



UNIVERSITI PUTRA MALAYSIA

**SOCIAL CAPITAL AND EMPOWERMENT AMONG
SQUATTER SETTLERS IN TEHRAN, IRAN**

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**SOCIAL CAPITAL AND EMPOWERMENT AMONG
SQUATTER SETTLERS IN TEHRAN, IRAN**

By

HAMIDREZA BABAEI

**Thesis Submitted to the School of Graduate Studies, Universiti Putra
Malaysia, in Fulfilment of the Requirements for the Degree of
Doctor of Philosophy**

June 2012

To

My Father



Abstract of thesis presented to the Senate of Universiti Putra Malaysia in fulfilment
of the requirement for the degree of Doctor of Philosophy

**SOCIAL CAPITAL AND EMPOWERMENT AMONG
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June 2012

Chairman: Associate Prof. Nobaya Ahmad, PhD

Faculty: Human Ecology

Squatter settlers live in situations of poverty with a lower cost of opportunity and less financial and human capital than wealthy people. These people usually live with expanded poverty, lack in basic living facilities and are exposed to various social deviations that together with the special cultural structure have made these communities crisis-generating regions.

Poverty is known as a multidimensional phenomenon, hence, poor people need empowering with a variety of resources and capabilities at the individual and collective level. Empowerment has become an essential tool for enabling marginalized people to expand their access to resources and enhance their own experiences. Empowerment is defined as the extension of assets and the capability of poor people to participate and negotiate with influence, control, and hold accountable institutions that affect their lives. Social capital has been acknowledged as an

efficient means for poverty reduction among the poor. Social capital, involving bonding, bridging and linking, in its best form, contributes to economic, social, psychological and political development by providing information distribution, mitigating opportunistic behaviour, and facilitating communal decision-making and empowerment. This study sets out to examine the role of bonding, bridging and linking social capital for predicting the psychological and financial assets and empowerment among squatter settlers in Iran, Tehran.

This study used the survey technique and questionnaires to collect the data from 328 selected respondents in two squatter settlement communities in Tehran (Islamabad and Bagh-e-Azari). The results reveal that bonding social capital has a higher level than other dimensions of social capital among squatter settlers in Tehran. The results indicated that social capital significantly predicts empowerment among squatter settlers. Concerning the social capital dimensions the results indicate that all three dimensions of bonding, bridging and linking social capital positively predict empowerment among squatter settlers. With regards to empowerment dimensions (psychological and financial), the results indicate that bonding social capital predicts financial assets while bonding, bridging and linking together predict psychological assets among squatter settlers.

Education, employment status and gender significantly predict social capital, and education, income, marital status and household size significantly predict empowerment among squatter settlers. Taken together the findings of this study suggest that bonding, bridging, and linking social capital are linked to empowerment.

The results suggest noteworthy implications for theory and practice. The findings of this study have improved our understanding of the factors predicting financial and psychological assets among squatter settlers in Iran. The overall results indicate that the theories of bonding, bridging and linking social capital have provided a good understanding of empowerment predictors and the majority of the findings appear to support the existing theories. Since the bridging and linking of social capital among squatter settlers was at a low level among community workers, social planners and social policymakers might focus on expanding and building, bridging and linking social capital to empower the squatter settlers.

Abstrak tesis yang dikemukakan kepada Senat Universiti Putra Malaysia sebagai memenuhi keperluan untuk ijazah Doktor Falsafah

**MODAL SOSIAL DAN PENDYAKUASAAN DI KALANGAN
PENEMPATAN SETINGGAN DI TEHRAN, IRAN**

Oleh

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Penduduk setingan hidup dalam keadaan kemiskinan dengan kekurangan peluang serta modal kewangan dan modal insan yang lebih rendah berbanding dengan golongan yang lebih berada. Mereka biasanya hidup dalam situasi yang teramat miskin, kurangkemudahan asas dan terdedah pada pelbagai masalah sosial, yang menyumbang kepada pembentukan satu budaya yang boleh menjadikan komuniti ini pencetus krisis.

Kemiskinan merupakan fenomena pelbagai dimensi, maka, penduduk setingan yang miskin memerlukan pendayaupayaan melalui pelbagai sumber dan kemampuan pada peringkat individu dan secara kolektif. Pendayaupayaan telah menjadi alat penting untuk membolehkan masyarakat yang terpinggir untuk mengembangkan akses mereka kepada sumber-sumber dan meningkatkan pengalaman mereka. Pendayakupayaan ditakrifkan sebagai kaedah penambahan aset dan kemampuan masyarakat miskin untuk menyertai dan berunding dengan

pihak yang mempunyai pengaruh dan kawalandalam kehidupan mereka . Modal sosial telah diakui sebagai cara yang efisien untuk pengurangan kemiskinan dalam kalangan orang miskin. Modal sosial, yang melibatkan ikatan, perapatan jurang dan perhubungan, dalam bentuk yang terbaik, menyumbang kepada pembangunan ekonomi, sosial, psikologi dan politik dengan menyediakan maklumat, mengurangkan tingkahlaku mengambil kesempatan, dan memudahkan membuat keputusan bersama, dan juga mendayaupayakan komuniti.

Penyelidikan ini bertujuan mengkaji peranan modal sosial ikatan, perapatan jurang dan perhubungan untuk meramal aset psikologi dan kewangan dan penguasaan di kalangan penempatan setingan di Iran, Teheran. Penyelidikan ini menggunakan teknik tinjauan dan soal selidik untuk mengumpulkan data daripada 328 responden yang dipilih dari dua komuniti penempatan setingan di Teheran (Islamabad dan Bagh-e-Azari). Keputusan kajian menunjukkan bahawa modal sosial ikatan mempunyai tahap lebih tinggi daripada modal sosial dimensi lain dalam kalangan penempatan setingan di Teheran. Keputusan kajian menunjukkan bahawa modal sosial telah secara signifikan, meramal pendayaupayaan antara penduduk setingan. Merujuk kepada dimensi modal sosial, hasil kajian menunjukkan bahawa ketiga-tiga dimensi ikatan, perapatan jurang dan hubungan, meramalkan pendayaupayaan dalam kalangan penduduk setingan secara positif. Berkaitan dengan dimensi pendayaupayaan (psikologi dan kewangan), dapatan kajian menunjukkan bahawa modal sosial ikatan meramalkan aset kewangan, sementara ikatan, perapatan jurang dan perhubungan kedua-duanya meramalkan aset psikologi dalam kalangan penduduk setingan.

Pendidikan, status pekerjaan dan jantina secara signifikan meramalkan modal sosial, manakala pendidikan, pendapatan, status perkahwinan dan saiz rumah tangga secara signifikan meramalkan pendayaupayaan dalam kalangan penduduk setingan. Secara keseluruhan, penemuan kajian ini mencadangkan modal sosial ikatan, perapatan jurang, dan perhubungan adalah berhubungkait dengan pendayaupayaan. Keputusan kajian ini memberi implikasi penting untuk teori dan amalan. Penemuan kajian ini telah meningkatkan pemahaman tentang faktor-faktor yang meramal pendayaupayaan kewangan dan psikologi dalam kalangan penduduk setingan di Iran. Keputusan keseluruhan menunjukkan bahawa teori modal sosial ikatan, perapatan jurang dan perhubungan telah memberikan pemahaman yang baik tentang ramalan pendayaupayaan dan majoriti penemuan menyokong teori-teori yang sedia ada. Oleh kerana perapatan jurang dan perhubungan modal sosial dalam kalangan penduduk setingan berada pada tahap yang rendah, pekerja komuniti, perancang sosial dan penggubal polisi sosial memberi penumpuan terhadap perkembangan dan pembangunan modal sosial perapatan jurang dan perhubungan untuk meningkatkan pendayaupayaan penduduk setingan.

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Kuala Lumpur, Malaysia, September 2011

HAMIDREZA BABAEI

I certify that a Thesis Examination Committee has met on **15 June 2012** to conduct the final examination of Hamidreza Babaei on his thesis entitled "**Social Capital and Empowerment among Squatter Settlers in Tehran, Iran**" in accordance with the Universities and University Colleges Act 1971 and the Constitution of the Universiti Putra Malaysia [P.U.(A) 106] 15 March 1998. The Committee recommends that the student be awarded the Doctor of Philosophy.

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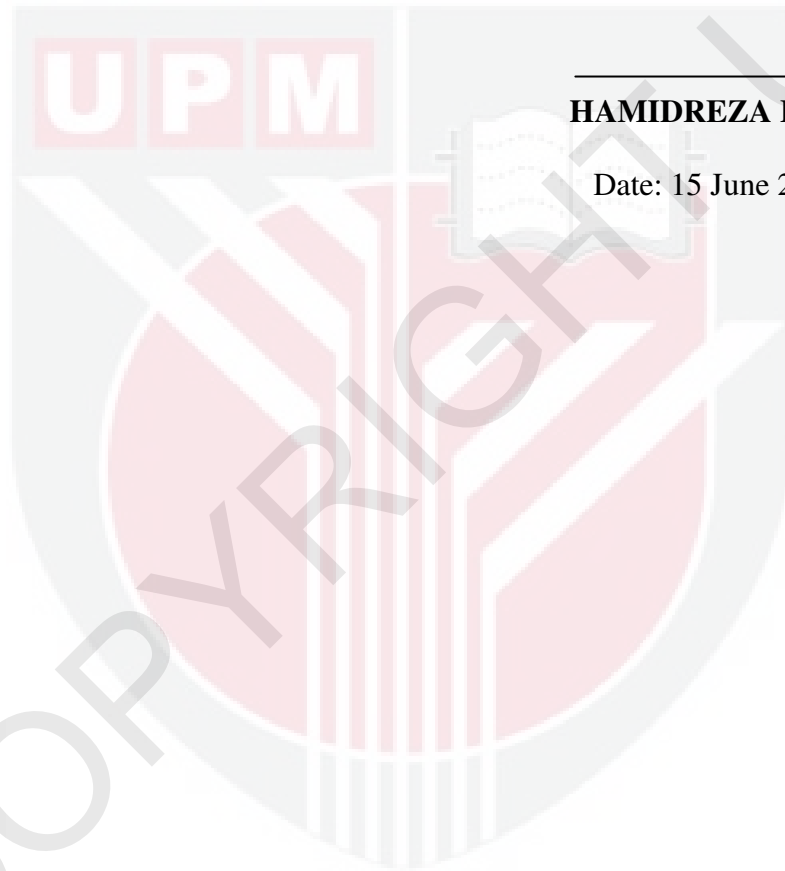
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DECLARATION

I declare that the thesis is my original work except for quotations and citations which have been duly acknowledged. I also declare that it has not been previously, and is not concurrently, submitted for any other degree at University Putra Malaysia or other institution.



HAMIDREZA BABAEI

Date: 15 June 2012

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