

For the People or for Yourself? Poverty Reduction Strategies in Nigeria and Tanzania

Brendan Lawlor

Abstract

This article investigates Nigeria’s and Tanzania’s national poverty reduction strategies, putting forth a new perspective that challenges the notion of growth as the driver of development. This research is pertinent because even though Nigeria saw much higher economic growth than Tanzania, Tanzania was more successful in decreasing multidimensional poverty in almost all aspects, explicating that governance structures must also be focused on in the development discourse. In addition to analyzing the government’s poverty reduction programs and their effectiveness to decrease multidimensional poverty in their respective countries, program outcomes and the factors which inhibited poverty alleviation are analyzed through an ethical lens to argue program failure is a moral wrongdoing committed by public officials and a human rights violation.

I. Introduction

Poverty has reared its ugly head ever since the dawn of human civilization. Societies of the past, present and future always have, and will continue to be stratified into dichotomous groups of the “have nots” and the “haves”. People and society ascribe the epithet of “poor person” to people such as Uzoamako Ndugo of Nigeria, who sells bottlecaps to provide for her five children.¹

This article is centered around exploring the effectiveness of government poverty reduction efforts in reducing multidimensional poverty. The analysis utilizes two case studies—Nigeria and Tanzania—to identify the government programs instituted to address domestic poverty and their effectiveness to lift citizens out of multidimensional poverty. Since a high prevalence of poverty reflects a deep injustice, poverty must be considered in the context of ethics.² As such, this article adopts an ethical framework that views government programs as products of specific ethical perspectives of the citizenry and portrays a program’s success or failure at lowering domestic poverty rates as an ethical issue.

¹ Obiezu (2019).

² Barrientos et al. (2016), p. 6.

This article is structured into six sections. Following this introduction, the next section consists of a brief literature review of eminent research describing Nigeria's and Tanzania's poverty reduction programs, their effectiveness, and their moral dimensions. Following this is a compendious section describing the socio-economic background of Nigeria and Tanzania. Next, Section IV compares and contrasts the trends of multidimensional poverty in Nigeria and Tanzania. An ethical analysis then explores two aspects the poverty reduction programs: the ethical foundations of the policies and the ethics of government failure due to corruption. Lastly, there is a concluding paragraph to wrap up the discussion and to advance recommendations to augment program effectiveness.

II. Literature Review

Development practitioners, economists and academics alike have spilled copious amounts of ink in their attempts to explore the Tanzanian and Nigerian poverty reduction programs and their accompanying ethical implications. Ewhrudjakpor (2008), Egbue (2009) and Kolawole (2021) provide a comprehensive understanding of these programs in Nigeria, while the Government of the United Republic of Tanzania's 2020 Poverty Reduction Strategy Paper and Magombeyi and Odhiambo (2016) describe and examine Tanzania's poverty reduction strategies.

- Ewhrudjakpor (2008) provides a broad overview of how multidimensional poverty manifests in Nigeria through the lived experiences of the rural and urban citizenry. The author provides insight into the factors that influenced fluctuating poverty rates throughout the country's history and uses this historical approach to explain the extent of Nigeria's contemporary poverty. Ewhrudjakpor (2008) advances a conceptual framework of poverty that argues that people living in poverty are trapped in a culture of poverty, while also exploring oil's role in exacerbating income inequality in Nigeria.
- Egbue (2009) argues that poverty reduction efforts depend largely on the political and economic elites' perceptions of poverty reduction because they are in charge of spearheading such programs. As such, Egbue (2009) argues that the elites are squarely responsible for the ineffectiveness of poverty reduction programs in Nigeria. Egbue supports the notion that public officials not acting to ameliorate poverty rates but instead to enrich themselves is a moral failing.
- Kolawole (2021) summarizes Nigeria's poverty reduction programs and their main components. This study's motivation is to understand better why poverty rates remain so high given these attempts. She found that the Nigerian government's policies focused primarily on growth, basic needs and rural development, while advancing the argument that these policies failed to lower poverty rates because they were primarily supply-driven, disabling them from meeting the needs of the poorest. She ends by urging the international community to aid in elite capture prevention in order to target the poor mostly effectively.
- Tanzania's 2000 Poverty Reduction Strategy (PRS) provides a broad understanding of both multidimensional poverty and poverty reduction programs in Tanzania. The Tanzanian government wrote this PRS paper through a participatory process of civil society groups and development partners such as the International Monetary Fund (IMF) and World Bank in order to describe Tanzania's macroeconomic and social policies to reduce poverty. As such, this is an indispensable resource as it explains the causes and effects of poverty in Tanzania, the

government's goals as they relate to multidimensional poverty and its strategies to obtain those objectives.³

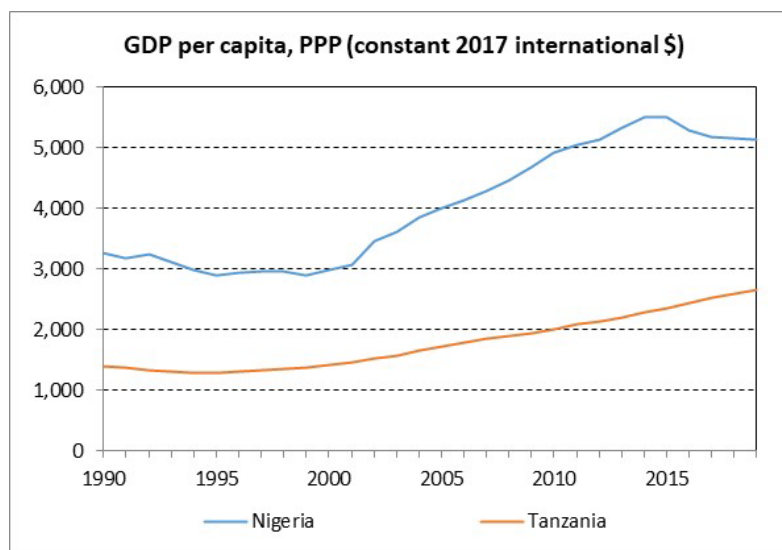
- Magombeyi and Odhiambo (2016) explore Tanzania's poverty and poverty reduction strategies from 1980-2013. The research largely focuses on the Second National Strategy for Growth and Reduction of Poverty, commonly referred to as Mkukuta II, which was implemented during fiscal years 2011 and 2015. Magombeyi and Odhiambo (2016) fill in the gaps the 2000 PRS paper left, providing the framework for why poverty reduction strategies should be pursued. They also provide an overview of the specific strategies Tanzania has implemented up to 2013 and how poverty trends have reacted to these policies and the larger social, political and economic context. They end with highlighting several challenges that hinder Tanzania from further decreasing its poverty rates.

III. Socio-Economic Background

To understand the endemic disease of poverty in Nigeria and Tanzania, it is useful to establish a foundational understanding of their socio-economic environment. This article examines this environment by reviewing the evolution of GDP per capita, live expectancy and literacy rate.

Figure 1 shows that in 1990, Nigeria started at a far higher GDP per capita level than Tanzania. Nigeria's GDP per capita increased from \$3,259 in 1990 to \$5,135 in 2019, while in Tanzania's GDP per capita increased from \$1,392 in 1990 to \$2,660 in 2019. While Nigeria's GDP per capita has increased more than Tanzania's in absolute values, in relative terms, Tanzania's increased more. Tanzania experienced gradual but consistent growth since 1994, while Nigeria's GDP per capita plateaued between 1995 and 1999, increased sharply between 1999 and 2014 to reach a peak of \$5,514, plateaued again in 2015, and then decreased to \$5,135 in 2019.

Figure 1: PPP-adjusted GDP per capita in Nigeria and Tanzania, 1990-2019

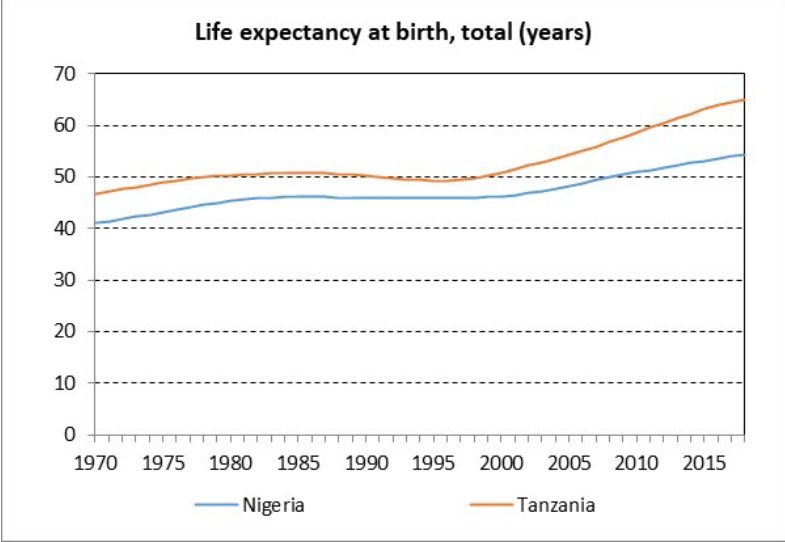


Source: Created by author based on World Bank (2021).

³ Mbilinyi and Nyoni (2000).

Despite Tanzania’s far lower GDP per capita, Figure 2 shows that Tanzania always had higher levels of life expectancy during 1970 to 2018. While the trends in life expectancy are similar for the two countries for most of the years, Tanzania has experienced far more gains during the last decade. In 1970, Tanzania’s life expectancy was 5.8 years higher than Nigeria’s, while in 2018 it was 10.7 years more. It is impressive to note that Tanzania’s life expectancy is 3.01 years higher than the average lifespan in all developing countries, but it is still 12.0 years lower than the average of the developed world.⁴

Figure 2: Life Expectancy at Birth in Nigeria and Tanzania, 1970-2018



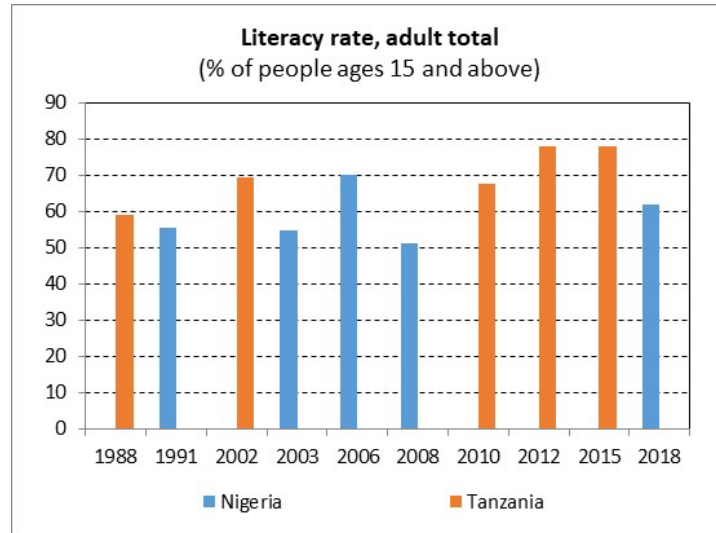
Source: Created by author based on World Bank (2021).

According to Iheonu and Urama (2019), poverty has significantly affected education achievements in Nigeria and has impeded an increase in their literacy rates. However, Tanzania has seen an expansion of education at all levels—evidenced by an increase of 1,114,344 schools within just five years—allowing Tanzania to achieve a literacy rate uncommon in developing countries.⁵ Figure 3 elucidates these realities, showing that in 2015, 77.9 percent of Tanzanians could read and write—an increase of 18.8 percentage points over a span of 27 years—while in Nigeria, only 62.0 percent of Nigerians could read and write in 2018—an increase of only 6.5 percentage points over the same time. In other words, Tanzania’s literacy rate increased 12.2 percentage points more than Nigeria’s literacy rate for the years such data is available.

Tanzania’s literacy rate was overall also more consistent compared to Nigeria’s. While Tanzania experienced periods of increase and then plateauing, it never sharply increased and then immediately decreased like Nigeria’s. While Tanzania’s higher literacy rates are consistent with Tanzania’s higher life expectancy, it should be pointed out that Tanzania’s higher literacy rates are inconsistent with Tanzania’s far lower GDP per capita, despite having corrected GDP per capita for differences in prices across the two countries.

⁴ Government of the United Republic of Tanzania, Ministry of Finance and Economic Affairs (2010).
⁵ Government of the United Republic of Tanzania, Ministry of Finance and Economic Affairs (2010).

Figure 3: Adult Literacy Rates in Nigeria and Tanzania, all available years



Source: Created by author based on World Bank (2021).

IV. Analysis of Facts

There is broad agreement today, that poverty is a multidimensional phenomenon. One of the World Bank’s definitions of poverty is the “inability to attain a minimal standard of living, interpreted to include not only consumption of food, clothing and shelter, but also access to education, health services, clean water and so on.”⁶ Reflecting the multidimensionality of poverty, the first subsection examines the evolution of income poverty, while the second subsection explores access to health, education, and other basic infrastructure.

IV.1. Evolution of Income Poverty in Nigeria and Tanzania

Figure 4 shows the percentage of the population that lives in extreme poverty for all the years such data are available, quantified as living on less than \$1.90 a day. It shows that Tanzania achieved greater success at decreasing extreme poverty rates compared to Nigeria, even though Nigeria had a lower extreme poverty rate in 2018 than Tanzania had in 2017. While it is true that 49.4 percent of the population were still living in extreme poverty in Tanzania in 2017, this is a decrease of 36.8 percentage points from its high of 86.2 percent in 1994. On the other hand, Nigeria decreased its extreme poverty rate by only 26.2 percentage points (from its high of 65.3 percent in 1996 to 39.1 percent in 2018).

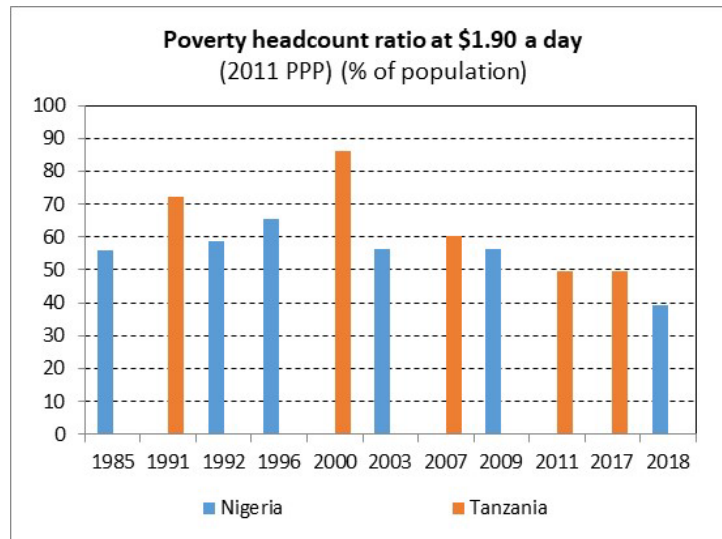
The extreme poverty rates did not follow a similar trajectory. Nigeria’s extreme poverty increased steadily from 1985 to 1996, which had been allotted to the Structural Adjustment Program that was instituted to deal with the country’s macroeconomic instability created partly from an oil price shock.⁷ It then decreased from 1996 to 2003, increased marginally from 2003 to 2009, and then decreased again from 2009 to 2018. On the other hand, Tanzania experienced three distinct eras of changes in extreme poverty: first sharply increasing poverty from 1991 to 2000, which has been explained by severe droughts that engendered deleterious economic conditions “never experienced

⁶ Lötter (2011), p. 39.

⁷ Duze, Mohammed and Kiyawa (2008), p. 47.

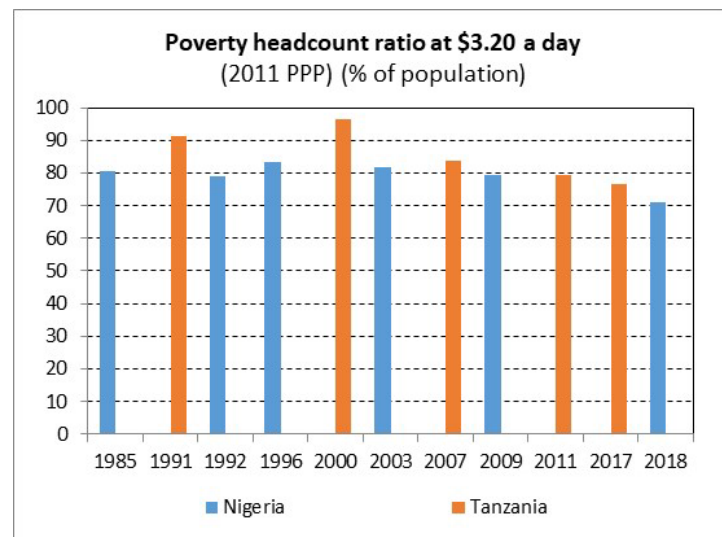
in recent decades.”⁸ Second, Tanzania’s extreme poverty then decreased strongly from a high of 86.2 percent in 2000 to 49.6 percent in 2007, which had been explained partly by the government addressing “poverty as a major policy concern” through the National Poverty Eradication Strategy (NPES).⁹ Third, Tanzania’s extreme poverty rate then plateaued between 2001 and 2017. Figure 4 shows that while extreme poverty has overall been reduced in Tanzania and Nigeria since 1985, it still affects 49 percent of Tanzanians and 39.1 percent of Nigerians, explicating that this is one of the most pressing issues facing the two governments.

Figure 4: Percentage of People Living Below \$1.90 a Day, all available years



Source: Created by author based on World Bank (2021).

Figure 5: Percentage of People Living Below \$3.20 a Day, all available years



Source: Created by author based on World Bank (2021).

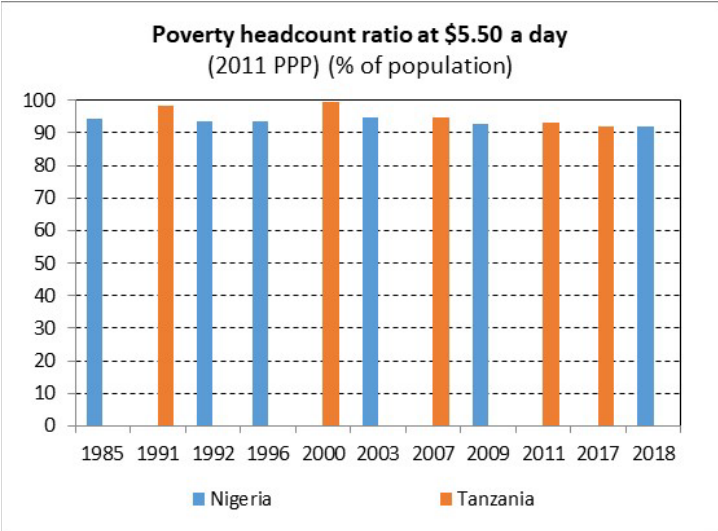
⁸ Government of the United Republic of Tanzania, Ministry of Finance and Economic Affairs (2010).

⁹ World Bank (2019).

Figure 5 details the percentage of people living on less than \$3.20 a day in Tanzania and Nigeria, showing once again that Tanzania has been more successful than Nigeria in decreasing this poverty measure. While Nigeria’s poverty rate has mostly fluctuated around the 70 percent and 80 percent mark—measuring 83.4 percent at its worst in 1996 and 71 percent at its best in 2018—Tanzania decreased its rate from its worst of 96.3 percent in 2000 to 76.8 percent in 2018. While Tanzania started and ended with higher poverty rates compared to Nigeria, it lowered its rate by 19.5 percentage points, while Nigeria decreased its rate by only 12.4 percentage points. While Nigeria and Tanzania have made overall progress since 1985 in reducing the percentage of people living in poverty, 76.8 percent of Tanzanians and 71 percent of Nigerians still live in poverty using the \$3.20 threshold.

Figure 6 displays the percentage of Nigerians and Tanzanians who live below \$5.50 a day, showing that Tanzania had always a higher poverty rate than Nigeria, except in 2018. As Figure 6 shows, Tanzania achieved far greater success than Nigeria in lowering poverty rates within this threshold, decreasing by 7.6 percentage points from its high of 99.4 percent in 2000 to its low of 91.8 percent in 2018, while Nigeria’s percentage of people living below \$5.50 a day decreased by only 2.9 percentage points from its high of 94.9 percent in 2003 to its low of 92.0 percent in 2018.

Figure 6: Percentage of People Living Below \$5.50 a Day, all available years



Source: Created by author based on World Bank (2021).

While there is some consistency in trends across these three poverty headcount ratios, there also are some differences. For example, the \$1.90 a day indicator and the \$5.50 a day indicator show more volatility than for the \$3.20 a day indicator for both countries. Furthermore, while Nigeria’s percentage of people living below \$1.90 a day was always lower than Tanzania’s percentage of people living below \$1.90 a day for comparable years, Nigeria and Tanzania had the same percentage (79.5 percent) of their people living below \$3.20 a day in 2009 and 2011, respectively. With regards to the \$5.50 a day indicator, Nigeria’s poverty rate was always lower than that of Tanzania’s, except that Nigeria’s poverty rate was higher than that of Tanzania’s for the most recent years such data is available, 2017 for Nigeria and 2018 for Tanzania. These differences in poverty across these three poverty headcount ratios indicate that poverty has evolved differently

for the two countries at different poverty levels. Before explaining these differences in income poverty by different policies and programs, the next subsection first reviews some other indicators to better understand the multidimensionality of poverty.

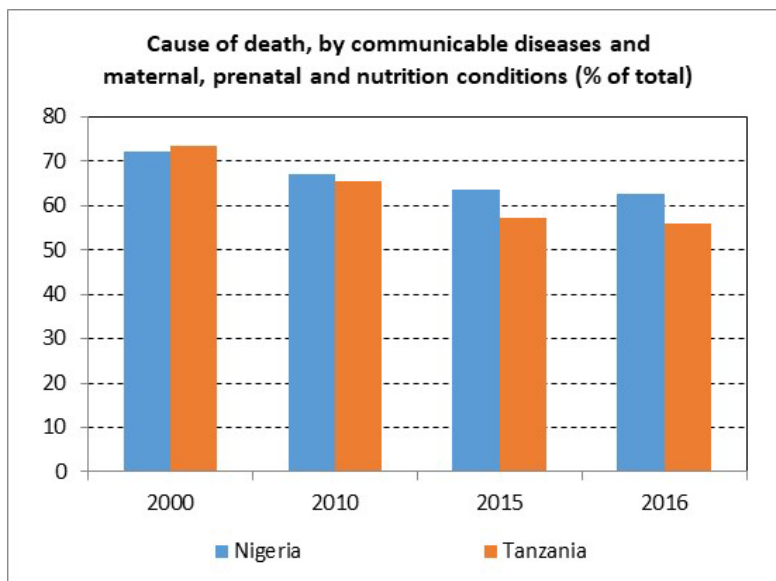
IV.2. Lack of Access to Basic Services

IV.2.a. Health

Good health is central to obtaining market opportunities.¹⁰ Having poor health is a critical component of multidimensional poverty. A person living in poverty is more likely to experience ill health and be excluded from medical services because they lack the funds necessary to purchase the essentials for obtaining good health, such as quality healthcare, or because they lack information on “health-promoting practices”.¹¹ At the same time, poor health is contributing to income poverty. In this article, the role of poor health is examined by reviewing the percentage of deaths caused by communicable diseases and maternal, prenatal and nutritional conditions.

Figure 7 shows that fewer percentages of people die in Tanzania than in Nigeria because of poor health. While both countries were around the 72 percent mark in 2000, Tanzania decreased their rate by 17.7 percent to 55.8 percent, while Nigeria only decreased its rate by 9.4 percent to 62.7 percent. Both countries followed a similar path until 2010, when Tanzania decreased its death rate from these causes more rapidly than Nigeria. Overall, Tanzania decreased their death rate by 8.3 percent more than Nigeria.

Figure 7: Percentage of Deaths Caused by Communicable Diseases and Maternal, Prenatal and Nutritional Conditions



Source: Created by author based on World Bank (2021).

Researchers have argued that Nigeria’s health system is worse than Tanzania’s, with the World Health Organization (WHO) labeling Nigeria’s health system 187th among the 191 member

¹⁰ World Bank (2000).

¹¹ World Bank (2014).

states.¹² Tanzania’s investments in healthcare, combined with their investments in education have improved their human Development Index ranking, decreasing a total of 12 points between 2000 and 2009 and placing Tanzania into the mid-human development group.¹³

One of the reasons for the high death rates in Nigeria is because of a dearth of state healthcare infrastructure, as is, for example, evidenced in Ebonyi State, Nigeria, where “most of the people [are] dying of preventable diseases”. Since bad health is an aspect of multidimensional poverty, as states improve their healthcare systems and work to decrease the number of people dying from preventable diseases, they will also decrease the prevalence of multidimensional poverty within their countries.

IV.2.b. Education

The Multidimensional Poverty Index includes access to quality education as one of the leading indicators of multidimensional poverty because poverty and education are inextricably linked.¹⁴ Poverty is defined in part of a lack of opportunity to escape the cycle of poverty that they are trapped in, and because promoting opportunity is centered on material opportunities, education is a key dimension of poverty.¹⁵ Furthermore, enrollment rates illuminate the extent of poverty rates in a country because they show the percentage of people who have the funds to buy uniforms, books, school supplies and who can afford to lose the income they would receive from having their son or daughter work.¹⁶

Figure 8 depicts the gross enrollment ratio of primary education—that is the percentage of total enrollment among the population of eligible primary students.¹⁷ This graph shows that while both Nigeria’s and Tanzania’s enrollment ratios increased, Tanzania was more effective at increasing theirs. For example, in 1970, Tanzania’s enrollment ratio was 34.0 percent while Nigeria’s was 40.9 percent, but in 2019 Tanzania’s enrollment ratio was 98.8 percent (an increase of 64.8 percentage points) and Nigeria’s was 84.7 percent (an increase of only 43.8 percentage points). In other words, Tanzania increased its enrollment ratio by 21.0 percentage points more than Nigeria.

Figure 8 also shows that both countries experienced inconsistent and uneven trajectories, with Nigeria’s appearing more erratic, alluding to the fact that enrollment ratios can easily be subject to economic or social forces. People are poor because they do not have access to high incomes, but also because they lack access to high-quality education. As more poor people attend primary education, their chances of escaping poverty are increased. Since lacking access to education is a primary component of multidimensional poverty, analyzing enrollment rates illustrates how prevalent multidimensional poverty is in Tanzania and Nigeria. In addition to food insecurity and access to quality education, other aspects of multidimensional poverty deserve attention.

¹² Ewruhadjakpor (2008), p. 526.

¹³ Government of the United Republic of Tanzania, Ministry of Finance and Economic Affairs (2010), p. 10.

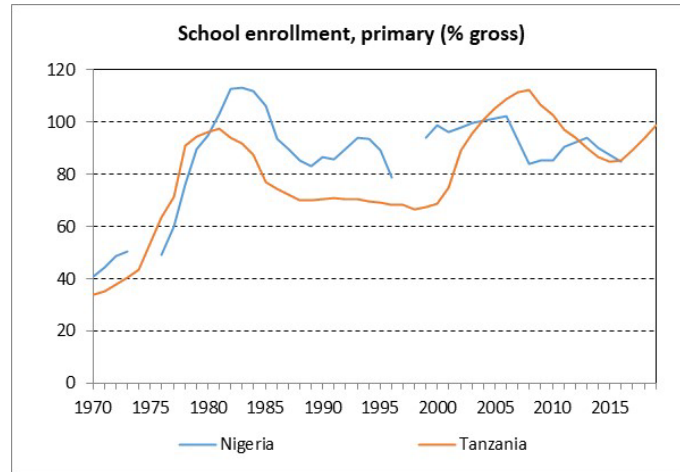
¹⁴ Child Fund (undated).

¹⁵ World Bank (2000).

¹⁶ Child Fund (undated).

¹⁷ The fact that some students still attend primary school even though they passed the primary school age (like due to late enrollment and repeating classes) explains why this percentage can be above 100 percent. We use this indicator instead of net primary school enrollment due to the severe data gaps for net primary school enrollment.

Figure 8: Gross Primary School Enrollment (percent), all available years

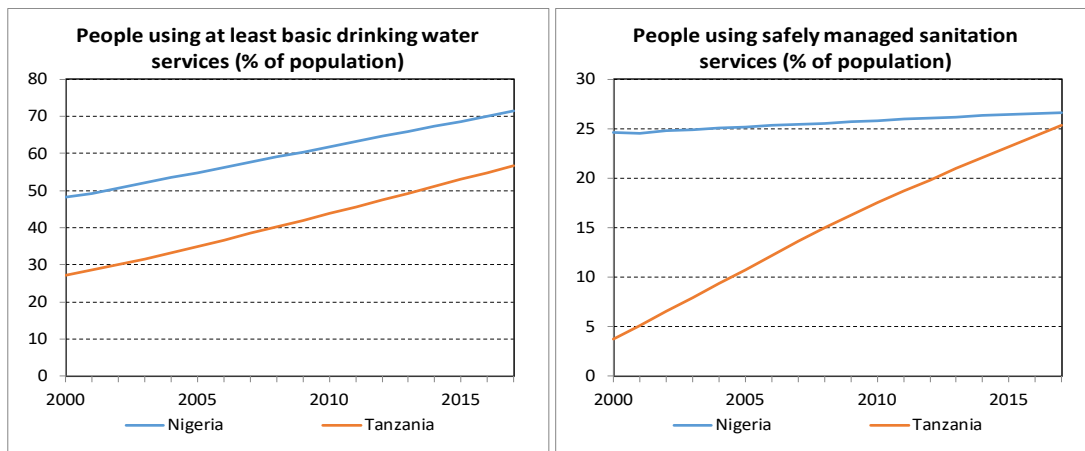


Source: Created by author based on World Bank (2021).

IV.2.c. Access to Water, Sanitation and Electricity

Besides many other factors, poverty is also influenced by not having access to basic infrastructure, such as water, sanitation and electricity. Figures 9 and 10 depict the percentage of Nigerians and Tanzanians who have access to basic drinking services, and the percentage of citizens who use safely managed sanitation services. Even though Nigeria had petrodollars since 1975 to guarantee this basic human right to its population,¹⁸ 28.6 percent of Nigerians still lack access to basic water services, and 73.35 percent do not have access to safely managed sanitation services. Using fewer financial resources but better governance structures, Tanzania was able to increase access to safe drinking water 6.2 percentage points more than Nigeria and increase access to safely managed sanitation services 19.6 percentage points more than Nigeria.

Figures 9 and 10: Percentage of Population Using at Least Basic Drinking Water Services and Safely Managed Sanitation Services, 2000 to 2017

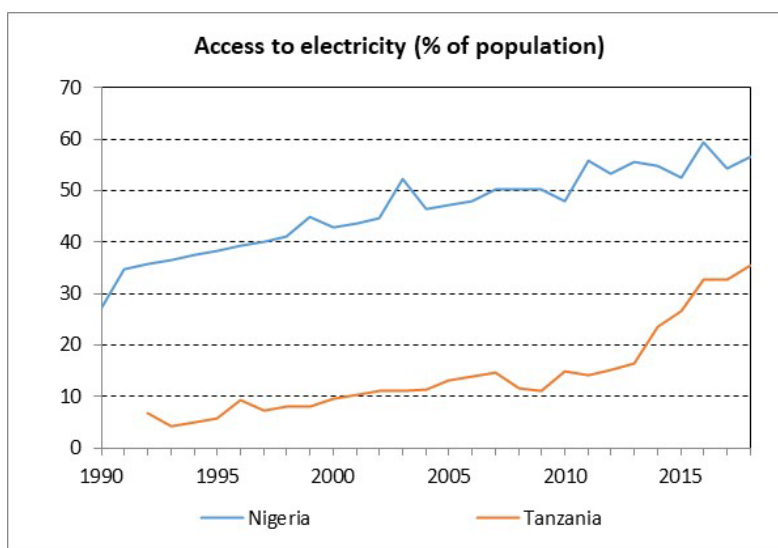


Source: Created by author based on World Bank (2021).

¹⁸ Ewruhadjakpor (2008), p. 529.

As stated by Ritchie and Roser (2020, first paragraph), electricity is “crucial for poverty alleviation, economic growth and improved living standards.” Similarly, the World Bank (2018) states that lacking access to electricity acts as a barrier in achieving progress in other development indicators, such as education, health, and gender equality. Figure 11 depicts the percentage of the population that does not have access to electricity, showing that Tanzania has never achieved access to electricity above 50 percent while Nigeria achieved this goal in 2011. Since 1990, Nigeria has increased its access to electricity by 29.2 percentage points, slightly beating Tanzania, which increased its rate by 28.8 percentage points. Nigeria’s trajectory was overall slightly more linear since Tanzania did not really start to see an increase until 2009, even though Nigeria’s trajectory can be characterized as having several peaks and valleys. In Tanzania, since only about a third of the population has access to electricity, most of the citizenry depends on firewood as their main source of energy, putting the burden on women and girls instead of the state.¹⁹

Figure 11: Percentage of Population Having Access to Electricity, all available years



Source: Created by author based on World Bank (2021).

The aforementioned graphs and analysis elucidate that poverty in Nigeria and Tanzania is a multidimensional social, political, economic, and psychological ailment. Poverty is exhibited through monetary deficiencies, inadequate access to health, education, and basic infrastructure. The Human Development Report 2000 stated that “[t]he mark of all civilizations is the respect they accord to human dignity and freedom,”²⁰ and since decreasing poverty secures freedom and advances human dignity, the mark of any society can be its efforts to reduce poverty.

The citizens of Tanzania and Nigeria prioritize the reduction of multidimensional poverty, with a specific focus placed on increasing access to services instead of decreasing income poverty. In Afrobarometer (2017) survey for Tanzania, 62 percent of respondents said the most important thing was for the government to improve access to social services, such as education, healthcare, and electricity. Tanzania’s high importance placed on social services could stem from the 1967

¹⁹ Mbilinyi and Nyoni (2000), p. 7.

²⁰ United Nations Development Programme (UNDP) (2000), p. 1.

Arusha Declaration, which “affirmed that the basis of socialism is people and the purpose of socialism is to serve people,” institutionalizing the notion among the citizenry that the government works for the people.²¹

Based on a survey by Afrobarometer (2020) in Nigeria, 41.9 percent said their main concern was for the government to provide more social services, and while this is about 20 percent lower than in Nigeria, it was by far the biggest concern among Nigerians for the government to address. A background study for the 2000/2001 World Development Report found that six out of the eight most important problems facing urban and rural Nigerians living in poverty were increasing access to social services, while the other two were decreasing unemployment and increasing agricultural inputs.²²

V. Ethical Analysis

Ethics is inherently linked to poverty reduction because decreasing poverty is an ethical act that ameliorates a profound injustice being committed against humanity.²³ People living in poverty are disabled from their quest “to live a life worthy for humans as defined by society.”²⁴ As such, poverty reduction strategies need to be analyzed within an ethical framework. Specifically, the framework argues that the ethical perspectives the citizenry holds influences and informs the priority and scope assigned to poverty reduction.²⁵ Thus, through analyzing the ethical perspectives of Nigerians and Tanzanians, a rationalization for why their respective governments pursued specific policies can be realized.

This section is structured into two sub-sections. The first sub-section examines how the utilitarian, priority and sufficiency perspectives were reflected in Nigeria’s and Tanzania’s poverty reduction programs and policies. The second sub-section examines why despite the reflection of these three perspectives in Nigeria’s and Tanzania’s poverty reduction policies, Nigeria’s poverty reduction programs largely failed, while Tanzania’s programs were largely successful.

V.1. Utilitarian, Priority and Sufficiency Perspectives of Poverty Reduction

As Barrientos et al. (2016, p. 9) argue, the social norm of assisting people living in poverty “can be justified on the basis of multiple ethical perspectives”. One justification can be rooted in an ethical perspective “based on the principle that social arrangements and institutions should maximize happiness in a society.”²⁶ This justification reflects the utilitarian perspective of poverty reduction. Another justification can be based on an understanding that “benefits to the worst off have a higher ethical value than benefits to the better off.”²⁷ This justification reflects the priority perspective of poverty reduction. A third justification can be based on the moral principle that “every individual must be helped to a certain threshold in order to survive”.²⁸ This justification reflects the sufficiency perspective of poverty reduction. These three different justifications and perspectives have different policy implications.

²¹ World Bank (2019).

²² Ayoola et al. (2000).

²³ Barrientos et al. (2016), p. 6.

²⁴ Lötter (2011), p. 59.

²⁵ Barrientos et al. (2016).

²⁶ Barrientos et al. (2016), p. 9.

²⁷ Barrientos et al. (2016), p. 9.

²⁸ Barrientos et al. (2016), p. 9.

The utilitarian, priority and sufficiency perspectives influenced the design and implementation of policies addressing poverty within Nigeria and Tanzania. Concerning the utilitarian approach first, this perspective supports policies that target individuals or households through cash-transfer programs. Nigeria instituted cash-transfer programs under the Vulnerable Groups Livelihood Investment Grants Program from July 2008 through December 2013, and the Conditional Cash Transfer Program that was created in 2016,²⁹ while Tanzania provides temporary relief to vulnerable and needy groups under the Tanzania Social Action Fund created in 2010 as part of the second cluster of Mkukuta II.³⁰

Concerning the priority perspective, some of Nigeria's and Tanzania's poverty reduction policies targeted the rural poor (which constitute the majority of the poor in Nigeria and Tanzania) and the agriculture sector (which remains the poor's largest employer).³¹ To accomplish this, the Nigerian government created the Accelerated Food Production Program in 1972, the Green Revolution Program in 1979, and the Directorate for Food, Roads and Rural Infrastructures in 1986.³² In Tanzania, the government passed the Agricultural and Livestock Policy of 1997, and created the Tanzania Social Action Fund in 2010 to expand the social safety net.³³ Hence, it can be concluded that these ethical perspectives are embedded in Nigeria's and Tanzania's poverty reduction strategies.

Some programs were also evident in Nigeria and Tanzania reflecting the sufficiency perspective. In Nigeria, such programs include the Free and Compulsory Primary Education Program (which was established in 1977 to provide free and compulsory education to children ages 5-14), the Low-Cost Housing Scheme (which was created through presidential mandate to provide 18,000 units of affordable housing by the end of 2006), and the School Meals Programme (which was created in 2016 with the intent of decreasing food insecurity rates by providing free school lunches to adolescents).³⁴ In Tanzania, the second cluster of Mkukuta II created poverty alleviation policies that increased the availability of basic services such as education, health, water and sanitation.³⁵

However, as stated in Mbilinyi and Nyoni (2000, p. 20), these sectoral policies and strategies designed to alleviate aspects of multidimensional poverty did not specifically target people living in poverty in Tanzania. The same can be concluded for the various Nigerian programs to which were referred above. It has been argued that these policies were designed to only establish a certain basis of welfare level instead of eradicating poverty.³⁶

V.2. Egalitarian Moral Principle and Corruption

Despite the "plethora of anti-poverty programs and policies over the years in Nigeria" there are still millions living in poverty and excluded from social services, which are taken for granted in wealthy countries.³⁷ Nigeria's poverty reduction efforts are widely regarded as a failure, with some analysts going so far as to label Nigeria a "crippled giant" and a "colossal collection of

²⁹ Federal Government of Nigeria (2016).

³⁰ Magombeyi and Odhiambo (2016).

³¹ Duze, Mohammed and Kiyawa (2008), p. 58 and Shuaibu (2017).

³² Kolawole (2021).

³³ Magombeyi and Odhiambo (2016).

³⁴ Kolawole (2021).

³⁵ Magombeyi and Odhiambo (2016) and Mbilinyi and Nyoni (2000).

³⁶ Barrientos et al. (2016), p. 14.

³⁷ Jaiyeola and Bayat (2020) p. 187.

impoverished masses.”³⁸ On the other hand, Tanzania has achieved the highest quality of life indicators among low-income countries in Sub-Saharan Africa due to the government’s efforts to improve living conditions, resulting in a sustained increase in access to basic services and improvement in human capital outcomes.³⁹ Tanzania was able to achieve greater comparable success than Nigeria because their policies were promulgated from an additional ethical foundation that Nigeria lacked: the egalitarian moral principle.

This principle states that just institutions are needed to “ensure all citizens access to basic resources on an equal basis.”⁴⁰ This principle was evident in Tanzania’s poverty reduction policies, primarily Cluster III of Mkukuta II, which emphasized improved accountability and governance issues. More specifically, Cluster III of Mkukuta II focused on improving “public service delivery to all, especially to the poor and vulnerable” and on ensuring systems and structures of governance that “uphold the rule of law and are effective, accountable, transparent, and corruption-free.”⁴¹ As Nigeria did not include this ethical perspective in their policies, their poverty reduction efforts were marred by corruption, fueled by their abundant natural resources, inhibiting them from actually decreasing poverty rates in Nigeria.⁴²

A plethora of authors from multiple disciplines have identified corruption as the primary reason why Nigeria’s poverty reduction programs have failed.⁴³ The corruption and rent-seeking by public officials or private interests able to capture the state diverted public funds earmarked for poverty reduction programs, defunding programs before they even had the chance to make a difference. Corruption has been an endemic problem in Nigeria.⁴⁴ For example, between 1960 and 1999, public officials stole more than \$500 million and diverted \$20 trillion from the Treasury between 1960 and 2005.⁴⁵ Public officials and private businesses have diverted this funding “to the detriment of the Nigerian people.”⁴⁶

As the currently eleventh most corrupt nation in the world according to Transparency International (2020), corruption can be described not as a part of government, but as the object of government.⁴⁷ According to Oxfam International (2017), the misallocation, misappropriation and ill-use of funds have perpetuated and exacerbated poverty rates in Nigeria. On the other hand, Tanzania ranks 94th in Transparency International’s Corruption Perception Index 2020. Important progress has been made under Tanzania’s National Framework on Good Governance, such as investigating 706 public employees for corruption, and streamlining public service delivery to decrease the opportunity for corruption.⁴⁸ Tanzania’s far lower level of corruption helped making their poverty reduction programs overall successful, while Nigeria’s level of corruption inhibited Nigeria from lifting millions out of poverty.

³⁸ Agbibo (2012), p. 325.

³⁹ Mbilinyi and Nyoni (2000) and World Bank (2019).

⁴⁰ Barrientos et al. (2016), p. 12.

⁴¹ Government of the United Republic of Tanzania, Ministry of Finance and Economic Affairs (2010), p. 83 and p. 82, respectively.

⁴² Shuaibu (2017).

⁴³ Akinyetun et al. (2021), p. 27.

⁴⁴ Ewhrudjakpor (2008), p. 526.

⁴⁵ Agbibo (2012), p. 335; and World Bank (2019).

⁴⁶ Jaiyeola and Bayat (2020), p. 199.

⁴⁷ Agbibo (2012), p. 330.

⁴⁸ Government of the United Republic of Tanzania, Ministry of Finance and Economic Affairs (2010), p. 19 and p. 86, respectively.

Nigeria's failure, which is largely due to corruption, represents a serious moral failure. The Nigerian government acted unethically due to its rampant corrupt behavior because corruption is a "breach of moral behavioral norms and values".⁴⁹ Public officials understand that their actions either improve someone's life or harm it, so by choosing to actively divert funds into their pockets, they understood others would suffer, thus proving they acted immorally by partaking in corruption.⁵⁰ Pete Alcock and Jo Roll support this claim when proposing a definition of ethics that has an imperative "to act to relieve or eradicate someone's poverty" because poverty is an "avoidable suffering" where onlookers "cannot just stand by and watch".⁵¹ This means that the obligation to help people in poverty extends beyond public officials.

The ethical mandate for poverty reduction is further advanced when it is combined with the social contract. The social contract is an idea in political philosophy where there is an actual or hypothetical compact between the ruled and their rulers, where the rights and duties of each are defined. According to such social contract theory, public officials have a moral obligation to wield their power to ameliorate poverty rates in order to act accordingly to the liberty and *volonté générale* found in Rousseau's social contract.⁵² Public officials are at "the very core of the poverty question"⁵³ because they are central to the formulation and implementation of poverty reduction measures, but instead of championing this obligation, it was jettisoned for selfish gain.

Furthermore, in a democracy, public officials are supposed to reflect society's ethics.⁵⁴ But instead of acting ethically, they undertook immoral behaviors, resulting in the persistence and increase of poverty in Nigeria. Public officials in Nigeria not only jettisoned their personal morals, but also their obligations as public servants, creating "selfish dealings with the governed" instead of abiding by their obligations under the social contract and being the champions of ethical standards for their citizens.⁵⁵ Nigeria's inability to effectively ameliorate poverty rates due to corruption constitutes a serious moral failing not only because of the aforementioned reasons, but also because of the ethical implications of poverty's consequences.

According to Irene Khan (2009), poverty is a human rights violation. Poverty "erodes or nullifies" economic, political, social and civil rights such as the right to health, a fair trial, adequate housing, and security of the person.⁵⁶ Following this definition, Tanzania protected human rights by implementing effective policies to ameliorate poverty rates, while Nigeria violated the human rights of their citizens by having the means to alleviate poverty but diverting them for private benefits. Furthermore, since Nigeria did not have as effective poverty reduction programs as they could have had without corruption, the government consequently allowed the escalation of crime, insecurity, violence, because they failed to adequately address poverty.⁵⁷

Lastly, corruption in Nigeria inhibited the government from decreasing unjustified income inequality. No philosophers—including the likes of Rawls, Nozick, Kant and Rousseau—would

⁴⁹ Huberts (2018), p. 24

⁵⁰ Lötter (2011), p. 27.

⁵¹ Lötter (2011), p. 31.

⁵² Editors of Encyclopaedia Britannica (undated), which defines *volonté générale* as a collectively held will that aims at the common good or the common interest.

⁵³ Egbue (2009), p. 59.

⁵⁴ Huberts (2018), p. 21.

⁵⁵ Ewhrudjakpor (2008), p. 529.

⁵⁶ United Nations Human Rights, Office of the High Commissioner (undated).

⁵⁷ See Iheonu and Urama (2019), p. 3; Egbue (2009); and United Nations Millennium Project (2005).

justify the income inequality in Nigeria where in 2009 the poorest half of the population had 22 percent of the wealth,⁵⁸ especially because “the capture of power by economic elites” is “one of the drivers of inequality”⁵⁹ since the economic elites have used stolen public funds meant for poverty reduction programs to enrich themselves further. Because Nigeria’s poverty reduction programs enriched public officials and private interests instead of decreasing poverty rates, it was able to less effectively address the myriad of ethical consequences of poverty compared to Tanzania.

VI. Conclusion

Contrary to Harvard Professor Dani Rodrik (2008, p. 2), who argues that “historically, nothing has worked better than economic growth in enabling societies to improve the life chances of their members,” the juxtaposition of Nigeria’s and Tanzania’s poverty reduction programs elucidates that growth alone, devoid of “explicit poverty reduction strategies and institutional reform,”⁶⁰ will not lift citizens out of poverty. While Nigeria has a much higher GDP per capita than Tanzania, Tanzania has a higher life-expectancy and literacy rates and has been more successful in decreasing all three thresholds for income-poverty, as well as multidimensional aspects of poverty such as undernourishment rates, school unenrollment, and ill health.

The sufficiency, priority and utilitarian ethical perspectives informed the priority the citizenry placed on poverty reduction strategies, as well as the policies the governments adopted. Nigeria’s programs were not effective because they were not undergirded by the egalitarian moral principle as Tanzania’s were, enabling corruption to invade the programs and drastically decrease their effectiveness. Through an ethical perspective, this is seen as a moral failing because public officials and private interests jettisoned their moral obligations for self-enrichment, which in turn exacerbated the moral violations of human rights abuses, water and sanitation scarcity, increased violence, and intensified income inequality.

To ameliorate this moral violation and institute effective poverty reduction programs that enable inclusive growth, Nigeria must reject the culture of corruption that permeates the government. One of the ways to do this would be by institutionalizing a more comprehensive political party system where party leaders can vet candidates to ensure they will not partake in corrupt behavior,⁶¹ or to stop trusting the contemporary political elites as Nobel Peace Prize laureate Wangari Maathai encourages by electing public officials from outside politics.⁶²

But ethical development goes beyond controlling corruption. Louis Joseph Lebret originated the idea that ethical development must subordinate the attainment of false, extraneous needs in order to “foster human ascent” and attain the enhancement of needs for all.⁶³ Tanzania acted accordingly to this notion of ethical development, while Nigeria strayed from these ideals, getting lost in their oil rents and selfish desires.

⁵⁸ Oxfam International (2017).

⁵⁹ Lötter (2011), p. 50.

⁶⁰ Jaiyeola and Bayat (2020), p. 199.

⁶¹ As referred to in Mainwaring (1998).

⁶² See Agbibo (2012), p. 325 and Monga (1995).

⁶³ As referred to by Astroulakis (2013).

References

- Afrobarometer (2017). Summary of Results: Afrobarometer Round 7, Survey in Tanzania, compiled by REPOA, Internet Resource available at: https://afrobarometer.org/sites/default/files/publications/Summary%20of%20results/tan_r7_sor_eng_14032018.pdf.
- Afrobarometer (2020). Afrobarometer Round 8, Survey in Nigeria, compiled by NOIPolls. Internet Resource; available at: https://afrobarometer.org/sites/default/files/publications/Summary%20of%20results/afrobarometer_sor_nig_r8_en_2021-01-27.pdf.
- Agbiboa, Daniel Egiegba (2012). Between Corruption and Development: The Political Economy of State Robbery in Nigeria. *Journal of Business Ethics*, Vol. 108, No. 3, pp. 325–345; available at: <https://doi.org/10.1007/s10551-011-1093-5>.
- Akinyetun, Tope Shola; Jamiu Abiodun Alausa; Dare Deji Odeyemi; and Aihonsu Samuel Ahoton (2021). Assessment of the Prevalence of Multidimensional Poverty in Nigeria: Evidence from Oto/Ijanikin, Lagos State. *Journal of Social Change*, Vol. 13, No. 2, pp. 24–44; available at: <https://scholarworks.waldenu.edu/cgi/viewcontent.cgi?article=1298&context=jsc>.
- Astroulakis, Nikos (2013). Ethics and International Development: The Development Ethics Paradigm. *Journal of Economics and Business*, Vol. 16, No. 1 pp. 99–117.
- Ayoola, G. B.; Aina; B. Mamman; N. Nweze; T. Odebiyi; Foluso Okunmadewa; D. Shehu; Olukemi Williams; and J. Zasha (2000) Nigeria: Voice of the Poor (Country Synthesis Report on Consultation with the Poor), Background Report for World Development Report 2000/2001; World Bank Internet Resource; available at: https://www.participatorymethods.org/sites/participatorymethods.org/files/Nigeria%20consultations%20with%20the%20poor_Ayoola.pdf.
- Barrientos, Armando; Abdul-Gafaru Abdulai; Daisy Demirag; Richard de Groot; and Luigi Peter Ragno (2016). Why Assist People Living in Poverty? The Ethics of Poverty Reduction. *Innocenti Working Papers*, No. 2016/27 (November); available at: https://www.unicef-irc.org/publications/pdf/IWP_2016_27.pdf.
- Child Fund (undated). Poverty and Education. Child Fund, Internet Resource; available at: <https://www.childfund.org/poverty-and-education/>.
- Duze, Mustapha C.; Habu Mohammed; and Ibrahim A. Kiyawa (eds.) (2008) *Poverty in Nigeria: Causes, Manifestations and Alleviation Strategies* (London, UK: Adonis & Abbey Publishers).
- Egbue, N. C. (2009). Elite Perceptions of Poverty and Nigeria's Poverty Reduction Research: a Theoretical Orientation. *International Journal of Development and Management*, Vol. 4, No. 1, pp. 50–62.
- Editors of Encyclopaedia Britannica (undated). The Social Contract in Rousseau. Encyclopaedia Britannica, Internet Resource; available at: <https://www.britannica.com/topic/social-contract/The-social-contract-in-Rousseau>.

- Ewghrudjakpor, Christian (2008). Poverty and Its Alleviation: The Nigerian Experience. *International Social Work*, Vol. 51, No. 4, pp. 519–531.
- Federal Government of Nigeria (2016). National Social Investment Programmes (NSIP). Internet Resource; available at: <https://statehouse.gov.ng/policy/economy/national-social-investment-programme/>.
- Government of the United Republic of Tanzania, Ministry of Finance and Economic Affairs (2010). *National Strategy for Growth and Reduction of Poverty II* (Dar es Salaam, Tanzania: Government of the United Republic of Tanzania, Ministry of Finance and Economic Affairs); available at: <https://www.international.gc.ca/development-developpement/assets/pdfs/countries-pays/NATIONAL-STRATEGY-FOR-GROWTH-AND-REDUCTION-OF-POVERTY-TANZANIA.PDF>.
- Huberts, L. W. J. C. (2018). Integrity: What it is and Why it is Important. *Public Integrity*, Vol. 20, Supplement No. 1, pp. S18–S32.
- Iheonu, Chimere O. and Nathaniel E. Urama (2019). Addressing Poverty Challenges in Nigeria. *AfriHeritage Policy Brief*, No. 21 (July); available at: https://media.africaportal.org/documents/Addressing_Poverty_Challenges_in_Nigeria_.pdf.
- Jaiyeola, Afeez Olalekan and Amiena Bayat (2020). Assessment of Trends in Income Poverty in Nigeria from 2010–2013: An Analysis Based on the Nigeria General Household Survey. *Journal of Poverty*, Vol. 24, No. 3, pp. 185–202.
- Khan, Irene (2009). *The Unheard Truth: Poverty and Human Rights* (New York, NY: W.W. Norton & Co.).
- Kolawole, Roseline J. (2021). Evaluation of Poverty Alleviation Programmes in Nigeria: The Demand Driven Approach Perspective. *African Journals Online*, Vol. 16, No. 1, pp. 161–177.
- Lötter, Hennie (2011). Why the Inequality of Poverty is Morally Wrong. In: Hennie Lötter (ed.) *Poverty, Ethics and Justice* (Cardiff, UK: University of Wales Press), Chapter 3.
- Magombeyi, Mercy Tsitsi and Nicholas M. Odhiambo (2016). Poverty Alleviation Policies in Tanzania: Progress and Challenges. *EuroEconomica*, Vol. 35, No. 2; available at: <http://journals.univ-danubius.ro/index.php/euroeconomica/article/view/3320/3754>.
- Mainwaring, Scott (1998). Party Systems in the Third Wave. *Journal of Democracy*, Vol. 9, No. 3, pp. 67–81.
- Mbilinyi, Marjorie and Timothy Nyoni (2000). *The Poverty Eradication Strategy* (Dar es Salaam, Tanzania: Institute of Development Studies (IDS), Rural Food Security Policy and Development Group (RFS)); available at: <http://www.tzonline.org/pdf/povertyeradication.pdf>.
- Monga, Célestin (1995). Civil Society and Democratisation in Francophone Africa. *The Journal of Modern African Studies*, Vol. 33, No. 3 (September), pp. 359–379.
- Obiezu, Timothy (2019). Nigerian Authorities to Alleviate Millions From Extreme Poverty. Voice of America (VOA), VOA News, Internet Resource of October 17, 2019; available at: https://www.voanews.com/a/africa_nigerian-authorities-alleviate-millions-extreme-poverty/6177764.html.

- Oxfam International (2017). *Inequality in Nigeria: Exploring the Drivers* (London, UK: Oxfam International, May); available at: https://www-cdn.oxfam.org/s3fs-public/file_attachments/cr-inequality-in-nigeria-170517-en.pdf.
- Risse, Mathias (2014). The Human Right to Water and Common Ownership of the Earth. *The Journal of Political Philosophy*, Vol. 22, No. 2, pp. 178–203.
- Ritchie, Hannah and Max Roser (2020). Energy. Internet Resource published at OurWorldInData.org; available at: <https://ourworldindata.org/energy-access#citation>.
- Rodrik, Dani (2008). *One Economics, Many Recipes: Globalization, Institutions, and Economic Growth* (Princeton, NJ: Princeton University Press).
- Shaffer, Paul (2001). New Thinking on Poverty: Implications for Poverty Reduction Strategies. Paper Prepared for the United Nations Department for Economic and Social Affairs (UNDESA) Expert Group Meeting on Globalisation and Rural Poverty (November 8-9, 2001); available at: https://www.un.org/esa/socdev/social/papers/paper_shaffer.pdf.
- Shuaibu, Mohammed (2017). The Effect of Trade Liberalisation on Poverty in Nigeria: A Micro–Macro Framework. *International Economic Journal*, Vol. 31, No. 1, pp. 68–93.
- Transparency International (2020). Corruption Perception Index 2020. Internet Resource; available at: <https://www.transparency.org/en/cpi/2020/index/>.
- United Nations Development Programme (UNDP) (2000). *Human Development Report 2000: Human Rights and Human Development* (New York: United Nations Development Programme); Overview Chapter; available at: <http://hdr.undp.org/en/content/human-development-report-2000>.
- United Nations Human Rights, Office of the High Commissioner (undated). Human Rights Dimension of Poverty, United Nations Human Rights, Internet Resource; available at: <https://www.ohchr.org/en/issues/poverty/dimensionofpoverty/pages/index.aspx>.
- United Nations Millennium Project (2005). *Investing in Development: Practical Plan to Achieve the Millennium Development Goals. Overview* (New York: United Nation); available at: https://www.ffla.net/wp-content/uploads/2021/03/Investing_in_Dev_complete.pdf.
- World Bank (2000). *Attacking Poverty: Opportunity, Empowerment, and Security. World Development Report (2000/2001)* (Washington, DC: The World Bank); available at: <http://siteresources.worldbank.org/INTPOVERTY/Resources/WDR/overview.pdf>.
- World Bank (2014). Poverty and Health. Washington, DC: World Bank Brief of August 25, 2014; available at: <https://www.worldbank.org/en/topic/health/brief/poverty-health>.
- World Bank (2018). Access to Energy is at the Heart of Development. Washington, DC: The World Bank; available at: <https://www.worldbank.org/en/news/feature/2018/04/18/access-energy-sustainable-development-goal-7>.
- World Bank (2019). Tanzania Mainland Poverty Assessment. Washington, DC: The World Bank; available at: <https://openknowledge.worldbank.org/handle/10986/33031>.

World Bank (2021). *World Development Indicators Database* (Washington, DC: The World Bank); as posted on the World Bank website: <https://datacatalog.worldbank.org/> (downloaded on January 6, 2021).