who were employed during the communism)

3.1.1 Full time employment from (specify the year)

3.1.2. Part-time employment or in a seasonal job from (specify the year)

3.1.3. Unemployed from (specify the year)

3.1.4. Other situation

3.2. Incomes from personal employment

3.2.1. Monthly average income during the last year

3.2.2. Monthly average income from any informal job

3.2.3. Monthly income from any part-time or seasonal job

3.2.4. Income from other resources (i.e. house given in tenancy, house accommodation offered from any resource, parents inherited property, or any other in kind or financial contribution depending on your situation)

3.3. Employment history of your former husband/partner (Question for all the groups of lone mothers)

Please describe briefly where has your husband been employed before and after 1990s and in what type of profession did he work/does he work (Question for the groups of lone mothers whose husbands/partners have been working during communism)

3.3.1. Full time employed from (specify the year)

3.3.2. Part-time employed part-time or seasonal jobs from (specify the year)

3.3.3. Unemployed from (specify the year)

3.3.4. Other situation

3.4. Income of the former husband/partner

(Question for all the groups of lone mothers)

3.4.1. Monthly average income during the last year

3.4.2. Monthly average income from any informal job

3.4.2. Monthly average income from a part-time or seasonal job

3.4.4. Income from other resources (i.e. house given in tenancy, house accommodation offered from any resource, parents inherited property, or any other in kind or financial contribution depending on his situation)

3.5. Financial contribution from the biological father of the child/children for their material support

(Question for all the groups of lone mothers, widowed excluded)

3.5.1. Does the biological father of your child/children give any financial contribution?

3.5.1.a. Yes

3.5.1.b. No

3.5.2. If yes, how much does he contribute per month and is it a regular contribution?

3.5.3. If he does not contribute regularly each month how much is his yearly contribution?

3.5.4. If no, what is the reason that he does not contribute?

3.6. The employment history of the actual husband or partner (if the lone mother is remarried or colives with a new partner)

3.6.1. Full time employed full time from (specify the year)

3.6.2. Part-time employed or in seasonal jobs from (specify the year)

3.6.3. Unemployed from (specify the year)

3.6.4. Other situation (specify)

3.7. Financial contribution or in kind contribution from the current husband/partner if you live in the same house with him and your child/children

3.7.1. Average monthly in kind contribution to the house

3.7.2 Average contribution for his social children what are social children?

3.8. Financial contribution from different resources:

(Question for all the groups of lone mothers)

3.8.1.a

Your parents (please specify)
brothers (please specify)

3.8.1. b

Your sisters and/or

3.8.2. Parents-in-law (please specify)

3.8.3. Brothers and sisters in law (please specify)

3.8.4. Local government (Municipality, the Commune)

3.8.5. Other resources (Women NPOs, Religious Institutions, neighbours, friends)

3.9. Economical situation of the parent's family before pregnancy

(Question for teenage lone mothers)

3.9.1. Low income (please specify if you can)

3.9.2. Sufficient income to afford the basic needs (please specify if you can)

3.9.3. Normal standard, which creates space for participation in social or cultural activities (please specify if you can)

3.9.4. High income and as a result a high living standard (please specify if you can)

3.10. Economic situation of the interviewee and her former husband/partner before and after child/children birth:

(Question for lone mothers who have children until 5 years old)

3.10.1. **Before child birth:**

3.10.1.a. Low income (please specify if you can)

3.10.1.b. Average standard (please specify if you can)

3.10.1.c. High income (please specify if you can)

3.10.2. **after the child/children were born:**

3.10.2.a. Similar situation

3.10.2.b. The situation has improved because the father or both parents perform better in the labour market

3.10.2.c. The situation deteriorated because the mother or both parents have no work

4. Education and qualifications

4.1 No education

4.2 First elementary education

4.3 Second elementary education

4.4. High school diploma

4.5. University graduate

4.6. Post-graduate (MA)

4.7. PhD degree

4.8. Professional or vocational training degree

4.9. Other

5. Actual and previous employment

5.1. Public sector

- 5.1.1. administration
 - 5.1.1.a. local government
 - 5.1.1.b. central government
- 5.1.2. educational institutions
 - 5.1.2.a. first elementary education
 - 5.1.2.b. second elementary education
 - 5.1.2.c. high school education
 - 5.1.2.d. university
- 5.1.3. health care
- 5.1.4. other (please specify)

5.2 Private sector

- 5.2.1. private companies (please specify which)
- 5.2.2. banking sector
- 5.2.3. self-employed (5.2.3.a SE 5.2.3.b. ME)
- 5.2.4. private educational institute
- 5.2.5. agriculture
- 5.2.6. bar, restaurant
- 5.2.7. sanitary employer, house-keeping, oper, elderly health-care
- 5.2.8. other (please specify)
- 5.3. **Third sector (NPO)**
- 5.4. other (please specify)

6. Housing conditions

- 6.1. I live alone with my child/children in a rented house
- 6.2. I live alone with my child/children in a house bought by me (and my husband)
- 6.3. I live alone with my child/children in a state social housing
- 6.4. I live with my child/children in a state shelter
- 6.5. I live with my children temporarily in an NPO shelter
- 6.6. I live with my child/children and my former husband or partner in the same house
- 6.7. I live with my child/children in the same house with my former husband or partner and his current partner
- 6.8. I live with my child/children and my parents-in-law
- 6.9. I live with my child/children and my parents
- 6.10. I live with my child/children, my parents and my siblings
- 6.11. I live with my child/children and a friend
- 6.12. I live with my child/children and my brother's or sister's family
- 6.13. Other situation (please specify)

Second part : Welfare services offered from the local government or the NPO sector
(To fill in only if the lone mother is in divorce process or is in the first year after receiving divorce)

7. Assistance offered from

7.a. NPO/or

7.b. the local government

7.a.1. Free legal assistance offered by NPO **7.b.1.** or the local government

7.a.2. Free psycho-social assistance for the child/children during and after divorce offered by NPO

7.b.2. Social housing offered by the local government

7.b.3. Child cash-benefit **7.b.3.1.** or mother's cash-benefit **7.b.3.2.** family cash-benefit from the LG for a period of

- three months six months 9 months longer

7.a3. In kind contribution offered from religious organization or other NPOs (please specify)

8. Satisfaction with the services offered from the NPO or the local government during and after divorce

(to fill it in only if you are a lone mother undergoing divorce and have received such services)

You can select more than one alternative answer in regard to your situation.

8.1. Limited services (**8.1.a.** LG: **8.1.b.** NPO)

8.2. Non relevant services (**8.2.a.** LG: **8.2.b.** NPO)

8.3 It was too bureaucratic to get access to this service (**8.3.a.** LG: **8.3.b.** NPO)

8.4. I feel an integrity violation when I use these services (**8.4.a.** LG: **8.4.b.** NPO)

8.5. I feel judged by the person who offers these services (**8.5.a.** LG: **8.5.b.** NPO)

8.6. Offered services are qualitative (**8.6.a.** LG: **8.6.b.** NPO)

8.7. Offered services are more than relevant (**8.7.a.** LG: **8.7.b.** NPO)

8.8. Other personal comment

9. The satisfaction of lone mothers with the services offered from the local government (Question for all the groups of lone mothers)

9.1. Economic aid

9.1.a. Yes.... **9.1.b.** No **9.1.a.1** months: **9.1.a.2** ... years

9.1.1. It does not cover all the categories of people in need

- 9.1.2. It does not cover the basic needs
 9.1.3. It is a very bureaucratic procedure to get access to it
 9.1.4. It is not delivered systematically
 9.1.5. People who do not need this assistance benefit from it
 9.1.6. I am satisfied
 9.1.7. It is a reasonable assistance
 9.1.8. Other personal comment

9.2. Social housing and housing with soft loans

- 9.2.a. Yes.... 9.2.b. No 9.2.a. 1 Months: 9.2.a. 2 years
 9.2.1. The waiting period to become part of this programme was too long
 9.2.3. The conditions leave much to be desired
 9.2.4. The rent we need to pay monthly is too high taken into consideration our incomes
 9.2.5. It is very bureaucratic to have access to
 9.2.6. People who do not need this assistance profit from it
 9.2.7. I am satisfied
 9.2.8. It seems reasonably organized in this way
 9.2.9. Other personal comment

9.3. Subsidy for children's school books

- 9.3.a. Yes.... 9.3.b. No 9.3.a.1 Months: 9.3.a.2 years
 9.3.1. Limited access for certain categories
 9.3.3. Very bureaucratic to have access to
 9.3.4. We did not receive it at the right time
 9.3.5. People who do not need this assistance profit from it
 9.3.6. I am satisfied
 9.3.7. It is reasonable
 9.3.8. Other personal comment

9.4. Healthcare notebook for children

- 9.4.a. Yes.... 9.4.b. No 9.4.a. 1 Months: 9.4.a. 2 years
 9.4.1. I am satisfied
 9.4.2. It is reasonable
 9.4.3. Other personal comment

9.5. Healthcare notebook for the mother itself

- 9.5.a. Yes.... 9.5.b. No 9.5.a. 1 Months: 9.5.a. 2 years
 9.5.1. I am satisfied
 9.5.2. It is reasonable
 9.5.3. Other personal comment

9.6. Vocational training courses

9.6.a. Yes.... 9.6.b. No 9.6.a.1 Months: 9.6.a.2 years

9.6.1. Is limited in choices, it does not offer many alternative programs

9.6.2. The offered courses do not respond to the required missing skills in the labour market

9.6.3. A parallel alternative to child-care does not exist during the time we are offered these course (question for lone mothers with small children)

9.6.4. Some of the offered courses are too expensive to attend

9.6.5. I was not asked for what course would be beneficial to me, therefore I take what is offered to me

9.6.6 I have no information on the existence of such courses

9.6.6.a. Local government does not have a communication strategy to inform us for these courses

9.6.6.b. I have been indifferent in getting informed

9.6.7. I am satisfied

9.6.8. These are well thought through and well organized courses

9.6.9. Other personal comment

9.7. Registration in the local employment offices and the recommendation to qualitative and relevant employers

9.7.a. Yes.... 9.7.b. No 9.7.a. 1 Months: 9.7.a. 2 years

9.7.1. I find it difficult to positively evaluate a well-organized coordination between the vocational training programs and the business community in the region

9.7.2. There are cases when the job offered is far from the city and the transportation to go there is problematic in certain time schedules

9.7.3. The monthly payment offered from the employers is too low as compared to the long hours work per day

9.7.4. I am pleased with the job that is offered to me but I have no one to take care of my child while I am at work

9.7.5. Other personal comment

9.8. Child pension or family pension (for widow lone mothers)

9.8.a. Yes.... 9.8.b. No 9.8.a.1 Months: 9.8.a.2 Years

9.8.1. It does not cover even the basis needs

9.8.2. It is very bureaucratic to get access to it

9.8.3. It is not delivered systematically

9.8.4. I am satisfied

9.8.5. It is a reasonable assistance

9.8.6. Other personal comment

9.9. Invalidity pension for the child (for lone mothers whose children have serious health issues and are dependent on their care daily)

9.9.a. Yes.... 9.9.b. No 9.9.a.1 Months; 9.9.a.2 years

9.9.1. It does not cover even the basic needs

9.9.2. It is very bureaucratic to get access to it

9.9.3. It is not delivered systematically

9.9.4. I am satisfied

9.9.5. It is a reasonable assistance

9.9.6. Other personal comment

9.10. Other services

9.10.a. Yes.... 9.10.b. No 9.10.a.1 Months; 9.10.a.2 years

9.10.1. It is limited in time, it is not offered each year because it is dependent on the yearly budget of the municipality

9.10.2. Very bureaucratic to get access to it

9.10.3. I am satisfied

9.10.4. It is a reasonable assistance

9.10.5. Other personal comment

10. The satisfaction of lone mothers with the services offered from NPOs (women or religious ones) (Question for all the groups of lone mothers)

10.1. Psycho-social assistance for the lone mother

10.1.a. Yes.... 10.1.b. No 10.1.a. 1 Months; 10.1.a. 2 years; 10.1.a. 3 weeks

10.1.1. Useful and satisfying service

10.1.2. I have the feeling that too much attention is dedicated to negative experiences

10.1.3. I feel influenced and limited in personal choices

10.1.4. Other personal comment

10.2. Psycho-social assistance for the child/children

10.2.a. Yes.... 10.2.b. No 10.2.a.1 Months; 10.2.a.2 years; 10.2.a.3 weeks

10.2.1. Useful and satisfying service

10.2.2. I have the feeling that too much attention is dedicated to negative experiences

10.2.3. I feel that my child is influenced in his/her personal choices

10.2.4. Other personal comment

10.3. Daily centre for the children

(Question for the lone mothers whose children are 1-12 years old)

10.3.a. Yes.... **10.3.b.** No **10.3.a. 1** Months; **10.3.a.2**years; **10.3.a.3** weeks

10.3.1. I value it positively as a service

10.3.2. It would be more useful if the hours could be extended to facilitate working hours

10.3.3. The meals and hygienical conditions are of a satisfying standard

10.3.4. Other personal comment

10.4. Cultural and sportive activities for the child/children (please specify which kind of activities these are)

(Question for the lone mothers whose children are 1-18 years old)

10.4.a. Yes.... **10.4.b.** No **10.4.a.1.** Months; **10.4.a.2.** years; **10.4.a.3.** weeks

10.4.1. I am satisfied with the activities organized in groups for children

10.4.2. It is important that children spend quality time and get socialized

10.4.3. Children feel good when they come back home, as these activities are aimed at children of families in financial difficulties, therefore they feel no difference when socializing with each other,

10.4.4. Other personal comment

10.5. Shelter service

(Question for lone mothers who were violated or trafficked)

10.5.a. Yes.... **10.5.b.** No **10.5.a. 1** Months; **10.5.a.2** years; **10.5.a.3** weeks

10.5.1. I am satisfied with the services offered in this shelter

10.5.2. The time it took to get approved to come here was too long

10.5.3. The shelter's staff is well qualified to deal with our problems

10.5.4. I like the atmosphere that is created in the shelter

10.5.5. There are moments I feel dictated in decisions I have to take for my life outside this shelter

10.5.6. Other personal comment

10.6. Other services (please specify)

(Question for all groups of lone mothers)

10.6.a. Yes.... **10.6.b.** No **10.6.a.1.** Months; **10.6.a.2.** years; **10.6.a.3.** weeks

- 10.6.1.** I am satisfied with this service
- 10.6.2.** I would have liked to be asked prior to planning of these services in order for them to respond better to my needs
- 10.6.3.** It is limited in time
- 10.6.4.** Other personal comment

Third part

11. The relationship of lone mothers with the biological father of their child/children
(You can select more than one choice depending on your situation. Question for lone mothers who are divorced, separated or abandoned)

- 11.1.** I do not have any contact with the father of the child/children
- 11.2.** I have continuous contact with the father of the child/children
- 11.3.** The only contact I have with the father of the child/children is for major life issues of the children and when it is necessary that he is informed or needs to be present:
- 11.3.1.** Health issues
 - 11.3.2.** Education
 - 11.3.3.** Birthday
- 11.4.** I see the father of the child/children few times a year when he gives his financial contribution
- 11.5.** Other personal comment

12. The relationship of the lone mother with her parents

(You can select more than one option depending on your situation).

- 12.1.** My parents have supported me and my child/children a lot
- 12.2.** My parents contribute financially towards the wellbeing of me and my child/children
- 12.3.** My parents take care of my child/children when I am at work
- 12.4.** My parents take care of my child/children when I am attending any qualification course
- 12.5.** My parents take care of my child/children occasionally, when I go out with my friends
- 12.6.** My parents can not support me due to:
- 12.6.1.** Are ashamed for what happened
 - 12.6.2.** Have cut all contact with me
 - 12.6.3.** Are not in a position to help me
- 12.7.** In general my parents do not interfere with anything, but if I ask them for help they offer the best they can
- 12.8.** Other personal comment

13. The relationship of the lone mother with her parents-in-law

(You can select more than one option depending on your situation)

- 13.1. My parents-in-law have supported me and my child/children a lot
- 13.2. My parents-in-law contribute financially towards the wellbeing of me and my child/children
- 13.3. My parents-in-law take care of my child/children when I am at work
- 13.4. My parents-in-law take care of my child/children when I am attending any qualification course
- 13.5. My parents-in-law do not have the possibility to help me and my child/children
- 13.6. My parents-in-law and myself maintain no contact
- 13.7. Other personal comment

14. Support from siblings

(You can select more than one option depending on your situation).

- 14.1. My siblings help me a lot to take care of my child/children
- 14.2. My siblings occasionally help me to take care of my child/children in case of special events
- 14.3. My siblings have no possibility to support me and my child/children as they have many problems of their own
- 14.4. Other personal comment

15. Social network support (friends, cousins, colleagues, etc.) (Answer only in cases when it applies to your situation).

- 15.1. My friends occasionally help me to take care of my child/children
- 15.2. My neighbours occasionally help me to take care of my child/children
- 15.3. My colleagues occasionally help me to take care of my child/children when I need to work longer hours
- 15.4. Other personal comment

16. Employer's support

- 16.1. Employer is tolerant about the hours I take off when my child/children are sick
- 16.2. Employer is not sensitive in allowing me to combine care time for children with working hours
- 16.3. Employer contributes a partial subsidy for the day-care of my child
- 16.4. I lost my previous job because I was not able to combine caring time with working hours
- 16.5. I have lost some job opportunities because I could not respond to the hours I was required to be at work due to caring responsibilities
- 16.6. Other personal comment

17. The relationship with the society as a lone mother

(Chose the optional answers only if they respond to your situation. You can select more than one option depending on your situation. Question for all the groups of lone mothers)

- 17.1. I feel prejudiced by the society due to ...
- 17.2. I do not feel prejudiced by the society, on the contrary
- 17.3. My child/children are sometimes called names in school or the neighbourhood because of being a child of divorced parents (if this happens please explain in more details)
- 17.4. In your perception, what is the image of a good mother or parent in the Albanian society?
- 17.5. Other personal comment

18. The relationship of the lone mother with her child/children

(Question for all the groups of lone mothers. Select the alternative option which is more relevant to your situation)

- 18.1. I have been able to create a healthy relationship with my child/children
- 18.2. It has been difficult for me to create a positive image of their father to my child/children
- 18.3. My child/children blame me for difficulties they face in life
- 18.4. My child/children have become mediators between myself and their father when it is time to take important decisions together
- 18.5. My child/children often ask me to talk about their father
- 18.6. Other personal comment

19.1. The relation of my child/child with the biological father in case the father did not accept him/her from the very beginning or parents where co-living together and got separated before the child was born

- 19.1.1. My child does not know his/her father
- 19.1.2. I have never talked to my child about his/her father
- 19.1.3. I have tried to create a good image for his/her father
- 19.1.4. Other personal comment

19.2. The relation of my child/children with their biological father after divorce or abandonment

- 19.2.1. My child/children meet regularly with their father
- 19.2.2. My child/children meet their father any time they want to
- 19.2.3. My child/children currently have no contact with the father
- 19.2.4. Other personal comment

20. Lone mother's feelings about her self-power and strength

20.1. Do you think you have created special abilities to combine care-time and work hours compared to married mothers?

20.1.a. Yes

20.1.b. No

If yes, please explain or give any example why do you think so.

20.2. Do you feel you are more equipped to judge your child/children needs compared to married mothers?

20.2.a. Yes

20.2.b. No

If yes, please explain or give any example why do you think so.

20.3. Do you feel you are more in control of your child/children as compared to married mothers?

20.3.a. Yes

20.3.b. No

If yes, please explain or give any example why do you think so..

20.4. What do you think are those special qualities in your character that make you stronger in front of your child/children, former husband/partner, family and the society in general? What qualities of yourself which keep you go moving ahead do you value more in yourself? Please explain

21. The evaluation of the situation from lone mothers themselves about moments when they needed to combine the care time and work hours (Question for lone mothers whose children are aged 1-12 years old)

21.1. Compared to other married working mothers, are you in a more difficult situation when you need to combine care time and work hours? Please explain in more details

21.1.a. Yes

21.1.b. No

21.2. How do you feel, and how do you solve situations when you cannot find anybody to take care of your child/children when you need to go to work?

21.3. Other personal comment

22. The expectancies of lone mothers from the local and central government

22.1. What are your expectations from the local government or other policy-makers who work and draft social policies which can have an impact on and improve your situation? What is it that you really need and you think the government can provide you with?

22.2. Do you think that social policies undertaken by the state can influence your personal or job choices in a considerable way? Please explain in details.

22.2.a. Yes

22.2.b. No

22.3. Which assistance do you prefer, assistance offered from the state, the NPOs, the employers or from family members?

22.3.a. state

22.3.b. NPO

22.3.c. employer

22.3.d. family members

22.4. Or would you rather prefer a combination of all the above-mentioned actors?

Please explain in details if you can.

23. Expectations of lone mothers from the NPO

23.1. What expectancies do you have from NPOs or religious organizations that you think can meet your needs?

23.2. Do you think that better social policies undertaken by NPOs could influence your personal choices and the work choices in a considerable way, at least for a certain period of time?

23.2.a. Yes

23.2.b. No

If yes or no please explain why is that you think so.

23.3. Would you prefer social services offered by NPOs or the local government? Please explain the reasons behind your choice.

23.3.a. NPO

23.3.b. local government

23.4. Other personal comment

24. Your expectancies from the business community

(Question for lone mothers whose children are aged 1-12 years old)

24.1. Would you prefer it if your employer could implement? policies on flexible working hours when you are raising small children, your child is sick or have other major reasons when your presence is needed in the house or in the child's school?

24.1.a. Yes

24.1.b. No

If yes or no please explain why do you think the way you do.

24.2. If yes, are you aware that the flexible hour policy means a reduction of your monthly income. Do you agree on having flexible working hours and receive lower payment as a result?

24.2.a. Yes

24.2.b. No

If yes or no please explain why you think the way you do.

24.3. Are you prepared to pay a part out of your salary in order for your company, or the institution where you work, to create crèches or kindergarten for children of employees?

24.3.a. Yes

24.3.b. No

24.4. Other personal comment

Thank you for your time and for answering to these questions.

Sincerely yours, Arla Gruda

Appendix 1.3 List of interviews with lone mothers before 1990

Name and number of interviews	City or rural area of the interview	Date of the interview	Local women organizations which arranged interviews	Chapters where lone mothers are quoted
1. Anonimous1	Durrës	11.11.2013	Association of Women with Social Problems Durrës (AWSPD)	Dilja, 5 th and 7 th Chapter
2. Anonymous2	Durrës	04.02.2013	(AWSPD)	Donika, 7th Chapter
3. Anonymous3	Durrës	04.02.2013	(AWSPD)	
4. Anonymous4	Durrës	13.11.2013	Useful to Albanian Women, Durrës branch (UAWD)	
5. Anonymous5	Durrës-plazh	05.02.2013	(AWSPD)	
6. Anonymous6	Durrës	12.11.2013	(UAWD)	
7. Anonymous1	Elbasan	13.11.2012	Another Vision (AV)	Burbuqe, 5th Chapter
8. Anonymous2	Elbasan	12.11.2012	(AV)	
9. Anonymous3	Elbasan	15.11.2012	(AV)	Evgjenija, 7th chapter
10. Anonumous1	Fieri	09.11.2012	Youth Centre 'The New Epoch' (YCNE)	Irena, 7th Chapter
11. Anonymous2	Fieri	09.11.2012	(YCNE)	
12. Anonymous3	Fieri	09.11.2013	(YCNE)	
13. Anonymous4	Fieri	01.10.2013	(YCNE)	
14. Anonymous5	Fieri	01.10.2013	(YCNE)	
15. Anonymous1	Peshkopia	02.10.2013	Widow women Peshkopia	Sofika, 5th chapter
16. Anonymous1	Vlorë	16.10.2012	Vatra Centre	
17. Anonymous1	Berat	25.10.2012	'Women's Centre Berat' (WCB)	
18. Anonymous2	Berat	25.10.2012	(WCB)	
19. Anonymous3	Berat	26.10.2012	(WCB)	Luljeta, 7th chapter
20. Anonymous4	Berat	25.10.2012	(WCB)	
21. Anonymous1	Sarandë	11.10.2012	'Jona Centre' in Saranda city (JC)	
22. Anonymous2	Sarandë	10.10.2012	(JC)	
23. Anonymous3	Sarandë	10.11.2012	(JC)	
24. Anonymous4	Sarandë	09.10.2012	(JC)	
25. Anonymous1	Korçë	25.09.2012	'Embroyder's Association' (EA) in Korçë city	Malvina, 3 rd chapter
26. Anonymous2	Korçë	26.09.2012	(EA)	Tereza, 3 rd and 5 th chapter
27. Anonymous1	Pogradec	02.10.2012	'Me, the Woman' (MW) Pogradec city	
28. Anonymous2	Pogradec	04.10.2012	Association of Women with Social Problems Durrës (AWSPD), Pogradeci Branch	

Appendix 1.4 List of interviews with lone mothers after 1990

Number of the interview and the name of the lone mother	City or rural area of the interview	Date of the interview	Local women organizations which arranged interviews	Chapters where lone mothers are quoted
1. Anonymous1	Durrës	10.02.2013	Association of Women with Social Problems Durrës (AWSPD)	
2. Anonymous2	Durrës-Spita llë	08.02.2013	(AWSPD)	Falma, 7th chapter
3. Anonymous3	Durrës-Spita llë	08.02.2013	(AWSPD)	Brunilda, 7th chapter
4. Anonymous4	Durrës	04.02.2013	(AWSPD)	
5. Anonymous5	Durrës	13.11.2013	Useful to Albanian Women, Durrës branch (UAWD)	
6. Anonymous6	Durrës	08.02.2013	(AWSPD)	
7. Anonymous7	Durrës	13.11.2013	(UAWD)	
8. Anonymous8	Durrës	04.02.2013	(AWSPD)	
9. Anonymous9	Durrës	08.02.2013	(AWSPD)	
10. Anonymous10	Durrës	15.11.2013	(UAWD)	
11. Anonymous11	Durrës	13.02.2013	(AWSPD)	
12. Anonymous12	Durrës	11.11.2013	(UAWD)	
13. Anonymous13	Durrës-Kavajë	07.02.2013	(AWSPD)	Arta, 7th chapter
14. Anonymous14	Durrës	13.02.2013	(AWSPD)	Klarita, 7th chapter
15. Anonymous15	Durrës	13.02.2013	(AWSPD)	
16. Anonymous16	Durrës	15.11.2013	(UAWD)	Xheni, 7th chapter
17. Anonymous17	Durrës	18.02.2013	(AWSPD)	Stela, 7th chapter
18. Anonymous18	Durrës	05.02.2013	(AWSPD)	Redona, 7th chapter
19. Anonymous19	Durrës-Shijak	10.02.2013	(AWSPD)	Nazife, 7th chapter
20. Anonymous20	Durrës	13.02.2013	(AWSPD)	
21. Anonymous21	Durrës	07.02.2013	(AWSPD)	
22. Anonymous22	Durrës	18.02.2013	(AWSPD)	
23. Anonymous23	Durrës	16.11.2013	(UAWD)	Olta, 7th chapter
24. Anonymous24	Durrës-Spita llë	13.02.2013	(AWSPD)	
25. Anonymous25	Durrës	08.02.2013	(AWSPD)	
26. Anonymous26	Durrës	15.11.2013	(UAWD)	Ornela, 7th chapter

Number of the interview and the name of the lone mother	City or rural area of the interview	Date of the interview	Local women organizations which arranged interviews	Chapters where lone mothers are quoted
27. Anonymous27	Durrës	12.11.2013	(UAWD)	Elida, 7th chapter
28. Anonymous28	Durrës	04.02.2013	(AWSPD)	Nadire, 7th chapter
29. Anonymoys29	Durrës-Spitallë	18.02.2013	(AWSPD)	Durime, 7th chapter
30. Anonymous30	Durrës	08.02.2013	(AWSPD)	
31. Anonymous31	Durrës	14.02.2013	(AWSPD)	
32. Anonymous32	Durrës	15.11.2013	(UAWD)	
33. Anonymous33	Durrës	04.02.2013	(AWSPD)	
34. Anonymous34	Durrës-Porto-Romano	07.02.2013	(AWSPD)	
35. Anonymous35	Durrës-Shijak	04.02.2013	(AWSPD)	
36. Anonymous36	Durrës	16.11.2013	(UAWD)	
37. Anonymous37	Durrës	05.02.2013	(AWSPD)	
38. Anonymous38	Durrës	05.02.2013	(AWSPD)	
39. Anonymous39	Durrës	10.02.2013	(AWSPD)	
40. Anonymous40	Durrës-Spitallë	08.02.2013	(AWSPD)	
41. Anonymous41	Durrës	19.02.2013	(AWSPD)	
42. Anonymous42	Durrës	13.02.2013	(AWSPD)	
43. Anonymous43	Durrës	15.11.2013	(UAWD)	
44. Anonymous44	Durrës	05.02.2013	(AWSPD)	
45. Anonymous45	Durrës	07.02.2013	(AWSPD)	
46. Anonymous46	Durrës-Nishtulla	07.02.2013	(AWSPD)	
47. Anonymous47	Durrës	10.02.2013	(AWSPD)	
48. Anonymous48	Durrës	10.02.2013	(AWSPD)	
49. Anonymous49	Durrës	12.09.2013	(UAWD)	Xhuli, 7th chapter
50. Anonymous50	Durrës	13.02.2013	(AWSPD)	Saimira, 7th chapter
51. Anonymous51	Durrës	13.02.2013	(AWSPD)	
52. Anonymous52	Durrës	13.02.2013	(AWSPD)	
53. Anonymous53	Durrës	14.02.2013	(AWSPD)	Besa, 7th chapter
54. Anonymous54	Durrës	18.02.2013	(AWSPD)	Bardha, 7th chapter
55. Anonymous55	Durrës	18.02.2013	(AWSPD)	
56. Anonymous56	Durrës	15.11.2013	(UAWD)	Lediana, 7th chapter
57. Anonymous57	Durrës	12.11.2013	(UAWD)	

Number of the interview and the name of the lone mother	City or rural area of the interview	Date of the interview	Local women organizations which arranged interviews	Chapters where lone mothers are quoted
58. Anonymous58	Durrës	12.11.2013	(UAWD)	
59. Anonymous59	Durrës	11.11.2013	(UAWD)	
60. Anonymous60	Durrës	11.11.2013	(UAWD)	Vjollca, 7th chapter
61. Anonymous61	Durrës	15.11.2013	(UAWD)	
62. Anonymous62	Durrës	12.11.2013	(UAWD)	
63. Anonymous63	Durrës	11.11.2013	(UAWD)	
64. Anonymous64	Durrës	03.12.2013	(UAWD)	
65. Anonymous1	Elbasan	15.11.2012	Another Vision (AV)	
66. Anonymous2	Elbasan	16.11.2012	(AV)	Violeta, 7th chapter
67. Anonymous3	Elbasan	12.11.2012	(AV)	
68. Anonymous4	Elbasan	16.11.2012	(AV)	
69. Anonymous5	Elbasan	14.11.2012	(AV)	
70. Anonymous6	Elbasan	15.11.2012	(AV)	Silvi, 7th chapter
71. Anonymous7	Elbasan	12.11.2012	(AV)	
72. Anonymous8	Elbasan	15.11.2012	(AV)	Daniela, 7th chapter
73. Anonymous9	Elbasan	12.11.2012	(AV)	
74. Anonymous10	Elbasan	16.11.2012	(AV)	
75. Anonymous11	Elbasan	15.11.2012	(AV)	
76. Anonymous12	Elbasan	16.11.2012	(AV)	
77. Anonymous13	Elbasan	15.11.2012	(AV)	
78. Anonymous14	Elbasan-Mliz	13.11.2012	(AV)	
79. Anonymous15	Elbasan-Bradashesh	16.11.2012	(AV)	Blerina, 7th chapter
80. Anonymous16	Elbasan	15.11.2012	(AV)	Evisi, 7th chapter
81. Anonymous17	Elbasan	16.11.2012	(AV)	
82. Anonymous18	Elbasan	13.11.2012	(AV)	
83. Anonymous19	Elbasan-Shushicë	13.11.2012	(AV)	
84. Anonymous20	Elbasan	12.11.2012	(AV)	
85. Anonymous21	Elbasan	12.11.2012	(AV)	Delina, 7th chapter
86. Anonymous22	Elbasan	11.11.2012	(AV)	Dajana, 5th and 7th chapter
87. Anonymous23	Elbasan-Shushicë	13.11.2012	(AV)	Sevimi, 7th chapter

Number of the interview and the name of the lone mother	City or rural area of the interview	Date of the interview	Local women organizations which arranged interviews	Chapters where lone mothers are quoted
88. Anonymous24	Elbasan-Mliz	13.11.2012	(AV)	Valdete, 7th chapter
89. Anonymous25	Elbasan-Mliz	13.11.2012	(AV)	
90. Anonymous26	Elbasan -Cërrik	15.11.2012	(AV)	
91. Anonymous27	Elbasan	15.11.2012	(AV)	Ervin, 7th chapter
92. Anonymous28	Elbasan	15.11.2012	(AV)	
93. Anonymous29	Elbasan	16.11.2012	(AV)	
94. Anonymous30	Elbasan	16.11.2012	(AV)	
95. Anonymous1	Fier	05.11.2012	Youth Centre 'The New Epoch' (YCNE)	
96. Anonymous2	Fier	08.11.2012	(YCNE)	
97. Anonymous3	Fier-Radostin Vadhiza	08.11.2012	(YCNE)	Adriana, 7th chapter
98. Anonymous4	Fier	09.11.2013	(YCNE)	Katerina, 7th chapter
99. Anonymous5	Fier-Radostin Vadhiza	08.11.2012	(YCNE)	Nevila, 7th chapter
100. Anonymous6	Fier	05.11.2012	(YCNE)	
101. Anonymous7	Fier	08.11.2013	(YCNE)	Kseanela, 7th chapter
102. Anonymous8	Fier-Levan	09.11.2012	(YCNE)	
103. Anonymous9	Fier-Radostin Vadhiza	08.11.2012	(YCNE)	
104. Anonymous10	Fier	06.11.2012	(YCNE)	
105. Anonymous11	Fier	06.11.2012	(YCNE)	
106. Anonymous12	Fier	06.11.2012	(YCNE)	
107. Anonymous13	Fier	05.11.2012	(YCNE)	
108. Anonymous14	Fier-Sheq i madh	06.11.2012	(YCNE)	
109. Anonymous15	Fier	08.11.2012	(YCNE)	
110. Anonymous16	Fier	09.11.2012	(YCNE)	
111. Anonymous17	Fier	09.11.2012	(YCNE)	
112. Anonymous18	Fier	05.11.2012	(YCNE)	
113. Anonymous19	Fier	05.11.2012	(YCNE)	
114. Anonymous20	Fier	05.11.2012	(YCNE)	

Number of the interview and the name of the lone mother	City or rural area of the interview	Date of the interview	Local women organizations which arranged interviews	Chapters where lone mothers are quoted
115. Anonymous21	Fier	05.11.2012	(YCNE)	
116. Anonymous22	Fier-Sheq i Madh	05.11.2012	(YCNE)	
117. Anonymous23	Fier-Libofsh	08.11.2012	(YCNE)	
118. Anonymous24	Fier-Radostin Vadhiza	08.11.2012	(YCNE)	
119. Anonymous1	Shkodër	09.10.2013	'Light Steps' in Shkodra city (LS)	
120. Anonymous2	Shkodër	08.10.2013	(LS)	
121. Anonymous3	Shkodër	07.10.2103	(LS)	
122. Anonymous4	Shkodër	10.10.2013	(LS)	
123. Anonymous5	Shkodër	08.10.2013	(LS)	Loreta, 7th chapter
124. Anonymous6	Shkodër	09.10.2013	(LS)	
125. Anonymous7	Shkodër	07.10.2013	(LS)	Juliana, 7th chapter
126. Anonymous8	Shkodër	08.10.2013	(LS)	
127. Anonymous9	Shkodër	07.10.2013	(LS)	Elona, 6th chapter
128. Anonymous10	Shkodër	09.10.2013	(LS)	
129. Anonymous11	Shkodër	09.10.2013	(LS)	
130. Anonymous12	Shkodër	07.10.2013	(LS)	
131. Anonymous13	Shkodër	09.10.2013	(LS)	Esi, 3rd chapter
132. Anonymous14	Shkodër	08.10.2013	(LS)	
133. Anonymous15	Shkodër	08.10.2013	(LS)	
134. Anonymous16	Shkodër	08.10.2013	(LS)	
135. Anonymous17	Shkodër	07.10.2013	(LS)	
136. Anonymous18	Shkodër	08.10.2013	(LS)	
137. Anonymous19	Shkodër	09.10.2013	(LS)	Nesi, 7th chapter
138. Anonymous20	Shkodër	08.10.2013	(LS)	
139. Anonymous21	Shkodër	07.10.2013	(LS)	
140. Anonymous22	Shkodër	09.10.2013	(LS)	
141. Anonymous23	Shkodër	07.10.2013	(LS)	
142. Anonymous24	Shkodër	08.10.2013	(LS)	
143. Anonymous25	Shkodër-Shtoji vjetër	08.10.2013	(LS)	
144. Anonymous26	Shkodër	09.10.2013	(LS)	
145. Anonymous27	Shkodër	09.10.2013	(LS)	

Number of the interview and the name of the lone mother	City or rural area of the interview	Date of the interview	Local women organizations which arranged interviews	Chapters where lone mothers are quoted
146. Anonymous1	Peshkopi-Pejke	03.10.2013	'Woman-mother and educator' in Peshkopia city (WME) 'Widow Association' in Peshkopia city (WA)	
147. Anonymous2	Peshkopi	03.10.2013	(WME)	
148. Anonymous3	Peshkopi	01.10.2013	(WA)	
149. Anonymous4	Peshkopi	01.10.2013	(WA)	
150. Anonymous5	Peshkopi-Komuna Melan	01.10.2013	(WA)	
151. Anonymous6	Peshkopi-Lishan i Poshtëm	01.10.2013	(WA)	
152. Anonymous7	Peshkopi	03.10.2013	(WA)	
153. Anonymous8	Peshkopi-Komuna Kastriot	01.10.2013	(WA)	
154. Anonymous9	Peshkopi	02.10.2013	(WME)	
155. Anonymous10	Peshkopi-Komuna Kastriot	01.10.2013	(WA)	
156. Anonymous11	Peshkopi	03.10.2013	(WA)	
157. Anonymous12	Peshkopi	03.10.2013	(WA)	
158. Anonymous13	Peshkopi-Komuna Melan	01.10.2013	(WA)	
159. Anonymous14	Peshkopi	02.10.2013	(WA)	
160. Anonymous15	Peshkopi	03.10.2013	(WA)	
161. Anonymous16	Peshkopi	01.10.2013	(WA)	Zamira, 7th chapter
162. Anonymous17	Peshkopi	02.10.2013	(WA)	Alisa, 7th chapter
163. Anonymous18	Peshkopi-Kishavec	03.10.2013	(WA)	
164. Anonymous19	Peshkopi-Kishavec	01.10.2013	(WA)	
165. Anonymous20	Peshkopi	02.10.2013	(WA)	Julinda, 7th chapter
166. Anonymous21	Peshkopi	04.10.2013	(WA)	
167. Anonymous22	Peshkopi	04.10.2013	(WA)	

Number of the interview and the name of the lone mother	City or rural area of the interview	Date of the interview	Local women organizations which arranged interviews	Chapters where lone mothers are quoted
168. Anonymous1	Vlorë	15.10.2012	'Vatra Centre' (VC) in Vlova city	
169. Anonymous2	Vlorë-Kërkovë	16.10.2012	(VC)	
170. Anonymous3	Vlorë	15.10.2012	(VC)	
171. Anonymous4	Vlorë	16.10.2012	(VC)	
172. Anonymous5	Vlorë-Kërkovë	19.10.2012	(VC)	Klodiana, 7th chapter
173. Anonymous6	Vlorë	18.10.2012	(VC)	
174. Anonymous7	Vlorë-Kërkovë	19.10.2012	(VC)	
175. Anonymous8	Vlorë	15.10.2012	(VC)	
176. Anonymous9	Vlorë	16.10.2012	(VC)	
177. Anonymous10	Vlorë	17.10.2012	(VC)	
178. Anonymous11	Vlorë	18.10.2012	(VC)	
179. Anonymous12	Vlorë	18.10.2012	(VC)	Yllka, 7th chapter
180. Anonymous13	Vlorë	17.10.2012	(VC)	
181. Anonymous14	Vlorë-Kërkovë	19.10.2012	(VC)	
182. Anonymous15	Vlorë	15.10.2012	(VC)	
183. Anonymous16	Vlorë-Kërkovë	19.10.2012	(VC)	Inva, 7th chapter
184. Anonymous17	Vlorë	16.10.2012	(VC)	
185. Anonymous18	Vlorë	15.10.2012	(VC)	
186. Anonymous19	Vlorë	16.10.2012	(VC)	
187. Anonymous20	Vlorë	17.10.2012	(VC)	
188. Anonymous21	Vlorë	17.10.2012	(VC)	
189. Anonymous22	Vlorë	17.10.2012	(VC)	
190. Anonymous23	Vlorë	17.10.2012	(VC)	
191. Anonymous1	Berat	25.10.2012	'Women's Centre Berat' (WCB)	
192. Anonymous2	Berat	26.10.2012	(WCB)	
193. Anonymous3	Berat	28.10.2012	(WCB)	
194. Anonymous4	Berat	28.10.2012	(WCB)	
195. Anonymous5	Berat	28.10.2012	(WCB)	
196. Anonymous6	Berat	26.10.2012	(WCB)	
197. Anonymous7	Berat	26.10.2012	(WCB)	Bruna, 5th and 7th chapter
198. Anonymous8	Berat	26.10.2012	(WCB)	

Number of the interview and the name of the lone mother	City or rural area of the interview	Date of the interview	Local women organizations which arranged interviews	Chapters where lone mothers are quoted
199. Anonymous9	Berat	26.10.2012	(WCB)	
200. Anonymous10	Berat	26.10.2012	(WCB)	
201. Anonymous11	Berat	25.10.2012	(WCB)	Mirjeta, 7th chapter
202. Anonymous12	Berat	26.10.2012	(WCB)	
203. Anonymous13	Berat	26.10.2012	(WCB)	
204. Anonymous14	Berat	28.10.2012	(WCB)	
205. Anonymous15	Berat	29.10.2012	(WCB)	
206. Anonymous16	Berat	29.10.2012	(WCB)	
207. Anonymous17	Berat	25.10.2012	(WCB)	
208. Anonymous18	Berat	28.10.2012	(WCB)	
209. Anonymous1	Sarandë	10.10.2012	'Jona Centre' in Saranda city (JC)	
210. Anonymous2	Sarandë	08.10.2012	(JC)	Kostanca, 5th chapter
211. Anonymous3	Sarandë	10.10.2012	(JC)	
212. Anonymous4	Sarandë	11.10.2012	(JC)	
213. Anonymous5	Sarandë	12.10.2012	(JC)	
214. Anonymous6	Sarandë	13.10.2012	(JC)	
215. Anonymous7	Sarandë	10.10.2012	(JC)	
216. Anonymous8	Sarandë	09.10.2012	(JC)	
217. Anonymous9	Sarandë	09.10.2012	(JC)	
218. Anonymous10	Sarandë	09.10.2012	(JC)	
219. Anonymous11	Sarandë	09.10.2012	(JC)	
220. Anonymous12	Sarandë	09.20.2012	(JC)	
221. Anonymous13	Sarandë	08.10.2012	(JC)	
222. Anonymous14	Sarandë	09.10.2012	(JC)	
223. Anonymous1	Korçë	25.09.2012	'Embroyder's Association' (EA) in Korçë city	
224. Anonymous2	Korçë	2509.2012	(EA)	
225. Anonymous3	Korçë	25.09.2012	(EA)	
226. Anonymous4	Korçë	15.10.2012	(EA)	
227. Anonymous5	Korçë	26.09.2012	(EA)	
228. Anonymous6	Korçë	27.09.2012	(EA)	
229. Anonymous7	Korçë	26.09.2012	(EA)	
230. Anonymous8	Korçë	25.09.2012	(EA)	

Number of the interview and the name of the lone mother	City or rural area of the interview	Date of the interview	Local women organizations which arranged interviews	Chapters where lone mothers are quoted
231. Anonymous9	Korçë	29.09.2012	(EA)	
232. Anonymous10	Korçë	27.09.2012	(EA)	
233. Anonymous11	Korçë	24.09.2012	(EA)	
234. Anonymous12	Korçë	25.09.2012	(EA)	
235. Anonymous1	Pogradec	29.09.2012	Association of Women with Social Problems Dur-rës (AWSPD), Pogradeci Branch; 'Me, the Woman' (MW) Pogradec city	
236. Anonymous2	Pogradec	02.10.2012	(AWSPD)	
237. Anonymous3	Pogradec	03.10.2012	(MW)	
238. Anonymous4	Pogradec	04.10.2012	(AWSPD)	
239. Anonymous5	Pogradec	02.10.2012	(AWSPD)	
240. Anonymous6	Pogradec	04.10.2012	(AWSPD)	

Appendix 2 Interviews with representatives of women NPO's and religious institutions

Appendix 2.1 Questionnaire for representatives of women NPO's

Introduction to the questionnaire

In the framework of the PhD research on “*Lone mothers and welfare policies in Albania. Conditions, experiences and expectations, 1944-2013*”, pursued at Utrecht University, the Netherlands, I am conducting a survey using face to face or online interviews with representatives of local women organizations in 11 Qarks in North, South and Central Albania. This research on lone mothers is pursued in cooperation with the Independent Forum for the Albanian Woman and under the academic guidance of Prof. Dr. Berteke Waaldijk (The Netherlands) and Dr. Saemira Gjipali (Pino) (Albania).

This survey intends to observe the role of organizations which work on gender issues in providing social and facilitating services to lone mothers (women householders) and their children, which are under un-favourable social and economic situations. In the category of lone mothers I include the mothers who are going through divorce, are divorced, are violated and heading towards divorce, widows, separated, abandoned and teenage lone mothers.

Another important aim of this survey is to find out, and highlight, the financial difficulties these organizations face from their establishment to maintain their profile in providing ongoing services to communities they operate. It also intends to identify and expose the new services for women in general and lone mothers in particular that these organizations have provided over the recent years, taken the socio-economic development change in the country. The next paragraph is very difficult to edit because I don't know what you want to say: The efforts in fund-raising among International donors, and in the last years in the National Financial Instrument for Civil Society, or municipalities for decentralized services are a well-known fact in Albania. For this reason it is necessary to address these financial struggles and needs, which affect the local programs of the organizations to meet the local needs of women in general and lone mothers in particular, taken the international agendas of bilateral and multilateral donors.

In the last decade one has noticed a positive effort of organizations working in gender issues in Albania to unify their capabilities and expertise in coalition together in order to influence political agendas to increase the representation of women in local and central decision-making. The expertise power of these coalitions and women organizations is as well observed in drafting national strategies on gender equality and social services, or evaluating and negotiating amendments to current laws on gender rights and domestic violence in Albania. The Ministry of Labour, Social Affairs and Equal Opportunities has established a positive model of cooperation with non-for-profit organizations for participatory-processes aiming policy-drafting, policy-making processes and drafting strategies. This background and cooperation with the Ministry of Labour will be part of the questionnaire to understand the lobbying and advocacy experiences and the power of women organizations in these participatory processes.

Supporting the fact that non-for-profit organizations in Albania are the best me-

diators between the communities they represent and the local governments, this questionnaire intends to gather information on the governmental hierarchies that civil organizations need to overcome to bring the voice of their communities to policy and decision-makers.

A future aim of this questionnaire is to make the voice of women organizations which work on gender issues in Albania visible, in international academic and civil society networks.

Since the data required are of a public concern and for public consumption, and since the non-for-profit organizations operate with a code of conduct of pro transparency of their services and funds allocated, the full names and surnames of representatives of local governments who were interviewed will be made public in the written text.

Questionnaire

First part: general information on the representative person and the organization she represents

1. Please give your full name, surname and your age.
2. What is your position in this organization? For how long have you been in this position? What was your previous position in this organization? Where have you been working prior to starting your engagement in the civil society sector?
3. When was your organization established? What were the priorities and programmatic areas in the first years of activity of this organization? What were the services provided by your organization in its early years? What were the first donors (please list them according to the services they covered) that supported your services financially in its first years?
4. Has your organization changed donors for the same services that you provide from its establishment until today? If yes, why do you think the previous donor did not continue to support these services in the communities you operate?
5. Have your priorities and programmatic areas of operation changed in the last years due to socio-economic changes of the community you work for? If yes, what were the services you provided over the last years and who are the international and national donors that support your new projects?
6. What is the relationship of your organization with other local and central organizations which have similar areas of operation as you do? Is your organization part of any national coalition on gender equality issues, operating as networks of non-for-profit organizations? If yes, can you provide me with information on which coalitions are you member of?
7. Is your organization part of any international coalition or network that has similar areas of priority as yours? If yes can you please list them?
8. According to your opinion and knowledge are the women you provide services for satisfied with the services you provide them with? Please explain and give informative arguments on your answer.
9. Does your organization have a strategy in place to gather women's opinion on the level of satisfaction they have with the services you provide to them? Can you ex-

plain your strategy in more detail if you have one?

10. In what year did you hear about gender concepts for the first time, and from which organizations or experts did you receive the first training on gender and gender mainstreaming?
11. Does your organization itself have organized trainings on gender rights and gender mainstreaming?

Second part: lone mothers (women householders and services provided)

12. What do you understand under the terminology of women householders? What about lone mothers? What you categorize as groups within these categories of women?
13. Does your organization have a strategy to conduct need's assessment surveys for the categories of women you operate in your region? If yes can you explain what approach do you follow in assessing these needs?
14. How do you interpret and represent the needs of these women in dialogue with the media, in citizen's council or municipal council in the district you operate? How do you lobby and advocate for these needs with central and local government?
15. How do you lobby and advocate for these needs with the international donor's community? What about the national donors and the business community?
16. How much is the work with lone mothers (women householders) and their children part of your activity? What are the assisting and facilitating services you provided to this category of mothers?
17. In your knowledge, what are the services the local government provides to lone mothers and their children?
18. In your experience, how difficult do you think it is to perform fund-raising for lone mothers by the international and national donor community?
19. In your experience, do you wait to be invited by local government to address and expose the needs of lone mothers you work for in your community, or do you have your lobbying-negotiating strategy as an organization? Can you explain?
20. Have representatives from your organization (leaders, employees, experts, volunteers) been part of consultative participatory processes with the Ministry of Labour, or other ministries in drafting the National Strategy on Gender Equality or drafting law proposals which target the women and lone mothers you represent directly? If yes, can you please list in which of these processes you participated?

If yes, what materials do you bring and negotiate for, and argue in the consulting round tables to address the needs of women and lone mothers you represent?

21. Does the municipality or the qark in which you operate organize participatory processes and, if yes, how often? Do you trust the processes organized by the ministry or by the local government more?
22. In your experience, does the municipality or ministry that invites you as an organization in consultative participatory processes has a guide or code of conduct in place to organize such processes, and gather and evaluate the information you pro-

- vide on the needs of the communities?
23. Does your organization accept invitations to consultative participatory processes for purpose of policy-drafting or national-strategies-drafting when they are financed initiatives or do you have your own budget to cover your participation in these activities?
 24. Up to what level do you think that the participation of organizations which work on gender issues is taken into consideration in influencing the drafting of social policies, or the social agendas of action-plan for respective ministries? Can you explain how effective you think your influence as an organization has been in such processes, concerning the situation of lone mothers?
 25. Do you have an information database with contact details of lone mothers you provide services for? Do you share these contact lists with local or central government as a prove proof? I don't know what you mean here... of lone mothers who need assistance?
 26. Do you as an organization have adequate human resources which are well-informed and have worked directly with communities, and are trained in project proposal writing, or are the project proposals mostly a response to international donor calls for proposals and strategies?
 27. What new alternatives would you initiate to raise funds for lone mothers in Albania, taken that international donors are always and more directing their attention to other countries with lower economic standards?
 28. Is there anything else you would like to add about how you can improve the situation of lone mothers (women householders) in your community?
 29. Would you consider the work of organizations working on gender rights in Albania as a social feminist movement or no? If yes or no, can you provide an argumentation to your answer.
 30. In studies of the last decades by Eastern European scholars the issue of an 'imposed cultural feminism' on local women organizations was raised by American and US cultural feminism through policies of international donors. Taken into consideration that the local women organizations in Albania are dependent also on international donors to survive, and knowing that in most of the cases the multilateral and bilateral donors have their international agendas translated to local ones, do organizations need to adjust their proposals as a response to international strategies rather than the local needs? Do you think that in Albania we also had a partially 'imposed cultural feminism'? Can you explain your answer in more detail?

Thank you for your time, your information and your attention! Arla Gruda

Appendix 2.2 Questionnaire for representatives of religious institutions

Introduction

In the framework of the PhD research on “*Lone mothers and welfare policies in Albania. Conditions, experiences and expectations, 1944-2013*”, pursued at Utrecht University, the Netherlands, I am conducting a survey using face to face interviews with representatives of religious institutions in 10 Qarks of Albania. This research on lone mothers is pursued in cooperation with the Independent Forum for the Albanian Woman and under the academic guidance of Prof. Dr. Berteke Waaldijk (The Netherlands) and Dr. Saemira Gjipali (Pino) (Albania).

This survey tries to ascertain the role of religious institutions/organizations in Albania on providing charity services to their community. The questions intend to identify the type of charity that is provided to lone mothers (widow, divorced, separated, abandoned) and their children who live in persistent poverty. Parallel to this, this survey also aims to observe the cooperation of religious institutions with municipalities, line ministries, and business community and women organizations in the region in which they operate.

Questionnaire

1. Please give your full name, surname and your age.
2. What is your position in this institute/organization (mosque, church, religious organizations)? For how long are you have been leading it or are you employed by this institute?
3. When was your institute/organization established? What are the charity services that your organization provides to the community you work in?
4. What is the juridical status of your religious institute? In my knowledge, apart from the regulation code of the national religious institute you are part of, you also operate as a non-for-profit organization and function under the regulatory framework of the civil society sector in Albania, is this true?
5. What are the international and national donors that financially support your charity programs?
6. What is the definition of ‘families in need’ for which you provide charity? Are widowed, divorced or abandoned mothers and their children part of your charity programs? Can you provide information on what you concretely offer these categories of women and their children?
7. Do you as a religious institute, and in your religion, differentiate between the statuses of being a widowed mother as compared to being a divorced mother? What about orphan children from one parent as compared to children of divorced parents?
8. Do you think that you will continue to provide these charity services, or create new programs based on the needs of the lone mothers and their children in your community in the future?
9. How does your institute/organization cooperate with the municipality or business

community for the charity services you provide?

10. Do you cooperate with local women organizations in the region you operate in and, if yes, in what areas does your cooperation consist of?
11. Does the municipality provides your institute/organization with a list of widowed and divorced women, who need more assistance than what they can provide?
12. Is your institute/organization invited by the municipality or the line ministries (Ministry of Labour, Education, Healthcare) in consultative participatory processes when they draft local and national strategies on social policies?
13. What do you think or how do you measure the satisfaction of the community or lone mothers with the services you provide for them?

Thank you for your time, your information and your attention!

Sincerely Yours, Arla Gruda

Appendix 2.3 The list of interviews with the following leaders of these women organizations:

1. Diana Çuli, President of the Independent Forum of Albanian Woman (IFWA). Interviewed on 15 October 2011.
2. Bajana Çeveli, Executive Director of the Association of Women with Social Problems Durres (AWSPD); Interviewed on 15 January 2012..
3. Brikena Puka, Executive Director of Vatra Centre (VC);
4. Interviewed on 10 October 2011. Lumturi Xhani, President of the 'Jona Centre' Sarande city (JC); Interviewed on 12 October 2012.
5. Etleva Tare, Leader of the 'Embroyders' Association, Korca city (EA); Interviewed on 28 September 2012.
6. Natasha Buzali, coordinator of the Association 'The Mother, the Children, the Future', Korca city (MCF); Interviewed on 29 September 2012.
7. Shega Murati, Leader of the Association 'The Voice of Children calls us', Tirana city (VC); Interviewed on 11 January 2012.
8. Sanije Batku, Leader of the Association 'Womam – mother and educator', Peshkopia city; Interviewed on 2 October 2013.
9. Marjana Meshi, Director "Different and Equal" Association. Interviewed in 13 January 2012.

Appendix 2.4 The listed of the filled in questionnaires online by the following representatives of women NPOs

1. Aurela Bozo, Project Coordinator of the 'Centre for Civic Legal Initiatives' (CCLI);
2. Online interview on January 2012.
3. Flutura Xhabija, President of the 'Association of Professional, Business and Art-craft' Women of Albania' (APBAWA); Online interview n February 2012.
4. Luljeta Hysa, Leader of the 'Women-headed families' Association (WHFA);
5. Afroviti Gusho, Leader of the 'Me, the Woman', Pogradec City (MW); Online interview in November 2012.
6. Luljeta Qose, Coordinator for the 'Women's Centre Elbasan' (WCE); Online interview in February 2012.
7. Suela Kurti, Project Coordinator for the 'Women's Forum Elbasan' (WFE); Online interview in March 2012.
8. Lefteri Kosova, Coordinator of the 'Women's Centre Berat' (WCB). Online interview in March 2012.
9. Marjeta Mazniku, Project Coordinator of the 'Association of Professional, Business and Art-craft' Women of Albania' (APBAWA). Online interview in February 2012.

Appendix 2.5 List of interviews with representatives of religious institutions and organizations

1. Father Richard, leader of 'Triumphant Life', Evangelical Church in Saranda City;

- Interviewed on 11 October 2012.
2. Ibrahim Bajrami, Executive Director of “Lydia Foundation” (A branch of a Christian Protestant Organization in the Netherlands “Come Over and Help”), in Saranda City; Interviewed on 13 October 2012.
 3. Haxhi Hito Shahaj, Myfti of ‘Plumbum Mosque’, in Vlora District; Interviewed on 15 October 2012.
 4. Arjan Emini, “Evangelical” Unity, in Elbasan city; Interviewed on 15 November 2012.
 5. Blerta Ranxha “Director of the Autocephalous Orthodox kindergarten for children”, in Elbasan city; Interviewed on 15 November 2012.
 6. Ermal Lushi, leader of the Evangelical Church “Alfa Omega” in Pekopia city; Interviewed on 3 October 2013.
 7. Muis Kurtalla, Mufti of Muslim Community in Dibra region; Interviewed on 4 October 2013.
 8. Anduela Kaba, Coordinator of World Vision, Peshkopia city; Interviewed on 3 October 2013.
 9. Bashkim Muhamet Muslija, lawyer of Muftinia (Muslim Community Institution) in Shkodra city.
 10. Lydia de Vries, former Dutch journalist for poor Albanian families. She coordinated the support to 400 poor families in Fieri city. Interviewed on 27 January 2013.
 11. Bas de Baarn, former professor of economy and philosophy at UVA, the Netherlands. Lydia’s colleague who helped to bring dental machineries and tools for Albanian dentists in Fieri city. Interviewed on 27 January 2013.

Appendix 3 Interviews with representatives of local governments

App. 3.1 The questionnaire for representatives of local governments

Introduction

In the framework of the PhD research on “*Lone mothers and welfare policies in Albania. Conditions, experiences and expectations, 1944-2013*”, pursued at Utrecht University, the Netherlands, I am conducting a survey using face to face interviews with lone mothers in ten Qarks of Albania. This research on lone mothers is undertaken in cooperation with the Independent Forum for the Albanian Woman and under the academic guidance of Prof. Dr. Berteke Waaldijk (The Netherlands) and Dr. Saemira Gjipali (Pino) (Albania).

The intention of this questionnaire is to track the application of social service delivery in local municipalities, and to ascertain the level of development of new social services provided by local governments for the category of lone mothers (women householders as categorized by law) who live together with their children in persistent poverty.

Decentralized services provided to children of poor families and of one parent families will be in the focus of this questionnaire, to understand the diversity of provided services. Parallel to this, the questionnaire aims to observe the institutional mechanisms which put in place the coordination of services between the local government and non-for-profit organizations.

In focus of this questionnaire is also the cooperation of the respective municipality

with the Ministry of Labor, Ministry of Education and Health-Care, the business community, the international and national donors, and the non-for-profit organizations to draft and coordinate together, new policies and social services for lone mothers and their children on a local level.

Since the data required and the institutional mechanisms used? are of public concern and for public consumption, and since in Albania the law on transparency towards citizens for public services offered is functional, the full names and surnames of representatives of local government who were interviewed will be made public in the written text.

First part of the questionnaire: General personal and institutional information

1. What is your name, surname and age?
2. What is your position in this department? How long have you held this position (weeks, months, years)? What has been your previous position in this municipality (if this is relevant in your situation). Where did you work before your engagement within the civil service sector?
3. Has your department gathered continuous data on families who have received economic aid over the last 20 years? If yes, do you share this data with other state and non-state institutions?
4. How many poor families have been assisted by your municipality, with economic aid from 2011 until this moment in time? How many of these families are headed by lone mothers?
5. With the data you possess, can you draw a comparison of the number of families assisted with economic aid by your department, from the moment of its application, during the decentralization of the service to today,?

Second part: Services provided to lone mothers (or women householders)

6. Does any additional fund exist, that your municipality creates from the annual budget to proceed with the economic aid for poor families, or are you always dependent on the state budget?
7. Has your municipality drafted any specific program for one parent families in the last years, especially those headed by women householders? If yes, can you give more information about the nature of this program, about its lifespan and the categories of women it targets?
8. Based on which data does your municipality draft programs for women householders? What is your strategy on gathering data and in listening to the needs of these families?
9. Do you consult the European Commission legal frameworks for social policies concerning social treatment of one parent families? If yes, do you receive the relevant directives of the European Commission from Line Ministries (Ministry of Labor, Ministry of Education, and Ministry of Healthcare) or does the social affairs lawyer in your municipality inform you of new programs covering priorities and needs of

the citizens conform to the European Commission standards?

10. If your municipality has drafted any specific program for the category of lone mothers (women householders), in your knowledge, has the relevant department or the department you represent consulted with women non-for-profit organizations before drafting this program? If yes, what were the provided materials from the representatives of non-for-profit organizations in advocating the needs of lone mothers?
11. What are the decentralized services for children coming from poor families and orphans for which your municipality is institutionally responsible?
12. Does your municipality has an institutional communication strategy in place to inform citizens on the services provided by you?
13. Do there exist citizen councils set up as independent bodies near your municipal council? If yes what is their role in communicating and advocating the needs of their communities including the needs of women householders (lone mothers)?

Third part: The cooperation with the business community, non-for-profit organizations and international donors for purpose of policy-making and development of new programs in support of women householders (lone mothers).

14. Does your municipality cooperate with the business community when you develop economic programs dependent on your annual budget, to support women householders (lone mothers)? Do you think the business community in your city is sensitive towards social responsibility?
15. Is your municipality institutionally responsible for vocational training programs or has it developed any program of its own via the annual budgeting spaces created? If yes, in your knowledge is there any specific program designed for lone mothers?
16. If lone mothers (women householders) take part in such a vocational training, what type of mechanisms have you developed to facilitate the training process for women who have to take care of young children?
17. Prior to, and after the participation in the vocational training program, have you, as a municipality set up cooperation agreements with the business sector operating in your district, to create employment opportunities for lone mothers? If yes, in your knowledge, what are the job opportunities offered to these women? How many of these women accept the job positions offered to them, and if not, what are their reasons to not accept? (I know that the employment questions are more relevant to the Regional Employment Office, but since you have joint meetings to discuss on many issues you maybe you will be able to provide some information on this).
18. Does your municipality have a specific social housing program in place for women householders (lone mothers)? If yes, can you provide me with the information on the number of women householders and their children who benefit from this program? How do you evaluate the difficulty of fulfilling the criteria to become part of social housing program for lone mothers and on which criteria do they fail to gain the status of a homeless family?
19. Does your municipality provide any financial subsidy for the education of children coming from women householders (lone mothers), depending on their age and the level of public education they have? If yes can you tell me more about this type of service?

20. Has your municipality drafted or applied the strategy of a citizen's card to measure the success or to improve on the social services and economic aid delivered to poor families, women householders or other groups of concern? If yes, for how many years have you been applying the citizen's card and how do you administrate and manage the citizen's complaints?
21. Do you think that women householders (lone mothers) who head their families are women with power and agency or do you view and categorize them as vulnerable due to the difficult financial situations they are in?
22. Does your municipality cooperate with International Donors which cover social programs you offer, and have you, until now, developed open tender procedures to delegate these services to non-for-profit organizations?
23. How often (times in years) does your department report to the Ministry of Labor, Social Affairs and Equal Opportunities, the Ministry of Education and Science and the Ministry of Healthcare, regarding the decentralized services you offer for the different categories women householders (lone mothers) are part of? When you prepare such reports, do you cooperate with non-for-profit organizations beforehand to receive a more information for purpose of need's argumentation?
24. What would be your recommendation to create a more positive and effective approach to the design and development of specific facilitating services to lone mothers between your municipality, non-profit organizations, business community, national and international donors?
25. Is there anything you would like to add or comment on concerning the improvement of the financial situation of women's householders who are unemployed and low educated in your community?

Thank you for your time, your information and your attention!

Appendix 3.2 questionnaire for the representative of the Social State Service

Introduction

In the framework of the PhD research on "*Lone mothers and welfare policies in Albania. Conditions, experiences and expectations, 1944-2013*", pursued in Utrecht University, the Netherlands, I am conducting an interview with the leadership of the Social State Service in Albania. This research on lone mothers is pursued in cooperation with the Independent Forum for the Albanian Woman and under the academic guidance of Prof. Dr. Berteke Waaldijk (The Netherlands) and Dr. Saemira Gjipali (Pino) (Albania). The intention of this interview is to highlight the development of social state services from the perspective of central policies, as concern the categories of women householders (lone mothers – divorced, single, separated, widow, abandoned, teenage) and their children, who live in persistent poverty level.

The questions aim to understand not only the diversity of provided services, but also the operation of institutional mechanisms which put in place the coordination of actions in service provision between the central and local governments and the inclusion of non-

for-profit organizations which have become part of some types of service provision.

This interview intends as well to observe the application of the amended law on economic aid from 2011 onwards, and what will be the future trend that this law will have in focus as left-wing policy orientation taken the fact of changing political regimes from democratic to social ones from September 2013.

Another crucial point that aims to emerge as information from these questions is the cooperation of the Social State Service with the Ministry of Labor, with the Regional Offices of State Service, with the Regional Employment Services, with the Ministry of Education, Ministry of Finance, Ministry of Health-care and the civil society in drafting and coordinating together necessary policies and services for women householders (lone mothers) in Albania. Since the data required and institutional mechanisms are of a public concern and for public consumption, and since in Albania is functional the law on transparency towards citizens for public services offered, the full names and surnames of the representatives of social state service who will be interviewed will be made public in the written text.

First part of the questionnaire: Personal and institutional general information

1. What your name, surname and your age?
2. What is your position in this department? For how long are you holding this position (weeks, months, years)? What has been your previous position in this municipality (if this is relevant for your case). Where have you been working before your engagement with the civil service sector?
3. Have your department gathered continuous data on families who have received economic aid in the last 20 years? If yes, do you share this data with other state and non-state institutions to facilitate their work in drafting social programs for the categories of families that you provide services for?
4. From the last report of the Social State Service January-June 2013, results that 71.019 families receive partial economic aid and 32.736 families receive full economic aid. Do you as institution have segregated this data further in knowing how many of these families are headed by women? If yes, would you provide me with this data?
5. With the persistent data your institution gathers have you conducted any comparative study on the numbers and types of families that are treated with economic aid from the moment of its conception to today? If yes, where can I find this study?

Second part: Services provided to women householders (lone mothers)

6. What is your definition for the category of ‘women householders’, what sub-categories do you include in this category? What would you think for the usage of the social terminology lone mothers “nëna të vetme kryefamiljare”⁹⁷ in drafting policies

⁹⁷ This social terminology is suggested in my dissertation, and it includes those women who are mothers and who raise and take of their children alone, without a partner due to divorce, abandonment, incarceration or decease of the partner, and other reasons dependent on the situation of a lone mother. This terminology includes those lone mothers

for this category of women?

7. In your knowledge and experience do there exist initiatives from women non-for-profit organizations to suggest and argue on the need of new socio-economic policies in support of 'women householders' in Albania? If yes, in your knowledge will these suggestions and arguments be taken into consideration by you as an institution, by the ministry of labor you are dependent on or other ministries?
8. Does there exist any initiative from your institution to consider 'women householders' (lone mothers) as a special category with specific needs and draft radical legal policies to support this category of women and their children? If yes, in which areas do these policy are more focused and what is the target of the beneficiaries? Always if yes, do you think that these new policy initiatives would find the support of other state stakeholders, considering that new policies come with a budget cost?
9. Do you consult the legal frameworks of the European Commission in concern to the social treatment of one parent families, where lone mothers are part of? If yes, do the relevant directives from the European Commission are transferred to your institute via the Parliamentary Commission for Social Affairs, via the Ministry of Labor, or also via the international donors and the civil society sector? Or do you have the social affairs lawyers in your institute who consult these legal packages to adjust them to the needs and priorities of one parent families in Albania?
10. If your institution in cooperation with the Ministry of Labor have drafted and developed specific programs for 'women householders' (lone mothers) and their children, in your knowledge have your colleagues consulted with the non-for-profit organizations beforehand? If yes, what were the materials brought in round consultative tables from the civil society representatives?
11. Have you consulted with international donors for financial and expertise support to draft new programs for 'women householders' (lone mothers)?
12. What are the decentralized services provided to children of one parent families who live in persistent poverty levels? What about the orphans children of widow women who cannot qualify for receiving a child' pension due to lacking social contribution of their deceased husbands?
13. During the last two years is amended the economic aid law to include the violated women who are undergoing divorce. In my interviews and discussions with representatives of local women organizations came out that they face difficulties from local governments to apply institutionally this law for every women who qualifies as being part of this program. What steps would your institute, as the responsible executing mechanism undertake to put in place and establish an obligatory instrument for the application of economic aid to violated lone mothers who are in di-

which are heading their families, even in cases when they go back with their children to live with their parents or other family members, or continue to live with their parents in law, in cases when the husband dies. I do not prefer the term women householders, because here can as well be included women who have no children, or women who have invalid husbands in the house and are receiving disability pension, and an allowance for the carer.

voiced process?

14. Does your institute have a communication strategy with the citizens on the alternative services that you provide?
15. On which material base does your institute draft and develop in cooperation with the Ministry of Labor social services for 'women householders' (lone mothers)? What is the strategy of your institute and the Ministry of Labor in gathering and listening arguments about the needs of these families?
16. What is the cooperation of your institute with the international donors community in drafting and providing social services for 'women householders' (lone mothers) and their children?
17. How often does your institute organize consultative participatory processes with representatives of the social administrations per qark, as concern the evaluation of the economic situation of families you provide economic-aid? Do you invite non-profit organizations in these meetings and which type of organizations do you invite?
18. Would you have any comment or any future recommendation that you would consider as necessary for the development of social services for 'women householders' (lone mothers)?

Thank you for your time, your information and your attention! Sincerely Yours,

Appendix. 3.3 List of interviews with representatives of local government, and the National Social State Service

1. Kadri Kruja, Specialist of the Sector of Social Programme, Elbasani Municipality
Interviewed face to face on 15 November 2012.
2. Meme Xhaferaj, Director of the Directorate of Social Service, Durrës municipality
Online interview on 23 November 2013
3. Ilir Zguri, Director of the Directorate of Social Support and Housing, Korça municipality. Interviewed 26 September 2012
4. Emanuela Çetri, representative of the Directorate of Saranda municipality. Online interview November 2012
5. Vjollca Hoxha, Director of Berat municipality. Interviewed on 27 October 2012
6. Rajmonda Haka, Director of the Social Assistance Programme in Peshkopia municipality. Online interview December 2013
7. Irena Cakrani, Director of the Social Service, Vlora municipality. Interviewed on 17 October 2012.
8. Leonard Strazimiri, the Director of the Directorate of the Implementation of the Law on Socio-Economic Aid and Disability pensions. Interviewed on 23 November 2013

Appendix 4 *Preparations for Fieldwork*

Appendix. 4.1 message sent to representatives of local women NPOs to invite for cooperation and explanation on the tasks they needed to perform (model)

Dear (...), I wish my email finds you well and that everything is going in the right direction with 'Another Vision'!

I have entered in the second year of my PhD program, and I am writing to you as a representative of 'Another Vision' to ask for a possibility of cooperation with your organization for the field-work that I need to conduct for my PhD Project in Elbasan city.

I am first introducing you to my PhD Project and then I will explain what a possible cooperation with your organization would consist in.

My PhD research is focused on "Lone mothers and welfare policies in Albania" and it covers the period from 1944-2013". The research is pursued in Utrecht University, the Netherlands, and it is in cooperation with the Independent Forum for the Albanian Woman. I receive academic guidance by Prof. Dr. Berteke Waaldijk (The Netherlands) and Dr. Saemira Gjipali (Pino) (Albania).

In order to observe the conditions and experiences lone mothers face in dealing with having to raise their children alone, while employed or not, I intend to conduct a survey with face to face interviews with lone mothers in ten Qarks of Albania. Initially I will start with the cities of Pogradecin and Korça, Saranda and Vlora, and then I will be coming in Elbasan to continue in other cities later. My time and budget for this project are limited, therefore I need to manage a well-coordinated field-work, since I cannot return twice in a city.

In the city of Elbasan, I would very much appreciate if we could cooperate together, certainly with relevant financial costs for the tasks your organization will perform, considering also the limited budget I have for the PhD project.

According to the plan of the field-work, I will be in (...) to conduct the interviews on 12-17 November 2012. What I request from your organization is creating to me access to 35 lone mothers, which have received prior services from your organizations, or receive or have received services from the local government.

I need to interview in (...) around 35-48 lone mothers (women householders). In this category of women I include women or teenage mothers from the age 15 to 60 years old, which are raising their children alone without a partner, due to divorce, separation, abandonment, widowhood, out of choice or out of human mistake or else reasons.

These women or their children should have received different services by your organization or others in the city, or religious institutions operating there. These could and their children could as well not receive any service from non-for-profit sector due to many reasons. I am as well interested to interview lone mothers who have received, are receiving or cannot receive economic-aid and other services from the local government, or are capable of covering everything themselves without needing assistance from the civil society sector or the government.

As follows I will provide you with a pre-defined budget I have for the interviews that I will be conducting in (...) city and I am explaining the work that needs to be done by the

representative person of your organization, maybe you.

The budget of the survey in North, South and Central Albania is taken from the budget pre-defined for conference participation during my PhD years, but I have decided to spend a good part of that budget on field-work. My PhD expenses are covered by Nuffic, which has limited minimal incomes of living during the PhD years, therefore I cannot promise to pay amounts similar to the European Commission projects. However, I believe that I will be able to pay reasonable amount for the task required from your organization to perform. As well, I think that your organization will benefit by this project by adding in your profile cooperation with national and international experts and I will be able to promote the work of your organization through my PhD project in national and international networks in academia and the civil society sector.

For (...) city I can pay 5 recharging mobile communication for informing and inviting in interview by phone and coordinating the interviews, which equals:

5 mobile recharging cards x 1000 ALL = 5000 ALL

The payment for the representative/s person from your organization who will do the phone calls to lone mothers to inform them on this project and invite them for interviews is:

2 persons x 3000 ALL = 6000 ALL

There is considered a payment for the office space that I will occupy to conduct the interviews in your headquarters as of 2000 ALL per day, equaling:

5 days x 2000 ALL per day = 10.000 ALL

The sum amount of the task and services required by your organization reach 21.000 ALL.

Meanwhile I need the interviews for these people to be organized in a way that each interview can last 45 minutes to one hour each, during the days of 12-17 Nëntor. I personally have no contacts of lone mothers in your community therefore I need your organization to create me access to them. They can be either women that you have provided services, or women who were supported by the local government if you know them through the cooperation with the municipality, or simply women that you know in your community who are lone mothers.

Every lone mother that will be interviewed will receive 500 ALL for the time that she will spend during the interview. Lone mothers which I consider of the communism period, who are aged 55 and above, with whom I will conduct a qualitative face to face interview which takes longer will be paid 1000 ALL. I do not exclude the fact that some of the women with whom I will conduct the interview with mixed qualitative and quantitative questions and happen to be very informative will as well be paid 1000 ALL, due to spending more time with them in the interviewing process.

I do request ideally that you could provide me access to 5-6 women who are 55-75 years old and have been lone mothers in the communism period.

Dear(...) , this is all I wanted to share and inform you in a first message. Can you please let me know as soon as you can how possible is for your organization this type of cooperation, and whether the tasks I require from you are realistic and manageable by you in the required days.

I will be waiting for your answer in order to be able to coordinate the field-work in

other cities. If you have issues with the timing of the field-work in your city I can try to coordinate the field-work with other cities to fit with your agenda.

Warm greetings from Utrecht and with high consideration for the work you do in your city,

Arla

After the confirmation message about approval of cooperation for the PhD project, I send another message explaining the pre-selected categories I wanted to interview

Date send: 18 October 2012

Dear (...) , I am sending to you the categories of lone mothers I would like to interview. This is a pre-selection example but if you cannot find women of the categories and criteria I have set up, please feel free to bring in the interview women who are lone mothers in your community, without considering in much details this pre-list. I am flexible for a free-selection of women by your side, though my sample methodology is pre-selective, but I am flexible to change in case that it is very difficult for you. With a free selection by your side the sample can represent better the characteristics of lone mothers in this region, so this is up to your possibilities of creating access to lone mothers who are willing to be interviewed.

1. One teenage lone mother (who has remained pregnant for different reasons) and who raises her child by her own or together with her parents in her parents' house.
2. Four divorced lone mothers of the age 19-30 years old, whom or whose children are provided social, psyscho-social, economic or else services by local women organizations, religious organizations in your community or the local government.
3. Six divorced lone mothers of the age 31-45 years old, whom or whose children are provided different socio-economic services, or else services by local women organizations, religious organizations in your community or the local government.
4. Four divorced lone mothers of the age 19-30 years old, who used to receive socio-economic services , by local women organizations, religious organizations in your community or the local government, but do not receive them any longer, or have never been provided such services by any institution or organization.
5. Six divorced lone mothers of the age 31-45 years old, who used to receive socio-economic services , by local women organizations, religious organizations in your community or the local government, but do not receive them any longer, or have never been provided such services by any institution or organization.
6. Four divorced lone mothers of the age 46-60 years old, whom or whose children are provided different socio-economic services, or else services by local women organizations, religious organizations in your community or the local government.

7. Four divorced lone mothers of the age 46-60 years old, who used to receive socio-economic services , by local women organizations, religious organizations in your community or the local government, but do not receive them any longer, or have never been provided such services by any institution or
8. Two lone mothers in divorce process of the age 19-30 years old, whom or whose children are provided social, psycho-social, economic or else services by local women organizations, religious organizations in your community or the local government.
9. Two lone mothers in divorce process of the age 31-45 years old, whom or whose children are provided social, psycho-social, economic or else services by local women organizations, religious organizations in your community or the local government.
10. Two lone mothers in divorce process of the age 31-45 years old, who used to receive socio-economic services, by local women organizations, religious organizations in your community or the local government, but do not receive them any longer, or have never been provided such services by any institution or organization.
11. One lone mothers in divorce process of the age 46-60 years old, whom or whose children are provided social, psycho-social, economic or else services by local women organizations, religious organizations in your community or the local government.
12. One lone mothers in divorce process of the age 46-60 years old, who used to receive socio-economic services, by local women organizations, religious organizations in your community or the local government, but do not receive them any longer, or have never been provided such services by any institution or organization.
13. Two abandoned lone mothers of the age 19-30 years old, whom or whose children are provided social, psycho-social, economic or else services by local women organizations, religious organizations in your community or the local government.
14. Two abandoned lone mothers of the age 19-30 years old, who used to receive socio-economic services, by local women organizations, religious organizations in your community or the local governments, but do not receive them any longer, or have never been provided such services by any institution or organization.
15. Two abandoned lone mothers of the age 31-45 years old, who used to receive socio-economic services, by local women organizations, religious organizations in your community or the local governments, but do not receive them any longer, or have never been provided such services by any institution or organization.
16. Two abandoned lone mothers of the age 31-45 years old, whom or whose children are provided social, psycho-social, economic or else services by local women organizations, religious organizations in your community or the local government.

17. Four widow lone mothers of the age of the age 31-45 years old, whom or whose children are provided social, psycho-social, economic or else services by local women organizations, religious organizations in your community or the local government.

18. Two widow lone mothers of the age of the age 31-45 years old, who used to receive socio-economic services, by local women organizations, religious organizations in your community or the local governments, but do not receive them any longer, or have never been provided such services by any institution or organization.

19. Women of 60-75 years old who were lone mothers in communism.

Dear (...) these are categories that I want to interview and pre-selected. As I said do not feel pressured if this does not seem a realistic pre-selection to you.

I would be very smooth procedure if you could organize them to come to the center from the 12 to 17th of November 2012 for interviews of 45 minutes to one hour. I am flexible if some of them would not like to come to the center and are more open to conduct the interview in their houses, or elsewhere. So, please do consider my flexibility when organizing the interviews.

I can start the interviews from 9 in the morning until 20.00 in the evening. I need one day free for the interviews with the representatives of the local government and the religious community.

All women will be paid as emailed earlier 500 ALL and the qualitative or more informative interviews who last longer 1000 ALL.

Please let me know whether there are not clarities, and whether we can make this field-work happen in time.

Thank you very much in advance, Warm regards, Arla

Appendix. 4.2 The pre-selection number of interviewees based on the Women and Men 2011 INSTAT

Lone mothers divided per categories (500 interviews for the survey)

As it can be noted in the early intention of the field-work my ambition was to do a national survey, where Tirana, the capital of Albania, where are living 1/3 of Albanian population would as well be part of the survey, because the lone mothers would be more diverse in many respect. As I have explained the Tirana field-work was jeopardized by two women organizations which initially agreed to cooperate and then they decided not to cooperate for the reason of completion of my project with their strategic program for 'women householders'.

The field-work experience anyhow showed that time-wise and financially-wise would have been more difficult to manage the interviews also in Tirana. There were in total conducted 286 interviews, from which 18 were disregarded as not informative, or as pretending to be a lone mother where in fact the woman was not a lone mother.

Teenage lone mothers	15-18 years old 10 informants		
Divorced lone mothers	19-30 years old 70 informants	31-45 years old 100 informants	45-60 years old 40 informants
Ongoing divorce lone mothers	19-30 years old 10 informants	31-45 years old 20 informant	45-60 years old 20 informants
Lone mothers out of partnership (separated from the partner)	19-30 years old 10 informants	31-45 years old 10 informants	
Lone mothers (who were and are still married but abandoned due to husband immigration)	19-30 years old 20 informants	31-45 years old 20 informants	45-60 years old 10 informants
Lone mothers (who were in a partnership with a partner but abandoned from him due to immigration)	19-30 years old 3 informants	31-45 years old 3 informants	
Lone mothers by chance	19-30 years old 5 informants	31-45 years old 5 informants	
Lone mothers by choice	2 informants	2 informants	
Lone mothers due to widowhood	19-30 years old 6 informants	31-45 years old 14 informants	45-60 years old 30 informants
Lone mothers returned from immigration after divorce or separation from the husband/partner	19-30 years old 5 informants	31-45 years old 5 informants	45-60 years old 5 informants

The number of females per district (based in Albania in figures 2010, INSTAT)

Districts	Number of females Preliminary results census 2011	Number of females Albania in figures 2010 (data gathered 2009)
Berat	69,844	84,717
Diber	67,328	72,246
Durrës	131,633	157,223
Elbasan	146,907	169,236
Fier	153,250	185,246
Gjirokaster	36,978	50,822
Korçë	108,811	128,880
Kukës	38,640	40,649
Lezhë	67,802	81,548
Shkodër	109,197	121,856
Tiranë	384,590	391,071
Vlorë	106,906	106,906

Appendix 4.3 The list of the local women NPOs with which I collaborated to conduct the survey and get access to lone mothers.

In these organizations I observed the relationships with their clients (lone mothers), how they handled day to day cases and problems they were facing.

1. Association of Women with Social Problems Durrës (AWSPD); Field-work conducted during 4-19 February 2012.
2. Vatra Centre (VC), in Vlora; Field-work conducted during 15-19 October 2012.
3. 'Jona Centre' Sarandë city (JC); Field-work conducted during 8-13 October 2012.
4. 'Embroiders' Association, Korça city (EA); Field-work conducted during 25-29 September 2012.
5. 'Woman – mother and educator', Peshkopia city;
6. Association for Widow Women, Peshkopia city; Field-work conducted during 1-4 October 2013.
7. 'Me, the Woman', Pogradec City (MW); Field-work conducted during 2-4 October 2012.
8. 'Another Vision' Association Elbasan; Field-work conducted during 11-16 November 2012.
9. 'Women's Centre Berat' (WCB); Field-work conducted during 25-29 October 2012.
10. 'Light Steps' in Shkodra city; Field-work conducted during 7-10 October 2013.
11. Youth Centre 'The New Epoch', in Fier city; Field-work conducted during 5-9 November 2012.
12. 'Useful to Albanian Woman' Durrës branch Association. Field-work conducted during 11-16 November 2013.

Appendix 5 Data about 268 lone mothers

The findings of the survey are presented through tables and graphs which serve to describe the sample

Table 1 Routes to lone motherhood of 240 lone mothers after 1990

Districts ¹	Wid- ow	Divorced	Separated	Abandoned	In divorce process	Invalid husband in the house	Total
Durrës-urban (CA)	6	29	10	5	4	-	54
Durrës-rural (CA)	4	3	1	1	1	-	10
Elbasan-urban (CA)	4	13	3	2	1	-	23
Elbasan-rural (CA)	-	5	1	1	-	-	7
Fier-urban (WSCA)	6	5	2	3	-	-	16
Fier-rural (WSCA)	5	1	2	-	-	-	8
Vlorë-urban (WSA)	3	9	1	4	1	-	18
Vlorë-rural (WSA)	2	3	-	1	-	-	6
Saranda-urban (WSA)	6	5	1	1	1	-	14
Berat-urban (SCA)	4	7	-	5	1	1	18
Korça-urban (SEA)	3	2	3	3	-	-	11
Pogradec-urban (SEA)	3	1	-	-	-	-	4
Pogradec-rural (SEA)	1	1	-	-	-	-	2
Shkodër-urban (NWA)	1	13	1	9	2	-	26
Shkodër-rural (NWA)	-	1	-	-	-	-	1
Peshkopi-urban (NEA)	9	3	-	3	-	-	14
Peshkopi-rural (NEA)	7	-	-	1	-	-	8
Total	64	101	25	38	11	1	240

Table 2 Distribution of 28 lone mothers from before 1990 based on the route to lone motherhood

Districts	Widow	Divorced	Total
Durrës (CA)	1	4	5
Elbasan (CA)	-	3	3
Fier (WSCA)	-	3	3
Vlorë (WSA)	-	1	1
Saranda (WSA)	2	2	4
Berat (SCA)	1	3	4
Korça (SEA)	-	2	2
Pogradec (SEA)	-	1	1
Durrës-rural	-	1	1
Peshkopi (NEA)	2	1	3
Pogradec-rural	1	-	1
Total	7	21	28

Table 3 The age division for 28 lone mothers from before 1990.

The number of lone mothers per group	The age group division
7	41-50 years old
13	51-60 years old
9	61-75 years old

Table 4 The age division of 240 lone mothers after 1990

The number of lone mothers per group	The age group division
4	14-19 years old
13	20-25 years old
28	26-30 years old
67	31-40 years old
85	41-50 years old
40	51-60 years old
2	61-75 years old

Table 5 Remarriage and re-partnering among 240 lone mothers after 1990

Number of lone mothers remarried or re-partnered	The types of relationship created after remaining alone for the first time
5	Divorced from the first husband, abandoned by the second
1	Both husbands died
2	Divorced from both husbands
2	Divorced from the first and co-living with the second partner
1	Widowed by the first husband and divorced from the second
1	The first husband died and the second partner is abandoned by the lone mother herself

Table 6 The age of children of 240 lone mothers after 1990

The number of mothers who have children in the respective age groups	The children age-group division
12	1. Under 3 years old
20	2. 4-7 years old
30	3. 8-13 years old
9	4. 14-19 years old
21	5. 20-25 years old
8	6. 26-30 years old
7	7. Above 31 years old
5	The first and second age group
20	The second and third age group
31	Third, fourth and fifth age group
53	Other combined sub-categories

Graph 1 The age of children of 28 lone mothers before 1990

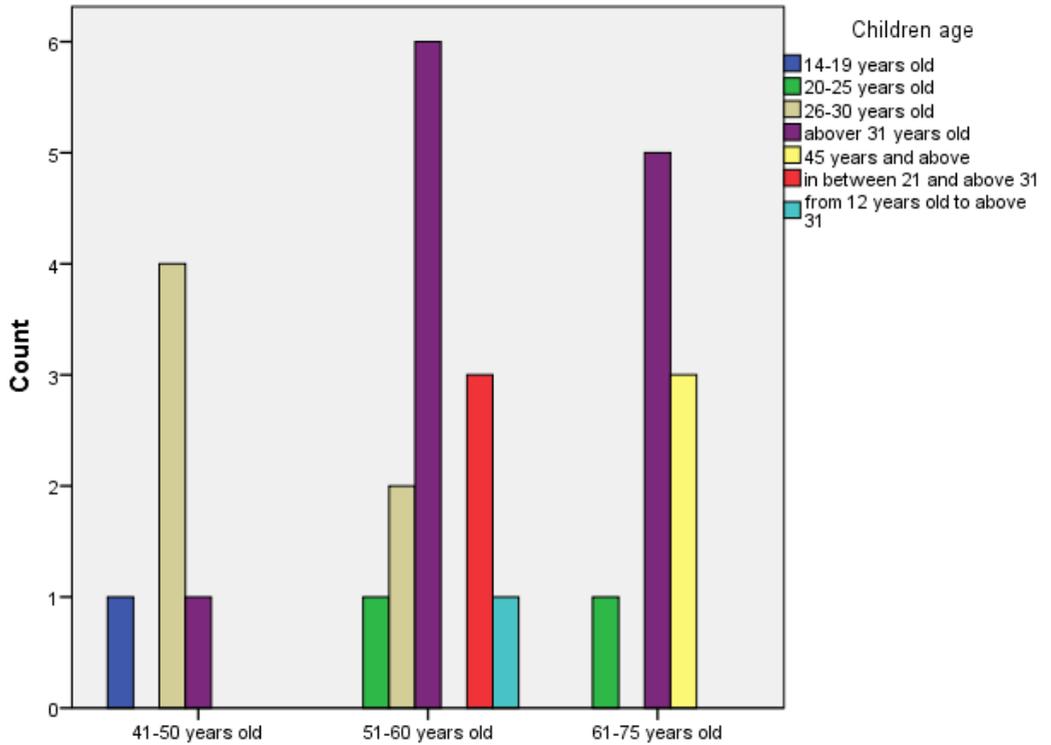
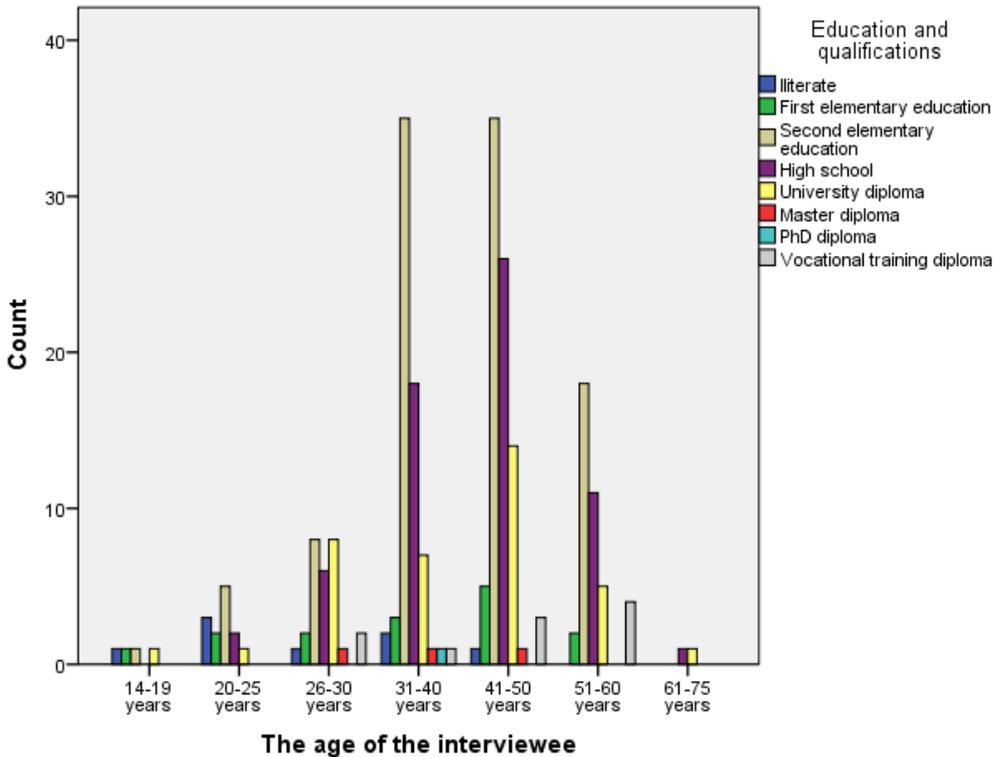


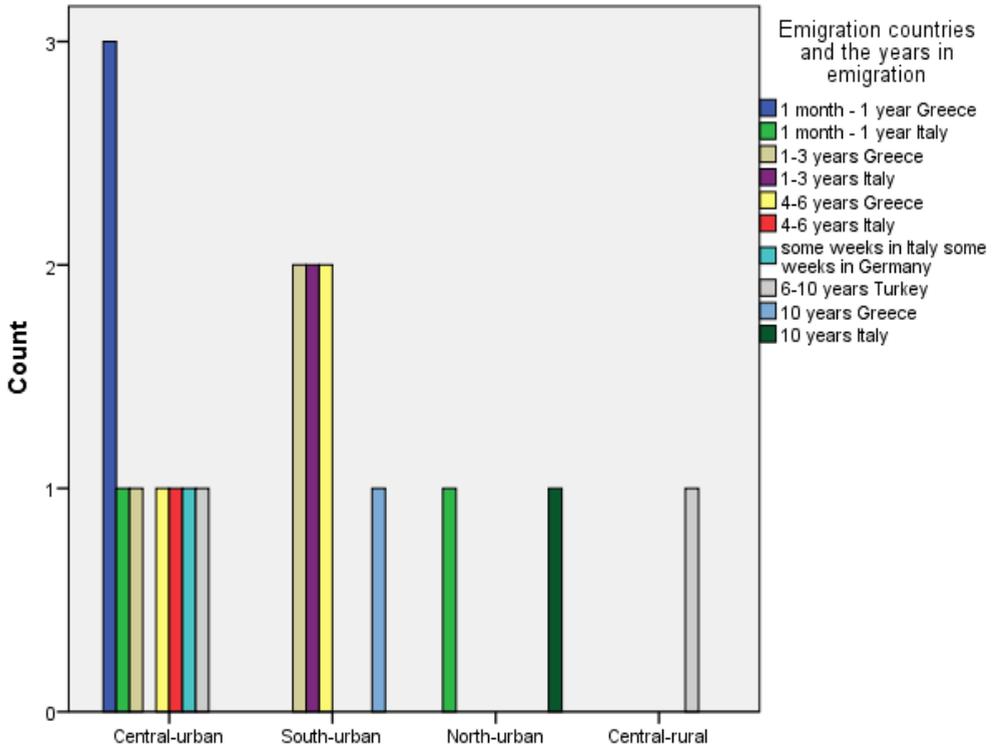
Table 7 Correlation between age of mothers and number of children for 240 lone mothers after 1990

Age of the interviewee	Number of children						Total
	1 child	2 children	3 children	4 children	5 children	6 and more children	
14-19	3	1	0	0	0	0	4
20-25	10	3	0	0	0	0	13
26-30	16	7	2	3	0	0	28
31-40	17	32	13	2	1	3	68
41-50	7	32	30	11	4	1	85
51-60	6	18	8	3	4	1	40
61-75	0	0	1	1	0	0	2
Total	59	93	54	20	9	5	240

Graph 2 Education and qualifications of 240 lone mothers after 1990



Graph 3 Emigration countries and years in emigration for 240 lone mothers related to the region of origin in Albania



1 Districts are local administrative units which consist of a certain number of communes and urban areas, with one big urban area as a center of it. I have used abbreviations in parenthesis in the side of each big urban area to represent the location where the city is: CA - Central Albania; WSCA – WEST South-Centre Albania; WSA – West South Albania; SCA – South Central Albania; SEA – South East Albania; NWA – North West Albania; and NEA – North East Albania. This survey has used the administrative division that was in place until 2013, since the field-work was conducted until 2013. Today the administrative division has changed.

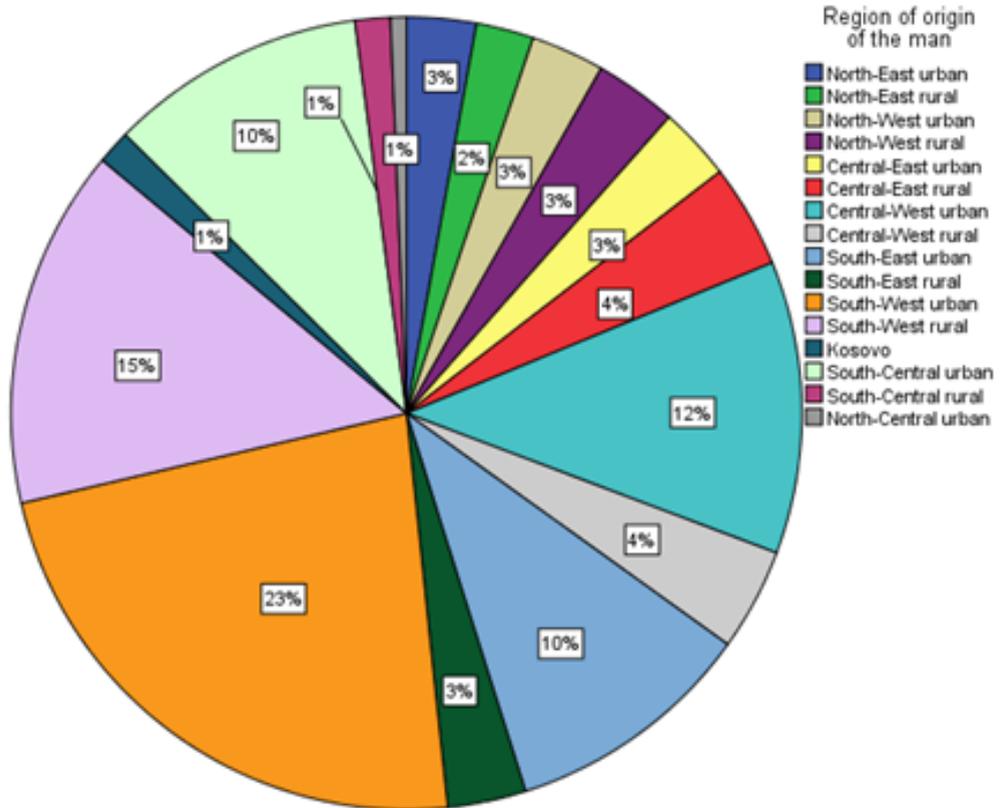
Table 8 Patterns of internal migration by 240 lone mothers after 1990

Region of the lone mother origin	Region of the origin of the lone mother. The city where she lives may * be removed?														Total			
	The city where the lone mother lives																	
North-East-urban	1	0	0	0	0	0	0	6	0	0	2	0	0	0	0	0	0	9
North-East-rural	2	0	0	0	0	0	1	8	0	0	1	0	0	0	0	0	0	20
North-West-urban	3	0	0	2	0	0	10	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	15
North-West-rural	1	0	0	0	0	0	12	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	1	0	14
Central-East-urban	1	0	0	9	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	1	0	11
Central-East-rural	1	0	0	7	0	0	0	0	0	1	1	0	0	0	0	0	0	16
Central-West-urban	27	0	0	1	0	0	1	0	0	0	1	0	0	0	0	0	0	30
Central-West-rural	9	0	0	1	0	0	0	0	0	0	5	0	0	0	0	0	0	15
South-East-urban	5	0	0	2	10	3	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	20
South-East-rural	2	1	0	0	0	1	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	2	0	0	6
South-West-urban	1	11	9	0	0	0	1	0	0	12	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	35
South-West-rural	1	6	7	1	0	0	0	0	0	1	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	29
South-Cen-tral-urban	0	0	0	0	1	0	0	0	0	0	0	16	0	0	0	0	0	17
South-Cen-tral-rural	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	2	0	0	0	0	0	0	2
North-Cen-ter-urban	0	0	0	0	0	0	1	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	1
Total (n)	54	18	16	23	11	4	26	14	14	18	10	6	8	7	2	1	8	240
% in total	22.5%	7.5%	6.7%	9.6%	4.6%	1.7%	10.8%	5.8%	5.8%	7.5%	4.2%	2.5%	3.3%	2.9%	0.8%	0.4%	3.3%	100.0%

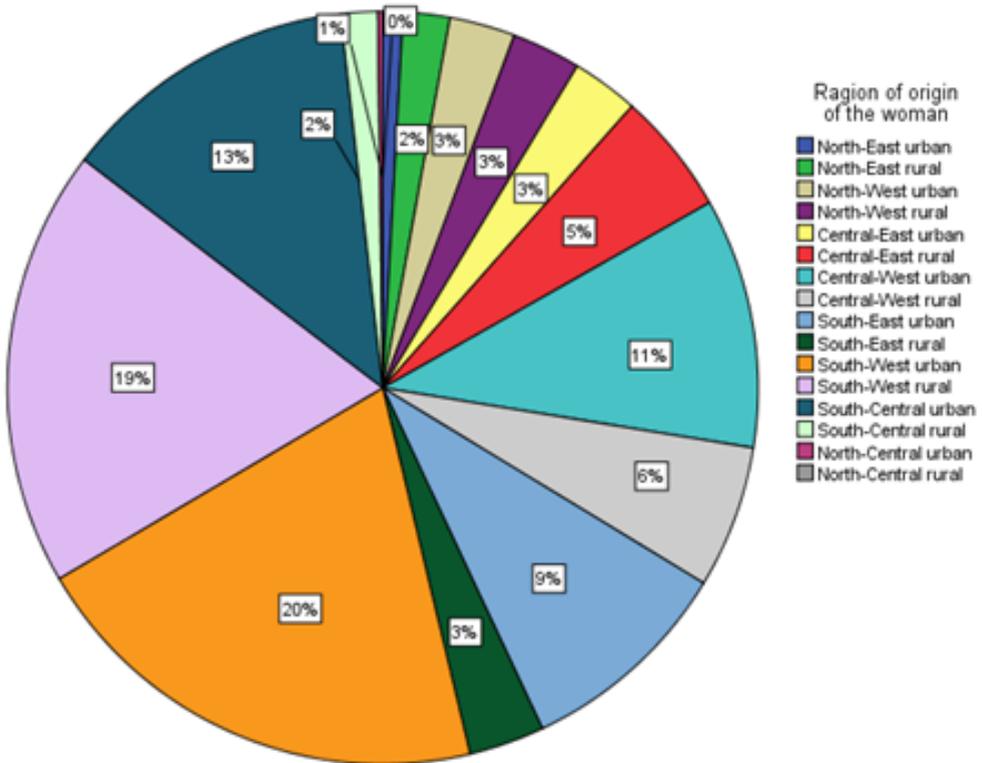
Table 9. The distribution of the region of the origin of the man versus the origin of the woman for the sample size of 240 women

The region of origin	Man	Woman
North-East urban	19	9
North-East rural	18	20
North-West urban	13	15
North-West rural	13	14
Central-East urban	11	11
Central-East rural	14	16
Central-West urban	31	30
Central-West rural	10	15
South-East urban	22	20
South-East rural	6	6
South-West urban	39	35
South-West rural	24	29
South-Central urban	15	17
South-Central rural	2	2
North-Central urban	1	
Kosovo	2	
Total	240	240

Graph 5 The distribution of the place of origin of the former partner of 240 lone mothers after 1990



Graph 6 The distribution of the place of origin of the woman for the equal sample size



Graphs 4 and 5 show in percentages the differences in the place of origin when entering into marriage. For example 19% of women have originally been from the south-central rural area versus 15% men, 13% of women were born in south-central urban versus 10% of man. This representation reflects the level of patrilocality in marriages between women from rural areas towards urban ones, or marriages of women from urban areas with men from rural regions.

Table 10 The distribution of extended family types versus the age of the interviewee for 240 lone mothers after 1990

Extended families	Age of the interviewee							Total
	14-19 years	20-25 years	26-30 years	31-40 years	41-50 years	51-60 years	61-75 years	
With the family of parents in law	2	9	17	38	60	25	1	152
Single unit	1	2	9	24	20	14	1	71
In the street	1	0	0	0	0	0	0	1
Living either with my sisters' family or his	0	0	0	1	1	1	0	3
Some years to his parents some years to mine	0	0	1	1	3	0	0	5
we started out living with my parents	0	2	0	4	1	0	0	7
Myself with my mother and sister stay with family of my uncle	0	0	1	0	0	0	0	1
Total numbers	4	13	28	68	85	40	2	240
Total % within extended family type	1.7%	5.4%	11.7%	28.3%	35.4%	16.7%	0.8%	100.0%

Table 11 The distribution of the type of marriage versus the region of living for 28 lone mothers of the communism period

The type of marriage	The region of living			Total
	Central	South	North	
Arranged marriage (n)	8	8	3	19
Out of love (n)	1	8	0	9
Total (n)	9	16	3	28
% of total	32.1%	57.1%	10.7%	100.0%

Table 12 Distribution of the types of marriages versus the region of living as for Central South North Albania of 240 lone mothers

The typology of marriage		Region of living Central South North Albania						Total
		Central-urban	South-urban	North-urban	Central-rural	South-rural	North-rural	
Arranged marriage	Numbers	38	31	31	9	10	9	128
	% within the region of living	49.4%	38.3%	77.5%	52.9%	62.5%	100.0%	53.3%
Out of love marriage	Numbers	39	50	9	8	6	0	112
	% within the region of living	50.6%	61.7%	22.5%	47.1%	37.5%	0.0%	46.7%
Total	Numbers	77	81	40	17	16	9	240

Table 13 Distribution of the type of marriage versus the age of the interviewee for 240 lone mothers after 1990

Type of marriage		Age of the interviewee						Total	
		14-19 years	20-25 years	26-30 years	31-40 years	41-50 years	51-60 years		61-75 years
Arranged marriage	Numbers	1	4	12	36	51	24	0	128
	% within the age of the interviewee	25.0%	30.8%	42.9%	52.9%	60.0%	60.0%	0.0%	53.3%
Out of love marriage	Numbers	3	9	16	32	34	16	2	112
	% within the age of the interviewee	75.0%	69.2%	57.1%	47.1%	40.0%	40.0%	100.0%	46.7%
Total	Numbers	4	13	28	68	85	40	2	240
	% within the age of the interviewee	100.0%	100.0%	100.0%	100.0%	100.0%	100.0%	100.0%	100.0%
	% of Total	1.7%	5.4%	11.7%	28.3%	35.4%	16.7%	0.8%	100.0%

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Table 14 Housing accommodation of 240 after remaining alone versus route to lone motherhood after 1990 of 240 women (part 1)

	Housing accommodation										Total		
The group of lone mothers per route to lone motherhood	I live alone with my children in a rented house	25	13	3	1	3	5	3	11	15	1	21	
	I live alone with my children in a house bought by me, or by me and my husband												
	I live alone with my children in social housing												
Divorced	I live with my children in a state shelter												
	I live with my children in an NPO shelter												
	I live with my children and my ex-husband in the same household as before												
Separated	I live with my children and my parents-in-law												
	I live with my children and my parents												
	I live with my children, my parents and my brothers and sisters												
Widow	I live with my children and my brothers and sisters												
	Other												
	Numbers	25	13	3	1	3	5	3	11	15	1	21	101
	% within subgroup	24.8%	12.9%	3.0%	1.0%	3.0%	5.0%	3.0%	10.9%	14.9%	1.0%	20.8%	100.0%
	% within housing accommodation	61.0%	23.6%	27.3%	100.0%	50.0%	71.4%	25.0%	52.4%	48.4%	33.3%	40.4%	42.1%
	% of Total	10.4%	5.4%	1.3%	0.4%	1.3%	2.1%	1.3%	4.6%	6.3%	0.4%	8.8%	42.1%
	Numbers	2	1	2	0	1	1	0	3	6	1	8	25
	% within subgroup	8.0%	4.0%	8.0%	0.0%	4.0%	4.0%	0.0%	12.0%	24.0%	4.0%	32.0%	100.0%
	% within housing accommodation	4.9%	1.8%	18.2%	0.0%	16.7%	14.3%	0.0%	14.3%	19.4%	33.3%	15.4%	10.4%
	% of Total	0.8%	0.4%	0.8%	0.0%	0.4%	0.4%	0.0%	1.3%	2.5%	0.4%	3.3%	10.4%
	Numbers	8	31	3	0	0	0	6	2	2	0	12	64
	% within subgroup	12.5%	48.4%	4.7%	0.0%	0.0%	0.0%	9.4%	3.1%	3.1%	0.0%	18.8%	100.0%
	% within housing accommodation	19.5%	56.4%	27.3%	0.0%	0.0%	0.0%	50.0%	9.5%	6.5%	0.0%	23.1%	26.7%
	% of Total	3.3%	12.9%	1.3%	0.0%	0.0%	0.0%	2.5%	0.8%	0.8%	0.0%	5.0%	26.7%
	Numbers	4	10	2	0	2	0	3	4	5	0	8	38

Table 14 Housing accommodation of 240 after remaining alone versus route to lone motherhood after 1990 of 240 women (part 3)

		Housing accommodation																							
Total	Numbers	I live alone with my children in a rented house	41	I live alone with my children in a house bought by me, or by me and my husband	55	I live alone with my children in social housing	11	I live with my children in a state shelter	1	I live with my children in an NPO shelter	6	I live with my children and my ex-husband in the same household as before	7	I live with my children and my parents-in-law	12	I live with my children and my parents	21	I live with my children, my parents and my brothers and sisters	31	I live with my children and my brothers and sisters	3	Other	52	Total	240
	% within subgroup	17.1%	% within housing accommodation	100.0%	22.9%	100.0%	4.6%	100.0%	0.4%	100.0%	2.5%	100.0%	2.9%	100.0%	5.0%	100.0%	8.8%	100.0%	12.9%	100.0%	1.3%	100.0%	21.7%	100.0%	
% of Total	17.1%	22.9%	4.6%	0.4%	2.5%	2.9%	5.0%	8.8%	12.9%	1.3%	21.7%	100.0%													

Table 18 Distribution of the employment status of the lone mother versus the region of living per sample size 240

The region where the lone mother lives		The employment status of the lone mother						Total
		Full time	Part-time or seasonal jobs	Unemployed	Other	Self-employed	Retired	
Central-urban	Numbers	34	10	24	4	4	1	77
	% of Total	14.2%	4.2%	10.0%	1.7%	1.7%	0.4%	32.1%
South-urban	Numbers	27	8	31	5	9	1	81
	% of Total	11.3%	3.3%	12.9%	2.1%	3.8%	0.4%	33.8%
North-urban	Numbers	17	5	11	3	4	0	40
	% of Total	7.1%	2.1%	4.6%	1.3%	1.7%	0.0%	16.7%
Central-rural	Numbers	3	1	12	1	0	0	17
	% of Total	1.3%	0.4%	5.0%	0.4%	0.0%	0.0%	7.1%
South-rural	Numbers	0	2	9	3	2	0	16
	% of Total	0.0%	0.8%	3.8%	1.3%	0.8%	0.0%	6.7%
North-rural	Numbers	1	0	5	3	0	0	9
	% of Total	0.4%	0.0%	2.1%	1.3%	0.0%	0.0%	3.8%
Total	Numbers	82	26	92	19	19	2	240
	% of Total	34.2%	10.8%	38.3%	7.9%	7.9%	0.8%	100.0%

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Summary of the PhD dissertation: *Lone mothers and welfare policies in Albania. Conditions, experiences, expectations. 1944-2013.*

This is a feminist action research that endeavors to construct the category of 'lone mothers' in Albania, through their own voice, for the purpose of creating the socio-political discourse on their real needs they and their children have. It talks about lone mothers not as needy or vulnerable, but as women with power and agency, whose life circumstances and disadvantages have created inequality and exclusion from the rest of the society. I argue that lone mothers in Albania, are not born needy, but instead the non-responsibility of the biological fathers of their children, the socio-economic and political transitions Albania underwent after 1990, the internal and external migration flows and the lack of employment and low education impacts the disadvantaged situation they and their children face today. The research shows that there exist differences among lone mothers. Those women who are highly educated and are employed do not face the same difficulties as those who have neither high education, nor employment.

The needs voiced by lone mothers in this research are the fundamental ground for understanding their expectations from the state and non-state actors. Their voiced expectations support the argument that lone mothers in Albania see themselves as both material providers and carers of their children. They are women who want to work to support their children, and they are women who nor during communism neither after 1990 are offered the opportunity to choose whether they want to be carers or workers during child-rearing years, an issue this last that has captured the European reconciliation debates.

This PhD research on lone mothers and welfare policies in Albania, takes an interdisciplinary approach, at the crossroads of gender, family sociology and demography, welfare history and economic policy and international development.

The methodological and theoretical approach of this research is guided by different feminist and gender perspectives. I have researched Albanian lone mothers in two ways. I studied their identity construction and the way they are positioned by the services they receive from the government and non-governmental actors. The identity construction of lone mothers is examined via historical research and personal narratives about the entrance into marriage or cohabitation, the route to lonely motherhood, the age factor when marrying and remaining alone, the age and number of children and the education level and labor participation. By analyzing these variables I have offered insights into the

socio-economic background of lone mothers in Albania, today, and in the past decades. The identity formation of lone mothers is also impacted via the influence of social norms and the character of Albanian family in a life-span of a century.

This analytical description of lone mothers in Albania lays the ground for a critical study of welfare policies and social programs needed to assist this category of mothers and their children in Albania. The emigration level, the years in emigration of their former partners and the impact of emigration years is observed for the purpose of understanding the family economy due remittances or creation of families with one parent. An innovative aspect of this research is the attention to the income packaging by lone mothers. The study observes how they combined income from the state and non-state institutions, by family networks, and by the biological father of their children. The book thus corrects and contributes to comparative research on income packaging by lone mothers in Europe.

The welfare policies provided to lone mothers by the communist and post-communist government are observed and analyzed through gender lenses, which problematize the reconciliation policies in between caring and working regimes. The social programs provided to lone mothers by non-governmental actors (women organizations and religious institutions) argue on what services they provide different support compared to the government, and what gap of support perceived by lone mothers they seek to fill in.

Last but not least this research contributes to lacking scholarship on lone mothers in Western-Balkans and adds to a larger European context the scholarship voice from Albania. The provision of a history of women NGOs in Albania seeks to reflect an overview on the first services provided as concern women's rights in the country and the role international donors played in strengthening the civil and political rights over the socio-economic ones. The research opens the discourse on the role of the Albanian state and the international multilateral donors (European Union, United Nations Development Programme, World Bank) in prioritizing the provision of social and economic rights for lone mothers in the future Albania. As an invitation to the government and the non-governmental actors, this action research invites these national stakeholders to think and adopt reconciliation policies with focus on the caring aspect for working and non-working lone mothers.

Samenvatting van het proefschrift: *Alleenstaande moeders en sociaal beleid in Albanië. Omstandigheden, ervaringen, verwachtingen. 1944-2013.*

Dit feministisch actieonderzoek tracht de categorie van ‘alleenstaande moeders’ in Albanië in kaart te brengen, in hun eigen stem, met als doel een sociaal-politiek discours te creëren over hun werkelijke behoeften en die van hun kinderen. Dit proefschrift ziet alleenstaande moeders niet als behoeftig of kwetsbaar, maar als vrouwen met macht en kracht, wier leefomstandigheden en nadelige situaties hebben geleid tot ongelijkheid en uitsluiting uit de maatschappij. Ik betoog dat alleenstaande moeders in Albanië niet als behoeftig worden geboren, maar in plaats daarvan, dat het gebrek aan verantwoordelijkheid van de biologische vaders voor hun kinderen, de sociaaleconomische en politieke transitie die Albanië onderging na 1990, de interne en externe migratiestromen, het gebrek aan werkgelegenheid en het lage opleidingsniveau van invloed zijn op de kansarme situatie waarin zij en hun kinderen zich vandaag de dag bevinden. Dit onderzoek toont aan dat er tussen alleenstaande moeders verschillen bestaan. Die vrouwen die hoog zijn opgeleid en werk hebben, worden niet geconfronteerd met dezelfde problemen als degenen die geen hoge opleiding noch werk hebben.

De in dit onderzoek door alleenstaande moeders geuite behoeften vormen de fundamentele basis voor begrip van hun verwachtingen ten aanzien van de staat en niet-staatsgeboden instellingen. Hun geuite verwachtingen onderstrepen het argument dat alleenstaande moeders in Albanië zichzelf zien als zowel materiële ondersteuners en als verzorgers van hun kinderen. Er zijn vrouwen die willen werken om hun kinderen te ondersteunen, en er zijn vrouwen die – noch tijdens het communisme, noch na 1990 – de keus hadden tussen de rol van verzorger en werknemer. Deze laatste kwestie is vooral van belang voor de Europese verzoeningsvraagstukken.

Dit promotieonderzoek over alleenstaande moeders en welzijnsbeleid in Albanië kent een interdisciplinaire benadering, op het kruispunt van gender, sociologische opvattingen over familie en demografie, sociale geschiedenis, economisch beleid en internationale ontwikkeling.

De methodologische en theoretische benadering van dit onderzoek kent uiteenlopende feministische en gender perspectieven. Ik heb Albanese alleenstaande moeders op twee manieren onderzocht. Ten eerste bestudeerde ik hoe hun identiteit is opgebouwd en de manier waarop ze worden behandeld door de overheid en non-gouvernementele instellingen. Deze identiteitsvorming van al-

leenstaande moeders wordt door historisch onderzoek en persoonlijke verhalen beoordeeld op de overgang naar het huwelijk of samenwonen, alsook de route naar solomoederschap, de leeftijdfactor bij het trouwen en alleen-staan, het aantal kinderen en hun leeftijd, en het opleidingsniveau en arbeidsparticipatie van de vrouwen. Door het analyseren van deze variabelen draag ik inzichten aan over de sociaaleconomische achtergrond van alleenstaande moeders in Albanië, zowel van vandaag de dag als de afgelopen decennia. De identiteitsvorming van alleenstaande moeders wordt eveneens beïnvloed door sociale normen en Albanese familieopvattingen van de afgelopen eeuw.

Deze analytische beschrijving van alleenstaande moeders in Albanië vormt de basis voor een kritische studie van welzijnsbeleid en sociale programma's die nodig zijn om deze groep moeders en kinderen in Albanië te ondersteunen. Het emigratieniveau, het aantal jaren dat hun voormalige partners geëmigreerd zijn en de impact daarvan worden beschreven, met als doel de familie-economie of vorming van eenoudergezinnen in kaart te brengen. Een innovatief deel van dit onderzoek is de aandacht voor de inkomstnsamenstelling van alleenstaande moeders. Deze studie bekijkt hoe zij het inkomen van de staat en niet-overheidsinstellingen, van de familie en van de biologische vader van hun kinderen combineren. Daarmee draagt dit proefschrift bij aan en corrigeert vergelijkend onderzoek naar het inkomen van alleenstaande moeders in Europa.

De welzijnsvoorzieningen die door de communistische en de postcommunistische regering voor alleenstaande moeders zijn getroffen, worden bekeken door een gender-lens, hetgeen het verzoeningsbeleid tussen zorg en werk problematiseert. De sociale programma's van niet-gouvernementele instellingen (vrouwenorganisaties en religieuze instellingen) voor alleenstaande moeders worden in kaart gebracht: welke andere diensten bieden ze aan dan de overheid, en welke ruimte proberen ze te vullen bij de ondersteuning voor alleenstaande moeders?

Ten laatste, maar minstens even belangrijk, draagt dit proefschrift bij aan ontbrekend onderzoek over alleenstaande moeders in het westen van de Balkan en voegt een academische Albanese stem toe aan de bredere Europese context. Het aanbieden van een geschiedenis van vrouwen-NGO's in Albanië geeft een overzicht van de voorzieningen voor vrouwen, de connectie met vrouwenrechten en de rol die internationale geldvertrekkers spelen bij het eerder versterken van de burgerlijke en politieke dan de sociaaleconomische rechten. Het onderzoek start een discussie over de rol van de Albanese staat en de internationale multilaterale financierders (de Europese Unie, ontwikkelingsprogramma's van de Verenigde Naties, de Wereldbank) door het verlenen van sociale en economische rechten aan alleenstaande moeders in het Albanië van de toekomst. Dit actieonderzoek

nodigt deze nationale belanghebbenden – overheid en non-gouvernementele instellingen – uit de verzoeningsmaatregelen te adopteren die zich richten op de zorg voor werkende en niet-werkende alleenstaande moeders.



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ISBN 978-90-76905-36-5



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