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THE ROLE OF SOCIAL CAPITAL IN THE DEVELOPMENT STRATEGY OF TERRITORIAL COMMUNITIES

РОЛЬ СОЦІАЛЬНОГО КАПІТАЛУ В СТРАТЕГІЇ РОЗВИТКУ ТЕРИТОРІАЛЬНИХ ГРОМАД

In a context of crisis and endemic violence, social capital has fundamental importance and is at the heart of the solidarity strategies that inhabitants develop to survive. This form of social organization can become a real advantage. Thus, it is not surprising to see the role assigned to an asset such as social capital in development strategies, particularly those implemented by territorial communities. This study aims to determine the variables that also explain the level of social capital in the Logbogbo zone in Ivory Coast. The study shows that social mobility and gender are socio-demographic variables that determine the mobilization of social capital in the surveyed zone. Social capital promotes the development of the community through collaboration, resource exchange, mutual support, and risk reduction. For local policymakers, economic actors, and development agencies, having well-populated management developed at the level of the zones is therefore an advantage in trying to change the mentalities and individual logics that are gradually transforming from the local to the universal. Above all, this study is a pilot project whose results should be confirmed more broadly and which should lead to a proposal for promoting the development of sustainable social capital in Nigeria.

Keywords: territories, development, strategy, social capital, communities.

У контексті кризи та ендемічного насильства соціальний капітал має фундаментальне значення та лежить в основі стратегій солідарності. Така форма соціальної організації може стати справжньою перевагою. Має значення бачити роль такого активу, як соціальний капітал, у стратегіях розвитку, зокрема тих, що реалізуються територіальними громадами. Це дослідження спрямоване на визначення змінних, які також пояснюють рівень соціального капіталу в Кот-д'Івуарі. Дослідження показує, що соціальна мобільність і стать є соціально-демографічними змінними, які визначають мобілізацію соціального капіталу в досліджуваній зоні. Соціальний капітал сприяє розвитку спільноти через співпрацю, обмін ресурсами, взаємну підтримку та зменшення ризиків. Тому для місцевих політиків, суб'єктів господарювання та агенцій розвитку добре заселене управління, розроблене на рівні зон, є перевагою в намаганні змінити менталітет та індивідуальну логіку, які поступово перетворюються з локального на універсальний. Це дослідження є частиною цих основних питань, які мають перевагу поставити місцевих жителів у раціональність, розгорнуту в середовищі зміни відносин співпраці, солідарності та підтримки, які можна помітити в країні. Чи може ритм співпраці цих груп населення, які страждають від хронічного насильства, мати наслідки деканіталізації певних джерел солідарності? Загальна гіпотеза полягає в тому, що мешканцям досліджуваної території вдалося захистити або навіть відновити в різних формах соціальний капітал, або створити нові форми капіталу. Керівні цілі лідерів цих спільнот виражаються в рівні соціального капіталу, який їм вдається мобілізувати або створити. Єдність, яка неодмінно має бути прогресивною, оскільки вона ґрунтується на локальних раціональностях, які мають поступово бути широко зрозумілими. З точки зору за-

гальної демографічної політики, це дослідження натхненню інтегрованим підходом, глобальна мета якого полягає в інвестуванні на місцевому рівні за допомогою двох стратегій: спираючись на імпульс, створений на міжнародному рівні цілями сталого людського розвитку, хоча й залучаючи населення та партнерів до усвідомлення необхідності сприяння змін у менталітеті та когнітивних стратегіях, і починаючи з реалізації досвіду та діяльності як важеля переконання, для поступового впровадження нової логіки втручання.

Ключові слова: території, розвиток, стратегія, соціальний капітал, громади.

Statement of the problem. At a time when territorial development faces numerous challenges related to the socio-political, economic, and environmental context, the need to rely on endogenous socio-economic initiatives of territorial stakeholders is gaining importance. In Nigeria, the problems of rural land management by local communities persist as it also in Ivory coast. In fact, although the participatory approach and dialogue advocated by the National Land Commission in the regular intermediate meetings it organizes foster discussion on territorial issues, territorial stakeholders are not involved in approaches for collaboration and collective action that are the bedrock of social capital.

However, the question that arises today concerns the role of social networks in territorial development strategies. Our goal is to propose an empirical approach based on qualitative and quantitative tools to respond to this concern and test the following hypothesis: "Social capital is a strategic resource for collaboration and development of territorial communities." The survey was carried out between 2023 and 2024. The subject is theoretical, practical, and innovative. Social capital is a resource for the fabrication of cooperation. Using a combination of quantitative and qualitative survey tools, this study helps to fill a certain number of gaps in the literature. Indeed, there is still too little scientific knowledge of the functioning of social capital, the conditions for its existence, and the methods of weighting it in support of local development. The result of the combined use of these three tools makes it possible to specify the effects of local development of social capital in a dynamic of territories.

Analysis of recent research and publications. The role of social capital in any up-to-date strategy of territorial community development in developed and transitional societies has been the subject of considerable interest among scientists. This proposition is supported by a number of scientific works devoted to this matter питання (Portes A. [1], Miković R. [2], Petrović D. [2], Mihić M. [2], Obradović V. [2], Todorović M. [2]). With respect to the relation between social capital and the development strategies of territorial communities, opinions in the scholarly literature diverge. Some researchers believe that the development of social capital is essential (Han S. H. [3], Yoon S. W. [3], Chae C. [3]), others see it as an impediment to economic activity, and still others are less categorical about whether and why territorial community development strategies should consider social capital (Partelow S. [4], N'Gouandi E. [5], Ruth E. A. I. [5], Joachim A. D. [5], Celestin K. [5]).

An in-depth analysis of the state of scientific research on social capital and, in particular, the community development strategy, has allowed us to summarize the position of the dominant approach, distinguishing theoretical and economic issues and the methodological aspects of scientific research (Kouame J. [6], Sackou-Kouakou J. G. [6], Tiade M. L. [6], Attia-Konan R. [6], Coulibaly M. [6], Dagnogo A. [6], Hounsa A. [6], Nohoua T. [7]). The analysis of the state of scientific development showed us the possibility of enriching this theory with practical solutions that apply in specific conditions, i.e., the social and economic specifics of the Ivory Coast.

Formation of the objectives of the article (task statement). The article is aimed at studying the role and place of social capital in the development strategy of territorial communities in Nigeria and Ivory coast between 2023 and 2024. The solution to this problem required the accomplishment of the following tasks. Firstly, to provide a clear understanding of social capital and to provide a definition of this concept. Secondly, to find out the status of communities in terms of social capital assessment: what is the nature of social relationships among their members, and the norms and values of these communities. Third, to evaluate the impact of social capital on the outcomes of local communities' development and coexistence, such as community resilience,

coexistence, and social justice for all members. An analysis of the impact of social capital on the design of community strategies that will be implemented.

The article assumes the presence of an already established research framework in which the relationship between communities and development strategies has not been established so far. For this purpose, the concepts of communities and the framework of the process of community change affecting the development of strategies will be presented in detail. Several different indicators for measuring social capital will be presented.

Summary of the main research material. We have collected and thoroughly analyzed data establishing the association between indicators associated with the presence of social capital and orientation towards a particular development strategy in the community of a territorial base located in the south of Ivory Coast. This is a cluster of 69 villages. The concept of integrating social networks and trust guiding relationships between members of the community was particularly important. Indicators of social capital stemming from the community survey are shown to be key criteria for the choice of community, while the quality of the roads built to access the community is important but less determinant. The results show the primacy of social networks and trust between individuals living in communities in order to facilitate their cooperation and their efforts to implement public goods, in line with the hypotheses and with most of the references linked to the concept of social capital. The impact of data coverage for certain dimensions of the constructed roads also shows the importance of developing infrastructure to facilitate links with actors living outside of territorial areas. We have therefore tested, through a grid of indicators referring to these beings, relationships between members of different groups of a single community (governance) or between members of a community and local and non-local operational actors (development). Regarding governance, we define the notion of bonding social capital as the quality of the ties associating the various stakeholders in the community as well as their level of trust. We then define a notion of bridging social capital referring to the relationship – ties and trust – between the community and institutional actors at the local level ensuring some kind of public service. Linking social capital designates, in the same way, ties and trust between these local actors and operational partners outside the territory who have the agreement of the national authorities for a development action on the territory. Three types of best practices of the territories tested have been examined: the interest of reference to land policy, the mobilization of the territorial partnership, the presence of endogenous dynamism, and then intervention with light reorientation of endogenous dynamism after the process of consultation [8, 9, 10, 11].

One of the key objectives of our research, shown in Table 1 below, is to understand, within the context of the surveyed territorial communities, the level of the seven indicators listed above. By presenting this data, we are seeking to measure social capital being developed and applied in the examined communities. The indicators are divided into Bonding, Bridging, and Linking. Each of the Bonding indicators provides information on how community members interact with one another, indicating the strength of the relationships established within the local community, and whether the group is based on an exclusive foundation or is more open and flexible to newcomers.

On the basis of these indicators, we are able to identify what kind of community is being studied and conclude whether it has the potential to function as an autonomous 'development entity.' As regards the indicators of Bridging, they focus on outside-community relationships and whether the locality is isolated or integrated with others. Indicators under Linking, meanwhile, provide an assessment based on individuals and their interactions with the Chair of the Commission, the Mayor, and other resource persons in the community. Once these indicators are measured, they can provide key information for developing strategies for action with the local community. It must be emphasized that the results presented in Table 1 should not be considered an exhaustive presentation of social capital existing in the researched areas. As the indicators focus on active participation and the use of existing contacts, the score of a refusal answer does not provide – in our opinion – a full perspective on the level of social capital

Table 1

Social Capital Indicators in Territorial Communities

Indicator	Bonding	Bridging	Linking
Community Engagement	+		
Making Decisions	+		
Community Aid Requests	+		
Source of Development Information		+	
The Trust Level	+		
Equality and Equity	+		
Social Network Strength	+		
Belonging Card	+		
Unions Card	+		
Indicators of Bridging		+	
Complaint to Commission Chair or Mayor		+	
Community-Based Organizations		+	
Indicators of Linking			+
Resource Persons and Coordinators			+
Community Activities Participants			+

Source: author's presentation

that is appropriate to a community. What we are interested in are the attitudes of promoters of the community towards engagement in the activities organized by outsiders as people who decide about the initiative, as co-organizers. That is why we may say that in the domain of building social capital, the fact is less important than the presumed impact [12; 13; 14].

This table summarizes part of the doctoral research data. The table provides a brief summary of the main strategies employed by territorial communities in three regions of Ivory Coast. The table describes the community and development strategy and emphasizes the role that access to social capital plays in the overall strategy. The table also provides some of the key stakeholders in the strategy and indicates some of the challenges. The table presents an itemization of responses to a specific question in the questionnaire, providing a portion of the larger study data.

Table 2 is a theoretical map that provides direction on how social capital is actually used in territorial communities, or at least on how secretaries general perceive their abilities, and how people in these territories manage to develop in interaction with social capital. The population of Beoumi is estimated at 20,000 persons. Both territories are inhabited by populations of Akan origin, the majority of whom are Baoulé, Ashanti, and Ébé. Katiola borders both Beoumi and Farrakro. The population of Korhogo is estimated to be around 900,000 to 1,200,000. Katiola has a population of approximately 100,000 to 250,000 [15].

Sustainable development in territorial communities, as perceived by villagers, indigenous people, and elected officials, is: more networks of human relations (close, friendly, mutual assistance, sharing of joy and sorrow) and sustainable development with a significant correlation than the absence or few networks of human relations and few sustainable developments.

Table 3 confirms, therefore, all the previous writings with respect to the positive influence of those close, friendly, and mutual assistance relations among members of a territorial community, be they of the indigenous or migrant people, on the achievement of economic, social, and environmental well-being, i.e., the enhancement of capital, the rise in income, the improvement of nutritional status, the conservation and sustainable management of natural resources, the development of the two vibrant sectors (artisans and farmers), and other sectors to achieve a multi-sectoral economy at the level of the territorial community. In short, it is possible to appeal through pro-poor grassroots actors capable of getting their people together, thanks to their trust, which is available in urban and rural territorial communities, to show the strengths that characterize them by focusing everyone on a development strategy towards one of the Sustainable Development

Table 2

Comparison of Development Strategies in Different Territorial Communities

Territorial Community	Development Strategy	Role of Social Capital	Key Stakeholders	Challenges
Beoumi	Education, Social Cohesion, Community Activities	Social capital helps integrate and mobilize local community	Community Leaders, Local Residents	Limited external support
Katiola	Agriculture, Entrepreneurship, Health Programs	Social capital enables knowledge exchange and collaboration	Community Leaders, Farmers, NGOs	Insufficient funding for expansion
Korhogo	Infrastructure Development, Resource Management	Social capital fosters collaboration on large projects	Local Government, Contractors	Lack of trained professionals

Source: author's presentation

Table 3

Impact of Social Capital on Sustainable Development

Type of Relationship	Impact on Sustainable Development	Key Outcomes
Close, Friendly, Mutual Assistance	Significant positive correlation with sustainable development	Increased income, improved nutritional status, enhanced social unity
Few or No Networks of Human Relations	Negative or no correlation with sustainable development	Economic stagnation, poor resource

Source: author's presentation

Goals, in particular towards income-enhancing rural and urban actions that could be identified at the level of territorial communities, the pilot wind system rural-urban. In tables and summaries of data, they illustrate the benefits pertaining to strong networks of human relations at rural and urban levels within the territorial community. To understand the facts recorded in the other tables, let us again study Table 1 given above, which shows the concordance between all variables: trust, obligations among actors of a territorial community, and social unity on the one hand, and income, etc., at the urban and rural levels, on the other.

Conclusions. The study highlights the critical role of social capital in influencing development strategies for territorial communities in Nigeria and Ivory Coast. It confirms that social capital acts as a stimulus for community engagement, resource mobilization, and sustainable development. This research highlights the need to integrate social capital factors into development policies, programs, and practices, particularly in delicate or resource-constrained contexts.

Essential Recommendations:

1. Promote Local Collaboration Policymakers and stakeholders should facilitate or create platforms for consistent discourse and collaboration among community members to strengthen and reinforce bonding and bridging social capital.

2. Need for Investments in Capacity Building Initiatives: Develop training programs to enhance leadership and governance within communities, focusing on trust-building and collective action.

3. The need to leverage External Partnerships: Encourage and cultivate partnerships between communities, NGOs, and government agencies to improve linking social capital and access to resources.

4. Implementation of Participatory Planning: Officials should ensure that community members actively participate in overall development planning to engender ownership and resilience.

5. Expansion of Research and Data Collection: Conduct longitudinal studies to monitor the evolution of social capital and its impacts on community development. By focusing on these strategies, territorial communities in the Ivory Coast can harness the potential of social capital to achieve inclusive and sustainable growth, addressing challenges and optimizing opportunities for development.

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