

Sociological study of elements effective on un-institutionalization of neighborhood council-aiding in Tehran

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Abstract

Council-aiding of neighborhoods is a new established local government that can create provisions for improvement of local development, increase of people participation in governance of local affairs and making local institutions responding in case of formation of social capital and their institutionalization. The current research is performed by qualitative approach via grounded theory and turns to study and pathology effective factors on un-institutionalization of neighborhoods' council-aiding in the city of Tehran. In order to increase theoretical sensitivity, theoretic studies about social capital, good governance and local development were used. The analysis of findings and theoretical models built indicate that elements like "un-institutionalization of Islamic Council of city", "organized limitation of council aiding", "lack of supervision", "vagueness of regulations" and "lack of

mutual out-group equilibrium” have caused “un-institutionalization” of neighborhood council-aiding. Members of neighborhood council-aiding are benefiting from two approaches of “advocacy seeking” and “institutionalization”.

Keywords: un-institutionalization, qualitative research approach, grounded theory, social capital, local development, urban management, neighborhood council-aiding and Tehran.

1 Introduction

The city has principle role in structure of social system complex and in this regard, urban phenomenon has direct relation with social organization. Moreover, sociological dimension of urbanization cannot solely confine to ecological, psychological and social analysis of institutionalizing. These phenomenons include lateral cognition of global sociological procedures. In this relation, consideration and emphasis of social programs and urban policy makers have been attracted to lower levels and palpable dimensions of neighborhood life (so that, many researches and studies are performed in recent decade that all aimed at a kind of policy making, programming and urban management at the smallest unit which is "neighborhood"). The concept of "basic neighborhood development" which is propounded in this regard is based on social engineering and refers to specified and detailed local aspects instead of macro approaches and objective scales. It thinks about manageable measures and specific organic units (urban neighborhood) instead of turning to mechanical and non- manageable mass of urban affairs. In this approach, viewpoints of programmers and policy makers concerning neighborhood is based on the approach: "basic asset" by emphasis on social capital of citizens and local civil institutes [8]. An increasing prosperity is shown for the notion of "social capital" and its consequences for community welfare, public policy making and entrance of this notion to public aspect of public local daily life that can oblige democratic institutions like local organizations more effective and help them reach to their objectives [15].

2 Case explanation

In Tehran mega-polis, from one side existence of urban neighborhoods with different cultural and social contexts and on the other side the un-institutionalization, lack of relations and interactions between citizens and city councils (lack of social capital) made city councils not much efficient in solving problems. Paxton proposes the third party or official executive guarantee that by its formation and growth social capital will also increase in urban neighborhoods [13]. In fact, neighborhood council-aiding is a dealer between people and councils and the Mayors are considered as official executive guarantee. The third party has the function of the dealer of interactions between citizens and urban managers. In Pusen and Boix viewpoint [15], the citizens' awareness of public affairs increases and results in education of governmental bureaucrats' abilities for cooperation with each other by increasing social capital in micro, middle and macro levels among citizens and council-aiders. The above mentioned factors are components of local development [1]. If we accept the assumed relation between social capital and local development, then weakening voluntary institutions prevents local development. For this reason, seeking cognition of effective factors on the function of council-aiders would be the important duty of sociology of development [1]. In fact, the case of research would be "sociological study of un-institutionalization of neighborhood council-aiding among citizens of the city of Tehran, Islamic city council and municipality managers" by emphasis on the relation between social capital, good governance and local development [4,6,18] and the objective of research is detection of malfunctions, inefficiencies and ineffective state of mutual interactions of council-aiders with citizens and urban managers and

discovering the reason of un-institutionalization and non-formation of social capital in three micro, middle and macro levels.

3 Theoretical work frame

The selected definitions of social capital by contemporary theoreticians, social capital is "the whole actual and potential resources that are connected with mutual understanding and ownership of network with durability of more or less institutionalized relations [2]." Social capacity is defined with its function and is not uni-identity, but is a diversity of identities with two common principle elements. All of these identities are made of some dimensions of social structures and facilitate certain roles for their players"[4], "Specifications of social organization like: trust, norms and the networks which can improve society's efficiency by facilitating harmonic activities" [17], "The players' ability of protecting the benefits by means of advantage of membership in social networks and other social structures." [14], Paxton finds social capital included of two dimensions of objective and subjective connections [13].

- Objective connections: mean objective network structure that connects individuals to each other. This component indicates that individuals interact with each other in social space.
- Subjective connections: The connections between individuals should have specific characteristics included of: bilateral interaction, be trusted and require positive emotion [13].

Positive consequences of social capital exist when two containing dimensions of that are sufficiently and simultaneously present. Separation of social capital to two objective and subjective dimensions and necessity of connection between them for creation of its effective consequences are for this reason that confining the concept to objective structures of relations or mentality of individuals creates problems in formation of social capacity and its effects. By governmental investments, some institutions may establish for development of relations among society individuals that might oblige every to become a member of that. But, existence of these structures without provision of trust, cooperation incentive, norms and collective act cannot form social capital in that society. This case is evident concerning objective dimensions of social capital, too. If the facilities for creation of interactive networks are not provided in the format of voluntary associations, the trust and encouraging norm of collective and would remain in mind of society individuals as a non-operative ideal. In the research, the theories of social capital are studied in three micro, middle and macro levels. In micro and personal level, social capital can be observed in the theories of Bourdieu [2] and Nan Lin [11], middle look at social capital can be observed in opinions of Coleman [3], Offe and Fuchs [12]. Macro overlook of social capital can be observed in opinions of Fukuyama and Putnam [6].

Narayan [24], proposes axial ideas of inter-group social capital and mixed relations of government-society and by combination of them he suggests that different combination of governance and inter-group social capital in a group, local community, etc. needs different interferences. In societies benefiting from good governance and excellent levels of inter-group social capital, government and society are completing each other and there the success and social development are probable to happen. But, when social capital of a society is mostly gained by primary groups of the society who do not have communications with each other, more powerful groups dominate the government by retreating other groups. In this condition, one of the key duties of lower groups and social and political active person is to form a vast and organized coalition and plan relations with unions at power position [23,24].

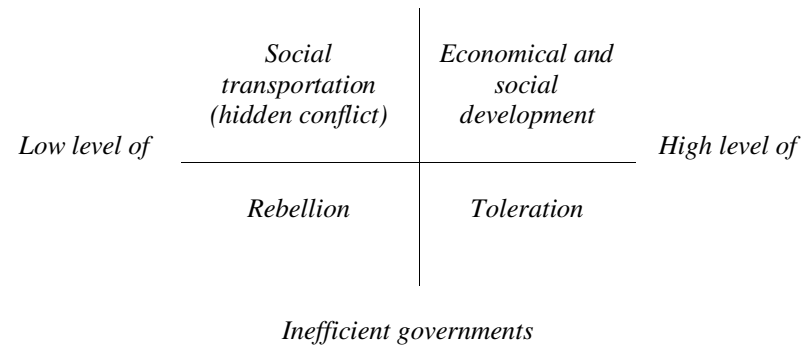


Figure 1: the relation of social capital and governance

In case such groups do not succeed in this task, weak groups may benefit from rights and resources they have been previously prevented from. Based on this comparison, the government that is welcoming and performs clear relations with deprived groups increase the possibility of the poor to have access to resources and services they have right to use. The other point is that the relation of government-society may vanish and appear as conflict or anarchy. On the other word, destruction and disconnection may happen which may give the opportunity of capturing governmental power for war seekers and local Mafia [24]. When government delegates, private sector and evil community establish common societies via which they can follow their common objectives they can fulfill development. In this condition social capital as dealing variable has a role formed by public and private institutions.

4 Research methodology

Neighborhood council-aiding is a new phenomenon that its investigations are not performed solely by quantitative research approaches. Moreover, qualitative research approach can detect its complications in the bed of social structure of the community and gain subjective interpretations of its actors. This research considers neighborhood council-aiding as an organization and investigates its inner processes which refers to its containing elements or its units in a level lower than a system. according to questions of the research, documents historical study was performed for surveying history of Tehran management and grounded theory approach was used for analysis of qualitative data and productions of concepts and theoretical patterns [21] and also, The data gathering techniques in this research included of: 1) Semi-constructed interview with council-aiding members of neighborhoods in district 22 of Tehran city. 2) Participating observation, presence in meetings of council-aiding members, observation and note taking of view points and verbal behaviors of council-aiders and authorities. 3) Focus group, performing concentrated groups by participation of members' neighborhood council-aiding and 4) Documentary study of journals, brochures, instructions and council-aiding weblog and website.

5 Analysis of findings

In general, grounded theory is diagnosis and detections of subjects or existing themes in the text and coding of the text concerning "presence or absence" of these themes. In grounded theory, coding means decoding and interpretations of data, naming notions, definition and discussion of them in more details. Coding in grounded theory against analysis of the content—which is based on deductive approach – is performed in inductive method. Coding data type in the approach grounded theory is including: A) *Open coding*; generally in open coding the objective is to transform data and phenomenon—in the format of notions [5]. B) *Axial coding*; in this step, the researcher should treat the "categories" gained by open coding in a logical order and specify their relations with each other. on the other word , decomposed date to notions and categories in axial coding should relate to each other model including, "reasoning conditions", "phenomenon", "field", "intervening condition", "actions strategies /mutual actions" and "consequences" [21]. C) *Selective coding*; this steps of open and axial and specifying paradigm models started. "Selective coding", continues axial coding in a higher and more abstract level. In this step formation and connection of each categorizing with other groups is explained. According to repetition of "un-institutionalization of council-aiding" concept in data, notions, categories and paradigm models, this concept has been selected as "core" phenomenon. Of course, the researcher believes that other reasons like more power of absorption in this category concerning the other categories and absorption ability of other categories in itself, integration of other categories concerning that and theoretical superiority of that compared to the other categories had important role in selection of core category.

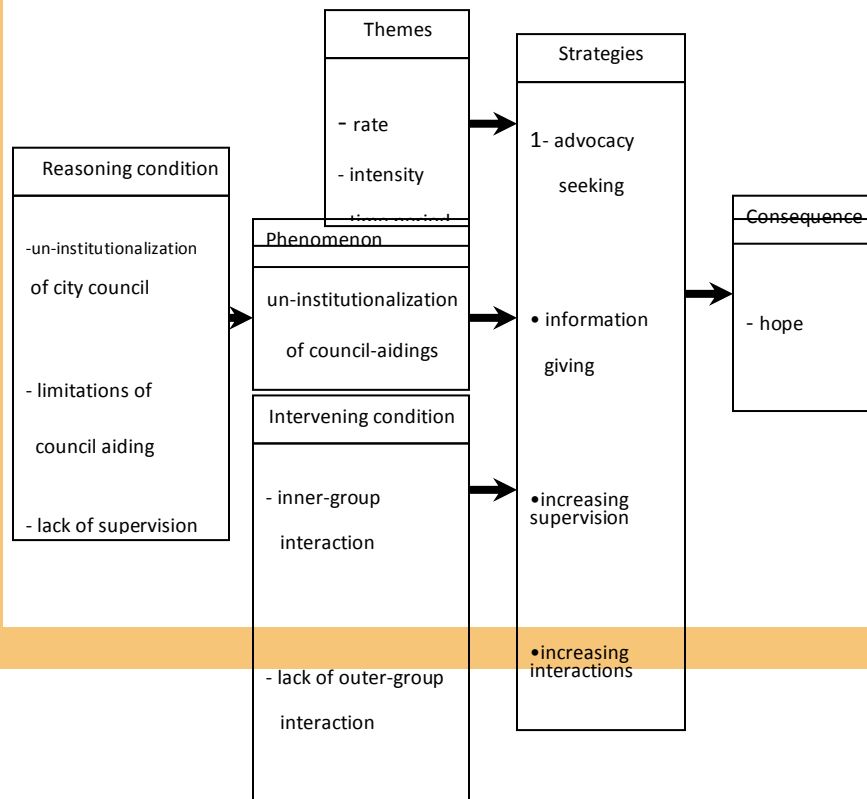


Figure2: Paradigm model of phenomenon un-institutionalization of council aiding

5.1 Reasoning conditions

The factors which cause creation of "un-institutionalization" phenomenon in neighborhood council-aiding include "un-institutionalization" of city Islamic council, "limitations of council aiding", "lack of supervision", "vagueness of rules" and "lack of mutual outer-group interactions". One of the important factors is un-institutionalization of city Islamic council. Official structural situation of country and the rules related councils have made their members to consider city council as institutions lacking authorities and specified powers [9]. Although they are introduced in constitutional law as the basis for managing country and management system and city policy making, at present policy and resources at city level are provided for different and diverse governmental organizations which take orders from one of the related ministries. The responding state of managers of city governmental organizations to their higher rank authorities at the centers of states or country has made them not to imply requests of city council members important. In fact, un-institutionalization of city council have made the council-aiding not to be institutionalization as a subsidiary of city council and the governmental organizations like water, electricity and education, etc organizations which are settled in regions and neighborhoods of the city of Tehran not to consider neighborhood council-aiding as a management institution in neighborhood and regional level. Vagueness in bylaws and constitutions of neighborhood council-aiding in the field of election procedures, selection of neighborhood trustees, performance of elections, the way of constructing fake council-aiding and suspension state from one side and lack of composed instructions concerning mutual interaction of council-aiding with municipality of area, region, governmental organizations, NGOs and charity institutions on the other side have caused formation of different interpretations of specific affairs of council-aiding and confusion of council-aiding members, local authorities and citizens which finally results in un-institutionalization of council aiding. "Institutional limitation of council aiding" is the other reason un-institutionalization of council aiding. Institutional limitation of council-aiding refers to governmental pressures and not valuing it in governor, state, public media, etc levels. The reason condition of "lack of supervision" is among the reasons of "un-institutionalization" of neighborhood council aiding. Lack of supervision by city council and council-aiding organization on function and activities of them gives unofficial and release state to council-aiders.

5.2 The phenomenon resulted by reasoning condition

The situation dominant on city Islamic council and its un-institutionalization, existence of negative approaches by governmental organizations to council aiding, vagueness in bylaws, constitutions and instructions of council-aiding and lack of supervision by city Islamic council on council-aiding have made local organizations and municipality offices to some extents to consider council-aiding free of supervising and executive power and are not ready to interact with council-aiding do not draw a position for them in management system of neighborhood and region. This fact makes local governmental

organizations to act compatible with their official hierarchy and do not consider council-aiding officially. In case of non-responding and lack of consideration of governmental organizations and municipality offices to the new institutionalization of council aiding, no executive guarantee exists to push them. For this reason, council-aiders feel that they are in the margin of neighborhood managing system and no organization official institution is supporting them, they feel abandoned and released.

5.3 The fields concerning development of phenomenon

Fulfillment and development of strategies related to "un-institutionalization" phenomenon in council-aiding depends to the theme of phenomenon. The phenomenon "un-institutionalization" exists to different amounts and intensities among council-aiding members. Almost most council-aiders were complaining for the lack of supervising and executive power, inconsideration, non-responding of local organizations and municipality offices to their requests and opinion. The amount and intensity of "un-institutionalization" phenomenon was less among women and based on that the complaints of women were less than men. Among the ones having higher education, the intensity of "un-institutionalization" feeling was more. The ones who have been neighborhood council-aiders for several periods and were familiar with council-aiding activity and instructions, which had servicing background the rate and intensity of "un-institutionalization" was more.

5.4 Intervening conditions and strategies

This condition includes the factors which were effective on taking strategies of council-aiding members which were; "inner-group interaction", "lack of outer-group interaction", "financial situation of municipality", "local belongingness", "efficiency and effectiveness" and "political approach". As much inner-group interactions of council-aiding members, neighborhood council-aiding and council-aiding secretaries have the essence based on servicing and harmony in a group and tension is low among them, their strategy against "un-institutionalization" would be selection of institutionalization seeking, but if the relations and inner-group interactions among council-aiding members, neighborhood council-aiders and council-aiding secretaries is based on tension and benefit seeking, they use the strategy of advocacy seeking against "un-institutionalization". As much outer-group interactions of council-aiding with governmental organizations, municipality offices and NGOs is bilateral and kind, the council-aiders use strategy of institution seeking against "un-institutionalization" and if there is no outer group interaction or it is uni-lateral and instrument state, the council-aiders advocacy seeking strategy for removing "un-institutionalization". Financial and human resources of municipality are also effective on the state of strategy selection by council-aiders. The Mayors of regions and areas with sufficient incomes, excellent human forces, provide council-aiding members with appropriate executive power and encourages them to take institution seeking strategy. Local belongingness of council-aiders and efficiency and effectiveness of council-aiders in the neighborhood is the fact which influences council-aiders on taking strategies. If council-aiders were capable of high local belongingness and be efficient in the neighborhood, principally they take institution seeking strategy against "un-institutionalization". And finally, political viewpoints of council-aiders have role on their type of strategy they choose. The council-aiders who are seeking political state of council-aiding take advocacy seeking strategy against "un-institutionalization".

5.5 The consequences of strategies

The strategies being taken by council-aiding members concerning "un-institutionalization" had given or taken consequences for them. These consequences

included: "hope" and "failure imagination". Failure imagination refers to the situation in which council-aiding member feels failure and disappointment for taking institution and advocacy seeking approaches for events which would take place in future. He is not optimistic concerning future policy and programs of council and governmental organizations and is not willing to continue his activity. He believes that with low supervising and executive power they are not able to fulfill citizens' demands and he becomes indifferent concerning council-aiding and citizens' problems. Among some other people, the consequences of strategies taken, especially the ones who were following institution seeking was hope. They were hoping to emerge the efforts; they were optimistic that their authorities and supervising and executive power would increase in next periods of their elections. Transmission of citizens' problems to governmental organizations was quicker and easier and they were willing to solve infrastructure problems of city and cultural and social problems of citizens.

6 Conclusion

According to studies, the factors which cause creation of "un-institutionalization" phenomenon in neighborhood council-aiding include "un-institutionalization of city Islamic council", "limitation of council aiding", "lack of supervision", "vagueness of rules" and "lack of mutual outer-group interactions". The situation dominant on city Islamic council and its un-institutionalization have caused existence of negative viewpoints of governmental organizations to council aiding, vagueness in bylaws, constitutions and instructions of council-aiding and lack of supervision by city Islamic council on council aiding. This has made local organizations and offices of municipalities not to consider neighborhood council-aiding with supervising and executive power and they are not willing to have interactions with council aiding. They were not drawing the positing for them in management system of neighborhood and region. And this fact makes local governmental organizations to act solely with their own official hierarchy and do not consider council-aiding officially. In case of non-responding and inconsideration of governmental organizations and municipality offices to the new institution of council aiding, there would be no executive guarantee to push them. For this reason, the council-aiders feel they are in the margin of managing system and no organization or official institution is supporting them and they feel abandoned and released. "Institutionalization" is one of the important indicators of social capital which has been neglected in studies and analysis of social capital [9]. To the words of Dr. Bushain [10] in the local development structural and managing elements cannot be solely considered, but social and cultural flexible factors should be also considered. He indicates that local government in Iran despite France "are up to down" and are imposed by the government on the neighborhood and regions. Cultural factors of the neighborhood and participation of citizens were not considered and the citizens were unfamiliar with local governance and management. In the study of "city associations" Saburi expresses that "the relation between city association and citizens did not exist and they were not participating in their elections and the citizens were indifferent. Formation of city associations could not reduce local and citizens' problems [19]. Moreover, among other major problems in neighborhood council-aiding are lack of participation, lack of citizens' awareness of neighborhood council-aiding and lack of citizens' cognition of neighborhood council-aiding (during interviews being done with citizens almost one third of them were aware of council-aiding existence, meanwhile only half of them were familiar with activities of council aiding). Reasoning conditions which had role on formation of "social non-participation" of citizens included of "servicing", "interactions with citizens" and "responding to public demands" of citizens. Rate and intensity of such issues had direct relation with social participation of citizens in neighborhoods in which council-aiders had interactions with citizens where spirit of servicing is high among council-aiders. And in neighborhoods which citizens' demands were fulfilled, the rate of citizens' social participation is relatively higher

Neighborhood council-aiding interactions and connections as one of the (indicators of social capital) were studied in two levels of "inner-group

interactions" and "outer-group interactions". Also, inner-group interactions and connections were investigated in two dimensions of objective inner-group connections and interactions and subjective inner-group interactions and connections. The findings are indicative of this fact that there are objective and subjective inner-group interactions and connections among neighborhood council-aiders. Based on Paxton model this would make existence of social capital among them easier [13] and not emergence of inner-group tensions among neighborhood council-aiders. Meanwhile, the evident of field study are indicative that among council-aiders of region (meetings of neighborhood council-aiding secretaries) there are objective inner-group interactions and connections, but subjective inner-group interactions and connections are not formed. Council-aiders expressed worry and anxiety concerning malfunctioning of regions' council-aiding meetings. According to Paxton's model, the council-aiding needs connectors to facilitate their interactions [13]. Outer-group interactions and connections were studied in two levels of outer-group interactions and connections with municipality and related authorities and outer0group interactions and connections of local governmental institutions (for discovering the relation among them, the indicators of good governance and for analysis, and the *models of Nejam*, Woolcock and Nariyan were used) [20,24]. According to *Nejam's model* 2000 [20] there are "completing relation" among neighborhoods council-aiding and municipality, which means both sides have common objectives, but they are using different instruments to reach those goals. It should be considered that interaction of neighborhood council-aiding with municipality of area and region is not simple and in one-way. This kind of relation especially is considered in servicing that from municipality viewpoint neighborhood council-aiding should take action for such services which the municipality has not provided them for any reason. Moreover, for neighborhood council-aiding it is important to reach development in the society from down to up side. Interactions and connections of neighborhood council-aiding with governmental institutions are solely objective, ordering and displaying connections. *Nejam* draws the fifth situation free of his model, in which there is no interaction between government and NGOs. Thus, the reason for lack of interaction between council-aiding and governmental institutions is un-institutionalization of neighborhood council aiding.

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