

Youth Unemployment in Africa as a Catalyst of Conflicts and Insecurity: The Case of Cameroon

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ABSTRACT

This reflection attempts a clarification of youth conflict in Cameroon basing on unemployment as a catalyst of youth issues. Conflict in general and youth conflict in particular is a problem to developing countries. Beside youth bulge, youth unemployment appears to be the most glaring cause of youth conflicts on the continent as of date among many other causes. Using deprivation theory coupled with both primary as well as secondary methods of data generation, we came to the conclusions that youth unemployment is at the heart of youth driven conflict in Africa. As measures to remedy conflicts in Africa on a larger scale and in Cameroon on a smaller scale, youth aspirations and voices should be heard and taken into consideration. Poverty and joblessness being seen as the main factor of insecurity and youth violence/conflict, creating opportunities for these ones is the only remedy as criminal convictions have failed to deter or curb insecurity caused by young people public authority and policy makers therefore are call upon to formulate and implement employment policies so as to limit youth violence.

Key Words: Youth, Youth Conflict, Unemployment, Youth bulge, Employment, Insecurity.

INTRODUCTION

World-wide, idled young people have a skyrocketing comparative advantage in the negative economy reasons why these ones left on themselves are easily seduced by entrepreneurs of violence/conflicts due to the benefit therein. Young people based on their youthfulness are prone to conflicts otherwise known as youth conflicts, violence and insecurity. Youth, conflict and violence are practically inseparable, where we have young people, there is bound to be conflicts. Young people to this fact are no longer to be seen as just a social category but a segment of the population demanding the highest attention of the powers that be. African governments inspired by the African Youth Charter have been formulating and implementing programs and projects in view of youth empowerment. A disturbing fact noticed in Cameroon is that the budget allocated for some of these programs is limited compared with the youth populace.¹ Until young people are considered as a time bomb and administer the right method of disarming the bomb, it is just be a matter of time for the time bomb to explode. If conflict, insecurity, war or violence retards development as posits by conflict researchers, development also retards the outbreak of conflicts or violence. Hence, the best anti-dot to youth conflicts is youth empowerment via developmental programs and projects. Conflict as mentioned in the topic goes beyond verbal assaults to physical confrontations resulting at times to casualties. Vulnerable young people are most often mobilized by unscrupulous politician to involve in activities that are usually unbeneficial to them. Looking at conflicts in general and youth conflicts in particular, one is tempted to think that conflicts is linked to humanity to this, John Paul in his work hold that “conflict is normal in human relationships, and conflict is a motor of change”.² From the word unemployed youth, it is clear that conflicts abound since a hungry man they say is an angry man. Using the deprivation theory, we analysed conflict in Africa from the point of view of unemployment since most conflicts especially arm conflicts have young people at the forefront with majority joining the evil trade because of the supposed benefit it provides. For the purpose of this talk, young people or youth is

¹ This fact was relayed to us by the staff of the Ministry of Employment and Vocational Training in Yaoundé 2023 during our internship relating to our research work in the Ministry.

² John Paul Lederach (2014) *The Little Book of Conflict Transformation*, Good Books Publishing, USA, 64 pages.

referred to men and women of both sexes ranging between the ages of 15-35 years having in mind that there is no universal definition for this category.

Youth conflicts or youth and conflicts in Africa have varied causes but a particular accusing finger is being pointed at 'youth bulge' as a catalyst of conflict on the continent. To this, the Rwandan crisis of 1994 was accused by some on the outburst of population with limited landed property available hence reasons to reduce the population so as to align the surviving people with the available land. Youth bulge in homogenous societies is a factor of development, but in heterogeneous societies like the countries of the Sub-Sahara Africa is a factor of division and conflict due to ethnic differences.³ Others point at unemployment as the main cause of youth violence. The second option is more convincing because a loose number of young people with reasoning brains but jobless will surely use those brains in the negative economy. Others attach youth conflict to coercion of entrepreneurs of violence. This assertion is very limited since for one to be coerced, they must be available and especially jobless, young people with well-defined activities do not hang around so as to be abducted by these entrepreneurs of the negative economy. Citing Syed et al. 2011, Osarensen and Laurence hold that "The assertion is that the high rates of unemployment in an economy is a stimulating factor for unemployed persons to commit crime for monetary gains".⁴ Hence young people are not breakers but do join gangs due to hardship and poverty.

With no doubt young people due to their youthful strength, vivacity are both makers and breakers when it comes to the construction or destruction state or a nation. This fact is better enlightened by Honwana and De Boeck, 2005 but we however think that these ones (young people) are breakers if and only if they are not given the opportunities to be makers. Hence, youth empowerment is a call for concern. The thesis which holds that youth bulge nations are conflict prone nations are not wrong but at the same time are not very correct. In a global society like ours with android youths on the planet, a country with a youthful population on the contrary is development incline if these young people are well integrated into the different channels of production and consumption. Youth bulge in reality constitute an important internal market of the National Economy.⁵ Theorising on causes of conflict in Africa, Fonkem Achankeng I in his article point an accusing finger at colonialism. To him, conflict entrepreneurs fail in considering the colonial aspect in the resolution of conflicts in Africa, leading to many of the conflicts left unresolved.⁶ The colonial factor as he puts it, is to be considered in resolving conflicts on the continent since he attaches conflicts on the continent to what he terms "colonial legacy".⁷ It will be absurd not to agree with this approach which puts colonial factor at the helm of conflicts in Africa, this being because the history of Africa is that of colonization and problems in every society can only be solved adequately by resorting to the history and hence the *raison d'être* of colonialism in conflict management in Africa. In as much as the point has its place, we think that youth conflict in particular, especially in this era is economic prone and should be settled with economic solutions through the creation of opportunities for these idled youthful population on the continent.

Unemployment is a situation of deprivation and young people who feel deprived of their rights to work, earn good salaries and construct families do turn to violence as a means of expression. A point to note is that other factors responsible for youth violence and conflicts do abound but unemployment seems to be the most glaring factor in this era of general poverty and limited opportunities. Apart from theft, juvenile delinquency, arm robbery, ritual crimes, verbal crime (hate speech) is the fast growing insecurity or fuel of insecurity in Cameroon. Multi-ethnic nature of the country which naturally ought to be a source of strength to Cameroon and Cameroonians in terms of cultural diversity is sadly becoming a source of conflicts and general insecurity.

³ Multi-ethnicity as witnessed in Cameroon is a call for concern and managing conflicts in general is quite difficult since somebody will always feel marginalized because of the other.

⁴ Osarensen EDOMWONYI and Lawrence Chukwuka EDOMWONYI (2020) "IS UNEMPLOYMENT THE ROOT CAUSE OF INSECURITY IN NIGERIA? International Journal of Social Inquiry Cilt / Volume 13 Sayı / Issue 2/pp. 487-507.

⁵ A tangible example is seen in China where before international market, the Chinese themselves constitute a real market for their produce.

⁶ Fonkem Achankeng I, "Conflicts and Conflicts Resolution in Africa: Engaging the Colonial Factor", College of Education and Human Services, University of Wisconsin Oshkosh, pp. 11-38.

⁷ He identified the bad governance tradition in Africa today to be linked to colonial rule which did not respect self-determination of the African people, violated their rights with harsh rule and violence.

In Yaoundé for instance the ‘Betty Clan’ turn to see adversity in other ethnic groupings present in the city based on land issues related to sales, double sales and ownership.⁸

To this, what is the nature of youth conflicts and how can it be handled? As a direct answer to this question, we hold that youth conflict in Africa taken wide and in Cameroon on a smaller scale is caused primarily by unemployment and to an extent underemployment. As seen in the above question, the objective of this work is to examine unemployment as a catalyst of youth conflicts and to propose remedy measures to the situation. Methodologically, the study uses both primary and secondary data. As primary techniques, we used observation as the main technique of data generation alongside television and radio debates, news reports and the social media. Secondary data saw the consultation of documents (reviews, articles and books). Young people are deprived of their rights leading no doubts to conflicts on the continent. Right to work, to own properties, to establish families and to explore the world. The deprivation theory proponents hold that “some social movements are born when certain people or certain groups of people in the society feel that they are deprived of a specific good, service or resource” (Mc Adam, McCarthy, & Zald, 1988; Opp, 1988).¹ Deprivation therefore lies at the heart of the grievances of young people which sooner or later, obliges them to adopt conflicting measures between each other, among ethnic groupings and to an extent against the established political institutions. This being said, our reflection will start with an examination of what conflict is, followed by the nature of conflict experienced in Cameroon while pointing an accusing finger at unemployment as the main catalyst of conflicts before looking at means to resolve conflicts on the continent having in mind that Cameroon is Africa on a smaller scale.

Conceptualising the Notion of Conflict

Violent conflict as posits by Didier Péclard (2019:P1), is an evolution of disagreement between two or more persons with opposing opinions and ranges from verbal to physical confrontations with the highest incident or damage being death or complete destruction of the other party. Conflicts usually take place between individuals, but can also take place between groups of individuals or even between ethnic affiliations and on a larger scale, between two or more states also known as international conflicts. A point to note is that conflicts in Africa are mostly structural in nature.⁹ Young people for instance no matter the country they found themselves in, are a conflict that requires proper management. This management takes into consideration the availability of opportunities since economic in most cases substitutes conflict in Africa. To this fact, hungry young people become an emerging conflicts for their state or nation.¹⁰ In this light, Muhabie Mekonnen Mengistu (2015: 2) holds that “Conflict on the other hand can be defined as the contradictions inherent in power relations and which manifest themselves in individual and group interactions with one another and with nature in the pursuit of limited resources or opportunities. Conflict is the motor of transformation and is either positive or negative”.² We definitely will not look at conflict as a negative approach of transformation but rather we will devise means to curb youth conflict embedded in unemployment amongst young Cameroonians of both gender. Youth driven conflicts is at the heart of general conflicts in Africa. The Rwandan genocide for instance was quite a negative conflict because it claimed the lives of approximately a million people.

Unemployment as articulated is no doubt conflicts prone but food insecurity as witnessed in developing nations is equally a non-negligible factor of conflict and even armed conflict.¹¹ The question of what will one eat usually push young people either to pick-up arms, rob people of their belongings or join gangs there by ending in the negative economy. Insecurity just like conflict are situations that can be very hostile to development because no investment is possible or profitable in a situation of continues atmosphere of fear and uncertainty. To this fact, conflicts and or insecurity retards development and development equally retards the outbreak of conflicts. Creating an enabling environment with diverse opportunities for the general populace and young people, is the one and only way to retard and or settle conflicts before it out break.

⁸ Ethnicity and ethnic division in Cameroon is becoming more of a problem since some ethnic groups put themselves above others thereby rendering National Integration difficult and to extent impossible. Though not physical, ethnic conflicts remains a difficult problem to fathom in Cameroon as seen through hate speech notably on the social media platforms.

⁹ This means that such conflicts have always existed and only the management can either maintain it or escalate it.

¹⁰ The African continent has a very large youth cohort or youth bulge. This in itself is conflict especially economic driven conflicts.

¹¹ This corroborates with the saying which goes that “a hungry man is an angry man” and anger being at the base of conflicts.

The Nature of Conflicts Experience in Cameroon

Before the conflict of identity as witnessed in English Cameroon, the main conflicts inherent to the state of Cameroon is ethnic based. Regulating ethnic conflict in Cameroon prompted the present regime to create ministerial dormant positions just to please this or that ethnic group. The multi-ethnicity nature of Cameroon is a fuel of conflicts but the conflict generated from the segmentation seem to work positively for the New Deal Regime in Yaoundé. This is seen especially with the difficulties observed in mobilising young Cameroonians to demand or claim their legitimate rights. Since somebody must be at the head of a group, anybody who so ever dares is quickly segregated by the other ethnic groups who either boycott the plans or turn in the initiator.¹²

Despite the presence of violent conflict as highlighted above, we rather wish to look at boiling tensions of young people who emanating from joblessness and or unemployment. Ethnic and tribal conflicts are therefore the bomb that exist in Cameroon which will soon explode if not dismantled. After independence, the president of Cameroon of blessed memory Ahmadou Ahidjo used certain mechanisms to solve ethnic conflicts in Cameroon. He opted to cancel partially or completely ethnic identity with national identity. This was seen especially with the unified party of 1966 and later unification of the two Cameroons in 1972 via a referendum. National sentiment in this epoch was above ethnic or tribal sentiments. The consolidation of this was seen in 1984 when the present president by a presidential decree changed the name of the country from the United Republic of Cameroon to the Republic of Cameroon. This was because the connotation “united” hid in it, a once separated people, which could lead one day to claims hence, it was timely for that to be taken out. However, with the wind of change that blew from the west notably with the collapse of the Berlin wall and the unification of the two Blocks in 1989 and 1991, we saw a recourse to multi-party politics which brought back the ethnic and tribal feelings which existed beforehand. To this political parties carried along with them ethnic connotations like “Anglophone party”, “Bamilike party” and what have you. This made it difficult to combat ethnicity and tribalism which is today a source of conflicts and misunderstanding between the Cameroonian people.

Conflicts amongst Young People: Unemployment as a Push Factor

“I am sure that none of you would want to rest content with the superficial kind of social analysis that deals mainly with effects and does not grapple with underlying causes” (Martin Luther King Jr 1963).

To this fact we see and or take unemployment as a direct cause of conflicts on the continent and in Cameroon though other factors abound. After observation and perhaps experience, limited prospect and lack of opportunities is the most glaring factor of conflicts in Cameroon.¹³ It is either young people are reported of dying in the Mediterranean Sea while struggling to cross over to Europe or are being killed, captured and imprisoned for theft. Talking on conflicts in general and youth driven conflicts in particular, Honoré De Mirabeau (1749-1791) held that “I know only of three ways of living in society: one must be a beggar, a thief, or a wage earner”. To this Cameroonian young people are proud people and cannot beg. If begging is out of the question and salary jobs are not present, stealing becomes an option. This therefore is the reason we have general criminality especially in the major cities with forces of law and order tracking them day-in-day-out. The surprising aspect however of youth crime is the fact that the more they are tracked and convicted, the more they multiply in the country. Young people without employment generally think that they have more to gain than to lose in the course of criminality.¹⁴ A good example of this is seen in the “Anglophone problem” where despite the fact that those involved are being killed on a daily bases, more young people are picking up arms not to fight the course of the struggle but to fight poverty via kidnappings and general theft thereby inflicting pain on the population in the two regions.

Youth conflict in Africa in general and in Cameroon in particular can equally be tied to ‘youth bulge’. Youth

¹² Multi-ethnicity is therefore a factor of disunity instead of the reverse in Cameroon since it brings along stigmatization and a certain level of complexity of some ethnic groups.

¹⁴ Looking at the benefit of stealing and succeeding, they careless of the very fact that they could be caught. To this, young people are bold enough to challenge the authorities by daring the law.

bulge which is a blessing to other continents and countries seems to be a curse to Africa and Cameroon. Voicing on youth bulge and conflicts, Henrik Urdal posits that: “youth bulges represent a challenge that governments have to address by providing opportunities for youth to participate in education, in the labour market, and in governance”.¹⁵ To this fact, the government can either make or unmake young people for in either way, there will be repercussion. It has become a tradition in Cameroon that after every day or two, there is a report on the capture by the forces of law and order of young people at times as young as sixteen kidnapping, raping, stealing or even profaning graves for the extraction of human bones for trafficking. In all the young people involved in conflicts especially arm conflicts in Cameroon, none of them is found having a job or a good income generating activity that they abandoned to perpetrate conflicts. But the lucrative nature of ill-gotten wealth and the easy way it is gotten usually impair young people from searching for legal and legitimate opportunities. Tackle joblessness and you will have a peaceful society this is the case with most African countries south of the Sahara. Hence, in Africa, on the continental level and in individual countries, a confluence of peace and prosperity can only be possible when young people are taken seriously and their aspirations fulfilled. Citing International Labour Organisation, Noah Q. Bricker and Mark C. Foley hold that “not only do unemployment and underemployment rise for members of large youth cohorts, potentially increasing violence, the number of idle youth also rises as a result of large youth cohort”.³ Voicing on causes of youth conflicts, Paul Collier et al. hold that “Low and declining incomes, badly distributed, create a pool of impoverished and disaffected young men who can be cheaply recruited by “entrepreneurs of violence.”¹⁶” This again corroborates the fact that unemployment and limited opportunities caused either by corruption or frail nature of the state is at the base of youth conflicts. Conflict zones are usually haven for the black market both for that which concerns production, distribution and consumption. With the current crisis in the Anglophone regions, drug production just like consumption and even exportation becomes pretty easy.

One will say or can say that conflicts in Sub-Saharan Africa is caused by the population bulge which most often does not go along with the resources available. On the same point, HENRIK URDAL holds that “If young people are left with no alternative but unemployment and poverty, they are increasingly likely to join a rebellion as an alternative way of generating an income”⁴ In Cameroon, the single fact that elders for the most of them as old as 90 years are still in positions of responsibility angers the youth who see their future to be bleak. The younger generation in Cameroon keep on receiving promises whereas those that are in power today were in office in their twenties. This situation has led to frustration of young people who do not only seek opportunities elsewhere like Europe, North America most often even on foot, but do involve themselves in ungodly activities such as theft, arm robbery, kidnapping, vandalism, criminality (conflict in the nutshell). Voicing on this issue, Gilpin R. holds that “although they dismiss the notion of a mono-causal relationship between demographic structure and violence, they do not fully explore important socio-economic challenges and potential opportunities that could make youthful populations more of a boon than a ticking time bomb”.¹⁷ Even talking of population bulge, as other studies and observation have it that, unemployment is at the rapid population increase.¹⁸ Business does not permit lousiness and hence jobless men and women turn to meet regularly leading to unwanted pregnancies which eventually leads to a population bulge without any quality. Involving in conflicts is very risky but being a civilian in a conflict zone becomes more risky and hence reasons why most young people in conflicts zones end-up involving themselves since the only way to stay safe is to fight. At this juncture, open conflict should be discourage because of victimisation which might lead to a civil war. The case of the Anglophone crisis in Cameroon started with ease but of date victimisation has made it practically impossible to come to a standstill. To this children are born with the syndrome of conflicts in their blood meaning that even if the conflict was to end today, there is no guarantee that it won’t start back in the nearest future.

A close observation of the Anglophone conflicts makes it clear that unemployment if not the sole reason behind the massive integration into the lines of combatant, it is and have proven to be the spearheading factor.

¹⁵ Henrik Urdal (2011) “Youth Bulges and Violence”, Goldstone.indb, pp. 117-132.

¹⁶ Paul Collier et al. (2003) *Breaking the Conflict Trap: Civil War and Development Policy*, World Bank and Oxford University Press.

¹⁷ Raymond Gilpin (2015) “Bomb or Boon: Linking Population, People and Power in Fragile Regions” Comment on “The Pill Is Mightier Than the Sword”, *International Journal of Health Policy and Management* 5(2), 109–111.

¹⁸ To this, we intend to say that idleness on the part of both young men and women leads to numerous birth without control.

Scrutinizing the “secessionist fighters” maltreating the people they claim to be fighting for, one can hardly find one of them who left a job, an economic generating activity or a well-defined identity to join the belligerents. This is a factual prove that unemployment is at the base not only of the Anglophone problem but its perpetration. Also, the recruitment of young people by the Boko Haram sect was explained by economic opportunities offered by the organization. They made proposals including financial freedom, marriage facilities, and establishment of businesses to young men thereby recruiting them since they had little or nothing to do.¹⁹ General criminality as observed and reported daily is committed by young men and women searching for opportunities and when questioned, they hold that if they had something doing, they won’t have joined the negative economy. Looking at youth conflict or youth inclined conflicts in the Cameroonian society, it is impossible or difficult to see young people involved in deviance activities, aligning with terrorist fighters, operating in the black (negative economy) without being jobless and or unemployed before entering into such contracts. In this same light, young people both male and female going on adventure as mentioned earlier in Europe and North America are driven by the limited and to extend inexistence employment facilities.

Mechanisms of counteracting youth conflict in Cameroon

One of the reasons why conflicts are hardly resolved and eradicated on the continent owes to the method used. Africa has a history and we mentioned earlier conflicts have always existed because conflicts especially among individuals is as old as humanity. Searching for solutions elsewhere is actually where the problem lies, we can’t solve or manage our conflict with Western methods. Guns has never solve conflict as a matter of facts it worsens it. Our cultures, our traditions has in it mechanisms to resolve conflicts among clans, villages and individuals. As long as Africans of today look out to the west for conflict resolution, the killings will never end. Realising this fact, Paul President Biya of Cameroon in one of his interventions once said he was a beggar of peace. Begging for peace goes beyond mere words by bringing to the scene action, concrete action so as to deter conflicts for peace to reign. Peace and conflicts are not cousins and as such can’t cohabit. As seen with the analysis of game theory, conflicts are driven by the inability of one segment of the population to get involve in issues that matters both for the country and for the individuals. Enabling these ones (young people) to express themselves and find their lost glory will not only bring peace to the continent but will favour the long awaited development of the African continent. Conflict is born because of the inability to possess, own and control property. Young people on the continent are hungry to serve the interest of their different countries but are not permitted to do so by the people they call elders or elites. To corroborate this fact, in West Africa notably in Liberia after the civil war Which lasted from 1989 to 1996 and again from 1999-2003 claimed some 200,000 lives young people who fought the war found themselves jobless as reported by JAIRO MUNIVE in his work. Young people who once held guns are now idle leading to crime in the Liberian country. In his words, he held that “two of the most accepted interpretative frames analysing and explaining the Liberian civil war mention economic incentives and youth resentment respectively as the important root causes”.²⁰ To this we see economic factor at base of the Liberian Civil War with young people at times child soldiers on the war front.²¹ This single example should be enough for African countries to take youth empowerment seriously since they are the bomb that will soon explode if not controlled. If opportunities as posits by the above author are to be taken seriously to integrate post-war young people, stable countries should take that as an example to avoid such a war from occurring in the first place.

Basing on youth bulge, unemployment among young people could be resolved in the long run simply by revising birth rate within the country. Despite the efforts of the government to provide opportunities to young people, it seems futile not because the opportunities are not present but because birth rate is very high thereby making it difficult for the powers that be to cater for these ones. Every effort made seems like taking a cup of water out of an ocean. To this, we think that in as much as child birth is good for the image of the country in terms of population which factor of international relations, quality of the population is equally an important

¹⁹ Young people therefor got into the conflict trap due to lack or limited opportunities. In the Anglophone crisis for instance we could a young man without education or skill become a ‘general’ over nights. Demanding taxes and kidnapping and demanding ransom rendered some of them who ought to die witched to earn millions and hence the continuation of the conflicts despite the killings.

²⁰ JAIRO MUNIVE (2010) “The army of ‘unemployed’ young people” Danish Institute for International Studies, Denmark, Nordic Journal of Youth Research. Vol 18(3): 321–338.

²¹ From the title the army of unemployed youth, we can imagine what such an army can do in terms damage and or destruction to the country.

aspect. Seeing that women of Sub-Saharan Africa on a general note are very fertile, birth control should be a considerable point so as not to have children without basics. Youth unemployment can be curbed in the long run by simply promoting education of the girl child since statistics have proven that educated young women tend to have children later in their lives and equally plays on the number of children which is usually controlled. To correlate this fact, Potts et al. in their work think that “Investing in girls’ education may be the most leveraged and cost effective investment a region in turmoil can make. Among other benefits, educated girls tend to marry later and have fewer children. Education, for good reason, is considered the primary driver of social and economic development”.²² The observed difficulties that women and especially young women face on the African Continent is that of separating sexual intercourse from child bearing. Education solves the problem of early and unwanted pregnancy and even early marriages since young women are required to spend a considerable time in school. Pondering on child birth and on youth bulge in this work is due to the fact that ends means are limited and by so doing limiting opportunities there by affecting majority of young people who find themselves unemployed not because the state has failed, is failing or unwilling but because the government agenda has more urgent issues to tackle.

Conflict is and must not be an option in Africa, young people have what it takes to bring their generations to power. There is no gun that is as deathly and as poisonous as the ballot. Change is within the reach of young people since these ones constitute slightly above 65% of the African population, they can make a change if they so wish. Young people especially in Cameroon do shy away from voting but glamour for change, we wonder where this change will come. Election rigging in Africa is a fact but for how long shall they continue to rig? What happened in Senegal can happen everywhere in Africa, young people have to trust themselves and do the needful and change will surprise them. Accusing fingers are being pointed at the whites for spoliation, looting and plundering the wealth of the continent this argument though not baseless is not enough grounds for Africa to be poor and African youths begging and dying in the Mediterranean to cross over to Europe. As reported by Alcinda Honwana, with the break out of the Tunisian conflicts, Ben Ali propose and engaged to create 300,000 jobs for young Tunisian job seekers within the period of one year.⁵ This shows that leaders in Africa know and have what it takes to better the lives of young people. Perhaps, they lack the political will or better still, they do not think that they will be in power long enough to justify or give explanations to their failed promises.

CONCLUSION

With luminosity of the deprivation theory, we came to the conclusions that youth violence in Africa in general and in Cameroon in particular is first and foremost caused by unemployment which with no doubt has and is still eating many countries on the globe. This is explained by the fact that expectations of young people are pretty high while opportunities are either stable or decreasing. We therefore respond in affirmative to the question raised by Christopher Blattman and Jeannie Annan: “can employment reduce lawlessness and rebellion?”²³ We affirm in this work that employment does not only reduce lawlessness and rebellion but can completely eradicate it among young people. Though youth bulge cannot be underestimated, joblessness and idleness seems to be the push factors to youth violence in Cameroon and on the African continent. Grievances of young people are born of deprivation of their basic rights especially those of finding a decent job. African development and prosperity lies in the hands of its young people, if these ones are empowered and their energies harnessed in the right direction, prosperity will be Africa’s if not chaos and turmoil awaits the continent. Conflicts in African States therefore do results from the fact that basic needs of young people are not met hence creating tensions and anger among these ones leading to the social ills we find in our societies. To this, youth in Africa should be considered as a problem requiring a structural solution so as to avoid the physical expression of youth violence. As a panacea to youth conflict in Africa, we propose revue of youth programs and a restructure of the political systems bringing young people on-board with their voices heard and taken into consideration. Youth policies notably to that which concerns employment policies should be taken

²² Potts et al. (2015) “The Pill is Mightier Than the Sword”, The OASIS Initiative, University of California, Berkeley, CA, USA, International Journal of Health Policy and Management, 4(8), 507–510.

²³ Christopher Blattman and Jeannie Annan (2015) “CAN EMPLOYMENT REDUCE LAWLESSNESS AND REBELLION?” A FIELD EXPERIMENT WITH HIGH-RISK MEN IN A FRAGILE STATE, Working Paper 21289, NATIONAL BUREAU OF ECONOMIC RESEARCH, 1050 Massachusetts Avenue Cambridge, MA 02138.

seriously. Young people though conflict incline due to their youthful nature, can become very dorsal and understanding if their aspirations are taken into consideration. Going further, conflicts or conflict situation is not only a situation of physical confrontations. A country with food insecurity like the case with countries south of the Sahara are conflicts prone countries. Education equally is an important factor of either conflict resolution or conflict catalyst depending on the system of education and the quality, not forgetting the value to the learner. To this a country with intellectuals is less prone to conflicts than a country with illiterates and young people with valueless certificates. An emancipated population is to an extent a peaceful population. On a final note, despite exaggeration notably from the opposition political parties and gesticulations from the powers that be, unemployment and lack of opportunities especially for the educated youth is at the base of youth conflicts in Cameroon and in Africa taken global.

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