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Exploring Missing Dimensions of Poverty Data in Chad, from a Capability Approach; Case Study of N'Djamena Population

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The missing dimensions of poverty analysis in Chad

With 55 percent of the population living below the (monetary) poverty line, and 36 percent living in extreme poverty, Chad is rated as one of the world's poorest countries. According to mainstream poverty analyses, based exclusively on a monetary approach, poverty in Chad is essentially concentrated in rural areas, where 87 percent of the country's poor (according to monetary measures) live.

However, as the use of multidimensional poverty measures and approach has not yet been implemented in Chad, most of the evidence produced in poverty analyses – on which related policy decisions are based - does not account for several other aspects of welfare, in which different groups of the Chadian population may also be deprived, at various levels.

Based on the “Sen’s **capability approach**” (which has inspired the creation of the UN’s Human Development Index) the **Oxford Poverty and Human Development Initiative (OPHI)** identified various dimensions of welfare (or “quality of life”) that were thus far absent, or poorly considered, in the indicators used to analyze poverty, distribution and equity. OPHI subsequently developed tools of poverty data collection that take into account these “missing dimensions” of welfare.

PEP researchers set out to fill data gaps

In this PEP-supported study, a team of Chadian researchers decided to incorporate OPHI’s instruments, to collect this type of data - on multiple dimensions of welfare - through the conduct of a small survey on a sample of households in the Capital of N'Djamena. The analysis of the collected data allowed them to conduct a poverty analysis based on 8 non-monetary dimensions of welfare, represented by 12 indicators.

These eight dimensions include 4 that may be considered “traditional” - consumption, health, education and housing - and 4 additional “missing” dimensions, related to labor conditions, security, as well as perceptions of decision-making power and of self-value.



Key findings

According to survey results, N'Djamena households are poor or “deprived” in 5 of the 12 indicators, in average, and deprivation is most severe in the dimensions of labor conditions (or rather job insecurity) and housing (or living conditions).

Results from the analysis also show that the particular contribution of the (previously) “missing dimensions” of welfare, in the assessment of households’ level of deprivation (or poverty), is significant.

For instance, deprivation in the sense of:

- **job insecurity contributes 20% to household poverty**
- **perceived lack of decision-making power (indicated by perceived freedom of choice in terms of religion) contributes 11% to household poverty**
- **insecurity (in terms of “safety of people and property”) contributes 7% to household poverty**

The results also indicate that such poverty, from a multi-dimensional perspective, is especially prevalent among female-headed households.

Overall, to the adjustment in Chad’s poverty incidence that results from a multidimensional analysis (vs one based on a unidimensional, monetary approach), those “missing dimensions” that were incorporated (based on OPHI tools) contribute almost half of the increment.

Policy recommendations

Based on these findings, the researchers recommend that the National Social Protection Strategy (NSPS), currently being developed by the Chadian government, should be oriented primarily towards interventions in favor of secure employment.

Also, in order to ensure sustainable human development, the government should implement policies that promote security (or safety) of people and property.

Finally, they conclude that an effective way to tackle multi-dimensional poverty in Chad would be for the government to actively promote gender equality, especially in terms of employment.