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Dimensions of Social Capital in Core Residential Neighbourhoods of Akure, Nigeria

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Abstract
This study looked at the dimensions of social capital and strength of social capital in the core neighbourhoods of Akure, Nigeria. It also investigated if some physical attributes of the neighbourhood predictors of social capital. Four specific residential neighbourhoods in the core of Akure were selected for the study, 532 questionnaires were successfully administered and analysed with factor analysis and categorical regression analysis. Social capital was considered to be high by majority (81.2%) of the respondents. Factor analyses suggest that social control and cohesion appears to be the strongest form of social capital in the neighbourhood (20.7%), followed by collective efficacy (19.4%) reciprocated exchanges (14.8%) of the dimensions of social capital. The regression analysis confirms a significant relationship between neighbourhood physical characteristics and social capital (sum of square = 54.036; df = 20; p 0.000). The results indicates that six variables of neighbourhood physical characteristics namely, waste disposal method (.004),neighbourhood open space (.001), source of water(.000), toilet type available and if shared (.005),how defined are compounds for each house (.000) and number of households in each house (.002) were significant predictors of social capital.The paper concludes that poor neighbourhoods should not only be described as neighbourhood with high concentration of physical poverty but also as neighbourhood with strong social resources in the form of social capital.
Keywords: Residential neighbourhoods, social capital, poverty

1.0 Introduction

Over the past few decades, inner city neighbourhoods decline in most Nigerian cities due to the rapid rate of urbanization experienced. The concentration of poverty in the urban core residential neighbourhoods of major cities around the world must have prompted researchers to revisit and further explore the nature of the relationships between people and place. Urban communities have experienced the decline of good-paying jobs for low-skilled workers and an exodus of more middle-class residents, processes that have concentrated poverty in the inner city (Wilson 1996).

Inner city neighbourhoods are often characterized by high rates of poverty, crime and antisocial behaviours, housing problems and failing infrastructure. This can have broad, negative consequences for individuals, neighbourhoods, and the city as a whole. Urban poverty is often said to find its greatest expression in residential neighbourhoods characterized by high densities of buildings, the crowding of large numbers of people into those buildings, lack of space for open air living between houses, poor health, sub-standard housing, and acute environmental and sanitary problems (Olotuah**,** 2009). This study therefore aimed to examine whether the physical environment (i.e., the nature of houses and neighbourhood) affects the degree to which people are involved in their communities and with each other. The fundamental premise is that some neighbourhood designs enable or encourage social ties or community connections, whereas others do not.

Neighbourhoods' ability to collectively address common problems is an indicator of its well-being (Ferguson and Dickens 1999). The goal of improving the well-being of citizens through place-based interventions informs the massive neighbourhood renewal campaigns in the developed countries. Warren, Thompson, and Saegert (2001) suggested that strong social bonds and effective organizations within communities provide the foundation on which poor people can develop the capacity to address the problems of poverty, to rebuild their communities, and to achieve a measure of control over their lives.

The various researches on social capital and network have been significant for neighbourhood studies. It has helped to re-focus attention and efforts on the positive aspects of neighbourhoods especially neighbourhoods with high levels of poverty. Social capital is influential and widely accepted as useful, because it is seen as important to economic, social and physical development (Forrest and Kearns, 2001).

At the neighbourhood level, social capital generally refers to a sense of social unity and cooperation among neighbours, and the desire and willingness to work together for the collective good of community members (Wilkinson, 2007).Social capital is conceptualized as resources embodied in the social ties among persons and positions that permit individuals and or communities to achieve desired goals (Coleman, 1990). Putnam (1993) defined social capital as "features of social organization, such as networks, norms, and trust that facilitate coordination and cooperation for mutual benefit".

There is no generally acceptable unit of analysis by which to measure social capital and its dimensions (Portes, 2000). Putnam (2000), an advocate of the communitarian perspective viewed social capital as a community level attribute and resource that operates at an ecological level, even if it is produced by relations

between individuals. Other researchers (Bourdieu, 1986, Coleman, 1988, Mitchell & Bossert , 2007) have also focused on the role that individual-level relations play in producing and benefiting from social capital. It is viewed as household level resources and also operates at multi- levels. Going through the array of past researches on social capital, scholars have disagreed on a consensus level (individual, family, neighbourhood, city and nation) to measure social capital. This analysis therefore, focuses on the dimensions of social capital at the neighbourhood level. It makes use of a research instrument designed to explore the elements of social capital at this level and applies it to the Akure context. This study contributes in two ways to the conceptual development and understanding of social capital in poor urban neighbourhoods. First, it examines the dimensions of social capital, trust that develop between neighbours, and secondly to investigate if there are certain neighbourhood physical characteristics that are predictably more or less to develop social capital.

2.0 Literature Review

2.1 Social capital in poor neighbourhoods

Social capital comes from the idea that relationships can be viewed as resources and it can contribute to "production" just as physical or human capital may contribute "production" (Bourdieu 1986; Coleman 1988, 1994; Putnam 1993, 1999). It also refers to features of social organization, such as networks, norms, and trust that facilitate coordination and cooperation for mutual benefit" (Putnam 1993). According to Portes and Sensenbrener (1993), social capital is constituted by "those expectations for action within a group that affect the economic goals and goal-seeking behaviour of its members, even if these expectations are not oriented toward the economic sphere". Paxton (1999) however concluded that the concept of social capital has two distinct components which are trust and association. Trust is described as passive emotional sentiments while association refers to the behaviours that produce familiarity, such as informal socializing or lending a tool or assistance to complete a task.

Lochner et al. (1999) defined and measured four community level constructs related to social capital; *collective efficacy; psychological sense of community; neighbourhood cohesion*; and *community competence*. These different constructs overlap to cover the varied dimensions of social capital and present a better understanding of the varied element of social capital

Collective Efficacy is defined as a 'sense of collective competence shared among individuals when allocating, co-ordinating and integrating their resources in a successful concerted response to specific situational demands'. Sampson et al. (1997), also define collective efficacy as 'social cohesion among neighbours combined with their willingness to intervene on behalf of the common good'.

Psychological sense of community: Buckner (1988) defines it as 'the sense of belongingness, fellowship, identity, etc, experienced in the context of a functional (group) or geographically based collective'

Neighbourhood cohesion: is defined by Lochner et al. (1999) as 'social interactions by which residents establish social connections that are either personal or at the neighbourhood

Community Competence: Community competence 'can be thought of as the problem solving ability of a community that arises through collective effort' (Lochner et al, 1999)

Social capitals are not equal and differences exist between bonding social capital and bridging social capital (Putnam 1993). Bonding social capital occurs within a community of individuals, such as a neighbourhood, but the relationships and trust formed by bonding social capital may not translate into action capable of addressing a neighbourhood problem. Bonding social capital is a necessary antecedent for the development of the more powerful form of bridging social capital (Ferguson and Dickens 1999; Warren, Thompson, and Saegert 2001). Ethnographic studies of poor communities have shown that poor people have always relied on their social capital to aid in survival when other forms of capital have been lacking (Edin and Lein 1997). More than the affluent, poor people often rely on social relationships for assistance and have networks of relationships in which access to aid is relatively prevalent (Boisjoly, Duncan, and Hofferth 1995).

Bridging social capital occurs when members of one group connect with members of other groups to seek access or support or to gain information (Paxton 1999). Bridging social capital is defined as residents' efforts to extend contact beyond the members of the neighbourhood, and collective action is the product of bridging social capital. While bonding social capital may be an asset of lower income neighbourhoods, Sampson (1999) questioned whether bridging social capital was present within low income neighbourhoods. Warren, Thompson, and Saegert (2001) noted that "the main problem for poor communities may not be a relative deficit in social capital, but that their social assets have greater obstacles to overcome, and are constantly under assault." Therefore, poor neighbourhoods may contain high levels of bonding social capital, but this form of social capital does not necessarily result in collective action. Low income neighbourhoods may face greater challenges in converting their bonding social capital into the more politically important bridging form of social capital. Affluent communities was considered do have greater financial and human capital resources, and their public institutions, like schools, are stronger. Their social capital can be more effective because it is reinforced by these other resources. For example, residents of poor communities may be friends with their neighbours, but those

neighbours cannot provide them with connections and references to high paying jobs (Warren, et al, 2001).

3. Methodology

This study is part of a larger study which evaluated urban poverty in the core residential neighbourhoods of Akure, Nigeria. For the purpose of the study, four poor residential neighbourhoods in the core of the city were selected out of the twelve residential zones of Akure on the basis of having the highest concentration of poverty. The four purposively selected neighbourhoods are Zone 3 of the inner core area (which comprises Araromi, Oja Oshodi, Odo-Ikoyi, Isolo and Ijomu via Oke-Ijebu streets), Zone 1 covers Erekefa/Erekesan market, Town Hall, General Post Office, and Deji's Palace areas, Zone 2 includes Idiagba, Ijemikin, Irowo, Odopetu, Ajagunle areas while zone 4 comprises the other side of Araromi, Odo–Ijoka and Old stadium areas. These neighbourhoods according to Olanrewaju, (1990) were found to have the highest spatial concentration of poverty in Akure, Nigeria.

The sample size was based on the number of existing buildings in the area since questionnaire administration will be done on one person per household and a household per building. The unit of analysis was the household head in the housing units. Stratified systematic sampling technique was used and 25% of the housing units in the neighbourhoods were selected. Five hundred and fifty seven (557) questionnaires were distributed to the household heads of these units. Five hundred and thirty-two (532) questionnaires were returned, and these were subsequently analyzed.

To measures the level of social capital in this study, the survey conducted measured 3 key aspects of social capital: how well residents knew their neighbours, their trust or faith in other people, and how well they render assistance to each other. These 3 key aspects of social capital were measured with the following ten questions; if there is a problem around here, the neighbours get together to deal with it, this is a close -knit neighbourhood, if there is a problem around here, the neighbours get together to deal with it, this is a close -knit neighbourhood, when you get into a problem, no one in this neighbourhood cares much about what happens to me, people in this neighbourhood generally don't get along with each other, children around here have no place to play but the street, the park or open space closest to where I live is safe during the day, the park or open closest to where I live is safe at night, people around here are willing to help their neighbours, people in this neighbourhood can be trusted, parents in this neighbourhood generally know each other and relate. This was done using 5 points Likert scale ranging from strongly agrees (5) to strongly disagree (1).Summing the responses on all 10 items for each respondent yielded an index score reflecting each respondent's degree of social capital. Scores were categorised as high (31-50), moderate (21-30) and low (1-20).

The data collected on social capital were analysed using factor analysis to investigate the dimensions of social capital in the neighbourhoods while categorical regression analysis was used to examine the relationship between neighbourhood physical characteristics and social capital. In line with the aim of the study, the neighbourhood social capital model was examined; the variables of social capital (dependent variables) were regressed with neighbourhood physical characteristics variables (independent variable) to produce a model. The independent variables on neighbourhood physical characteristics used in this study are house types, street roads, open spaces, source of water and power supply, number of household in the houses, how clearly defined the compounds of each houses are and methods of waste disposal.

4. Results and Discussions

4.1 Dimensions of social capital

Due to the need to understand the dimensions of social capital in the core neighbourhoods of Akure, factor analysis was adopted to identify underlying variables or factors that explain the most pertinent dimensions of social capital. Principal component analysis was used to simplify the responses and to determine common underlying factors for the chosen items. A scree plot and eigenvalues was used to determine the optimum number of factors to select from the analysis. The extraction method was principal components analysis. All the variables were included in the analysis (Table 1), only items with a rotated component loading of above 0.5 was considered to relate strongly with the factors. Three factors eventually explained a total of 54.4% of the total variance. All the three factors were readily interpretable and so this was selected as the optimal number of factors. Those questions that have high loading on the factors were examined and the three factors were broadly interpretable as, social control and cohesion, collective efficacy and reciprocated exchange. These factors were very similar to the theoretical construct on which the questionnaire was designed. The result of the factor analysis further explained that the first factor labelled social control and cohesion accounts for (20.7%) of social capital, the second factor collective efficacy accounts for (19.4%) while factor three labelled reciprocated exchange accounts for (14.8%) of the dimensions of social capital.

4.2 Measure of social capital in the neighbourhood

This study evaluates the strength of social capital that exists in the core neighbourhoods of Akure. The result of

findings on social capital (Table 2) indicates that social capital is very high in the neighbourhood. Majority of the respondents (81.2%) rated social capital to be high in their neighbourhoods, 16.4% rated social capital to be moderate while 1.3% of the respondent rated social capital low. Analysis of social capital across the four neighbourhoods confirms that there is a strong bonding social capital. Zone 4 (Araromi, Odo–Ijoka and Old stadium areas) of the neighbourhoods have the highest percentage of (90.1%) social capital, zone 2 of the neighbourhoods (Idiagba, Ijemikin, Irowo, Odopetu, Ajagunle) ranked second (81.6%), zone 1 (Erekefa/Erekesan market, Town Hall, General Post Office, and Deji's Palace areas) closely followed (80.6%) and zone 3 (Araromi, Oja Oshodi, Odo-Ikoyi, Isolo and Ijomu via Oke-Ijebu streets) of the neighbourhoods had the least percentage (77%) of social capital. The result was further subjected to the analysis of variance and the analysis produced a ρ value (.520) which is not statistically significant. The result implies that there is no significant difference in the level of social capital among the four residential neighbourhoods in Akure. The implication of the above results is that all the four neighbourhoods enjoy a high level of social capital. The study therefore confirms other studies on social capital (Mitchell and Bossert 2007; Edin and Lein 1997) that poor neighbourhood have high social capital and the poor families have always enjoyed the neighbourhood social capital to aid in survival when other forms of capital have been lacking

4.3 Predictors of social capital

In search for explanation for the level of social capital in the neighbourhood, categorical regression was done. The result as shown in (Table 3) yields R2 = .104. This indicates that there is a relationship between the dependent variable (social capital) and the independent variables (neighbourhood infrastructure). The analysis of variance (sum of square = 54.036; df = 20; $p \leq 0.005$) confirms the significance of the relationship, although the relationship is weak. The results indicates that six variables of neighbourhood physical characteristics namely, method of waste disposal ($p \leq 0.005$), neighbourhood open spaces ($p \leq 0.005$), source of water ($p \leq 0.005$), type of toilets facility ($p \leq 0.005$), how defined compounds are from each other ($p \leq 0.005$) and number of households in the house ($p \leq 0.005$) were significant predictors of social capital. As indicated in the (Table 3), structural condition of the buildings, street roads, power supply (electricity), house type and tenure status are not significant predictor of social capital. Out of all the variables that are significant predictors of social capital, how defined compounds are from each other is the strongest (Beta = -.160).This is followed by main source of water supply (-.134) neighbourhood open spaces (Beta = .120) and types of toilets (if shared by more than one household (Beta = .102) and number of household in the house (.095) as the least significant predictor. The result implies that shared amenities that are likely to encourage informal contacts will in turn enable residents to socialise with one another and protect each other's interest. This may enhance social trust and reciprocal exchanges that may lead to neighbourhood bonding social capital. The result of findings further supports previous findings that neighbourhood physical characteristics influence residents' perception of social capital which may also enhance quality of life and the neighbourhood.

Summary and conclusion

Sense of community in the poor residential neighbourhoods of Akure can be defined as very strong. The majority of the respondents rated trust, social cohesion and reciprocated exchanges high in their neighbourhood.

This study suggests that the neighbourhoods design and the housing characteristics affect social capital in poor neighbourhoods. There is a significant relationship between the neighbourhood physical characteristics and social capital formation in the core neighbourhoods. Relationship do not just happen, it is the presence and quality of the housing and neighbourhood infrastructure that creates the opportunity for people to interact which then transform into social capital. The results indicate that residents living in houses with more than one household, having to share toilets and other facilities together are more likely to know their neighbours, to assist one another, to trust others, and to be involved socially.

Poor neighbourhoods have been found to posses' strong social capital but their social capital is more of bonding social capital than bridging social capital. In other words, the main problem for poor communities may not be a deficit in social capital, but that they lack the kind of social capital that is capable of linking them to opportunities which can take them out of poverty. Poor communities cannot solve their problems on their own, no matter how strong and well organized their internal social capital becomes. They require greater financial resources and better public services. Nevertheless, their social capital can also play an important contribution to their economic, political and neighbourhood development.

Neighbourhood social capital can be used in neighbourhood building, neighbourhood organizing, and neighbourhood development to, foster micro-enterprise development, promote neighbourhood safety, improve neighbourhood infrastructure, and, take steps to translate their bonding social capital into bridging social capital.

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Table 1 : Dimension of social capital

	Component		
	Social control and cohesion	Collective efficacy and trust	Reciprocated exchange
If there is a problem around here, the neighbours get together to deal with it	**.765**	.173	-.163
This is a close -knit neighbourhood	**.736**	.220	-.123
When you get into a problem, no one in this neighbourhood cares much about what happens to me	-.166	.051	**.760**
People in this neighbourhood generally don't get along with each other	-.264	.277	**.642**
Children around here have no place to play but the street	**.512**	-.259	.621
The park or open space closest to where I live is safe during the day	.216	**.650**	.128
The park or open closest to where I live is safe at night	.027	**.811**	.091
People around here are willing to help their neighbours	.360	**.534**	-.159
People in this neighbourhood can be trusted	.396	.493	.092
Parents in this neighbourhood generally know each other and relate	**.502**	.336	-.080

Table 2: Levels of social capital

			NEIGHBOURHOODS				
			ZONE 1	ZONE 2	ZONE 3	ZONE 4	Total
social capital	High	Count	79	124	147	82	432
		% within NEIGHBOURHOODS	80.6%	81.6%	77.0%	90.1%	81.2%
	Moderate	Count	18	24	37	8	87
		% within NEIGHBOURHOODS	18.4%	15.8%	19.4%	8.8%	16.4%
	Low	Count	0	2	4	0	6
		% within NEIGHBOURHOODS	.0%	1.3%	2.1%	.0%	1.1%
Total		Count	98	152	191	91	532
		% within NEIGHBOURHOODS	100.0%	100.0%	100.0%	100.0%	100.0%

Table 3: The physical neighbourhood predictors of social capital

	Standardized coefficients		Df	F	Sig.
	Beta	Std. Error			
Tenure status	-.013	.042	1	.096	.757
House type	.039	.043	1	.841	.360
Method of waste disposal	.100	.043	2	5.485	***.004
Street roads	-.052	.044	2	1.366	.256
Neighbourhood open spaces	.120	.043	2	7.690	***.001
Main source of water	-.134	.044	2	9.222	***.000
Type of toilet (shared for more than one household)	.102	.045	2	5.127	***.005
Power supply	.071	.045	3	2.474	.061
Structural condition of the buildings	.049	.044	1	1.228	.268
How clearly defined are the compound for each houses?	-.160	.044	1	13.344	***.000
Number of households in the house	.095	.043	3	4.910	***.002

*** significant predictors of social capital
$p \leq 0.005$