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YOUTH UNEMPLOYMENT AND CRIMINAL TENDENCIES IN SOUTH-WESTERN NIGERIA

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Abstract
The youth population of any country represents the driving force for the development or otherwise of such country. For the youths to become positive agents of development, they must be gainfully employed. However, the pervasive high rate of youth unemployment and poverty in Nigeria has made them to involve in criminal activities by misdirecting their energies into wrong endeavours. This paper adopted Ted Gurr's deprivation theory to specifically examine the criminal tendencies of the unemployed youth (especially those in urban areas) who habitually gathered together to while-away time and subsequently form gangs. It is discovered that this trend has resulted in the levying of illegal taxes on individual and corporate entities domicile in their gang's jurisdiction to meet their needs. The paper identified the dimensions which these taxes take and analyze its socio-economic, security and political implications on the country. It recommended that government should take urgent steps in addressing this menace by explicitly criminalizing such activities, place heavy sanctions and create employment opportunities for the teaming youth before the trend get out of hand.

Keywords: Criminal gangs; Conflicts; Security; Political implication

Introduction

Youth unemployment in Nigeria has a geographical dimension as it is generally higher in the urban areas than in rural ones. Government and policy makers are increasingly finding it difficult to grapple successfully with youth unemployment in the urban cities as a result of the exploding population and the potential of lawlessness that may result therein. It should be noted that this problem of youth unemployment in the urban cities is not peculiar to Nigeria. It is a global phenomenon, only that the rates vary according to the seriousness and commitment of the political office holders in tackling it. This trajectory is responsible for downward movement in some countries while it geometrically increased in others.

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Comparatively, the intensity of unemployment within the global economy can be seen from the fact that unemployment rate is steadily increasing each year. The unemployment rate of the United States of America (USA) for example has increased from 5% in 2007 to 9% in 2011 and 9% in 2012. Spain has increased from 4.8 to 8.6% and geometrically jumped to 21.7% in 2012, Lativia from 5.4% to 16.5% in 2011 and dropped to 15.4% in 2012, Greece from 8.07% to 18.4% in 2011 and Italy from 6.7% to 8.3% in 2011 and 8.4 in 2012, while the average for the Euro area is 10.7% (National Bureau of Statistics [NBS], 2011; and CIA World Fact Book, 2012). Even within the African continent, unemployment has risen with South Africa that is acclaimed to be Africa's largest economy having a high rate of 25% in 2011 and dropped a point to 24.9%, Angola at 25% in 2011, Botswana at 17.5% geometrically dropped to 7.5%, Egypt at 11.8% to 12.2% in 2012, Kenya at 11.7% exploded to 40% in 2012 and Namibia at 51% only moved up to 51.2% in 2012. Nigeria's rate increased to 23.9% in 2011 compared to 21.1% in 2010 and 19.7% in 2009; but currently stands at 21. (Adesina, 2013; and CIA World Fact Book, 2012). The incessant violent conflicts and other criminal activities in Africa and the world at large can be attributed to the resultant effect of these high rates of youth unemployment.

The Nigerian federal government in 2008 acknowledged that about 50% of Nigeria's youth are unemployed and 10% underemployed (Daily trust 2008). In 2011, the Minister of Youth Development, Bolaji Abdullahi reported that 42.2 percent of Nigeria's youth population is out of Job. Depo Oyedokun, the chairman House Committee on Youth and Social Development revealed that out of the over 40 million unemployed youths in the country, 23 million are unemployable and therefore susceptible to crime. Hence, there is need to articulate what could be done to salvage this situation because today's youth will become in a short decade tomorrow's parents, leaders, labour force and armies. It was equally established, that lack of employment potential makes crime a more attractive option for some Nigerian University graduates. This is because in Nigeria it is common to find some graduates still roaming the streets, years after graduating in searching of jobs that are not there by lending force to crimes such as armed robbery, car snatching, pipeline vandalization, oil bunkering, non- state imposition of taxes and levies among others. To make it worse, the Nigerian youth are not only confronted with unemployment but also poverty, lack of capacity and skills needed to move the economy forward (Emeh *et al*, 2012) which made them resort to criminal activities.

On the other hand, these criminal activities are threatening the fabric of peaceful and developing society and also serve as a symptom of a breakdown of social order. Its dysfunctional syndrome threatens the stability of society and it is therefore, a social problem that requires a concerted effort towards finding a lasting solution to. The present status of youth criminology undermines the social fabric by eroding the sense of safety and security (Onoge, 1988; and Anthony, 2013) which consequently pose a major threat to the development of the country.

The media, both print and electronic are awash daily with reports of crimes committed and the seeming helplessness of the law enforcement agents especially the police, in curbing the ugly and disturbing trend has made it more worrisome. Crime in relation to unemployment is a universal phenomenon but differs only in degree among the various nations of the world (Anthony, 2013). In essence, youth unemployment

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appears to be the root cause of all sorts of crimes and criminal tendencies in Nigeria. Findings reveal that unemployed youth are the perpetrators, as well as victims of crime and violence. The increasing gab between the rich and poor affects the society through increased violence. This is exacerbated by political corruption, poverty, poor government, increasing population and lack of policy initiatives and implementation which to some extent encouraged criminal groups to thrive across Nigeria (Okechukwu, 2012). It is in light of this trajectory specificity that this paper examines the criminal tendencies of the unemployed youth in urban areas who habitually gathered together to while- away time and subsequently form gangs. It uses Ted Gurr's deprivation theory to identify the reason why they resulted in the institution of non-state illegal taxes levied on individuals and corporate organizations, not excluding government agents. The paper examines the various dimensions which these taxes take and its implication on the security and economic conditions of the country.

The Concept of Youth Unemployment

Youths are one of the greatest assets any nation can have. They occupy a prominent place in any society. Apart from being the leaders of tomorrow, they out-numbered the middle aged (Onyekpe, 2007; and Ajufo, 2013). The National youth development policy [NYDP] (2001) asserts that youth are the foundation of a society; their energies, inventiveness, character and orientation define the pattern of development and security of a nation. This signifies that a nation can make giant strides through their creative talents and labour power. The youth are a particular segment of the national population that is sensitive, energetic, active and most productive phase of life as citizens. The youth are also most volatile and yet most vulnerable segment of the population in terms of social – economic, emotion and other aspects (Anasi, 2010 and Ajufo, 2013). There is disagreement among scholars about the range of age categories that make up youth. The debate was put to a rest by the specification of the NYDP (2001) that the youth are the people aged between 18 and 35 years. It further stated that the youth constitute about 40% of the more than 140 million people of Nigeria. Relating this to the rate of unemployment in Nigeria, the National Bureau of Statistics (2004) reported that young people aged between 15 and 24 years account for 52.9% of unemployed people while those aged between 25 and 44 years accounted for 41.1%. Therefore, those in age bracket of 15 and 44 years account for 94% of the total unemployed persons in Nigeria (Osibanjo 2006).

At this juncture, it is imperative to explore a clear understanding of the concept of unemployment. Unemployment is a very complex phenomenon for which there is no standard definition. Instead various countries adopt definitions that suit their local priorities. In broad term, the term unemployment denotes condition of joblessness or lack of employment. Put differently, unemployment simply means the conditions of people who are without jobs. The International Labour Organization [ILO] (2007) and World Bank (1998) define the unemployed as numbers of the economically active population who are without work, but available for and seeking work, including people who have lost their jobs and those who have voluntarily left work. This conceptualization is practically corroborated by the position of Adebayo (1999) that unemployment exists when the labour force wish to work but cannot get jobs. The standpoint of

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conceptualizing unemployment in a conditional and situational trend is supported by Fajana (2000) and Adesina (2013) that unemployment is a situation where people who are willing and capable of working are unable to find suitable paid employment. Unemployment has been defined as situations in which people are willing to work at the prevailing wage rate are unable to find Jobs.

Premised on the foregoing, youth unemployment could be described as the conglomerate of youth with diverse background, willing and able to work, but cannot find any. Technically put, when the supply of labour outstrips the demand for labour, it causes joblessness and unemployment (Emeh et al, 2012). According to the statistics from the Manpower Board and Federal Bureau of Statistics, Nigeria has a youth population of 50 million, representing 60 percent of the total population of the country. 64 million of them unemployed, while 1.6 million are under – employed. Therefore, in a bid to survive Nigerian youths have resulted into criminal activities by misdirecting their energies into wrong endeavours. This was supported by Edward (2011) who argued that the problem of violent crimes in Nigeria has been exacerbated by high rate of unemployment and economic hardship which has pushed many jobless youths some of whom are graduates into various deadly crimes.

The nexus between youth unemployment and violence is captured in the submission of Okafor (2011) that unemployment in Nigeria is with attendant social, economic political and psychological consequences. One of its social consequences on the Nigeria youths is the high level of criminal tendencies opened to the unemployed youth. A phenomenon which encourages the development of street youths and urban urchins ("area boys") that grows up in a culture that encourages criminal behaviour. Unemployment has also contributed to increasing feminization of poverty among women, which has encouraged prostitution as a means of survival and leads to trafficking of young women across international borders with transnational security implications. Psychologically speaking, the unemployed usually experience trauma, anger, frustration, low self-esteem, negative life satisfaction, unhappiness and mental disorder including depression and acute stress. Another economic consequence of unemployment in Nigeria includes the relocation of youth and able bodied men from the country in search of better opportunities abroad, thereby reducing the labour force and producing capacity in Nigeria (Akande and Okuwa, 2009 and Akwara et al, 2013).

Causes of Youth Unemployment in Nigeria

The years of corruption, civil war, military rule and mismanagement have hindered economic growth. Nigeria is endowed with diverse and infinite resources, both human and materials but years of negligence and adverse policies have led to the under – utilization of these resources. These resources have not been electively utilized in order to yield maximum economic benefit (Ajaegbu, 2012). In the study of unemployment in Nigeria, many scholars, (such as Adebayo 1999; Alanana 2003; Echebiri 2005; Ayinde 2008; Morphy, 2008; Awogbenle and Iwuamadi, 2010; Okafor, 2011; Anyadika et al, 2012 and Adebayo, 2013) have identified the following causes of youth unemployment in Nigeria:

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i. Rapid Rural – Urban Migration:

The rate at which young people move from the rural areas to the urban centres in Nigeria in search of greener pasture is alarming. Many of these youths are fleeing from the poverty in the rural areas with the notion that life is better and easier in the urban centres. This is furthered compounded by the gross lack of infrastructural facilities in the rural areas, which makes the standard of living in the rural areas unattractive. Since industry and social amenities are concentrated in the urban areas, youths migrate into the urban areas to seek employment in the industries and ministries, as well as enjoy the comfort which the social amenities offer. According to Sarr (2000), youth migrants in Africa are three times more in number than other migrants in other continents. He argued that the urbanization rate of the youth was 32% in 1990, compared to less than 25% in previous years. The influx of these youths in Africa resulted in increased number of people residing in the urban areas where jobs opportunities are limited to a few modern sectors and establishments.

ii. The Rapid Population Growth:

Going by the 2006 census in Nigeria, the nation's population was put at 140, 431, 790 and projection for the future indicates that the population could be over 180 million by the year 2020 (National Population Commission & ICF macro, 2009:3). With this population, Nigeria is the most populous nation in Africa. It is argued that the high population growth rate has resulted in the rapid growth of the labour force, which is far outstripping job supply. The accelerated growth of population in Nigeria's unemployment problem is multifaceted. It affects the supply side through a high and rapid increase in the labour force relative to the abortive capacity of the economy.

iii. Out-Dated School Curricula and Lack of Employable Skills:

It is observed that as far as the formal sector is concerned, the average Nigeria graduate is not employable and, therefore, does not possess the skills needed by the employers of labour for a formal employment. Often, this is attributed to the Nigeria's education system, with its liberal bias. The course contents of most tertiary institutions in Nigeria lack entrepreneurial contents that would have enable graduates to become job creators rather than job seekers.

iv. Rapid Expansion of the Educational System:

The aggressive creation of more private and public – funded institutions in Nigeria has led to increase in the supply of educated manpower above corresponding demand for them. This contributes to the problem of the youth unemployment in Nigeria. According to Manning and Junakar (1998), the total number of graduates turned out by the higher institutions in Nigeria, which were 73,339 in 1986/1987 which rose to 131,016 in 1997/1999. For Masari (2009), about 4.5 million youth enter the labour market every year without any hope of getting employment for life sustenance getting jobs for the astronomical increase in the number of graduates produced in Nigeria has been a problem because the economy is too weak to absorb them.

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v. Decline in the Manufacturing Sector:

There is no vibrant manufacturing sector which has the capacity to absorb unemployed youths in Nigeria. In 2009 over 800 industries have collapsed and over 37 factories have closed shops. About half of the remaining operating firms have been classified as "ailing" a situation that poses great threat to the survival of manufacturing sector in the country in the next few years (Okafor, 2011). According to a survey carried out as part of its membership operational audit in January 2010 by the Manufacturers Association of Nigeria (MAN), the 837 figure represents the cumulative aggregate of firms that have shut down their operations in 2009 across the country. The MAN survey usually covers five manufacturing enclaves, into which country is divided, in terms of manufacturing activities. These include the Lagos, Northern, Southeast, South – South and South west. The report of the survey showed that in 2009, a total number of 176 firms became terminally sick and collapsed in the northern area, comprising Kano and Kaduna State manufacturing axis. In the South east area, that comprised of Anambra, Enugu, Imo, and Abia State, a total number of 178 companies closed shop during the period. While in the South – South area, which consisted of Rivers, Cross Rivers, and Akwa Ibon States, 46 companies shut down operations before December 2009. According to the survey, the South west area, which is comprised of Oyo, Ogun, Osun, Ondo, Ekiti, Kogi and Kwara State lost 225 companies during the year. It said that the Lagos area, covering Ikeja, Apapa, Ikorodu, followed closely with 214 manufacturing firms closing shop before the end of 2009 (Maiyak, 2010; Okafor, 2008; Oparah, 2011; Usman, 2011; Okafor 2011; and Adebayo, 2013).

vi. Corruption:

Corruption has eaten deep into the fabric of Nigerian society and this has robbed the country of developing a vibrant economic base in spite of her abundant natural resources. Fund meant for development projects have been misappropriated, diverted, or embezzled and stacked away in foreign banks. Some incompetent and corrupt bureaucrats and administrator in the public enterprises and parastatals have liquidated these organisations as a result of corrupt practices. The collaboration of the political elites, local and foreign contractors in the inflation of contract fees have robbed Nigeria of the chances of using more than $500 billion estimated revenue from the oil sale in the last 50 years to develop a vibrant and buoyant economy that would have created jobs for the youths in various sectors of the economy (OKafor, 2007, 2011 and Adebayo 2013).

vii. Wrong Impression about Technical and vocational studies:

The impression of the students about the place of technical and vocational education also accounts for deteriorating state of unemployment in Nigeria. There is an enduring societal biased attitude against technical and vocational education (Damachi, 2001 and Obumneke, 2012). A large number of job seekers lack practical skills that could enhance self – employment. That is why rather than producing jobs for others, the graduate unemployed persons keep depending on the government and the non – vibrant private sector for job offers (Obumneke, 2012).

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viii. The Neglect of the Agricultural Sector:

The agricultural sector was the leading provider of employment in Nigeria especially in the sixties and the seventies when the sector provided employment for more than 60% of the Nigerian population. Unfortunately, in the wake of oil discovery, government attention on this sector of the economy was diverted to the oil sector where employment capacity is very low. The resulting effect is the large number of job seekers who have no place in the oil industry. Even with the expansion of the industry, unemployment has continued to grow at an alarming rate (Obumnke, 2012). This is premised on the fact that the oil sector depends immensely on machinery driven work than human driven as is the case in the agricultural sector.

ix. Poor Enabling Environment:

The poor economic enabling environment that characterises the economy over the years has continued to pose serious challenges to employment generation in Nigeria. This coupled with poor security environment drive do reduce the prospects of employment generation. Many job seekers who would have embarked on self-programme are unable to, because of the hostile production environment. Others who made attempt are forced to wind up due to absence of infrastructures and overall heat of the unfavourable investment environment.

Consequences of Youth Unemployment In Nigeria

The Unemployment episode has continued to pose many challenges to the survival of the Nigerian nation. The consequence of this problem, if no major corrective initiatives are taken, could be disastrous for the nation. Youth unemployment has national global impacts, notably among which are increased violence, crime, drug abuse and political instability. Desperation can drive many people into living outside the law in order to survive and as a means of expressing dissatisfaction at the apparent neglect of their very existence. Furthermore, the negative consequences include poverty, psychological problems of frustration, depression, hostility, abduction, murder, armed robbery, and all manner of criminal behaviours causing general insecurity of life and property (Adebayo 1999; Egbuna, 2001; Alanana, 2003; Okonkwo, 2005 and Ajufo, 2013).

Ajufo (2013:311) went further by given the figures supplied by the Nigerian Prisons Service (National Bureau of Statistics, 2009: 248) to confirm this. For instance persons admitted into the prisons by age groups are as follows:

Year	16 – 20 years	21 – 25 years	25 – 50 year
2004	31, 700	39, 045	63, 100
2005	40, 170	34, 600	65, 140
2006	19, 122	28, 705	75, 491
2007	16, 236	57, 736	80, 134
2008	25, 317	28, 049	73, 071

Crime is not only a consequence of unemployment but also a factor causing youth unemployment through its negative effects on the economy. Crime affects the economy through a number of channels / ways. First, it increases the cost of doing business by

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private sector and provision of essential public services by the government owned institutions. Resources that would otherwise have been invested in increasing output and funding education and health programmes are diverted to crime prevention. Finally, because of increase in crimes rates, the attraction of foreign investors and foreign direct investment will be drastically reduced (Economic Commission for Africa, 2002).

Bello (2003) also identified these consequences of unemployment to include Low GDP. It is an established economic reality that the size of the work force directly affects a country's GDP. Not only that, the work force which produce manufactured goods or services or agriculture produce in direct proportion, also brings corresponding wage increment and purchasing power, which in turn, fuel the economic growth. Thus unemployment contributes to a reduction in the potential which exist in spurring a country's GDP. In addition, when unemployment grows in a country, dissatisfaction with the incumbent government follows. This, in turn, leads to frequent changes in governments or formation of unsteady coalitions. Neither is healthy for long term stable economic policies and this situation could lead to a vicious circle of political changes. This notion is depicted by the analogy of President Franklin D. Roosevelt of the United States that: "not only our future economic soundness, but the very soundness of our democratic institutions depends on the determination of our government to give employment to idle men. Youth unemployment (as also underemployment) therefore means to me, the saddest sight that fortune's inequality exhibits under the sun".

Theoretical Perspective

> Men are quick to aspire beyond their social means and quick to anger when those means prove inadequate, but slow to accept their limitations (Gurr, 1970: 58).

The theory of Relative Deprivation as propounded by Ted Robert Gurr in 1970 explains why people engage in violence and other criminal activities. It established significant relationship between frustration and aggression toward human tendency for violence. He argued that people resort to violence when they are frustrated as a result of the discrepancy between what they think they deserve and what they actually think they can get. In his words, he says, "perceived discrepancy between value expectations and value capabilities" (Gurr, 1970: 37).

The intensity and scope of Relative Deprivation strongly determine the potential for collective violence. Gurr (1970: 36) gives a long review of psychological research on aggression, and concludes that frustration-aggression is the "primary source of the human capacity for violence". Although, he noted that aggression is neither necessary nor sufficient for violence tendencies but he concedes that sometimes greed drives violence, but that frustration is a much stronger motivating force. The more intense and prolonged a feeling of frustration, the greater the probability of aggression. He posits that people become frustrated when what they get is lower than what they think they deserve to get and this condition consequently lead to aggression. This is evident in the above caption that opens this section which depict that frustration produces aggression among individuals, groups and societies.

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This theory best depict the Nigerian context, where an average youth who wish to live a magnificent life through increased luxuries and decreased stress end up living in increased stress and decreased luxuries. The situation in the country is that where hundreds of youth are turned out yearly as graduate from the universities and other tertiary institutions into an already saturated labour market with mechanism that can neither assure them of good jobs nor provide fertile ground for entrepreneurship opportunities. The replacement of their high hope and expectations with frustration after some years of joblessness prolongs their frustration and feelings of deprivation and consequently responsible for their resort to illegitimate activities in order to actualize their expectations in the society (Ajaegbu, 2012: 317).

It is un-contestable that the pervasive high rate of unemployment among the Nigerian youth makes them susceptible to crime. Most of the social crimes perpetrated by youth in Nigeria are a fallout consequence of unemployment. Obumneke (2012: 56) corroborate this argument that most of the apprehended criminals who engages in criminal activities were youth who were not gainful employed. They become more frustrated when they see their contemporaries living a fulfilled life. This prompted them to develop the zeal to meet their end needs by whatever means available to them; after all, it is often says that "the end justifies the means" as posited by Niccolo Machiavelli. This brought about the high rate of kidnapping in the south-south and eastern parts of the country, armed robbery and political thuggery in the western Nigeria and suicide bombing in the northern region. More generally, they resort to levying non-state illegal taxes on people and corporate organizations including government agents and agencies to meet their needs. The dimensions which these taxes take are analyzed in the following section.

Dimensions of Non-State Taxes Levied by the Unemployed Youth in South-Western Nigeria

Man as a rational being is bound to struggle in order to make life better, worthwhile and improve his status in the society. One who is unable to meet his basic needs tends to become frustrated and consequently prone to be violent as a result of the frustration. As depicted by the Gurr's Deprivation theory (1970), the unemployed youth in Nigeria especially those domiciled in the urban metropolitan cities like Lagos, Port Harcourt, and Kano amongst others resorted to the formation of gangs and are popularly called '*Area Boys*'. These gangs rivalled among themselves to claim territories of jurisdiction which more often than not led to violent conflicts resulting into lost of lives and damaging of properties belonging to innocent people domiciled in the conflict zones. Having won and consolidated such territories, they proceeded to institute non-state taxes levied on individuals and corporate organizations in their territory of jurisdiction to raise money for their personal and group sustenance. The power to levy these taxes is premised on the use of force and threat of violence. In some cases, people obey the demand of these youth out of fear of their wild looking appearance and most times in fear of the weaponry in their possession. This trajectory is challenging to both the people and governments at all levels. It became worrisome when these gangs started levying government agencies and contractors before being allowed to implement policies and programmes or commence the construction of infrastructure which will also be benefitted

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by them. Today, this act is becoming institutionalized by formalizing it to the extent of issuing receipt of payment to the payers.

Historically, it can be traced to Lagos State, at the period when groups of unemployed youth formed gangs and habitually gathered together at road junctions to while-away time. Subsequently, they started charging a prescribed fee on any passer-by who asked for direction to his/her destination. This act graduated to begging influential and respected persons who pass by either on foot or on automobiles for money to eat and drink alcohol. They also charge a fee from the driver/owner of a breakdown vehicle before they could offer to assist in pushing the vehicle out of the road or in looking at the possibility of rectifying the fault. These activities fetch them a lot of money which enables them go home with good daily income to meet other needs. They enjoy their new way of life of making money without stress or superior directives that is the order of the day in most workplace environments. The quality clothing, footwear and wristwatches they put on coupled with their magnificent lifestyle made other youth to envy them and either join them or establish new groups. Those already employed especially the underemployed and lazy ones also resigned their appointments to join the train of non-state tax collectors. This led to the proliferation of the gangs and its replication in most metropolitan cities across the zone.

The emergence of these proliferated groups with this objective in varying atmospheres of the societies led to variations in the dimensions which these non-state taxes take. While some look acceptable by societal norms, others are criminal in nature and are subsequently condemned though persisted. The acceptable ones take the form of services to humanity which ought to be delivered free. But, people are willing to pay the accompanying prescribed fee for such services because they are in dire need of such. These include description of direction to one's destination, filling of pot holes on highway or major roads, and pushing of breakdown vehicles amongst others. The criminal ones include demanding a fee from government contractor before commencing the execution of work and blockage of alternative route when there is traffic dreadlock on the major route in order to collect toll from vehicles plying the alternative route. It also take the form of holding corporate organizations especially manufacturing companies to ransom by threatening to disrupt their activities if they are not 'settled' (paid some amount of money).

The most recently instituted non-state tax is called *'owo eru'* (meaning load money) mandated on consumers or retailers who buy goods at Lagos major market especially Idumota Market in Lagos Island. Once the goods bought cannot be carried with hand, that is, any good that weight up to what one will put on the head will attract a prescribed fee to be paid to the *'Area Boys'* for such goods even if carried by the owner. The charges range from N50 to N200 depending on the bargaining power of the buyer and his/her ability to plead for sympathy or leniency. The one that concern sellers is called *'loading and offloading fee'*. This is paid on every vehicle being loaded or offloaded in the market. It ranges from N1, 000 to N100, 000. In Oshodi market, the fixed payable fee for offloading 20feet container irrespective of content is N50, 000 while 40feet container attracts N100, 000. Offloading medium and light vehicle attract negotiable fee depending on content and quantity. During direct observation at Oshodi market, we discovered that no fewer than thirty containers do offload on daily basis. One

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of the gang member confided in us that the approximate income of the whole gangs in the main market is up to N4million daily and sometimes more than that especially on Mondays and Tuesdays. Each gang will remit a prescribed amount to the higher authority (the gangs' overall leaders) and shared the remaining money among members depending on rank and status. These gangs also rent out part of the major road to sellers who cannot afford to rent shops in order to display their wares and often pay daily rent.

Another dimension of the tax is called '*owo omo onile'* (meaning land owner fee). This is collected from land buyers who intend to commence development of their landed properties. It usually comes in stages. The first being 'foundation money' followed by 'lintel fee'. 'Roofing charge' is the final pay for those erecting a non-storey building; while others pay 'decking money' for every storey of the building. Different fee is charged on the erection of fence for those who wish to have their house gated. Furthermore, any attempt to renovate an existing building will also attract a fee even if by changing a single roofing sheet, or repainting of the house. For those who are interested in burying their dead ones in the compound, a fee is charged even if such corpse is that of the landlord. They also collect toll from truck delivering sand at the building site before being allowed to offload. This trajectory started in Lagos and it is the order of the day in the entire State. It had already spread to most part of Ogun State and some other part of the western geopolitical zone.

The unemployed youth also make quick money during fuel scarcity. They sometimes forced filling station to sell fuel to them and in turn sell it as black market at a double price. In other cases, they manned the gate of the filling stations and collect toll from buyers before allowing them entry into the filling stations. During raining season, they do provide makeshift bridges to easy pedestrian passage on floods. Each pedestrian will pay a prescribed fee before allowed to make use of the bridge often made with set of tables. This also takes place during traffic dreadlock whereby the youth clear the road for any willing motorist who can pay for easy passage out of the traffic jam. The most common one that now engage almost all youth irrespective of employment status is the one called '*Carnival donation'*. The youth in each street do block the road and collect toll from all motorists and some influential pedestrians in order to raise fund for their street carnival which usually take place from December 25 to January 10 every year.

The Security and Economic Implication

The incessant youth restiveness, violent conflicts, proliferation of small arms and political thuggery in Nigeria amongst others are some of the security implication of the non-state tax collection. These youth often engage in unhealthy rivalries which negatively affect innocent dwellers of the area. This struggle is borne out of the fact that the gangs who control defined areas will do everything humanly possible to hold on to such territories, consolidate and also attempt to expand while those with little or nothing to control, will strive to dethrone the existing order and seize control. Whenever this trajectory leads to conflict, it is the innocent dwellers that suffer the loss both in lives and properties. This is because the gangs' members have no property in such area and would have device means of protecting themselves while the innocent dwellers will be caught unaware.

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In a situation where new gang upturned the order by dethroning the existing commander as it is usually the case, the members of the defunct gang usually resulted to armed robbery to sustain their lives. This is necessitated by the fire-arms in their possession and the unwillingness to subject themselves to working environment in any organization to meet their basic needs. Some gangs especially those that belong to the upper echelon usually sustained their power by siding with politicians. The politicians recruit them as political thuggery, arm them and back them with state power in order to sustain their grip on the control. The activities and kind of magnificent lifestyle lived by these youth prepare fertile ground for proliferation of thuggery and encourage laziness among youth. This is perhaps responsible for the outcome of the talent shortage survey carried out in the first quarter of 2011 where it was discovered that the ten hardest-to-fill positions among the youth globally include: Technicians, sales representatives, skilled trades workers, engineers, labourers, managers/executives, accounting and finance staff, it staff, production operators and secretaries, personal and administrative assistants (ManpowerGroup, 2011).

On the other hand, the economic implication of this trajectory is noticeable on the rate at which small and medium enterprises are folding up. People with entrepreneurial zeal are discouraged from investing their money in trading activities premised on the fear that these so-called 'Area boys' will over tax them. To those who despite all odds establish business ventures do pass the burden of these non-state taxes to the consumers, and in folds in most cases. This led to high cost of goods and services as observed in major urban cities across the country. Consequently, this high cost leads to low patronage and more often than not frustrate many businessmen and women out of business. The activities of these criminal elements also deprived Local Governments of their revenue because most revenue officers cannot penetrate the markets where the 'area boys' controls. The fact that they have government backing in most cases made it impossible for the revenue officers to subjugate them.

Conclusion

As established above, it is a settled matter that youth unemployment has significant relationship with criminal tendencies in urban areas. This corroborates the saying that 'an idle hand/mind is the devil's workshop'. The quest for survival led to the institutionalization of non-state taxes by the unemployed youth which also boom other criminal activities such as armed robbery, raping, violent conflicts, laziness and lawlessness amongst others. Since it is established that no nation can achieve growth in an atmosphere of violent crimes (Ajaegbu, 2012: 319), the governments at all levels must see this trajectory as a challenge that must be addressed before it degenerate into an uncontrollable phenomenon. Premised on this, it is strongly recommended that these activities of non-state imposition of illegal taxes on law abiding citizens should be explicitly criminalized and heavy sanctions should be placed to deter its continuity. However, it should be noted that this recommendation is one side of a coin. It might consequently lead to increase armed robbery if the other side of the coin is not considered. Government must as a matter of urgency and utmost priority create employment opportunities for the teaming youth. It should be noted that government cannot employ everybody into the Civil Service; hence, efforts must be geared toward the

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creation of environment that can spur the youth to realize their potential and encouraged them to actualize their dreams by initiating small and medium scale enterprises.

Skill development centres should also be built in the cities to improve the employability of the youth and improve their ability to find work and establish decent careers. This can be done through the provision of improved information resources on career and labour market for job seekers, encourage youth to have passion for vocational jobs by inculcating vocational skill courses into academic curriculum. In addition, effort must be put in place to revitalize career guidance programs for youth right from secondary school, partnering corporate organizations to provide practical training for tertiary students in order to enable them blend theory with practical and consequently improve their employability after graduation. Government and relevant NGOs should also revisit the issue of school dropout especially in the northern part of the country where the '*Almajiris'* pose a threat to the socio-political and economic condition of the country. It is strongly believed that if these recommendations are implemented with commitment and political will, high rate of youth unemployment in Nigeria will be addressed and the tendencies for criminal activities will be drastically reduced.

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