

Social Capital and Poverty Reduction in Nigeria: A Case Study of Minna Metropolis

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Abstract

The prevailing economic situation in Nigeria and the importance attached to the social capital as a solution to social interaction provides for an examination of its relevance to poverty reduction in Minna metropolis. To this end, social capital has been described as an empirically elusive concept, yet has also been heralded as the glue that holds communities together. While there has been much debate about its definition see (winter 2000). Using a set up household data generated from the administration of structured questionnaire to 600 households in Minna metropolis, a multiple linear regression analysis and a participatory poverty assessment methods, this paper examines the role of social capital on poverty reduction in Minna metropolis. The results obtained shows that social capital are positively related to poverty reduction in the metropolis, thus , fulfilling our a-priori expectation that state that the more social capital building by the people in the metropolis , the more they find themselves out of poverty. The results notwithstanding, policy measure that would continue to make social capital relevant to poverty reduction were suggested.

Key Words: Social Capital, Poverty, Minna, Nigeria

1. Introduction

The prevailing economic situation in Nigeria and the importance attached to the social capital as a solution to social interaction provides for an examination of its relevance to poverty reduction in Minna metropolis. To this end, social capital has been described as an empirically elusive concept, yet has also been heralded as the glue that holds communities together. While there has been much debate about its definition see (winter 2000). Social capital can be understood as network of social relations which are characterized by norms of trust and reciprocity and which lead to outcome of mutual benefits. Social capital stands for the ability of actors to secure benefits by virtue of membership in social networks or other social structures (Porte, 1998). If we take a broad view of what is comprised by these “other social structure” then social capital is a relevant concept at the micro and macro levels. At the macro level, social capital includes institutions such as government, the rule of law, civil and political liberties e.t.c. There is overwhelming evidence that such macro level social capital has measurable impact on national economic performance (Knack, 1999). At the micro level, social capital refers to the network and norms that govern interactions among individuals, households and communities. However, this paper is focused on micro level of social capital. Woolook (2002) describe social capital as relationship in three dimensions that is bonding , bridging and linking social capital.

The rest of the paper is structured as follows: section two provides conceptual and empirical overview of poverty and social capital, section three provides methodology and data source, section four present and interpret result while conclusion and recommendations are contained in the last section.

2. Conceptual and Empirical Overview of Poverty and social capital

2.1. Poverty

a. Meaning, Measurement, Causes and Consequences According to Encyclopedia Americana (1989) poverty can be seen from two different perspectives: (i) “moneylessness” which means both an insufficiency of cash and chronic inadequacy of resources of all types to satisfy basic human needs, such as, nutrition, rest, warmth and body care; and (ii) “powerlessness” meaning those who lack the opportunities and choices open to them and whose lives seem to them to be governed by forces and persons outside their control. That is, in positions of authority or by perceived “evil forces” or “hard luck” Aku, et. al (1997) saw poverty from five dimensions of deprivation: (i) personal and physical deprivation experienced from health, nutritional, literacy, educational disability and lack of self confidence; (ii) economic deprivation drawn from lack of access to property, income, assets, factors of production and finance; (iii) social deprivation as a result of denial from full participation in social, political and economic activities; (iv) cultural deprivation in terms of lack of access to values, beliefs, knowledge, information and attitudes which deprives the people the control of their own destinies; and (v) political deprivation in term of lack of political voice to partake in decision making that affects their lives. Related to the definition of poverty is the measurement of poverty.

b. Measurement of poverty

According to Foster, et .al (1984), the most frequently used measurements are: (i) the head court poverty index given by the percentage of the population that live in the households with a consumption per capita less than the poverty line; (ii) poverty gap index which reflects the depth of poverty by taking in to account how far the average poor person’s income is from the poverty line; and (iii) the distributionally sensitive measure of squared poverty gap defined as the means of the squared proportionate poverty gap which reflects the severity of poverty. Recent studies by United Nations Development Programme (UNDP) advocates the use of the Human Development Index (HDI). According to UNDP (2009), HDI combine three components in the measurement of poverty: (i) life expectancy at birth (longevity); (ii) education attainment and; (iii) improved standard of living determined by per capita income. The first relates to survival-vulnerability to death at a relatively early age. The second relates to knowledge being excluded from the world of reading and communication. The third relates to a decent living standard in terms of overall economic provisioning. Poverty has various manifestations which include among others: lack of income and productive resources sufficient to ensure sustainable livelihood, hunger and malnutrition, ill health, limited or lack of access to education and other basic services, increased morbidity and mortality from illness, homelessness and inadequate, unsafe and degraded environment and social discrimination and exclusion. It is also characterized by lack of participation in decision making in civil, social and cultural life (World Bank 1990; United Nations 1995)

c. Causes of poverty

Yahie (1993) reiterates that the factor that causes poverty include; (i) structural causes that are more permanent and depend on a host of (exogenous) factors such as limited resources, lack of skill, location disadvantage and other factors that are inherent in the social and political set-up. The disables, orphans, landless farmers, household headed by females fall into this category; (ii) the transitional causes that are mainly due to structural adjustment reforms and changes in domestic economic policies that may result in price changes, increased unemployment and so on. Natural calamities such as wars, environmental degradation and so on also induce transitory poverty.

d. Consequences of poverty

Discussing the consequences of poverty Von Hauff and Kruse (1994) highlighted on three major consequences: (i) consequences for those affected. That is, for the people affected, poverty leads to physical and psychological misery caused inter-alia by inadequate nourishment, lack of medical care, a lack of basic and job related education and marginalisation in the labour market; (ii) consequences for the national economies of countries affected arising through the formation of slums in cities, a worsening of ecological problems particularly as a result of predatory exploitation in the agricultural sector and through the failure to use the available human resources; and (iii) consequences for the political and social development of the countries affected. That is, mass poverty tends to preserve or re-enforce the existing power structures and thus also the privileges of a minority of the population. In some cases, this involves corrupt elites. These privileged minorities in the population are not generally interested in structural changes for the benefit of the poor population. As a consequence, mass poverty tends to inhibit the development of democratic structure and a higher level of participation.

As observed by Aku, et. al (1997) with mass poverty there tend to be a general loss of confidence in the constituted authority there by generating disrespect and rendering government policies ineffective; political apathy among contending forces; and social disillusion with respect to what the societal objectives are and people's responsibilities towards the attainment of these objectives.

2.2 Trends of Poverty in Nigeria

A critical look at some of these causes and consequences discussed above provide some peculiarity with the poverty situation in Nigeria. As indicated in Table 2, the incidence of poverty in Nigeria increased from 28.1 percent in 1980 to 88.0 percent in the year 2002. This percentage rate represent in absolute term 86 million people out of an estimated population of about 116.4 million people. The poverty situation in Nigeria also depicts regional variation. For example, within these periods the poverty rate was higher in the northern agro-climatic zone at 40 percent compared with the middle and southern zones at 38 percent and 24 percent respectively (Francis, et. al.1996; FOS various issues). Similarly, Nigeria's rank in the Human Development Index in the year 2008 remained low (0.470), being the 158th among 182 countries (ADB 2010). The use of socio-economic indicators like per capita income, life expectancy at birth (years), access to health care services, access to safe water, access to education, access to sanitation facilities, and electricity also depicts the extent of poverty in Nigeria. As indicated in Table 2, the rates of poverty in Nigeria have not shown any remarkable reduction when viewed from these indicators and when compared with some countries in Africa. For instance, apart from the early 1980s when the nation's per capita income witnessed an increase the situations in the 1990s and early 2000 were pathetic. The life expectancy at birth (years) does not provide a better level of well-being in the country (47 years in 2007), more so when compared with those of countries like Mauritius and Tunisia that had 73 and 74 years respectively in 2007 (ADB 2010).

2.3. Poverty Reduction Strategies in Nigeria

To reduce poverty various schools of thought advocates a number of measures. For instance, the Mercantilists laid emphasis on foreign trade which according to them is an important vehicle for the promotion of economic growth and poverty reduction. The Classical economists' (Adam Smith, David Ricardo, Thomas Malthus, Karl Marx, etc.) views on poverty reduction brought to fore the social changes brought about by technological changes resulting from the industrial revolution that took place between 1750-1850. The early development economists of the 1940s and the 1950s advocate the theory of forced-drift industrialization via Big push, Balanced growth and Labour transfer (Ijaiya 2002). In the 1970s Chenery,et.al (1974) advocates re-distribution of income. To them, poverty can better be reduced if radical redistribution of income or land is allowed to take place in view of the interlocking power and self-interest of the rich and the bureaucracy in the handling of the nations' resources. The World Bank (1983; 1990; 1991) emphasizes on the need for stable macroeconomic policies and economic growth. To the World Bank, sound fiscal and monetary policies will create a hospitable climate for private investment and thus promote productivity which in the long-run would lead to poverty reduction (see also Dollar and Kraay 2000; Sandstorm 1994; Edwards 1995).

This approach is what is referred to as pro-poor growth approach to poverty reduction. The 1980s to the 2000s had witness the introduction of new strategies/approaches to poverty reduction. Key among them are the basic needs and capabilities/entitlements approaches, participatory development, social capital, community self help, good governance and human right approaches to poverty reduction (Boeniniger 1991; Picciotto 1992; Woolcock and Narayan 2000; United Nations 2002; United Nations 2004). In Nigeria, various efforts were made by the government, non-governmental organizations and individuals to reduce poverty in the country. According to Ogwumike (2001) poverty reduction measures implemented so far in Nigeria focuses more attention on economic growth, basic needs and rural development strategies.

The economic growth approach focuses attention on rapid economic growth as measured by the rate of growth in real per capita GDP or per capita national income, price stability and declining unemployment among others, which are attained through proper harmonization of monetary and fiscal policies. The basic need approach focuses attention on the basic necessities of life such as food, health care, education, shelter, clothing, transport, water and sanitation, which could enable the poor live a decent life. The rural development approach focuses attention on the total emancipation and empowerment of the rural sector. In furtherance to his discussions on the measures, Ogwumike (2001) grouped the strategies for poverty reduction in Nigeria into three eras – the pre-SAP era, the SAP era and the democratic era.

In the pre-SAP era, the measures that were predominant were the Operation Feed the Nation, the River Basin Development Authorities, the Agricultural Development Programmes, the Agricultural Credit Guarantee Scheme, the Rural Electrification Scheme and the Green Revolution. In the SAP era the following poverty reduction measures were introduced; the Directorate for Food, Roads and Rural Infrastructures, the National Directorate of Employment, the Better Life Programme, the Peoples' Bank, the Community Banks, the Family Support Programme and the Family Economic Advancement Programme. The democratic era witnessed the introduction of the Poverty Alleviation Programme (PAP) designed to provide employment to 200,000 people all over the country. It was also aimed at inculcating and improving better attitudes towards a maintenance culture in highways, urban and rural roads and public buildings. By 2001 PAP was phased out and fused into the newly created National Poverty Eradication Programme (NAPEP) which was an integral part of the National Economic Empowerment and Development Strategy (NEEDS).

2.4 Social Capital: Meaning, Types, Forms and Measurements

a. Meaning

There are many definitions and interpretations of the concept of social capital, there is a growing consensus that "social capital stands for the ability of actors to secure benefits by virtue of membership in social network or other social structures". Portes (1998) cited in Grootaert (1999) said that: if we take a broad view of what comprised these "other social structure" then social is a relevant concept at the micro, meso and macro levels". At the macro level capital social include institutions such as government, the rule of law, civil and economic liberty. There is overwhelming evidence that at macro level social capital has a measurable impact on national economic performance. At the micro and meso level social capital refers to the network and norms that govern interaction among individuals, households and communities. Such networks are often (but not necessarily) given structure through the creation of local association or local institutions. (See Knack 1999).

The narrow concept of social capital was reviewed as a set of "horizontal association" between people that consists social networks, (network of civic engagement) and associated norms that have an effect on the productivity of the community. Two empirical presumptions underline this concept, network and norms are empirically associated, and these have important economic consequences.

Coleman (1998), cited in Satu (1999) also argued that social capital could include "vertical" associations as well, characterized by hierarchical relationships and unequal power distribution among members.

b. Types of Social Capital

Generally, there are two types of social capital "government social capital and civil social capital" Collier (1998) distinguished "government social capital" from "civil social capital" by referring to government social capital as governmental institutions that influence peoples' ability to co-operate for mutual benefit. These institutions include the enforceability of contracts, the rule of law, civil liberty and the extent of economic liberty that are permitted by the state. While civil social capital encompasses common values, norms, informal network and associational memberships affecting the ability of individuals to work together to achieve common goals.

c. Forms of Social Capital

Social capital is widely recognized as a multi-dimensional concept with dimensions such as relationships, trust, reciprocity, and action for a common purpose. Some of these dimensions such as relationships can be further broken down. Three different dimensions or types of relationships are described by Woolcock (2000); bonding, bridging and linking, forms of social capital. He describes bonding as the relationships that we have with people who are like us, and typically refers to those relations among members of families and ethnic groups. Bridging refers to those relationships; we have with people who are not like us. These may be people who are from a different socio-economic status, from a different generation or a different ethnicity. He describes linking social capital as the relationships people have with those in power. Linking social capital enables individuals and community groups to leverage resources, ideas and information from formal institution beyond the immediate community radius.

d. Measurements and Impact of Social Capital:

Evidences from household level and village level studies suggests that civil social capital in the form of trust or social ties can play an important role in alleviating poverty (Grootaert, 1998, Narayan and Pritchett 1997).

The rich arguably have much less to gain than the poor from memberships in groups that provide mutual aid or health or education services, because they can afford to purchase these services (Grootaert 1998). Similarly, institutions of cultural traditions that's broaden participation can be expected to have progressive effects, extending to poor people the kind of political influence and access that the rich tend to have in all societies.

However, cooperative norms, trust and social ties are most readily measured through conducting representative surveys of individuals. Conceptually, the type of trust that should be unambiguously beneficial to a nation's economic performance is trust between strangers, or more precisely between two randomly matched residents of a country. In societies where strangers can trust each other to act in the collective interest, people only can leave their bicycles unattended and unlocked on the street, they can contract with a wide range of parties without extended written agreements, and run a business without devoting substantial time to monitoring employees, partners and suppliers.

According to grief (1994) cited in Knack (1999) he said that within family trust, intra-ethnic trust or other forms of "particularized trust" or "specific trust" may well be corrosive to "generalized trust" (trust in strangers). Stronger intra-ethnic trust in an ethnically-heterogeneous society may restrict the scope for transacting and lead to segmented markets, reducing gains from specialization, and perhaps from the economics of scale.

3. Study Area and Methodology

3.1 Study Area

Minna the Niger State capital is located some 740 kilometers from Lagos and 140 Kilometer from Abuja the Federal Capital of Nigeria and on latitude North $6^{\circ}.30^1$ and longitude East $8^{\circ}.80^1$ of the equator. By 1991 census it has an estimated population of about 253,125 people (NPC 1993).

3.2 Data Source

The study used both secondary and primary data for regression analysis. The variables considered for the study are the social capital indicators which comprises (interpersonal trust, civic responsibility, and volunteer activity).

The data were obtained from African Development Bank Gender, poverty and environmental indicators on African counties for the 2003, The World Bank, and Social Development family, environmentally and socially sustainable development network (1999).

3.3 Model Specification

In determine the role of the social capital on poverty reduction in Minna, an econometric analysis are built around the social capital indicators. The models are thus used in estimating the impact of these indicators on poverty reduction in Minna Metropolis.

The indicators that were taking into consideration are: (interpersonal trust, civic responsibility and volunteer activity).

Having stated this, the model is thus formulated as:

$$Pov_i = f(\text{soc},; \text{cap},;) \dots \dots (1)$$

$$\text{With soc. Cap;} = f(\text{int.tr}, \text{civ.res}, \text{vol.act}) \dots \dots (2)$$

When equation (2) is substituted into equation (1) it then becomes

$$Pov_i = f(\text{int.tr}, \text{civ.res}, \text{vol.act}) \dots \dots (3)$$

When transformed into a multiple linear relationship, the model thus become

$$\ln Pov = \ln \beta_0 + \beta_1 \text{int.tr} + \beta_2 \text{civ.res} + \beta_3 \text{vol.act} + U$$

Where

$\ln Pov$ = Log of poverty reduction in Minna proxied by household consumption- expenditure

Int. tr. = Interpersonal trust among the people of Minna Metropolis

civ.res = Civic responsibility of individual in the area.

Vol.act = Volunteer activities by members of the community.

$\beta_0, \beta_1, \beta_2, \beta_3$ = Estimation parameter associated with the influence of the indicators of social capital on poverty reduction in Minna Metropolis

U = Disturbance term.

Drawing from the model, our a-priori expectation of the expected pattern of behaviour of the independent variables (int.tr, civ.act, vol.act) on the dependent variable (Pov) are $int.tr > 0, civ.act > 0, vol.act > 0$.

4. Result and Discussion

The results of the multiple regression analysis conducted at 5% percent level of significance are presented in table 1 below.

Table 1. Regression results of social capital and poverty in Minna Metropolis.

EXPLANATORY VARIABLES	COEFFICIEN AND T-VALUES
Intercept (t)	8.51(2.81)
Int.tr (t)	1.51 (-1.15)
civ.act(t)	3.15 (-2.05)
vol.act(t)	0.62 (-2.18)
R ²	0.62
F	6.05

Significant at 5% Per cent Level of Significance

A look at the model shows that the model is of good fit because it has an R² of 0.62. This shows that 62% variation in the dependent variables (poverty) is explained by the explanatory variables (social capital) while error term taken care of the remaining 38% which are variables in the study that cannot be included in the model because of certain qualitative feature. At 5% level of significance, the F-statistics show that the model is useful in determining if any significant relationships exist between poverty and social capital in Minna, as the computed F-statistic which is 6.05 is greater than the tabulated F-statistic value at 1.75.

In terms of the individual independent variables the coefficient and the associated t-values of social capital is related to poverty reduction in Minna metropolis which fulfilled our expectation. An indication that social capital has contributed to the poverty reduction in Minna metropolis. Reasons established for this could be linked to the following:

- (i) That social capital has been recognized in the areas.
- (ii) That there is trust among the people and the community.
- (iii) That, even the people and Government of the areas are performing their civic role in a way that it leads to the reduction of poverty in the areas.
- (iv) That people of the area used to volunteer in activities that can better the needs of the people of that area.

5. Conclusion and Recommendations

An empirical study of the impact of Social Capital on Poverty Reduction in Minna was carried out by the use of a collection of data and regression analysis. The findings show that Social Capital has significant impact on poverty reduction in Minna. This outcome notwithstanding, individuals, government and policy makers in Minna, Niger State still need to take into consideration the following measures that would likely improve the flow and effective utilization of Social Capital, which in turn would further reduce the level of poverty in Minna Metropolis.

- i. There is the need for government and individuals in the area to recognized the important of social capital
- ii. There is need to improve the level of trust in oneself in the metropolis, because with trust, one can engaged in any activities/ transaction without any written agreement.
- iii. There is also the need for both government and individuals in the area to sincerely perform their civic role in a way that it will leads to the reduction of poverty in the area.
- iv. The people of the Minna Metropolis should try to volunteer in activities that can better the needs of the people of that metropolis.

Table 2: Estimated Total Population and Rate of Poverty in Nigeria (1980-2002)

Year	Estimated Total Population (in million)	Absolute No. of Poor People (in million) b	Percentage (%) that are poor
1980	64.6	18.1	28.1
1981	66.7	21.3	32.0
1982	68.4	24.2	35.5
1983	70.6	27.5	39.0
1984	73.0	31.4	43.0
1985	75.4	34.9	46.3
1986	77.9	35.8	46.0
1987	80.4	36.5	45.4
1988	83.1	37.4	45.0
1989	84.9	37.7	44.5
1990	86.6	38.0	44.0
1991	88.5	38.5	43.5
1992	91.3	39.0	42.7
1993	93.5	45.8	49.0
1994	96.2	52.6	54.7
1995	98.9	59.3	60.0
1996	102.3	67.1	65.6
1997	104.0	67.6	65.5
1998	106.3	68.0	69.5
1999	109.3	72.3	72.0
2000	111.3	77.0	74.0
2001	114.0	81.2	83.1
2002	116.4	86.0	88.0

Sources: (a) National Population Commission 1993; Central Bank of Nigeria, Annual Report and Statement of Account (Various Issues) and Federal Office of Statistics Annual Abstract of Statistic (Various Issues). (b) Computed by the author from (a) and (c). (c) Federal Office of Statistic (FOS) Poverty profile for Nigeria 1980-1996; Federal Office of Statistics' National Household Consumer Survey (Various Issues).

Table 3: Socio-economic Indicator in Nigeria 1970-2008

Year	Access to Health Care (%)	Access to water care	Adult Illiterate (%)	Access to Sanitation (%)	Life Expectancy at Birth (years)	Per Capita Income(\$)	Infant Mortality (Per 1000)	Daily Calorie Intake Per Capita
1970-74	-	-	89.7	-	43.2	350.0	-	-
1975-79	-	-	84.9	-	45.3	660.0	122.0	1962
1980-84	40.0	-	67.1	-	47.4	410.0	112.0	1903
1985-89	40.0	15.9	59.2	62.1	49.2	270.0	102.0	2291
1990-95	76.0	40.0	51.4	63.3	50.4	220.0	93.4	2656
1995	-	49.9	43.6	57.3	51.1	210.0	91.6	2802
1996	-	-	42.1	-	51.2	250.0	89.8	2772
1997	-	-	40.6	-	51.3	270.0	88.0	2779
1998	-	-	39.1	-	51.5	260.0	86.2	2828
1999	-	-	37.6	63.0	51.6	250.0	84.4	2833
2000	-	-	36.1	63.0	51.8	260.0	82.6	-
2005	-	-	34.7	-	51.9	290.0	75.1	-
2006	-	47.0	28.1	30.0	46.8	620.0	111.9	2654.7
2007	-	-	26.9	-	46.8	970.0	110.7	-
2008	-	-	-	-	-	1160.0	-	-

Sources: ADB 2008; ADB 2010

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