The material and political bases of lived poverty in Africa: insights from the Afrobarometer

Description

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The lived poverty index: strongly related to measurement of political freedoms
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Abstract: The Afrobarometer has developed an experiential measure of lived poverty called the Lived Poverty Index (LPI). It measures how frequently people go without basic necessities during the course of a year. This is a portion of the central core of the concept of poverty not captured by existing objective or subjective measures.

As an individual measure, the LPI is found to be valid and reliable. However, it exhibits only moderate external validity when compared with absolute measures of national wealth: contrary to what appears to be the consensus among economists, GDP growth is accompanied by increases in lived poverty. Also, there is only a weak relationship between LPI and measures of human development or income poverty.

At the same time, lived poverty is strongly related to country level measures of political freedom. This supports Senâ??s (1999) arguments about development as freedom and Halperin et alâ??s (2005) arguments about the â??democracy advantageâ?• in development. This paper concludes that this measure does well at measuring the experiential core of poverty, and capturing it in a way that other widely used international development indicators do not.

Tags

1. poverty

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