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UNEMPLOYMENT AND POLITICAL VIOLENCE IN DEMOCRATIC NIGERIA.

Onimajesin, Salihu Isiaka

Department of Criminology and Security Studies,
University of Ilorin, Ilorin, Kwara State, Nigeria.
isiakasalihu@yahoo.com

Fawole, Olufemi Adeniyi

Department of Sociology,
University of Ilorin, Ilorin, Kwara State, Nigeria.
femifawole.2010@gmail.com

and

Matthias Olufemi Dada OJO

Department of Sociology,
Crawford University of the Apostolic Faith Mission,
Igbesa, Ogun State, Nigeria.
femfemty@gmail.com. (Correspondent Author)

ABSTRACT

The problem of unemployment in Nigeria is, to some extent, indicative of the magnitude of the fact that unemployment is not only an individual's problem but also a social malice; one which has posed serious threat to the peaceful co-existence of the society as a whole, in view of the fact that it is not only the unemployed who are directly concerned that suffer from the phenomenon, but the whole society. It is equally believed that the involvement of youths in negative activities, such as political violence and crimes is a result of their idleness. Therefore, this paper is set to see the nexus, if any, that exists between unemployment, youth crimes and political violence in Nigeria since the return of the country to democratic rule in 1999, and then make necessary or relevant suggestions to remedy the situation.

Keywords: Unemployment, political violence, democracy, genocide, inter-communal tension

INTRODUCTION

Unemployment, and in particular youth unemployment, is one of the most significant economic and social issue facing Nigeria. Whilst the official youth unemployment statistics can be debated from time to time, what is clear is that for at least three decades our nation's young people have experienced a consistently higher rate of unemployment than that of their peers in Africa.

Unemployment is one of the developmental problems that face every developing economy in the 21st century. International statistics portray that industrial and service workers living in developing regions account for about two-thirds of the unemployment (Patterson, et al. 2006).

The Nigerian economy, since the attainment of political independence in 1960, has undergone fundamental structural changes. The domestic structural shifts have however not resulted in any significant and sustainable economic growth and development. Available data shows that the Nigerian economy grew relatively in the greater parts of the 1970s. With respect to oil boom of the 1970s; the outrageous profits from the oil boom encouraged wasteful expenditures in the public sector, dislocated of the employment factor and also distorted the revenue bases for policy planning. This, among many other crises resulted in the introduction of the Structural Adjustment Programme (SAP) in 1986 and the current economic reforms. The core objective of the economic structural reform is a total restructuring of the Nigerian economy in the face of population explosion (Douglass and Gbosi, 2006).

Akintoye, (2006) observed that these economic and financial reforms put in place have not yielded significant results. In defining unemployment, Gbosi (1997) defined unemployment as a situation in which people who are willing to work at the prevailing wage rate are unable to find jobs. The implication of this definition is that anyone who is not willing to work at the prevailing wage should not be counted as part of unemployed labour force, this is to avoid over estimation of the official rate of unemployment.

Briggs (1973) sees unemployment as the difference between the amount of labour employed at current wage rate and working conditions, and the amount of labour not hired at these levels. According to Lipsey (1963), unemployment brings about economic waste and causes human suffering. The contribution and altitude of this economic waste were emphasized by the fact that the factor services are the least durable economic commodity.

Unemployment is measured among people in the labour force. Labour force of a country as defined by Feyisetan (1991), is a set of people or citizens of a country who are willing and are able to make available at any given point in time their efforts for gainful employment. The unemployed are the individuals with no work but are looking for work at the time of survey.

According to the Encyclopedia Americana (1995), unemployment literally applied to all persons without work and actively looking for work. In the opinion of Englama (2001) unemployment rate in an economy is the number of people unemployed, expressed as a percentage of the total labour force. The total labour force is defined as the number of people employed plus the number of people unemployed within the age bracket of 18-60 years. Unemployment, according to Adebayo (1999), exists when members of the labour force wish to work but cannot get jobs.

Dantwala (1971) defined unemployment as a state in which people who can work are without jobs and are seeking for pay or profit. This definition gives rise to the problem of measurement, especially when we are interested in knowing the average rate of unemployment in the economy over a period of time. Falae (1971) considered such a definition too broad because some categories of people who are without work should not really be regarded as unemployed in any meaningful sense. He therefore pointed to the labour code prescription of lower and upper limits for the labour force in Nigeria and submitted that anyone who is unable to work is not counted as unemployed, even though he or she would love to work.

According to Giertz (2004), an increasing number of youth has employment problems with recurrent movement from temporary jobs, studies and labour market programs. Officially unemployed are persons without work, but willing and able to work and looking for a job, often measured as a percentage of the labour force. Labour force is the total number of persons employed and officially unemployed (Bureau of Labour Statistics, 2015). Young unemployed are persons aged between 18 and 25 years, who were not employed during 100 days and are looking for job and further educational opportunities. Unemployment rate is the share of unemployed persons in the total number of active persons in the labour market (Eurostart, 2015).

TYPES OF UNEMPLOYMENT

Parking and king (1995) describe three different sources of unemployment that result to three different types of unemployment: these three forms of unemployment are: (1) Frictional; 2) Cyclical; and 3) Structural.

Frictional Unemployment: Arises from the normal turnover of people in the labour market. One of the sources of this turnover is the constant changing of people's economic activities, e.g. young people leave the school and join the labour force, old people retire and leave it, and some people leave it temporarily, often to raise children, and then rejoin it (Parkin and King, 1995). The generous social benefits provided by the state influence the period of time that people take to find a job. Respectively, the rate of frictional unemployment goes higher and average time for job search is longer.

Frictional unemployment may be regarded as subject of structural unemployment, mainly reflecting temporary unemployment spells as a result of job search and matching difficulties in connection with quits, new entries to the labour market, and job separation because of employers' dissatisfaction with the individual workers (Lindbeck, 1999). Ordinarily, this kind of unemployment does not usually pose much threat to individual's welfare as it is temporary in nature. However, the situation in Sub Sahara African (SSA) countries is that of frictional unemployment growing into a long – term unemployment and thereby resulting in a stable state of unemployment.

Structural Unemployment: Is the situation where many jobs are available in the labour market in a particular region, but the labour force is not competitive enough in order to get these jobs. The labour market demands might require more specific and qualified knowledge and skills that do not characterize all job searchers. According to Parkin and King (1995), Structural unemployment arises when the number of jobs available in a particular region or industry falls. It can occur because of constant technological change, such as automation of car plant. Mendes (1990) mentions that the structurally unemployed often lack skills and

education, and have little or no work experience to attain and maintain stable position in the job market, even during economic growth. A large number of structurally unemployed are disadvantaged and depend on social assistance; many others are young and or are part of ethnic groups.

Equilibrium unemployment is inimical to the economic system as the excess of labour supply over demand often lasts for a long time. This, to a large extent, describes the so-called structural unemployment. The stability of unemployment under a structural setting usually remains undisturbed until certain economic parameters undergo some changes. This is given the fact that this unemployment scenario is often characterized by structural shifts. Structural unemployment refers to a mismatch of job vacancies with the supply of labour available, caused by shifts in the structure of the economy (Bannock et.al .1998). Although the unemployment state of rest that characterizes structural unemployment phenomenon seems to describe the situation of unemployment in Sub-Sahara Africa but this unemployment equilibrium does not necessarily result from a situation of a mismatch between job vacancies and labour supply. It is rather a state of non-availability of jobs for those thrown out of jobs and for the new entrants. The unemployment situation in Sub Sahara Africa especially in Nigeria, Mali, Cameroon, Niger and a number of other countries in the Sub-region can therefore be described as that of long-term frictional unemployment rather than structural unemployment. Changes in the economic structures over the years have been very slow and insignificant.

Cyclical Unemployment: Occurs from an economic decline that affects majority of labour force irrespective of their qualifications, skills and personal preferences (Parkin and king, 1995). The Cyclical unemployed are those whose job opportunities rise and fall with the general situation in the economy, alternating between employment and unemployment (Mendes, 1990).

Cyclical unemployment is associated with cycles. It surfaces during the periods of economic depressions and disappears at the times of troughs and booms. Cyclical unemployment differs from structural and frictional unemployment in basically being tied to short-term economic fluctuation (Lindbeck, 1999). It is an unemployment resulting from lack of aggregate demand in a downswing in the business cycle (Bannock et.al.1998). In most Sub Sahara Africa economies, the issue of business cycle is actually not too relevant, this is because, such terminology is heard of probably within the oil sector only. For instance, in Nigeria, since the collapse of oil boom in the late seventies the economy has generally remained in passive state even though some other periods of oil price surge were later experienced. What sounds like cyclical unemployment in most Sub Sahara African economies is the seasonal unemployment that is inherent in the agricultural sector. If at all the generally declining economic growth in Nigeria is described as a cycle, then it may be best described as the very long Kondratieff cycle which lasts for over a period of 50 years (Bello,2003).

Disguised Unemployment: Otherwise known as concealed unemployment, it is a situation in which more people are available for work than is shown in the unemployment statistics (Bannock et al 1998). This is because many unemployed people will register for work only if they believe opportunities are available for them; otherwise, they view the exercise as a mere futility. This is exactly the situation in Nigeria where many job seekers rather than registering for work choose to engage in certain activities for which the marginal product of labour is virtually zero. In short, it means that given the techniques and productive resources, there exist surplus labour whose withdrawal from a sector would not reduce total output (Englama, 2001).

The problem of disguised unemployment is quite acute in Nigeria. This explains why official unemployment statistics sharply differs from the true state of unemployment or from the unofficial statistics available. The recorded figure for unemployment significantly understates the number of people who are actually willing to work at the existing set of wage rate. Of course, there are many people without jobs who are looking for work but do not bothered to register as unemployed. These people are not included in the official statistics for the registered labour force, nor will they appear as registered unemployed. Yet from economic point of view, such people are in the labour force and are unemployed. This probably explains why the official statistics released by the Federal Office of Statistics (FOS) present low rate of unemployment. Because even though there are employment exchange offices in Nigeria, unemployed persons are discouraged from registering with them because of poor job placements and lack of special benefits for other registered unemployed. Consequently, the unemployment figures in Nigeria are obtained through labour force sample survey, by asking if the person has worked in the past week preceding the survey. Obviously, because even a graduate who hawks around responds yes to that question, the unemployment rate will always be very low, e.g. 33 percent in June 1999 and 4.7 percent in December 2000 (Bannock et al, 1998 and Englama, 2001).

Under Employment: Is a situation of a labour not having enough paid work or not doing work that makes full use of his skills and abilities. It can be measured by the number of hours worked per week. Generally, in Nigeria, the official period of working time per week is forty hours which many workers fall short of due to non-availability of work. In some instance, available work is rationed (work-sharing) especially among the low skilled workers and casual labourers even in the formal sector. The situation in the informal sector tends to be worse. Therefore, the major problem we have in Nigeria is in terms of disguised and under employment (Bello, 2003).

Long-term unemployment seems to have taken its toll on Nigeria. The situation of many job seekers remaining in the labour market for years without hope of exit is now a common feature of the unemployment phenomenon. This long-term unemployed stands the risk of negative duration dependence, which in turn enhances long-term unemployment and unemployment persistence. In Nigeria, in the recent time, it is not uncommon to find unemployed graduates expressing futility in job finding having remained in the job market for more than four years without exit point. Many eventually give up job finding; taking to any means of livelihood (including **crime**) without minding the legal implications or consequences. The act of losing faith in job finding itself enhances higher unemployment rate. Machin and Manning (1998) state that “this negative duration dependence contributes to the incidence of long –term unemployment.” Many long-term unemployed often shun unemployment registration exercise viewing it as fruitless and worthless program.

FACTORS IN YOUTH UNEMPLOYMENT

A qualitative study was conducted by Lily Myrhed (2006), who analyzed how the political parties relate to questing of young individuals in Sweden, particularly to the question of youth unemployment. Units of analysis were the parliamentary parties and their youth organizations. Conclusions were that young individuals in society have a limited impact on the appearance of political parties. No party has a stable responsiveness to questions of young individuals: only three out of the seven youth organization had the current youth unemployment on the agenda. In Nigeria all parties had suggestions on how to combat

unemployment, but not all had suggestions directed towards youth in particular. It is noteworthy that youth unemployment is seen as a problem in Nigeria, but little intervention is made on the decision-making level, in order to find solution to these problems.

Another research analysis on whether unemployment among young people, and programs targeted towards the same group have an effect on crime. The findings are summarized as follows: Even in a welfare state where social benefits cover the major income loss from job displacement, unemployment has a big impact on main categories of property crime contrary to common opinion; there is not a clear correlation between youth unemployment and occurrence of youthful crimes. Moreover, there is no evidence that labour market programs reduce crime (Nilsson, 2005).

Urban youth unemployment, according to Onah (2001), stands for the conglomerate of youths with diverse background willing and able to work in urban areas. These result in pressures of supply of labour over the demand for labour thus causing joblessness. Given the lack of sufficient employment opportunities in the formal sector, young people are compelled to engage in casual work and other unorthodox livelihood sources, often of a criminal nature (Gibb and George, 1990). This included political violence as explained in this paper.

POLITICAL VIOLENCE

A clear understanding of the nature and dynamics of political violence is essential for us to properly understand the issues relating to violence. Violence or the threat of violence is a universal phenomenon. Individuals, groups and even states throughout history, in one form or another, resorted to violence or its potential use as a tactic of political action (Arnold, 1964).

Danzinger (1998) noted that the most common notion is that violence entails the use of physical force, usually with the purpose of injuring or damaging the object of the violence. The tools of such violence can range from flying fists and feet to clubs and bullets to nerve gas and nuclear missiles. According to Salami (1993), violence can be broadly categorized into two: direct and indirect violence. Direct violence refers to acts of deliberate violence resulting in a direct attack on a person's physical or psychological integrity. This category includes all forms of homicides (genocide, war crime, massacres, murders, terrorism) as well as all types of coercive or brutal actions involving physical or psychological suffering (kidnapping, torture, rape, and maltreatment). Such behavior corresponds in all instances to illegal acts running counter to the most basic of all human rights and the right to life.

Indirect violence, according to Salami (1993), is a category intended to cover harmful, sometimes even deadly situations or actions which, though due to human intervention, do not necessarily involve a direct relationship between the victims and the institution.

The clamour for democracy and democratic governance stems from the belief that it guarantees human rights and ensures peace, security and stability which are considered as part of the necessary ingredients for self-determination, personal and general economic well-being. However, for it to develop and flourish, certain socio-political institutions need to be in place. These include the constitution, impartial electoral commission, human right organizations, among others. These institutions, however, evolve as a result of a struggle between the major social classes in the society. It is this class struggle however that led to conflicts and conflicting interests within a political system as noted by Azeez (2005).

Political violence in the Nigerian context can be regarded as a sort of response to frustrating circumstances. In Nigeria, as in most developing countries, politics is a game of promises without fulfillment, and given the limited available resources to the system, certain individuals, group and communities had their aspirations and expectations raised without the possibility of their being fulfilled. These disappointments have given rise to agitations, struggles, conflicts among individuals and groups, and often times ended in violent confrontations with casualties or losses both in human and properties.

It is not an exaggeration to say that political violence in Nigeria is as old as Nigeria itself. This is largely because the Nigerian state had been engulfed by civil crises before the attainment of independence in 1960. For instance, following the introduction of the system of taxation under the colonial administration to the native of the south, resistance flared up in Iseyin in 1916, Abeokuta (Adubi war) in 1918, riots and disorderliness in Sapele and Warri in 1927 as well as the popular Aba women riots of 1929 in Owerri and Calabar provinces Nnoli (1976). Immediately after the attainment of independence, the Nigeria- state was bedeviled by political violence. These include the census crises of 1962/63, the Action Group crisis of 1962, the 1964 Federal Election Crisis, the Western Nigerian election crisis of 1965, the general elections crisis of 1979 and 1983 respectively, as well as the political violence that greeted the annulment of the June 12, 1993 presidential election.

Immediately before and after the 1998 general elections there were scores of political violence as a result of electoral malpractices or perceived marginalization by different groups/ associations. After the inauguration of the newly elected democratic government on May 29, 1999, there began violence perpetrated by different groups probably as a way of drawing government attention to their plight as minority groups politically or ethnically. These groups include the Oodua Peoples' Congress (OPC), the militant arm of Afenifere and National Democratic Coalition (NADECO), Arewa Peoples' Congress (APC), Igbo Peoples' Congress (IPC), militant arm of OhanezeNdigbo Eastern Mandate. Others are Bakassi Boys, Egbesu Boys, Militia arm of Movement for the Actualization of the Sovereign State of Biafra (MASSOB), Tiv Militia, Ijaw Militia, Jukun Militia, Itsekiri Militia (Onimajesin, 2005).

The killing of Chief Bola Ige, the then Federal Minister of Justice and Attorney General of the Federation in his Ibadan home on December 23, 2001, the murder of Dr Marshall Harry, then National Vice Chairman (South - South) of the All Nigeria Peoples' Party (ANPP) on March 5, 2003, assassination of the chairman Nigerian Bar Association (NBA) Anambra branch Mr. Igwe Barnabas and his pregnant wife were believed to be politically motivated. On the 15th of August, 2002, the State Chairman of the Peoples' Democratic Party in Kwara state Ahmed Pategi was killed on his way to Abuja (Ayinla, 2005).

Inter-communal, political, and sectarian violence has claimed the lives of more than 14,500 people since the end of military rule in 1999. During 2010, episodes of inter-communal violence in Plateau State, in central Nigeria, left over 900 dead. In January several hundred were killed in sectarian clashes in and around the state capital of Jos, including a massacre on January 19 that claimed the lives of more than 150 Muslims in the nearby town of KuruKarama. Shortly thereafter, on March 7, at least 200 Christians were massacred in DogoNahawa and several others nearby villages. In the months that followed, more than 100 people died in smaller-scale attacks and reprisal killings in Jos and surrounding communities. Meanwhile inter-communal clashes in Nassarawa, Niger, Adamawa, Gombe, Taraba, Ogun, Akwalbom, and Cross River states left more than 110 dead and hundreds more displaced. State and local government policies that discriminate against "non-indigenes"-people who

cannot trace their ancestry to what are said to be the original inhabitants of an area-exacerbate inter-communal tensions.

Widespread poverty and poor governance in Nigeria have created an environment where militant groups thrive. In Bauchi State in December 2009, violent clashes between government security forces and rival factions of a militant Islamist group known as Kala Kato left several dozen dead, including more than 20 children. Between July and October 2010, suspected members of the Boko Haram Islamist group killed eight police officers, an Islamic cleric, a prominent politician, and several community leaders in the northern city of Maiduguri, and in September attacked a prison in Bauchi, freeing nearly 800 prisoners, including more than 100 suspected Boko Haram members.

Targeted killings and political violence increased ahead of the 2011 elections. In January 2010 Dipo Dina, an opposition candidate in the 2007 gubernatorial elections in Ogun State, was gunned down. In a series of attacks in Bauchi State in August, gunmen killed two of the state governor's aides and a security guard for an opposition governorship candidate, and injured several others. Meanwhile, the Nigerian government has still not held accountable those responsible for the 2007 election violence that left at least 300 people dead.

Following a lull in violence in the oil-rich Niger Delta, attacks increased, including kidnappings of school children, wealthy individuals, and oil workers, and car bombings in Delta State, Bayelsa State, and Abuja. The 2009 amnesty - in which a few thousand people, including top militant commanders, surrendered weapons in exchange for cash stipends - led to a reduction of attacks on oil facilities in 2010, but their disarmament, demobilization, and reintegration have been poorly planned and executed. The amnesty has further entrenched impunity, and the government has made little effort to address environmental degradation, endemic state and local government corruption, or political sponsorship of armed groups, which drive and underlie violence and poverty in the region.

Again in 2010, members of the Nigeria Police Force were widely implicated in the extortion of money and the arbitrary arrest and torture of criminal suspects and others. They solicited bribes from victims of crimes to initiate investigations, and from suspects to drop investigations. They were also implicated in numerous extrajudicial killings of persons in custody. Meanwhile senior police officials embezzle and mismanage funds intended for basic police operations. They also enforce a perverse system of "returns," in which rank-and-file officers pay a share of the money extorted from the public up the chain of command.

The government lacked the will to reform the police force and hold officers accountable for these and other serious abuses. At this writing, none of the police officers responsible for the brazen execution of the Boko Haram leader, Mohammed Yusuf, and dozens of his suspected supporters in Maiduguri in July 2009 have been prosecuted. Similarly, the government has still not held members of the police and military accountable for their unlawful 2008 killing of more than 130 people during sectarian violence in Jos, or for the 2001 massacre by the military of more than 200 people in Benue State, and the military's complete destruction of the town of Odi, Bayelsa State, in 1999.

IMPLICATIONS

Sartori (1987) observed that democracy exist when the relations between the governed and the government abides by the principle that the state is at the service of the citizens and not

the citizens at the service of the state, and that the government exist for the people and not the other way round. Democracy as an ideology is seen as philosophy of governance which sets a high premium on the basic freedom of fundamental rights of the citizens, the rule of law, right to property ownership, free flow of information and the right of choice between alternative political positions.

The absence of peace in the country due to the prevalence of political violence has scared and will continue to scare away potential investors both local and foreign, thereby keeping the unemployment rate continuously on the high side, since no business minded person would invest his/her money in an un-conducive environment leading to little or no development at all.

The problems of violence in politics portends a greater danger to the foreign image of the country in the comity of nations as it would be seen as a sign of disunity among the various component parts of the country or maladministration on the part of the government which may result in non-serious relationship with the countries thereby affecting the developmental rate of the country.

Political violence retards the growth and development of the nation. Violence, regardless of its nature, tends to slow down development because development can only take place under a peaceful atmosphere. As it would be difficult for a blind man to see in the broad daylight, so it would be difficult for a nation to experience any form of growth or development where there is no relative peace.

Political violence often lead to military intervention, the first and indeed other military coups in Nigeria were said to have been informed by political instability that had threatened the continued existence of the country as a result of political violence, and the various military regimes that have ruled the country have negative effects on development of the nation.

RECOMMENDATIONS

The Nigerian constitution must be strengthened to cater for her unity despite her diversity. The constitution must be articulate enough to encapsulate all the various yearnings by both the minority and majority groups. The problems of marginalization should be adequately addressed. The states and local governments must be constitutionally empowered to be financially independent in order to meet up with the challenges and expectations of their people. States must source for their own revenues and must ensure adequate and judicious utilization of such for the benefit of the masses; absolute reliance on federal allocation must be discouraged.

Most violent acts are carried out by the unemployed youths; therefore, it has become highly imperative to take proper care of these youths by providing jobs for them with attractive remuneration which they can live on. Governments at all levels must make job creation a priority; this will go a long way in reducing the constant occurrence of political violence in Nigeria. The National Directorate of Employment (NDE) should be strengthened to carry out its function of providing jobs for our teeming youths, if we are to stay away from the reality of idle hands being devil's workshop.

Poverty reduction is a very useful tool in maintaining peaceful society devoid of political violence, since most of the people used in fomenting troubles are usually paid for the

dirty job, these people partake in the heinous activities because of what they stand to gain either monetarily or materially to make ends meet. Therefore, the poverty reduction strategies and other related programmes or schemes must be strongly pursued with all vigour because poverty is one of the major causes of the problem.

The military must be made to understand that their primary responsibility is to defend the territorial integrity of the country from external aggression and to maintain law and order within the country if the need arises, they should stay away from governance.

Our political and religious leaders must be steadfast in the discharge of their duties, the political leaders should be united in fighting the scourge of political violence, and they should stop the politics of bitterness and win at all cost by respecting the wishes of the people by accepting results of elections as they come. While the religious leaders should always admonish the political leaders on the good ways prescribed by their religions, they too should stop playing politics with their teachings and sermons.

CONCLUSION

It should be noted by all and sundry that violence in politics is an invitation to the military to intervene in the polity, thereby truncating the democratic process. Thus, it is pertinent to caution that the various incidents of political and electoral violence, thuggery, assassination, and social insecurity, if not checked, are capable of political drawback through military intervention.

Therefore, for the continued sustenance of democratic rule and its attendant benefits to the people in Nigeria, violence, in whatever form, should be condemned in all its ramifications, this would also earn Nigeria more respect in the comity of nations.

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