

Social Capital and Community Participation; Examples from Islamic Framework

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ABSTRACT

Community development empower individuals in societies to cooperate, interrelate and take decision to participate in fixing their community challenges. Contemporarily, people mostly perceived development of a community on beautiful building, security on street, with basic infrastructure of good road network and electricity etc. but ignored process of building strong relationship among people. Islam had established and described a practical social capital (bonding and bridging) within community which is not always conceded today as a sustainable tool in fostering community participation and development. This paper explores some examples from the Islamic traditions to discuss the ethical framework of Islamic social capital as a motivating mechanism in achieving sustainable community participation and development.

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1. Introduction

As a community, the stimulating action of Sustainable Development Goals was critical to derive in achieving a healthy society in people, planet, prosperity, peace and partnership globally. Partnership here entails social capital, is one of the keys to the UN drive to mobilize the resources required to implement the agenda by strengthened Global Partnership for Sustainable Development, based on a spirit of strengthened universal solidarity of community-ship, as such participation of all countries, stakeholders and the people could be achieved. These interlinkages and integrated nature of the SDGs, if comprehended across the full magnitude of the Plan, the lives of all will be greatly improved and the world will be changed for the better (UN, 2015).

Though, community is referred to people who live within a geographically defined area and who have social and psychological ties with each other and with the place where they live (P. Mattessich & Monsey, 2004). In other words, national research council (1975) confirmed that a community is a grouping of people who live close to one another and are united by common interests and mutual aid (Mattessich and Monsey 2004). These delineations ascertained the people and the ties that bind them and as well as geographical settings. Hence, the deficiency in individual's connectedness among them, such is referred to community beautifully assembled with structures and roads network. The potentials of social capital and community participation was discussed thousand years back as an element of community development. Ibn Khaldun (2000) ascertained this position in his renowned *Muqaddimah*, where he asserted that only through social capital, integration and community group unification the phase of a civilization is made;

"The power of kings and power of a dynasty can only be upheld widely through the efforts of a group and a sense of belonging. The reason is the aggressive and defensive attitude can only be achieved through a sense of belonging,

which means all its members are willing to love and mutual affection and willingly died fighting to protect the common good" (Khaldun, 2000).

The huge achievement and changes in civilization both socio economic and political undertakings were earlier potential in the past generation. The exhibited capacities displayed in the group spirit of Assabiya (solidarity) among group members was the driving force to these remarkable changes to their community's development. Moreover, Ibn Khaldun detailed consideration of social capital and community participation were the range of knowledge and abilities possessed by every group member was pulled together which enhanced the values to the group change and the civilization. These was what he referred to as 'ilm al-'umran (Sociology) which has influenced a paradigm shift of both classical and contemporary authors (Abdul Rahman, 2002 cited in (W. A. Amir Zal, 2012b). It shows that Islam has a lot of experiences in changing human civilization. It is from this background; the development of a community must take on the mantle of rising stronger "communities" of people and the social and psychological connections they share. Hence, this paper seeks to explore some examples from the Islamic traditions to discuss the ethical framework of Islamic social capital as a motivating mechanism in achieving sustainable community participation and development. However, this paper only discusses and examines the Islamic parallels with the development of existing communities by focusing on these two selected concepts, i.e., the concepts of social capital, and community participation.

2. Focus on Concepts and Establishing Fact on Community Enhancement

The thoughts of this idea are to reflect this aspect of social capital, with focus on community development as a learning procedure that enable residents to address problems by group decision making (Long 1975 cited in Mattessich and Monsey 2004). Otherwise, community development can be

explained as a process of participation to achieve development in some aspect of community life, this kind of process foster a strong establishment of a human community's pattern and recognized relationships (Ploch 1976 cited in Mattessich and Monsey 2004). Thus, changes that is beneficial for all the community members as a product of their participation in analyzing issues and decision making is referred to as community development (Kelly, 2006). However, these views concurred with Fey et al. (2006) as he concluded and added on social capital, that among concept that define community development were participation, community potentials and empowerment concept.

2.1 Social capital (bonding and bridging) and Islamic principles

The concept of social capital or social capacity, is not far from the contemporary community development authors', which describes social capital as the peoples capacities to mobilized and consolidate their assets for the achievement of an agreed distinct goals (Christenson and Robinson 1989 cited in Mattessich and Monsey 2004), furthermore, it is the assets of the people drive in social relationships among members and groups which assist in the cooperation and collaboration in the communities (Committee for Economic Development 1995 cited in Mattessich and Monsey 2004). Hence, social capital or capacity is the extent to which members of a community can work together effectively to develop and sustain strong relationships; solve problems and make group decisions; and collaborate effectively to plan, set goals, and get things done. This social capital can be bonding capital that is within a homogeneous group such as within same races, ethnicities, social action committees, or people of similar socio-economic status. And the bridging social capital heterogeneous translated as the ties outside or among different groups (Agnitsch, 2006).

Green and Haines (2002) identified some "community capital" cited in the community development works: to include

- Environmental: natural resources, weather, recreational opportunities, etc.
- Human: labor supply, skills, capabilities and experience, etc.
- Financial: community financial institutions, micro loan funds, community development banks, etc.
- Physical: buildings, streets, infrastructure, etc (Phillips & Pittman, 2009).

He argued that, in spite the significance of the mentioned community capital, that, it's challenging to see a progressive community, ignoring some amount of social capital or capacity. Hence, the likelihood for people to adapt to and take actions on deficiencies in other community capital depend largely on the huge amount of social capital deposited by such a community (Phillips & Pittman, 2009).

Islam has expressed the magnitudes of the social capital in the actualization of a healthy Islamic society (Ummah). These are expressed clearly in the glorious Quranic traditions that

"Verily, man is in loss". "those who believe in Islamic monotheism and do righteous good deeds, and recommend one another to the truth ie order one another to perform all kinds of good deeds which Allah has ordained, and abstain from all kinds of sins and evil deeds which Allah has forbidden, and recommend one another to patience (for the sufferings, harms, and injustices which one may encounter in Allah's cause". (Q102;2 – 3)

Extracted from the Quranic verse, it is an expression of achieving a healthy and progressive community through

social capital. Where a group relationship was stressed as a gate way through which understanding is achieved and recommending for each other the existence of problems in human society such social problem like corruption, terrorism, kidnapping, prostitution, unemployment etc, and possible procedure of attaining change and development i.e. Believe in Allah, participate in doing progressive deeds (such as making well or blowhole as source of water to eased the suffering for the community as exemplified by Usman bin Affan may Allah grant him Jannah did in Madina etc, and integrate other members of the community in the progressive acts. And remember change and progress is not automatic or magical its gradual hence, encouraged members to be patient in the process of achieving community change and development. This expression of social capitals was also embedded in the five principles of Islam as in the hadith narrated by ibn Umar may Allah be placed with them that; Allah's messenger (peace be upon him) i.e., PBUH said;

"Islam is based on five principles; Shahada to testify that none has the right to e worshipped but Allah and that Muhammad (SAW) is the messenger of Allah, to perform the five compulsory congregational prayers salat, to pay zakat, to perform Hajj ie. Pilgrimage to Makkah and finally to observe fasting during month of Ramadan". (A.bin Zain ud Din Ahmad translated M. Khan Muhammad (1996), Summarized Sahih Al-Bukhari;)

The hadith emphasized as extracted it's mandated on every human society to understand the unity of Allah and the prophet sent by the creator. The emphasis on congregational prayer, here entails a process of establishing bonding social capital between members of community as one. Then zakat, the focus here is not on the economic aspect of zakat, but as a process of institutionalizing social integration, bond, love and safety between the poor and rich in the community. The hajj as extracted, is viewed as a process of enhancing the bridging social capital networks with other community with the same purpose, feelings and perception as all been one as Ummah regardless of age, race, nationality, tribe, location etc. thus, fasting the month of Ramadan is the pick of establishing and enhancing both bonding and bridging social capital in human societies, where, a responsibilities as a community is demonstrated globally in terms of rendering assistance to each other and giving charity, feeding and praying in a mass congregation of both male and female, old and young etc, this emphasized the drive for a collective responsibility to address any situation.

In another hadith, social capital was expressed as a mandate on every community member as narrated by Abu Huraira may Allah be pleased with him; Allah's messenger (PBUH) said;

"Beware of suspicion, for suspicion is the worst of false tales; and do not look for the other's faults and do not spy and do not be jealous of one another, and do not desert i.e. cut your relation with one another, and do not hate one another; and O Allah's worshippers be brothers (as Allah has ordered you)" hadith 2035 (A.bin Zain ud Din Ahmad translated M. Khan Muhammad (1996), Summarized Sahih Al-Bukhari;)

Extracted from the tradition of the prophet that, achieving a sustainable community development entails the improvement of the peoples social capital as a viable tool for progress and change, hence, must establish a trust and avoid all mechanisms that could weakened that bond of relationship in the community such as false tales, spying, jealous, hate and cut off relationship with each other, hence, these expose the community to the challenges of underdevelopment and

prevalence of social problems. To sum it up the emphasis of social capital in Islam with the hadith narrated by Abu Musa may Allah be pleased with him said; Allah's messenger (PBUH) said;

"A believer to another believer is like a building whose different parts enforce each other" the prophet (SAW) then clasped his hands with the fingers interlaced....." hadith 2026 (A.bin Zain ud Din Ahmad translated M. Khan Muhammad (1996), Summarized Sahih Al-Bukhari;)

These shows that a sustainable healthy community can't achieve it set goals without a strong social relationship, hence is a viable resource that should be mobilized and strengthen among group members to achieve a sustainable community development.

2.2 Participation and Islam

Interestingly, as community attain the level of pulling the resource of social capital, it is now call for participation of members, as conferred by researchers within community development. The imperative of participation is the outcome of development effort (Newman, 2008). White (2004), asserted that participation is an involvement in a mutual decision-making process that affect every segment of the community (White, 2004). Participation trigger transformation to emanate from the community and subsequently could enhanced the weaknesses in the community (Matarrita-Cascante, 2006). Mutually viewed by Kretzmann & McKnight (2005), participation ensure the sustainable community development (Kretzmann, 2005). To accomplish such, a voluntarism is required on ground that people can stimulate and regulate their lives (White, 2004; Harvey, 2007).

Individual's participation helps them to make a decision (Harvey, 2007) for themselves and their communities. As such, participation can be considered as an involvement that affects them through decision-making and implementing processes, programs and projects (Thomas-Slayter, 2009).

However, the emphasis of an ideal societies after the social capital is the participation of members into community development, which entails the actions for change. This assertion is emphasis is clear in the tradition of the Prophet PBUH where he said

"If one of you sees something wrong, let him change it with his hand; if he cannot, then with his tongue; if he cannot, then with his heart and this is the weakest faith." (A.bin Zain ud Din Ahmad translated M. Khan Muhammad (1996), Summarized Sahih Al-Bukhari;).

These entails the full community participation in the doing away with social problems and institutionalized change, sustainability in the environment, peace, education, political stability etc. in these context Islam has not excluded any member but rather categorized the participation in community development on the basis of the abilities and capacities of members. This was the reason why Allah in the Quran declare that, this Ummah is the best, because we support each other in the execution of any act that is beneficial to the community, hence constitute full participation of all the members. As said in the Qur an

The believers, men and women, are Auliyâ' (helpers, supporters, friends, protectors) of one another, they Enjoin (on the people) Al-Ma'rûf, and forbid (people) from Al-Munkar (All that Islam has forbidden); they perform solat and give the Zakat, and obey Allah and his Messenger. [At-Taubah: 71].

Islam clearly encourages the community members to develop community participation. This shows that Islam takes

into account the social factors which encourage participations in community development.

Even though, one aspect that is paramount in the activation of the social capital and community as outline in the tradition of the prophet was education. Islam emphasis education as the basic ground through which the thoughts and value of community is comprehended by the members and uphold the responsibility of participation in its development. This is clear with the activities in Darul Arkam in the beginning of the prophet mission. It is the center of knowledge in Makkah. The emphasis in the significance of education in Islamic views of developing social capital and sustainable community development was further proven after migration to Madina, on arrival to Madina, the prophet (PBUH) first project was to develop a center of knowledge, which all hand were on deck in the building of the first university on the surfaces of the earth Masjid Nabi (PBUH) that mark the beginning of production change agent such as Abubakar, Umar, Uthman, Ali, Abu Huraira, Khalid Bin Walid The Military Commander, Abudullahi Bin Abbas, up to the time of Imam Malik, Imam Shafii, Imam Abu Hanifa, ibn Khaldun, in short it is translated as the Golden age, it has triggered other civilizations through the golden age. The golden age begins with Prophet Muhammad (PBUH) was chosen as a messenger and a drive to change human civilization. To the sequence of that, many Muslim governments appeared as the Umayyad, Abbasid and Ottoman caliphate. The emergence of Islamic governments provided many benefits to the social world. For example, in the 8th to 15th century, Islam has developed a multi-disciplinary knowledge through the establishment of the world's best universities located in Spain (Sulaiman, 2001 cited in (W. A. Amir Zal, 2012b)). On the other hand, 10th century was the Dark Age of Western civilization; people suffered and lived in primitive conditions, including lack of intellectual activity, culture and humanity (Abdul Rahman, 2002 cited in (W. A. Amir Zal, 2012b)). However, to get out from the Dark Age, Western civilization learned a lot from Islamic civilization. They concentrated and learned a lot of knowledge from the Islamic world. It became more vibrant through the establishment of universities in Spain, interaction with Muslims in the Island of Sicily (Southern Italy) and Crusaders expeditions (Sulaiman, 2001 cited in (W. A. Amir Zal, 2012b)).

However, the ethical Islamic framework in social capital and community participation diagram shows their connection and outcome of sustainable community development. The first stage is to build strong faith in the people of the oneness of Allah, this give members the feeling of togetherness on a goal, regardless of race or social, political, economic, and intellectual status. This shows all members are brothers and same in the side of Allah. The next stage is to activate the social capital through education, where every member of the community is thought on sacrifice for the benefit of the community, the relevance of group participation in good deed such as in prayers in congregation, giving zakat to the poor, fasting in Ramadan and going for hajj to Makkah. These motivated members to appreciate their potentials and increase social bond among community members. This ushered in to the next stage, readiness to act, with this in mind, every member is prepared for participation and action as jihad. And the final stage is community participation which lead to community improvement and positive change.

Therefore, to sustain this ethical process, it is important to establish ways to increase social capital to enhance and maintain community motivation for participation for a sustainable community development. This process is generally viewed by community development scholars as social capital building or capacity building. Which entails an ongoing full effort to strengthen the norms, supports, and problem-solving resources of the community (Committee for Economic Development 1995 cited in (P. a. M. Mattessich, M, 2004).

2.3 Example of participation and community development in Islam

As it was asserted in the traditions of the Prophet PBUH, the best man is the greatest benefit to others. Hence, the people participation in community issues, emphasis should be on a positive change that is beneficial for both individuals and their communities. This shows that, the process is an endless one, based on Islamic views of community development. Thus, one of the example is the establishment and construction of the first university *Masjid Nabawi* (PBUH) in Madinah, (see figure 2.3.1 below) were every member of the community including the prophet participated in the project physically, carrying and laying blocks for construction and that gave birth to the center of knowledge and change agent that have influence classical and modern civilization and the world (W. A. Amir Zal, 2012a). This project is still alive since 1441AH.

In addition, Uthman Bin Affan is the third caliph of the Muslim after the death of Umar. He was one of the companions of the prophet saw and the in-law of the prophet (PBUH). He has demonstrated the significance of social capital and participation for a positive community development where he bought a well from a Jew who charged excessive amount on Muslims community, because it was the only source of water to overcome the suffering of the people in that community on water (see figure 2.3.2 below).

He open the well for everyone to use free until his death. In the time of Ummayyad and Abbasiti dynasty, date palms were grew and harvest is given as charity, and the surrounding were free for public use in the name of Uthman Bin Affan. Now the plantation is modernized, sold and half of the fund is given as charity and the remaining half is reinvested in the name of Uthman Bin Affan into property investment, where accommodation were build close to the Masjid Nabawi (PBUH) in Madinah for visitor to the masjid (Abdulkadil, 2016). The amount still generated from the

investment, the same formula half for charity and half investment is maintain. The bank account in the name of Uthman Bin Affan disbursement from charity is increasing to fifty million Saudi riyal monthly. The well is known today as Bi'ir Uthman or Bi'ir Rummah. This is an example of social capital and participation in positive community improvement for over 14 centuries (Abdulkadil, 2016).

Another example from Islamic view of social capital and community participation was in security and defiance. These potentials was utilized in the encounter of Khandaq, in the defiance of Madinah. The prophet (PBUH) once had the news of the attack on Madinah, he quickly pull the social capital seeking suggestions and participation from his companions. In this context the Muslim community were faced with a huge social problem of attack by the enemies (DESK, 2019). Then one of the community members Salmanul Farisee gave an idea of digging a trench around the community, as the solution to the Madinah community social problem; (see figure 2.3.3 below)

That motivated for action and participation of the community ie companions and the Prophet (PBUH) himself in digging the trench for good six days. That idea save the community from the attack and the enemies were defeated (DESK, 2019). One thing that is very paramount is that, Islam emphasized and encourage utilizing the little potentials of members to achieve participation in community development. There are many example in Islam that shows the significance of social capital and community participation as a process of actualization of change and development.

3. Conclusion

It can be concluded that since the world is aiming to achieve ideal, peaceful, and progressive community, these can only be achieve through building strong faith in Allah, activate social capital through education amongst members of a community, which motivate the we feelings and readiness for participation amongst members that could produce improvement, change and sustainable community development. It should be noted and understood that these Islamic framework can be employed to address community social problems, such as in crime, terrorism, illiteracy, unemployment, environmental issues etc. Thus, community with less or no social capital is likely to decline in achieving an ideal society, and a society with much and higher social capital has a great potentials to be driven to achieve sustainable community development.

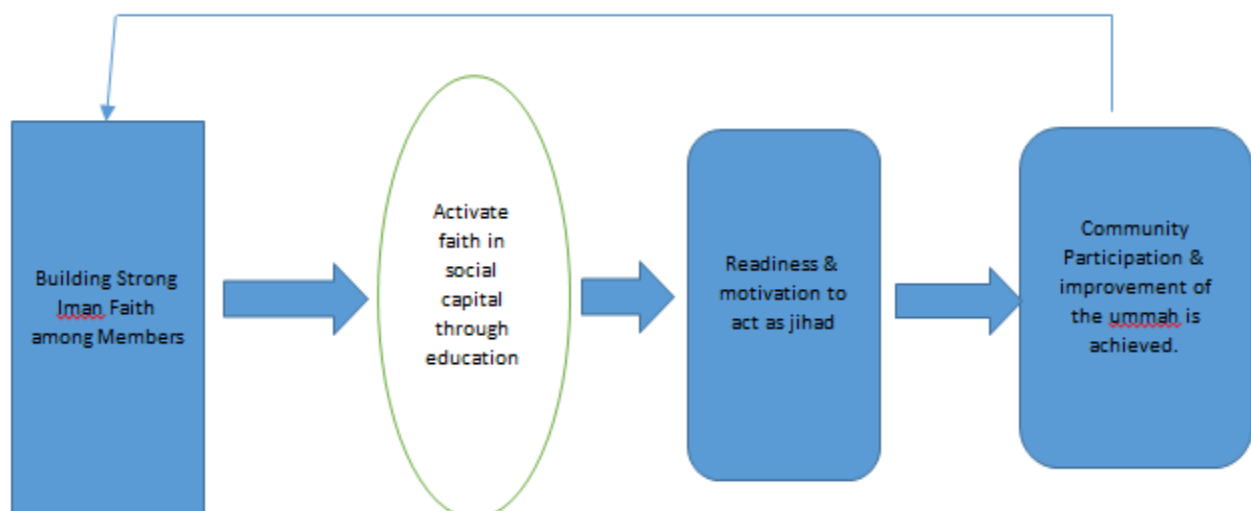


Figure 2.2.1 Ethical Islamic framework in Social Capital and Community Participation Diagram

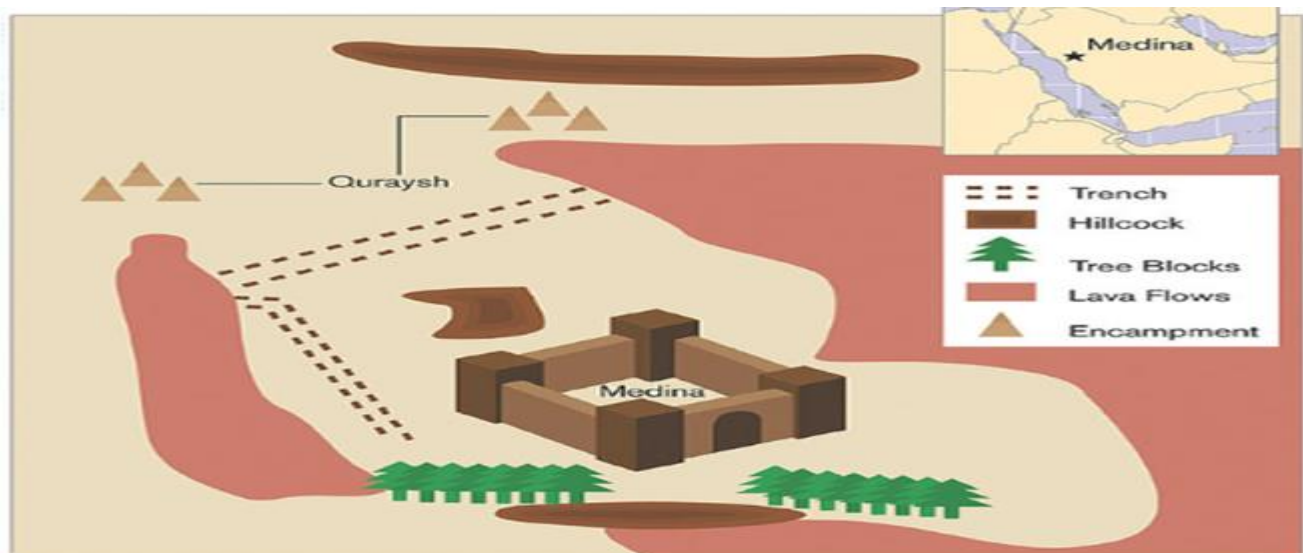


Figure 2.3.1: The Prophet Muhammad (Pbuh) Masjid At Madina Al-Munawwara



Figure 2.3.2: The Well Of Caliph Uthman Bin Affan In Madina

Source;(Abdulkadil, 2016)



Another Map of Battle of Trench. – Photo by: Wikimedia Commons

Figure 2.3.3: Source; Desk (2019) The Trench In Madina

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