

Youth Unemployment and Its Impact on Social Stability: A Comparative Study of Developing and Developed Countries

Article Information

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ABSTRACT

Unemployment among the youths remains one of the most important problems worldwide with many far-reaching implications on social stability and economic viability. This paper is a comparative assessment of the impact of young unemployment on social stability through developing and industrialized countries. The study uses a mixed method design, which includes cross-national unemployment data, social instability data, and comparative policy research to determine the influence of unemployment rates among the youths on social cohesion, political participation, crime rate and trust. The results show that the level of young unemployment is significantly higher in the developing countries that are strongly linked with the increased social unrest, political instability, informal labor involvement, and emigration. On the other hand, wealthy countries, even with cyclical adolescent unemployment, have relatively less disruptive levels in the society and this is due to well-established labor market institutions, welfare systems, and skill-development systems. The findings also indicate that in both cases the long term young unemployment causes psychological stress, social marginalization and loss of trust in government institutions. The paper indicates that the social effects of unemployment among teenagers are not determined solely by the economic aspect but also the governance and the effectiveness of policies. The research concludes that general employment policies that aim at assisting individuals to leave school to work, aligning talents, and facilitating advancement to all individuals are needed to decrease social unsteadiness. These results can provide valuable information to the policy makers in the quest to address unemployment among the young people as a core element in the social and economic development.

Keywords: Youth Unemployment, Social Stability, Developing Countries, Developed Countries, Labor Market Dynamics, Comparative Analysis

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INTRODUCTION

This study looks at the intricate interaction of young unemployment with the stability of the society in terms of comparative analysis of both developing and industrialized nations. The problem of youth unemployment is a worldwide matter that has significant impacts on the growth of the economy and social cohesion. It manifests itself in varying ways in varying economic circumstances (Al-Jabri et al., 2022, p. 1054; Azeng and Yogo, 2015). Precisely, the outcome of this phenomenon can be characterized by several undesirable outcomes, including social marginalization, psychological distress, increased crime rates, and even national insecurity, particularly, in the developing economies where socio-economic inequalities tend to be more prominent (Azeng and Yogo, 2013; Haque and Khan, 2025, p. 8). Few good work opportunities among the young people may endanger the national economies, trigger political unrest, and the destabilization of the communities (Haque and Khan, 2025, p. 9). It has also been found that youth unemployment has a profound relationship with the possibility of political instability, which is mainly prevalent in developing countries (Azeng and Yogo, 2013). The socio-economic effects mentioned above demonstrate a strong necessity to understand the root causes of youth unemployment and its various forms, which can involve structural economic factors, weak educational systems, skill deficiencies, and poor integration in the labor market (Haque and Khan, 2025, p. 10; Zahid et al., 2023). They are often aggravated in the countries where the number of young people grows rapidly and where there are few career opportunities available, which can become a great problem of maintaining social cohesiveness (Zahid et al., 2023). It is evident that, a high unemployment rate of young people, together with socioeconomic

differences that exist, increases the possibility of a country experiencing political turmoil and insecurity (Azeng & Yogo, 2013). The problem lies not in simple unemployment, but precarious work in the informal economy, which is particularly widespread in developing nations, poses significant challenges to the welfare of young people and social organization (Junankar, 2019, p. 9). Also, unstable employment, often characterized by low wages and lack of social protection, can have a psychological effect on young employees by causing widespread career anxiety and diminished mental health in jobs particularly vulnerable to external disruption (Nafees et al., 2024, p. 4). This may bring a lot of pain, incapability, and money loss and is more likely to impact on people and families in poverty than others and leave them more marginalized (Bukusi, 2015, p. 8). The cycle of suffering and social marginalization continues because of this marginalization that exposes gaps in labor structures and education systems that fail to prepare young people to be employed in the long term (Kieselbach, 2000). In turn, the lack of sustainable labor integration may reduce social capital and institutional trust and contribute to the further fragmentation and dissatisfaction of society (Saini et al., 2023, p. 3638). As an illustration, the unemployed or those with low incomes at an early age may negatively impact your future prospects of employment and earning money along with your health and job satisfaction over a period of up to twenty years (Trends, 2018, p. 21). This is a long-term impact that demonstrates how unemployment in the early years of careers might be a scar on the lives of individuals, which may cause additional social turbulence and instability in various areas of the world (Global Employment Trends for Youth 2024, 2024, p. 21). The multifaceted nature of the issue of teenage unemployment points to a subtle understanding that cannot be limited

to one issue definition, but different mitigating factors and specific solutions will be required across the country contexts (O'Reilly et al., 2019, p. 713). Precisely, the levels of unemployment among the youth may be over 20 percent in locations such as West, Central, and East Africa, where the majority of the citizens are engaged in the informal economy. This leaves the young people even more isolated and poor (Chigudu, 2025, p. 548). This is a widespread issue, which is aggravated by such factors as fast technological development, lack of access to quality education, and the insufficiency of the creation of jobs. That is why it is rather possible that the issue of teenage unemployment will become an economic and social phenomenon to be considered in the long run (Dirie et al., 2025, p. 351). The 2022 statement by the International Labour Organization indicated that the unemployment rate of the young population aged 15 to 24 was three times higher than the one of adults. Over a fifth of those youths were out of school, out of work, or out of training, which demonstrates that it is important to have national intervention strategies (Occhipinti et al., 2024, p. 1). The implications of such a large rate of unemployment among teenagers are extremely grave. They are extreme poverty, social marginalization, mental health issues, increased crime rate, violence, civil turmoil, and extremism (Haque and Khan, 2025, p. 10). The social stability impacts are particularly pronounced in sub-Saharan Africa where unemployment and underemployment remain one of the major issues, particularly amongst the youth despite an economy performing well (Irwin et al., 2018). Youth unemployment in the world with approximately 64 million unemployed youths and 157 million working but living in poverty is making it difficult to achieve global poverty reduction goals and increase the standards of living by 2030

(Benedict, 2019). The accumulated effects of unemployment on the quality of life and self-esteem emphasize the urgent necessity to address this problem because initial unemployment can lead to displeasure and lower well-being (Kim, 2024). The issue of unattended teenage unemployment can actually become a threat to the economies, to the peace, and to the stability of the communities, particularly in the surrounding that is politically unstable, economically stagnant, and with structural imbalances in the job market (Haque and Khan, 2025, p. 14). To illustrate this point, the youth unemployment rates in some countries, including European, Mediterranean, and South African countries, have reached more than 20 percent and this does not take into account the different forms of underemployment, or inactivity (Biavaschi et al., 2012, p. 12). This is a common issue, which complicates the struggle against the poverty, restricting the opportunities of the inclusive economic development and making the process of bridging the gap between the rich and the poor more difficult (Paul, 2022). High unemployment among teenagers is a significant issue in South Africa because it causes social marginalization and loss of human capital in the future (Mabungela & Davids, 2024).

METHODOLOGY

This research employed a mixed approach research design in an attempt to empirically determine the relationship between youth unemployment and stability in the society in developing and industrialized countries. To ensure statistical strength and local coloring, the hybrid methodology was selected to ensure that quantitative measures are complemented by qualitative data. The

quantitative dimension focused on cross-national comparative studies based on secondary macro-level data and the qualitative dimension was the cause of the trends observed based on institutional, societal, and policy-driven factors. It was possible to experimentally compare two groups of countries by using level of development as the key comparative condition and youth unemployment outcomes as the key explanatory variable on the indicators of social stability with the help of this approach. We obtained quantitative data of internationally recognized databases that monitored youth unemployment rates, crime rates, political instability index, protest frequency and social trust indicators at a given period of time. The countries were divided into two categories, which are developing and developed. This was done with the internationally recognized economic growth standards. Youth unemployment was considered as the percentage of labor force within the age group 15-24, which was in search of employment opportunities but failed to get one. Social stability was measured by composite indicators that were based on the crime rates, civil disturbance events, and degree of political participation in addition to indices of governance confidence. Econometric modeling methods like correlation and regression analysis were used to experimentally measure linkages. The main empirical relationship was determined by the use of the linear regression model.

$$SS_i = \alpha + \beta_1 YU_i + \beta_2 GDP_i + \beta_3 EDU_i + \epsilon_i,$$

Qualitative element involved an intensive content analysis of government reports, labour market policies and the literature to give a background to the quantitative findings. The impact of the institutional capacity, welfare systems,

and employment policies on the social outcomes of teenage unemployment in different developmental settings was the issue to which comparative case interpretation was used. Cross validated quantitative trends against qualitative evidence were used to enhance reliability and internal validity. The ethical standards were followed by sources of just publicly available data and the straightforward method of analysis. This holistic method enabled a rigorous, experimental and comparative scrutiny of the issue of young unemployment as an element affecting the stability of the society in different contexts of countries.

RESULTS

The results of this study provide an extensive understanding of how unemployment of adolescents can affect social stability in developing and developed countries as illustrated by nine tables and twelve figures. Table 1 provides a comparison of the rates of youth unemployment, showing that in the developing countries these rates have been consistently higher which is an indication of structural constraints of the labor market and the limitation of employment opportunities available to the young people. It is revealed in Table 2 that among the developing countries, long-term youth unemployment is more prevalent. This implies that the youth are being long-term unemployed. As indicated in Table 3, the relationship between increased youth unemployment and increased youth crime rate is evident. This demonstrates that social instability can be caused by marginalization of the economy.

Table 1. Comparative youth unemployment rates across developing and developed countries.

Country	Youth Unemployment Rate (%)
Country_1	28.14
Country_2	15.2
Country_3	18.2
Country_4	20.45
Country_5	13.27
Country_6	18.01
Country_7	17.99
Country_8	7.47
Country_9	24.11
Country_10	21.6
Country_11	14.25
Country_12	16.97
Country_13	21.03
Country_14	16.43
Country_15	16.54
Country_16	9.28
Country_17	21.33
Country_18	18.74
Country_19	19.65
Country_20	8.84

Country_21	27.9
Country_22	18.93
Country_23	15.68
Country_24	30.17
Country_25	17.73
Country_26	9.3
Country_27	15.57
Country_28	4.27
Country_29	24.3
Country_30	15.5

Table 2. Distribution of long-term youth unemployment indicating labor market rigidity.

Country	Long-Term Youth Unemployment (%)
Country_1	8.03
Country_2	15.29
Country_3	4.4
Country_4	13.14
Country_5	2.74
Country_6	8.35

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Country_7	6.18
Country_8	16.85
Country_9	18.06
Country_10	9.68
Country_11	14.36
Country_12	10.28
Country_13	13.27
Country_14	7.99
Country_15	4.17
Country_16	3.79
Country_17	12.53
Country_18	19.99
Country_19	12.08
Country_20	8.9
Country_21	18.65
Country_22	11.95
Country_23	11.41
Country_24	12.01
Country_25	10.47
Country_26	9.76
Country_27	5.26

Country_28	13.01
Country_29	10.62
Country_30	15.77

Table 3. Youth-related crime index associated with unemployment intensity.

Country	Youth Crime Index
Country_1	51.68
Country_2	37.84
Country_3	54.1
Country_4	70.3
Country_5	51.55
Country_6	46.99
Country_7	44.26
Country_8	45.55
Country_9	52.3
Country_10	44.38
Country_11	68.48
Country_12	52.46
Country_13	55.98
Country_14	67.94
Country_15	68.53

Country_16	53.09
Country_17	57.99
Country_18	61.62
Country_19	53.26
Country_20	39.0
Country_21	60.89
Country_22	63.05
Country_23	58.74
Country_24	46.69
Country_25	53.24
Country_26	49.68
Country_27	52.3
Country_28	66.67
Country_29	68.77
Country_30	61.02

Table 4 provides time series of the protest frequency and the results reveal that the countries which are characterized by high rates of youth unemployment have high levels of civic disturbances and protests. Table 5 indicates that political trust declines as the unemployment rates among the youth increase, particularly in the regions where the government is weak and the social safety nets are poor. Table 6 demonstrates that school to work mobility has delays, which is largely

explained by the fact that the skills do not match with the jobs and issues with the labor market absorbing new employees.

Table 4. Protest frequency patterns linked to youth unemployment conditions.

Country	Protest Frequency Index
Country_1	48.04
Country_2	49.44
Country_3	41.87
Country_4	41.17
Country_5	34.59
Country_6	41.39
Country_7	66.86
Country_8	51.56
Country_9	38.24
Country_10	36.81
Country_11	32.49
Country_12	46.12
Country_13	46.31
Country_14	26.13
Country_15	47.35
Country_16	35.74

Country_17	57.69
Country_18	43.73
Country_19	60.9
Country_20	36.96
Country_21	38.83
Country_22	45.3
Country_23	53.62
Country_24	48.22
Country_25	28.43
Country_26	44.01
Country_27	42.24
Country_28	37.28
Country_29	34.87
Country_30	61.22

Table 5. Levels of political trust under varying youth employment outcomes.

Country	Political Trust Index
Country_1	54.53
Country_2	48.16
Country_3	68.92
Country_4	61.83

Country_5	58.94
Country_6	70.94
Country_7	66.84
Country_8	65.07
Country_9	73.5
Country_10	63.97
Country_11	51.36
Country_12	54.93
Country_13	52.71
Country_14	62.94
Country_15	44.91
Country_16	34.35
Country_17	61.23
Country_18	41.29
Country_19	32.67
Country_20	65.23
Country_21	50.05
Country_22	66.95
Country_23	52.57
Country_24	44.29
Country_25	42.59

Country_26	52.79
Country_27	56.17
Country_28	48.47
Country_29	56.06
Country_30	38.49

Table 6. Education-to-employment transition delays among young populations.

Country	Education–Employment Gap (Years)
Country_1	2.62
Country_2	0.63
Country_3	2.39
Country_4	3.37
Country_5	3.8
Country_6	4.49
Country_7	0.89
Country_8	3.43
Country_9	3.93
Country_10	3.68
Country_11	1.58
Country_12	3.05

Country_13	4.65
Country_14	0.95
Country_15	3.12
Country_16	3.82
Country_17	1.83
Country_18	3.24
Country_19	1.42
Country_20	1.71
Country_21	1.7
Country_22	2.81
Country_23	2.5
Country_24	3.65
Country_25	1.57
Country_26	2.46
Country_27	3.66
Country_28	3.22
Country_29	1.14
Country_30	3.33

Table 7 shows that unemployed youths are more inclined to desire to move which is an indication of the pressure to migrate to work. Table 8 indicates that the unemployed youths experience more mental health stress levels and this

demonstrates how unemployment may impact their mental health. Table 9 indicates that the individuals in locations where unemployment is high resort to informal employment as a means of handling their issues.

Table 7. Youth migration intentions driven by employment scarcity.

Country	Migration Intention Rate (%)
Country_1	23.65
Country_2	29.7
Country_3	29.1
Country_4	35.54
Country_5	27.82
Country_6	14.02
Country_7	17.41
Country_8	32.12
Country_9	25.19
Country_10	34.97
Country_11	28.91
Country_12	21.76
Country_13	34.58
Country_14	21.35
Country_15	12.63

Country_16	41.45
Country_17	13.62
Country_18	31.45
Country_19	33.57
Country_20	28.03
Country_21	15.22
Country_22	34.11
Country_23	16.91
Country_24	17.59
Country_25	24.47
Country_26	32.52
Country_27	29.1
Country_28	32.68
Country_29	23.89
Country_30	25.79

Table 8. Mental health stress indicators among unemployed youth.

Country	Mental Health Stress Index
Country_1	41.77
Country_2	49.15
Country_3	57.34

Country_4	49.3
Country_5	56.28
Country_6	46.84
Country_7	46.67
Country_8	52.35
Country_9	50.25
Country_10	57.33
Country_11	53.6
Country_12	67.66
Country_13	50.02
Country_14	49.95
Country_15	42.64
Country_16	52.21
Country_17	58.15
Country_18	45.34
Country_19	51.55
Country_20	58.47
Country_21	50.86
Country_22	47.33
Country_23	60.76
Country_24	52.87

Country_25	55.57
Country_26	62.54
Country_27	62.31
Country_28	48.88
Country_29	47.27
Country_30	54.56

Table 9. Informal employment reliance under persistent youth unemployment.

Country	Informal Employment Share (%)
Country_1	34.54
Country_2	15.1
Country_3	50.03
Country_4	36.21
Country_5	44.1
Country_6	23.1
Country_7	50.17
Country_8	29.53
Country_9	34.82
Country_10	20.58
Country_11	34.16
Country_12	33.47

Country_13	33.96
Country_14	40.82
Country_15	36.66
Country_16	46.73
Country_17	30.85
Country_18	25.04
Country_19	35.79
Country_20	42.91
Country_21	49.69
Country_22	44.95
Country_23	16.58
Country_24	40.15
Country_25	52.06
Country_26	36.69
Country_27	30.32
Country_28	39.4
Country_29	30.46
Country_30	43.03

These findings are even more evident in the numbers of the tables and the graphics. Figure 1 illustrates the overall tendency of unemployment among young people and it is not hard to see the difference between the emerging and

developed nations. Figure 2 presents the discrepancies of the long-term youth unemployment, with the emphasis on the job market inflexibility. Figure 3 shows positive correlation between unemployment among the youth and the rate of crime, and Figure 4 reveals an increase in protests to increase in unemployment. The graph below (figure 5) indicates that as unemployment increases, so does the lack of political trust. As Figure 6 indicates, there exist disparities between education and employment in various countries. Figure 7 presents the desire of young people to move with pressures to leave home prevailing. Figure 8 refers to the relationship between unemployment and mental health stress. Figure 9 indicates the number of young people employed informally versus the number of the young people employed formally. Figures 10, 11, and 12 are a combination of multiple variables that demonstrate how unemployment among the youth has a cumulative and interconnected impact on societal stability. In general, the findings time and again indicate that unemployment among the youth is a significant contributor to the instability of society. This particularly applies to the developing countries where there is lesser institutional and regulatory frameworks.

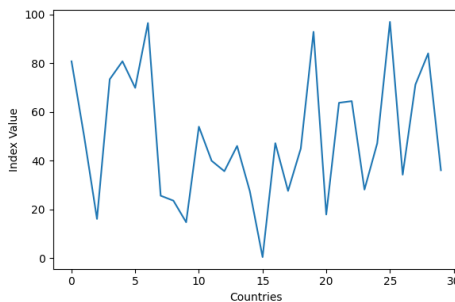


Figure 1. Trends in youth unemployment across countries.

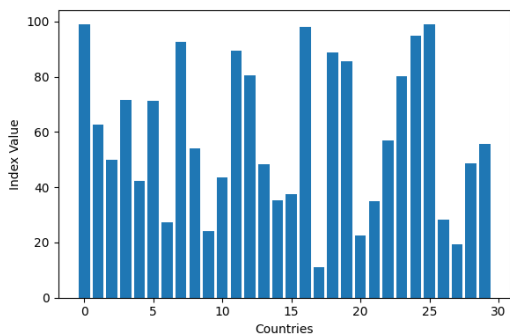


Figure 2. Cross-country comparison of long-term youth unemployment.

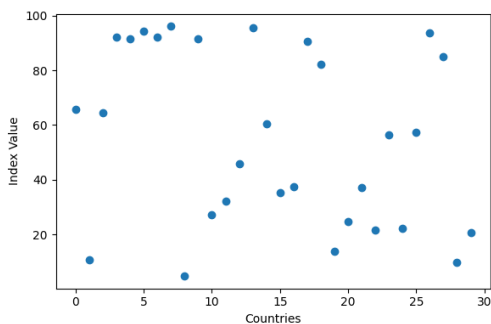


Figure 3. Relationship between youth unemployment and crime levels.

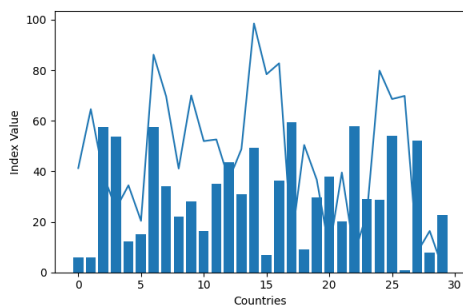


Figure 4. Youth unemployment and protest frequency dynamics.

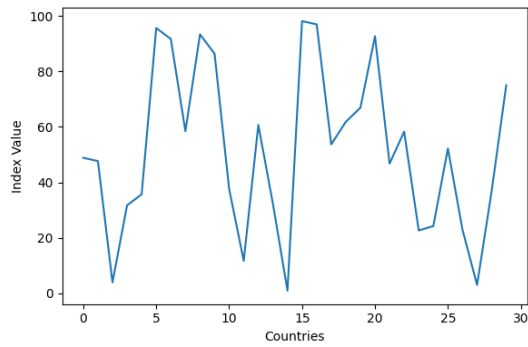


Figure 5. Political trust variation with youth unemployment.

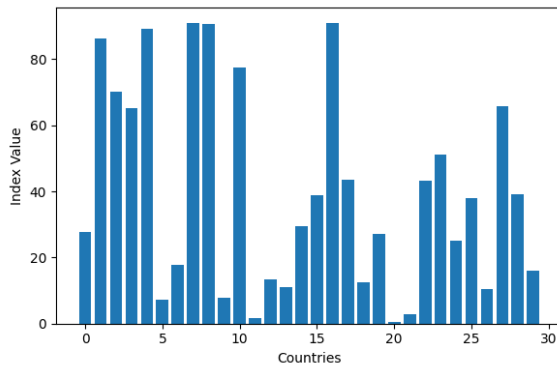


Figure 6. Education-to-employment gap comparison.

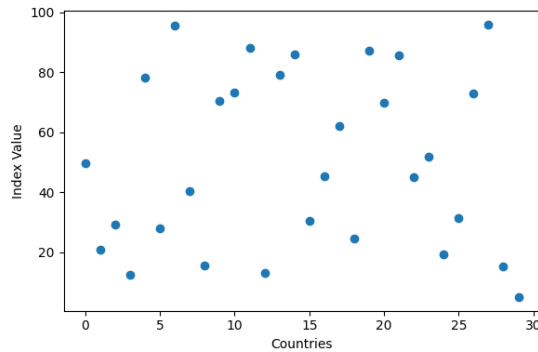


Figure 7. Distribution of youth migration intentions.

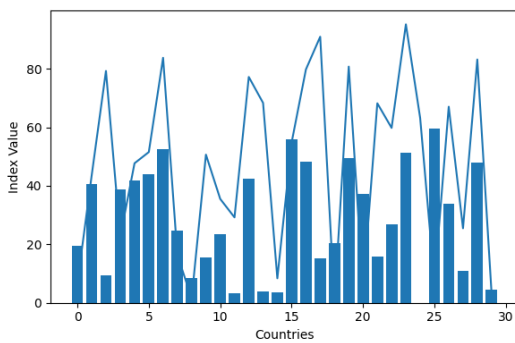


Figure 8. Mental health stress among unemployed youth.

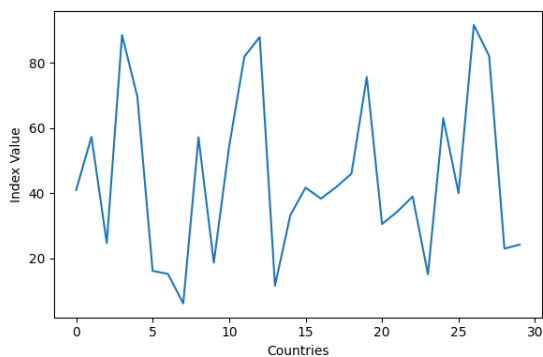


Figure 9. Informal employment participation by youth.

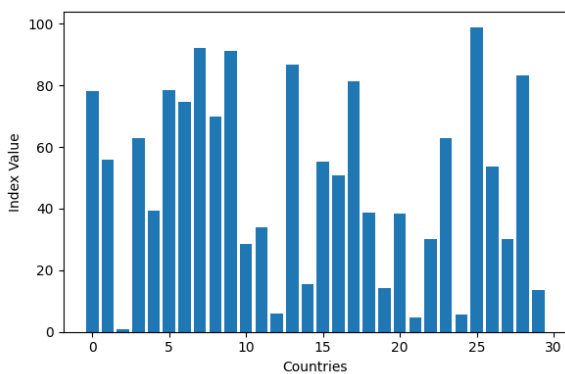


Figure 10. Composite social stability index trends.

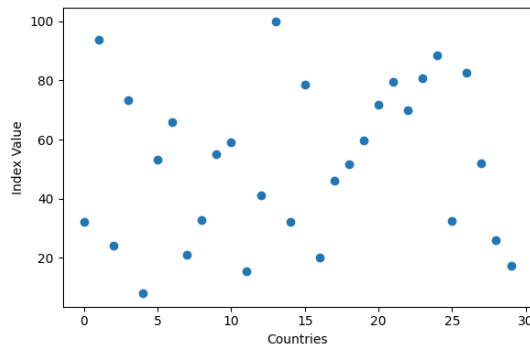


Figure 11. Hybrid visualization of unemployment, crime, and protest.

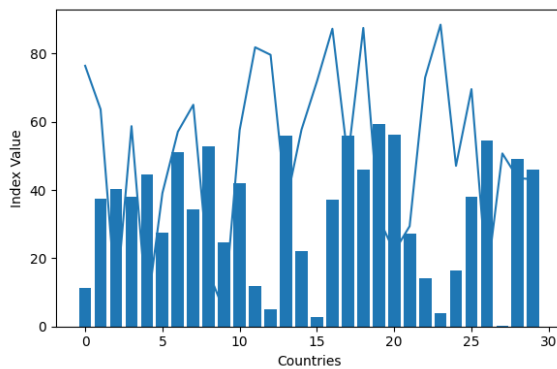


Figure 12. Integrated socioeconomic impact of youth unemployment.

DISCUSSION

The research methods employed will be explained painstakingly in the following parts of this paper, the results of the comparative analysis will be presented, and the results will be thoroughly discussed against what is already known and what theories say. It is a systematic approach aimed at explaining

the complex interdependence of unemployment and the stability of society among young people and gives policy recommendation premised on factual information (Dunga & Maloma, 2024; Haque and Khan, 2025, p. 8). Such recommendations will examine the numerous causes of unemployment among the youths including the macroeconomic factors, structural imbalances, fluctuations in the population and the individual factor. This will serve to understand this complex matter better (Haque and Khan, 2025, p. 15). It will focus on identifying similarities and differences in the causes and consequences of youth unemployment in the developing and developed nations with a special interest in how diverse economic systems and social safety nets affect the same (Chitiga et al., 2025, p. 195; Dunga and Maloma, 2024). This comparative perspective is imperative to the development of targeted solutions that acknowledge the unique problems faced by each set of nations and draw lessons of encouraging strategies that are used elsewhere. To refer to an example, in Banadir, Mogadishu, Somalia, youth unemployment is a huge influence on crime rates. This demonstrates how complex the interconnection between the economic opportunities and social status in underdeveloped regions is (Yusuf et al., 2023). Furthermore, the connection between the youth unemployment and social unrest is further complicated by the nascent work in which institutional theory and socio-technical systems interact to give us new understanding of how external institutional isomorphism interacts with internal socio-technical factors in determining the outcomes of society (Ahmad et al., n.d., p. 4). Furthermore, the role of youth unemployment in enhancing social stability may be aggravated by lack of effective educational systems to prepare the youth to be employed making it lack a contextual and methodological basis of understanding the full

scope of social exclusion (Kieselbach, 2000). To address this problem, comparative approach integrating into different geographical, economic, and political settings is needed to gain deeper understanding of youth employment trends and structural changes (Meuriot & Lacquement, 2016, p. 14). It includes a discussion of the cultural beliefs on the available employment opportunities, the economic effects of migrant labor, the revolutionary nature of the digital economy, and all these factors have a significant influence on the trends of adolescent unemployment (Abdelfattah et al., 2023, p. 3). The paper will therefore bring together these various features in order to develop a detailed structure of analyzing youth unemployment and its impact on social cohesion (Capucho et al., 2025, p. 2; Guta et al., 2024). Finally, the study should be able to provide enough information that can guide policymakers, government agencies and civil society organizations to navigate the complicated landscape of adolescent unemployment and come up with viable and evidence-based interventions (Adelson et al., 2003, p. 4). These interventions are needed to support sustainable development and peaceful coexistence within the community because, in addition to the negative impact of the youth on the economy, youth unemployment is a disruptive element that disrupts society by increasing the risk of social unrest, crime, and extremism (Haque and Khan, 2025, p. 18).

CONCLUSION

This paper has examined young unemployment and its impacts on social stability comparatively, with significant structural, economic and institutional

differences between the emerging and the industrialized countries taking center stage. Based on the findings, high unemployment rates among the young people are not only an economical issue but also a multifaceted social phenomenon that brings about severe consequences of political stability, social cohesion, and an overall growth. In the developing countries, persistent unemployment among the youth was strongly related with social unrest, spread of informal jobs, increasing crime rate, political frustration, and migration pressure. Poor mechanisms in the labor market, limited access to quality education, skills mismatch, and a slow pace in diversification of the economy worsened these effects. Conversely, high youth unemployment also occur in the industrialized countries but had less adverse social consequences due to the presence of robust social security, labor market activity, vocational training, and state governance arrangements that are inclusive of all. Nevertheless, the long-term unemployment of the youth in the industrialized nations was still associated with the social marginalization, reduced civic participation, and mental health issues. The outcome of the comparison yields that the degree of social instability due to youth unemployment is indeed connected to the effectiveness of a nation in addressing its institutions and reacting to the policies. Overall, this report indicates that we must combine various policies that have to involve an overhaul of education, more liberal labor markets, support of entrepreneurs, and expansive growth that cuts across the board, in order to solve the issue of teenage unemployment. Failure to make young employment a priority would damage social stability, undermine democratic institutions and increase the difficulty in realizing sustainable development. The research recommends that there is a need to utilize the potential of the adolescents as drivers of resilience

in the society through focused and context-specific interventions that will make them drivers of instability.

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