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## Unemployment and the Youth Category: A Demographic Analysis

### Abstract

This study aims to shed light on the phenomenon of unemployment in Algeria and its impact on the youth category, especially since unemployment is considered one of the challenges that must be addressed both in the current context and in the future. This phenomenon affects a considerable number of segments of the Algerian population across its various strata, particularly the youth, who face difficulties in integrating into the labor market due to several factors, most notably: weak vocational training, the mismatch between training and labor market requirements, and lack of experience, among others. Moreover, deteriorating economic conditions and ineffective development policies contribute to deepening the phenomenon of unemployment among this vital segment of society.

**Keywords:** *unemployment, youth, labor market, population growth, migration*

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## İşsizlik və gənclər kateqoriyası: demoqrafik təhlil

### Xülasə

Bu tədqiqat Əlcəzairdə işsizlik fenomeninə və onun gənclər kateqoriyasına təsirinə işıq salmağı hədəfləyir, xüsusən də işsizlik həm mövcud kontekstdə, həm də gələcəkdə həll edilməli olan problemlərdən biri hesab olunur. Bu fenomen Əlcəzair əhalisinin müxtəlif təbəqələrindəki xeyli sayda segmentinə, xüsusən də gənclərə təsir göstərir və onlar bir sıra amillərə, xüsusən də zəif peşə təhsili, təlim və əmək bazarı tələbləri arasındakı uyğunsuzluq və təcrübə çatışmazlığı və s. səbəbindən əmək bazarına inteqrasiyada çətinlik çəkirlər. Bundan əlavə, pisləşən iqtisadi şərait və səmərəsiz inkişaf siyasəti cəmiyyətin bu vacib segmenti arasında işsizlik fenomeninin dərinləşməsinə kömək edir.

**Açar sözlər:** *işsizlik, gənclər, əmək bazarı, əhali artımı, miqrasiya*

### Introduction

The problem of unemployment has become a distinctive feature of most economies, albeit with varying causes and impacts from one country to another, depending on the economic and social circumstances each country is experiencing. This is particularly true for developing countries such as Algeria, where economic orientations that relied on the role of the public sector in creating employment opportunities have proven limited in their capacity to absorb the increasing numbers of the labor force, especially the youth, who are the most affected by the various economic and social transformations taking place worldwide. We observe that this social category in our country has come to live in a difficult social reality, dominated by numerous problems and afflictions that hinder the wheels of growth and sustainable development.

## Research

Unemployment in Algeria is one of the social problems experienced by the majority of both educated and uneducated youth. With the prolonged duration of unemployment, they have lost hope of finding jobs that guarantee them the right to live like other working categories. This is the result of increased birth rates and decreased mortality rates, which have led to significant demographic growth. Among the negative consequences of this massive growth are economic and social problems, such as the phenomenon of unemployment. For this reason, this research paper will address the development of unemployment, particularly among the youth, from a demographic perspective.

### 2. Unemployment: Concept and Types

#### 2.1 Definition of Unemployment:

Unemployment is defined in various ways, some of which are clarified below:

- “The number of persons capable of working but not working, despite actively seeking employment.” (Ahmed, 2007, p. 205).
- “The situation of individuals who are willing and able to work, and are actively seeking it, but have not found it.” (Al-Quraishi, 2007, p. 183).

**Definition of unemployment according to the National Office of Statistics:** A person is considered unemployed if the following criteria are met:

- He/she is of working age (between 15 and 64 years).
- He/she has no job at the time of the statistical survey. It is noted that a person who has not worked even for one hour during the survey period is considered unemployed.
- He/she is fully available and qualified to work.

**Measuring unemployment:** The unemployment rate is unemployment expressed as a percentage of the labor force. It is measured by the size of the non-employed labor force, i.e., the total number of unemployed persons relative to the total working-age population. It is expressed by the following equation:

$$\text{Unemployment Rate} = \frac{\text{Number of Unemployed}}{\text{Labor Force}} * 100$$

#### 2.2 Types of Unemployment:

Unemployment can be classified into the following types:

➤ **Cyclical Unemployment:** This type is considered one of the most important forms of unemployment. It arises as a result of irregular downturns in economic activity. During such downturns, national output declines due to reduced national expenditure, leading enterprises to produce fewer goods and services, and consequently employ fewer workers (Al-Wazani & Ahmed Hussein, 1999, p. 265).

➤ **Frictional Unemployment:** This occurs as a result of the continuous mobility of workers between regions and different professions. It arises due to a lack of information among job seekers and employers who have available job opportunities. Clearly, the lack of information means the absence of a link between the demand side and the supply side, i.e., the failure to connect job seekers with those offering jobs.

➤ **Structural Unemployment:** This refers to the type of unemployment that affects part of the labor force due to structural changes in the national economy, which create a mismatch between available job opportunities and the qualifications and experiences of unemployed workers seeking employment (Zaki, 1997, p. 17).

➤ **Disguised Unemployment:** This refers to the situation in which a large number of workers are employed in excess of the actual need for labor, meaning there is surplus labor that produces almost nothing. If these workers were withdrawn from their jobs, production levels would not decline. This type of unemployment is particularly prevalent in the public services sector due to excessive public employment (Zaki, 1997, p. 17).

➤ **Voluntary Unemployment:** Also called “intentional unemployment,” it refers to the situation where a person withdraws from work of his/her own free will for certain reasons. It indicates the

existence of individuals who are capable of working but unwilling to do so at prevailing wages, despite the availability of jobs. Examples include wealthy unemployed individuals, some poor beggars, and individuals who left high-paying jobs and are unwilling to accept similar jobs with lower wages due to their habituation to higher incomes (Fawzi, 2004).

➤ **Involuntary Unemployment:** This refers to the situation where a worker is unemployed against his/her will, i.e., not by choice. It occurs through the forced dismissal of workers, even though they are willing to work (Khawaja, 2011, p. 17).

### 3. Causes of Unemployment:

Since unemployment is an escalating challenge worldwide, it is necessary to understand its causes and the factors leading to its aggravation, which may differ from one country to another and from one geographical environment to another. These causes are attributed to numerous economic, social, political, demographic, and technological factors. They can be addressed as follows:

➤ The exacerbation of the unemployment crisis, particularly after the implementation of the Structural Adjustment Program, which produced both positive and negative results. This program relied on hydrocarbon revenues, making it vulnerable to recurrent economic shocks, most notably the economic crisis resulting from the collapse of hydrocarbon prices in 1986. The situation of economic institutions deteriorated, public investment declined, and very weak growth ensued, leading to the collapse of employment rates, especially in the public sector, which dominated economic life.

➤ The demographic factor, which has been considered an obstacle to economic development. One of the most significant impediments to development is rapid population growth, particularly in the modern era. “Demographic factors play a fundamental role in the influx of large numbers into the labor market, thereby exerting clear pressures on the rise and aggravation of unemployment levels (Al-Saudi & Ahmed , 2008, p. 17).”

➤ The inability of the labor market to absorb graduates. The number of graduates from universities and educational institutes increases annually, yet the labor market fails to accommodate them.

➤ Personal reasons, which relate to the desire of some youth to join specific jobs that are unavailable, despite the availability of other jobs.

➤ Unplanned internal and external migration (Amer, 2014, p. 22).

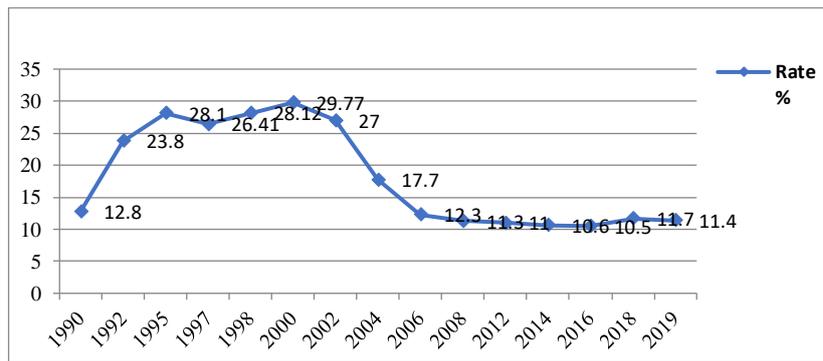
### The Evolution of Unemployment in Algeria.

**Table 1.**  
 Evolution of the Unemployment Rate in Algeria during the period (1990–2024).

Years	1990	1992	1995	1997	1998	2000	2002	2004
Rate %	12.8	23.8	28.10	26.41	28.12	29.77	27	17.7
Years	2006	2008	2012	2014	2016	2018	2019	
Rate %	12.3	11.3	11.0	10.6	10.5	11.7	11.4	

**Source:** National Office of Statistics, Statistical Summary 1962–2020, p. 88.  
 Données statistique, ONS, N°879; (2009–2019); household employment survey.

**Fig.1.** Evolution of the Unemployment Rate in Algeria during the period (1990–2024).



**Source:** National Office of Statistics, Statistical Summary 1962–2020, p. 88. Données statistique, ONS, N°879; (2009–2019); household employment survey.

Unemployment in Algeria was very high in 1966, reaching 32.90% (Al-‘Eid, 2023, p. 13), due to political instability and the withdrawal of the French army from Algeria. Since the late 1960s, Algeria attempted to establish a heavy industry sector to escape underdevelopment and create sufficient job opportunities for the unemployed labor force. The focus shifted to the industrial field to absorb labor, and this period was characterized by modest unemployment rates, reaching about 16.30% in 1982.

However, the period (1986–1999) witnessed a steady increase, with unemployment peaking at 29.30% in 1999. This rise was due to several reasons, including the financial crisis Algeria experienced as a result of declining oil prices and reduced petroleum tax revenues on the one hand, and the inability of public enterprises to create new jobs on the other. In reality, this increase is explained by the decline in development activity, caused by the difficult security conditions Algeria faced during that period.

As for the period (2000–2015), unemployment rates recorded a noticeable decline, dropping from 29.77% in 2000 to 17.7% in 2004. From that year onwards, unemployment rates continued to decrease, reaching 10.6% in 2014. This decline was due to the improvement of the country’s security and economic situation, which contributed to political stability alongside improved economic and social indicators. The rate then reached 10.5% in 2016 and 11.4% in 2019.

#### 4.1 Evolution of Unemployment by Gender.

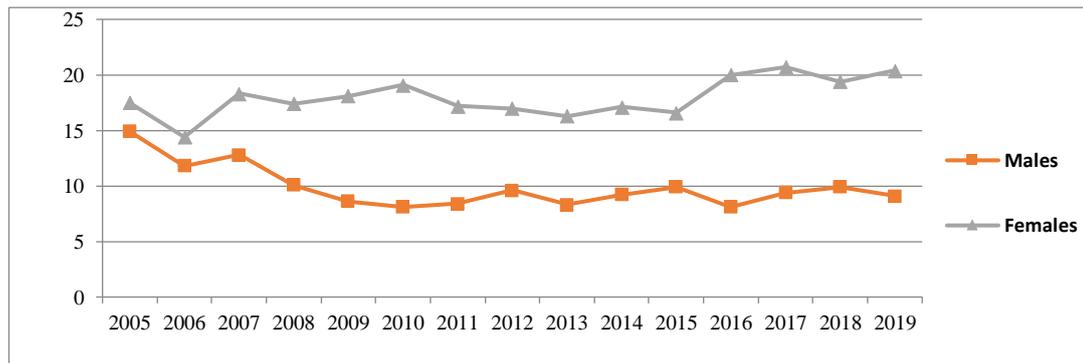
**Table 2.**  
 Distribution of the Unemployment Rate by Gender.

Years	Gender	
	Males	Females
2005	14.9	17.5
2006	11.8	14.4
2007	12.8	18.3
2008	10.1	17.4
2009	8.6	18.1
2010	8.1	19.1
2011	8.4	17.2
2012	9.6	17
2013	8.3	16.3
2014	9.2	17.1
2015	9.9	16.6
Years	Gender	

	Males	Females
2016	8.1	20
2017	9.4	20.7
2018	9.9	19.4
2019	9.1	20.4

Source: Données statistique, ONS, N°879, 726; (2009–2019) household employment survey.

Fig.2. Distribution of the Unemployment Rate by Gender.



Source: Données statistique, ONS, N°879, 726; (2009–2019) household employment survey.

From the figure, it is clear that the unemployment rate among males is significantly lower compared to females, whose rate has shown a steady increase, particularly in recent years. It was estimated at 17.5% in 2005 and rose to 20.4% in 2019. This is due to several reasons, including the spread of female education, the limited job opportunities available to women, and women’s inclination toward employment. As for male unemployment, it declined and stabilized between 8% and 9% during the period 2009–2019.

#### 4.2 Evolution of Unemployment by Age.

Table 3.  
 Unemployment Rate by Age (Age Groups).

Years Ages	2010	2011	2012	2013	2014	2015	2016	2017	2018	2019
15-19	10.78	8.94	10.29	10.97	30	38.8	30.9	32.9	32.1	29.4
20-24	32.43	32.2	32.56	31.74	24.1	27.6	25.7	27.1	28.2	26.2
25-29	31.22	30.41	26.98	26.04	16.9	18.4	18.3	20.2	21.5	20.8
30-34	13.01	12.61	12.68	13.87	9.5	9.9	9.9	9	10.2	10.9
35-39	5.3	6.96	7.26	7.4	6.1	5.8	5.4	6.7	6	7.2
40-44	2.97	3.38	4.54	4.25	4.1	4.6	4.4	4.5	4.4	5.5
Years Ages	2010	2011	2012	2013	2014	2015	2016	2017	2018	2019

<b>45-49</b>	2.04	3.01	3.03	2.63	3	2.8	2.6	3.8	3.9	4.1
<b>50-54</b>	1.2	1.31	1.53	1.95	2.3	2.5	1.9	3.7	3.6	3.7
<b>55-59</b>	0.92	1.12	1.53	1.1	1.4	2.7	2.1	4.7	4.1	2.6

**Source:** Données statistique, ONS, N°879, 2019; household employment survey.

From the table, it is evident that the largest proportions of the unemployed in Algeria are young people. More than 80% of the unemployed are under 30 years old. The unemployment rate among those under 25 years reached 26%, a significant difference compared to the 30–40 age group, whose rates ranged between 5% and 12%.

### 5. Characteristics of Unemployment in Algeria

The majority of unemployment consists of young people. We will attempt to present some statistical data related to the youth category to highlight the importance of this segment and the urgent necessity of investing in and supporting it.

#### 5.1 Evolution of the Unemployment Rate among Youth (16–24 years) during the period (2005–2019)

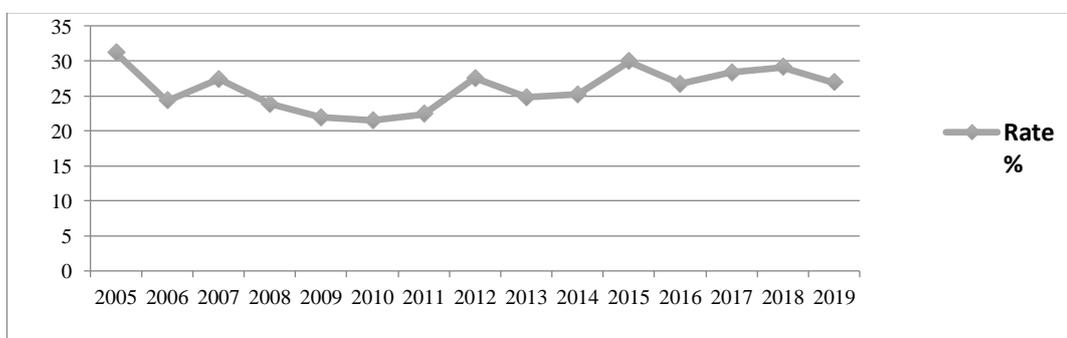
Youth are the most exposed to unemployment, particularly the age group (16–24 years), which is of great importance since youth are the backbone of society. The expansion of unemployment within this group negatively affects society as a whole.

**Table 4.**  
 Evolution of Unemployment Rates among Youth (16–24 years) in Algeria during the period 2005–2019.

Years	2005	2006	2007	2008	2009	2010	2011	2012
Rate %	31.1	24.3	27.4	23.8	21.9	21.5	22.4	27.5
Years	2013	2014	2015	2016	2017	2018	2019	
Rate %	24.8	25.2	29.9	26.7	28.3	29.1	26.9	

**Source:** Données statistique ONS N° 879, (2019); household employment survey.

**Fig. 3.** Evolution of Unemployment Rates among Youth (16–24 years) in Algeria during the period 2005–2019.



**Source:** Données statistique ONS N° 879, (2019); household employment survey

From the table and the figure above, it is clear that the problem of unemployment significantly affects the youth category compared to other groups. The period witnessed a remarkable

development: it was estimated at 31.1% in 2005, then declined to 24.3% in 2006. During the period (2009–2019), the unemployment rate showed a notable trend, estimated at 21.9% in 2009, then rising to 27.5% in 2012 and reaching 29.9% in 2015, an increase of 2.4 percentage points. This is generally due to the inability of public and private institutions to create additional job positions. As for the period (2016–2019), the rate remained almost at the same level, estimated at 26.7% in 2016 and 26.9% in 2019. After the outbreak of the Coronavirus pandemic, all countries around the world were forced to adopt a system of partial unemployment, not for economic reasons but for health-related ones. This affected both the public and private sectors, forcing institutions to close, which negatively impacted unemployment rates, bringing them down to 12.28% in 2020 (Tanqout & Zeinab, 2023, p. 111).

**5.2 Evolution of Unemployment by Educational Level and Gender.**

**1. Males:**

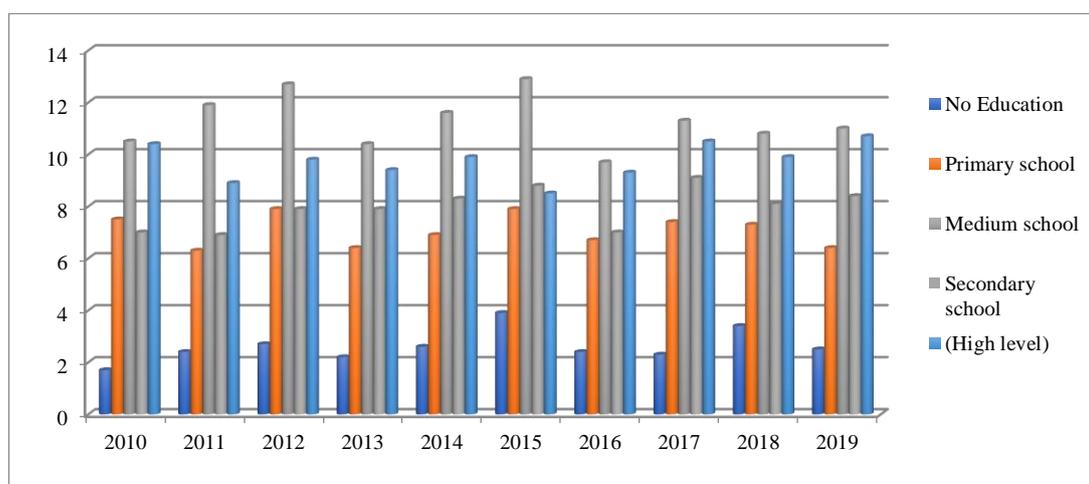
**Table 5.**

Evolution of Unemployment by Educational Level – Males.

Years Educational Level	2010	2011	2012	2013	2014	2015	2016	2017	2018	2019
No Education	1.7	2.4	2.7	2.2	2.6	3.9	2.4	2.3	3.4	2.5
Primary education	7.5	6.3	7.9	6.4	6.9	7.9	6.7	7.4	7.3	6.4
Medium	10.5	11.9	12.7	10.4	11.6	12.9	9.7	11.3	10.8	11.0
Secondary school education	7	6.9	7.9	7.9	8.3	8.8	7.0	9.1	8.1	8.4
(High level)	10.4	8.9	9.8	9.4	9.9	8.5	9.3	10.5	9.9	10.7

Source: Données statistiques N° 592, 651, 653, 683, 726, 763, 796, 819, 879; household employment survey.

**Fig.4.** Evolution of Unemployment by Educational Level – Males



Source: Données statistiques N° 592, 651, 653, 683, 726, 763, 796, 819, 879; household employment survey.

Unemployment among males by educational level showed particular developments, with figures indicating increases. In 2010, unemployment among the intermediate and higher education categories was high, estimated at 10.5% for the first and 10.5% for the second. The intermediate category rose to 12.7% in 2012 and did not change significantly, remaining around 11% in 2019. By contrast, the higher education category recorded a decline, especially in 2015, when it was estimated at 8.5%. For the “no level” category, unemployment remained low compared to other groups. As for the secondary level, it experienced a slight increase, from 7% in 2010 to 8.4% in 2019.

**2. Females:**

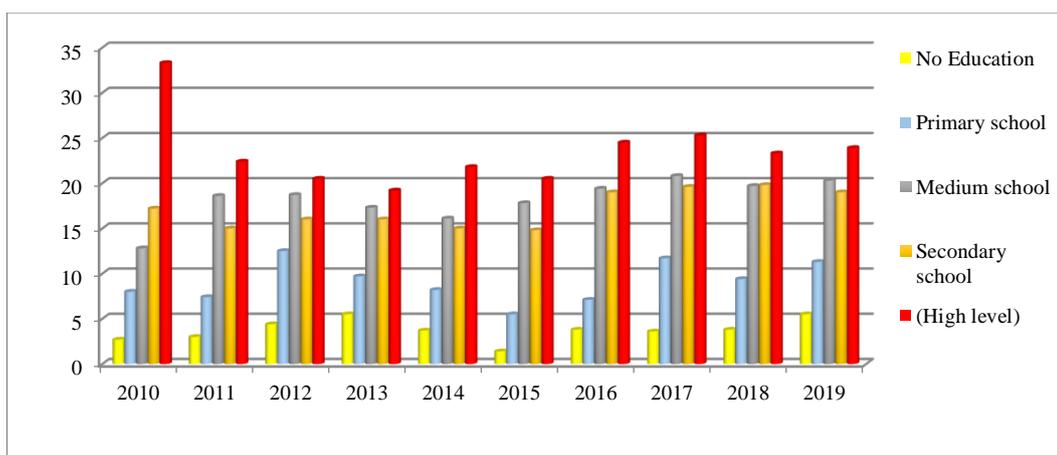
**Table 6.**

Evolution of Unemployment by Educational Level – Females.

Years Educational level	2010	2011	2012	2013	2014	2015	2016	2017	2018	2019
<b>No Education</b>	2.7	3.0	4.4	5.5	3.7	1.4	3.8	3.6	3.8	5.5
<b>Primary education</b>	8.0	7.4	12.5	9.7	8.2	5.5	7.1	11.7	9.4	11.3
<b>Medium</b>	12.8	18.6	18.7	17.3	16.1	17.8	19.4	20.8	19.7	20.3
<b>Secondary school education</b>	17.2	15.0	16.0	16.0	15.0	14.8	19.0	19.6	19.8	19.0
<b>(High level)</b>	33.3	22.4	20.5	19.2	21.8	20.5	24.5	25.3	23.3	23.9

**Source:** Données statistiques N° 592, 651, 653, 683, 726, 763, 796, 819, 879; household employment survey.

**Fig.5.** Evolution of Unemployment by Educational Level – Females.



**Source:** Données statistiques N° 592, 651, 653, 683, 726, 763, 796, 819, 879; household employment survey.

Unemployment by educational level among females was noticeably higher compared to males, with particularly elevated rates in the higher education category. In 2010, it reached 33.3%, then declined to 19.2% in 2013, before rising again to 23.9% in 2019. The secondary level followed with high rates, estimated at 16.0% in 2012 and rising to 19% in 2019. The primary and no-level categories recorded lower rates compared to other groups: the no-level category was 2.7% in 2010 and rose to

5.5% in 2019, while the primary level was 8% in 2010, dropped to 5.5% in 2015, and then rose again to 11.3% in 2019.

Thus, we conclude that unemployment has most affected the higher education level, especially among females, due to the massive number of university graduates and the lack of job opportunities corresponding to their numbers, which has increased unemployment rates.

### **6. Consequences of Unemployment**

Unemployment is one of the foremost problems in society. Work provides income, enabling individuals to meet their economic needs. Its absence leads directly to poverty. However, this is not the only outcome; there are other consequences, which include:

➤ **Underutilization of Human Resources:** The human element plays a vital role in the economies of nations at all stages of growth. It is the thinking, directing, and driving force behind all other factors of production. It is the true wealth of any society. Therefore, all members of society are expected to contribute to productive work for the benefit of their community (Saadi & Zaouche, 2019, p. 14).

➤ **Spread of Informal Work:** This phenomenon is widespread in Algeria, mainly in the parallel market. These markets have taken on many dimensions in society. Young people trading in the streets without authorization are merely a result of unemployment, as most of them resort to petty trade to escape taxation.

➤ **The Phenomenon of Poverty:** Poverty is one of the most serious and chronic problems facing many developing countries. It has spread widely in African countries and has even reached some Asian and Arab countries due to a series of events, with unemployment and economic stagnation being the final outcome. Poverty results from low levels of economic development and widespread unemployment. It is the product of global economic imbalances and decades of resource exploitation. Its negative impacts on economic and social conditions include: the spread of diseases, declining educational and cultural levels, deteriorating health standards, marginalization, and weak participation in public life (Al-Bakr, 2004, p. 274).

➤ **Spread of Social Ills:** When individuals are unemployed, they experience a large void, which they attempt to fill in various ways. This creates a vicious cycle in society, one that has been exacerbated by state policies. These are among the most significant social consequences of unemployment. Finally, we return to ways of addressing these problems.

### **7. Some Solutions to the Phenomenon of Unemployment**

Institutions and government bodies responsible for the labor force bear the responsibility of reducing unemployment rates. Among the proposed solutions are the following: (Saadi & Zaouche, 2019, p. 22).

– **Periodic Statistics:** To absorb unemployment in the labor market, it is first necessary to conduct regular surveys so that unemployment data is available to labor force planners and employers wishing to serve society. These data should include: the actual unemployment situation, specialization, profession, economic activity of the previously unemployed, age, place of residence, willingness to migrate, gender, and reason for unemployment. Such data help labor planners propose educational, training, economic, and financial policies to absorb unemployment.

– **Utilization of Idle Capacities:** Institutions should make use of their idle capacities by restarting closed factories or increasing the operating rates of existing ones to their maximum capacity, thereby absorbing disguised unemployment.

Other possible solutions include:

➤ **Training Workers:** Through continuous training to adapt to new labor market requirements, accompanied by measures such as encouraging labor mobility, improving labor market conditions, and creating retraining or requalification centers to generate jobs for youth and others.

➤ **Job Creation:** Adopting policies that stimulate demand and production, enabling enterprises to hire. Lowering labor costs may also lead to job creation. Jobs can be provided by establishing industrial zones or industrial communities in cities with abundant and low-cost labor. For example, some Japanese and American companies establish factories in East Asian countries such as Singapore, Malaysia, and Thailand, where labor costs are low. Encouraging small industries and handicrafts is

another option, by supporting small workers in starting their own projects, helping them obtain loans to establish factories, assisting in marketing their products, and supplying them with raw materials at reasonable prices.

➤ **Expanding Employment Opportunities:** This can be achieved by reducing working hours and reorganizing work schedules. For example, if there are 10 million workers employed for 40 hours per week, and they agree to work 35 hours instead, this would free up 50 million hours, which is equivalent to approximately 1,430,000 jobs.

### Conclusion

Confronting the unemployment crisis is among the most important challenges that must be addressed in the present and in the future. This phenomenon affects a considerable number of segments of the Algerian population across its various strata, particularly the youth. When examining the causes of unemployment from another perspective, we find that population growth is among them. This specific cause must be carefully considered, for it is unreasonable to regard population growth in a country such as Algeria as a challenge and an obstacle to economic and social development.

Youth unemployment has become one of the greatest challenges facing the various development policies in our country. Society will not be able to confront its problems without the participation of youth in development processes, since they are the cornerstone of these policies. As youth constitute the vital element in the development and advancement of society, the state must guarantee all their rights, especially the right to work.

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