Youth Unemployment, Development, and Political Stability in sub-Saharan Africa: The Cases of Ghana and Nigeria

Abstract

Unemployment has been a challenge to many economies, especially in the developing world. In this paper, I discuss that the high rate of youth unemployment in Sub Saharan Africa is a significant cause of social and economic instability in African democracies. Especially those who are yet to reach a phase of consolidation. Through a case study of Ghana and Nigeria, the paper argues how unemployment affects the Youth and provides some examples of the social ills arising from youth unemployment, including transnational crimes. Both quantitative and qualitative approaches were employed in this study.

Introduction

Unlike in many developing regions of the world, the unemployment of the youth is a significant obstacle to economic development and political stability in Sub-Saharan Africa. In addition to social and psychological distress, experiencing unemployment[1] Early in the life of youth has a significant dampening effect on long-term wages and earning potential [International Labor Organization, 2013]. Sub-Saharan Africa is susceptible to the social ills arising from rising levels of unemployment because it has the most youthful population in the world, with the youth totaling close to between 60% and 70% of the continent's population. The challenge of youth unemployment poses significant threats to the continent’s security and development. Though unemployment is seen manifested all over the world, the case of Africa is quite frustrating. (Frimpong, 2012)

Unemployment in Africa is not just the function of poorly performing economies, Part of the explanation for the chronic levels of youth unemployment in the continent also lies in the educational system and its failure to prepare graduates for self-employment. Guarcello and Manacorda (2005) argue that the average duration of the transition from school to work in Africa is very lengthy and that the youth are confronted with essential labor market entry problems primarily due to lack of experience. Besides, the experience of the youth during their school years is devoid of mentorship, internship, and skills development opportunities, which calls for a paradigmatic shift in the current schooling system and curricula. While some African countries like South Africa have initiated and implemented many policies. To stimulate demand for their labor through direct employment creation programs, there is still more to be done through targeted state interventions to equip graduates with essential skills and expertise that allow them to be gainfully employed and create their own job opportunities (Berstein, 2008; Zuze, 2012).