

Community of Trust:

Conceptualization and the Case of Muslim Communities in Gaza

Yosef Jabareen

Naomi Carmon

Faculty of Architecture and Town Planning

Technion – Israel Institute of Technology

Outline

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- **Trust: Definitions and Functions**
- **Risk: Definitions and Perception**
- **The Link between Trust and Risk**
- *Community of Trust*

Case Study: Gaza

- **Method**
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- **Conclusions: Theoretical and Practical**

Trust

- Trust is “the fundamental bond of human society – what makes it possible for human beings at all” (Dunn, 1984).
- Trust is “socially learned and socially confirmed expectations that people have of **each other**, of the **organizations** and **institutions** in which they live, and of the natural and moral **social orders**, that set the fundamental understandings for their lives” (Barber, 1983)

Trust

- Anthony Giddens (1990: 34) defines trust as a:

“confidence in the reliability of a person or system, regarding a given set of outcomes or events, where that confidence expresses a faith in the probity or love of another, or in the correctness of abstract principles.”

Giddens extends the definition of the trust underlying social relations to include ‘abstract principles’ (such as technical knowledge) that relate to modernity.

Functions of Trust

- ❑ Trust is important for social exchange (reduces the costs of exchange and transactions)
- ❑ Trust enables more effective, sustained and quick cooperation and coordination among people and organizations
- ❑ Trust is an instrument of social control as well as protection
- ❑ Trust is a vital component of social capital
 - (see for example: Putnam, 1995; Coleman, 1988, 1990))

Risk

- Renn & Rohrman (2000: 14) define risk as:

“The possibility of physical or social or financial harm/detriment/loss due to hazard within a particular time frame. ‘Hazard’ refers to a situation, event or substance that can be harmful for people, nature or human made facilities”

“People at risk might be residents, employees in the workplace, consumers of potentially hazardous products, travelers/commuters or the society at large”

- we expand this definition to include political as well physical, social or financial harms. By doing this, we consider political conflicts and their real and possible outcomes to be part of risk analysis

Risk Perception

Risk perception varies by:

- ❑ cultural beliefs and value orientations
- ❑ person's social position
- ❑ organization of political and administrative structures
- ❑ media reports

The Link between Trust and Risk

- “Risk and trust intertwine, trust normally serving to reduce or minimize the dangers to which particular types of activity are subject.” (Giddens, 1990: 35).
- Molm, Takahashi, and Peterson (2000: 1402) conceptualize trust as an emergent phenomenon that arises in response to **uncertainty** and risk.
- Guseva and Akos (2001) define trust as positive expectations in the face of **uncertainty** emerging from social relations.

Community of Trust

- We argue that planners usually failed to understand the essence of community
- What differentiates community from a mere collection of people in a city is the existence of trust relationships

Where there is a trust, there is a community

Community of Trust

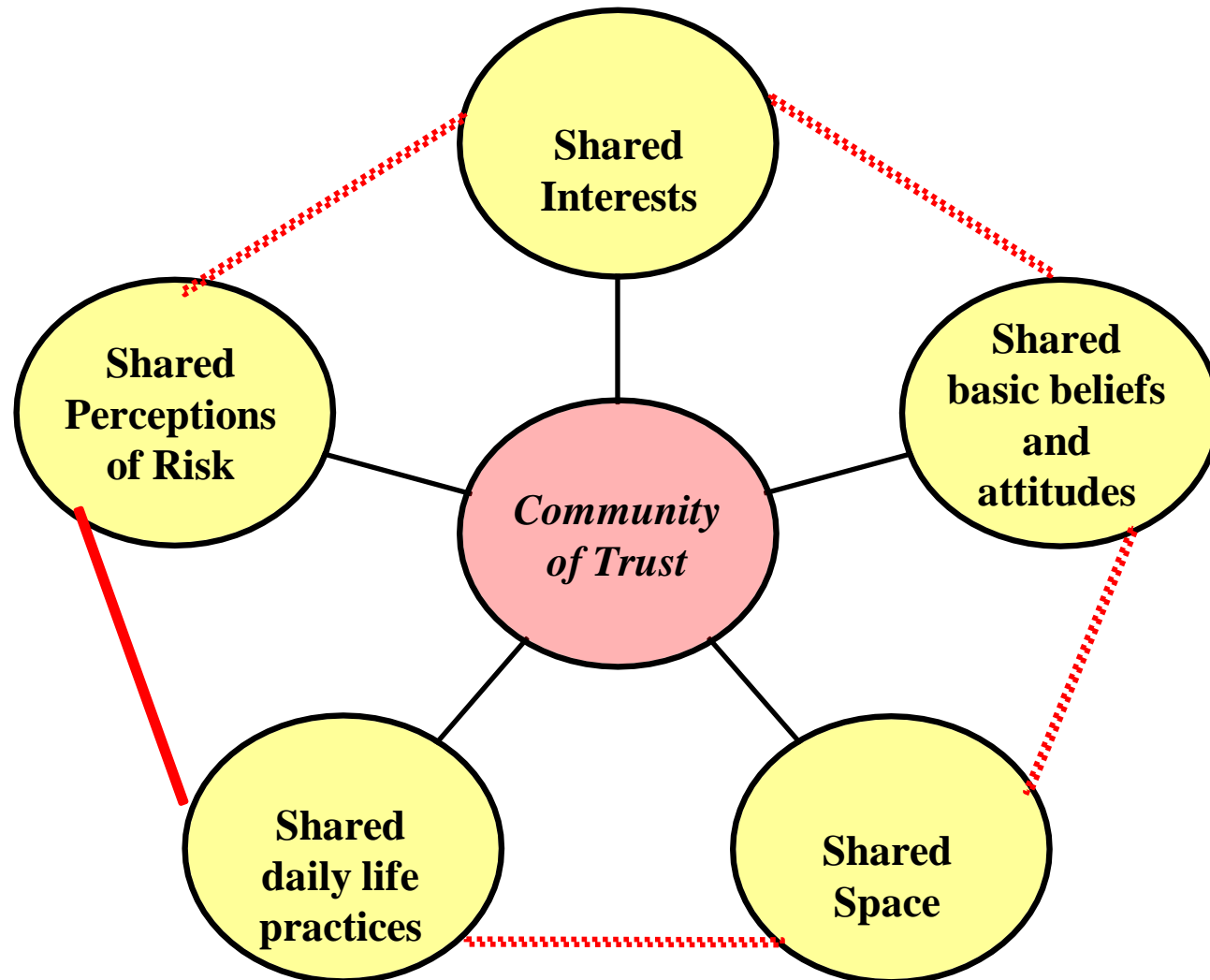


Community of Trust

Definition

Community of Trust is a socio-spatial setting in which there are substantial trust feelings among people who share a specific space (concrete or virtual space)

Community of Trust



Factors Promoting Community of Trust

- ❑ **Shared beliefs** - Religious beliefs, community ethos and attitudes toward fundamental aspects of life, such as the status of women
- ❑ **Shared interests** - Interests may evolve around social, cultural, environmental, political, or economic dimensions
- ❑ **Shared daily life practices** - Concrete daily behavior and contacts with others in the same space or housing environment - family members, neighbors, and friends, such as mutual help and joint leisure activities
- ❑ **Shared space**: Concrete place, such as urban neighborhood, or a virtual space, such as a group of environmentalists

Factors Promoting Community of Trust (cont.)

- **Shared perceptions of risk** – A risk maybe natural or man-made hazards or a common enemy that is perceived as threatening one's life , freedom, or property

This scheme shows conditions and circumstances in which communities of trust are more likely to strive.

The five factors are not proposed as a system of causal relationships that advance in one direction. Instead, we assume feedbacks among the factors; strengthening of one may strengthen the other.



Case Study

Gaza

- ❑ **Gaza Strip:** Population of 1.3m Palestinians
33% of whom live in United Nations-funded refugee camps
- ❑ **The city of Gaza** is the principal city in Gaza Strip with population of 400,000 (est.)
- ❑ One of the ancient cities of the world
- ❑ About 98% are Muslims and the rest are Christians
- ❑ Throughout the 20th century, Gaza experienced changes of regime - the Ottomans, British mandate, Egyptians and Israēlis¹⁵

Research Questions

- **Do residents in Gaza live in a Community of Trust?**
 1. Do residents in Gaza's neighborhoods share basic beliefs and attitudes?
 2. Do residents in Gaza neighborhoods share daily-life practices?
 3. Do residents in Gaza neighborhoods share common interests?
 4. Do residents in Gaza neighborhoods share similar risk perception?



Gaza Strip

The City of Gaza



Source: <http://www.answers.com/topic/gaza-city-jpg>

Data Collection: The Sample

Table 1: Interviewees by Neighborhood and Gender

Neighborhood	Interviewees	Female (%)	Male (%)
Total sample	973	56.6	43.4
The Old City	199	36.5	63.5
El-Remal	184	63.6	36.4
Shati Camp	194	71.4	28.6
Radwan	301	53.5	46.5
El-Rahman	95	64.2	35.8

Findings

Question 1: Basic Beliefs

“Religion is directing my behavior” (%)

	Total	Ebad El-Rahman	Sheikh Radwan	Shati Camp	El-Remal	The Old City
Agree	83.6	95.7	76.1	76.2	85.3	92.4
Partly Agree	14.7	4.3	17.9	23.3	14.1	6.6
Disagree	1.7	0.0	4.0	0.5	0.5	1.0
Total	(n=963) 100	(n=94) 100	(n=295) 100	(n=193) 100	(n=184) 100	(n=199) 100

Findings

Question 1: Basic Beliefs

“Women should dress according to the Islamic *Shareah*” (%)

	Total	Ebad El-Rahman	Sheikh Radwan	Shati Camp	El-Remal	The Old City
Agree	80	81	69	64	81	67
Partly Agree	25	17	25	34	16	28
Disagree	4	2	7	2	2	6
Total	(n=963) 100	(n=94) 100	(n=295) 100	(n=194) 100	(n=184) 100	(n=196) 100

Findings

Question 2: Shared Daily-Life Practices

“Who lives in your residential building?” by Neighborhood (%)

Neighborhood	Total	Residing with kins only	Residing with “others”
Total	100 (n=935)	84	17
The Old City	100 (n=188)	78	22
El-Remal	100 (n=171)	72	28
Shati Camp	100 (n=189)	99	1
Sheikh Radwan	100 (n=294)	89	11
Ebad El-Rahman	100 (n=93)	69	31

Findings

Question: (3) Shared Risk Perceptions

- Uncertainties as a result of political conditions

Findings

Question 4: Shared Interests

- Social interests: to keep the social order especially with the absence of formal state institutions.

Findings

Community of Trust

Feeling of Safety, by Neighborhood (%)

Neighborhood	Total	Highly safe	Partly safe	Not safe
Total sample	100 (n=935)	84	13	3
The Old City	100 (n=199)	78	12	10
El-Remal	100 (n=159)	86	13	1
Shati Camp	100 (n=173)	89	9	2
Sheikh Radwan	100 (n=296)	80	18	2
Ebad El-Rahman	100 (n=95)	81	17	2

Community of Trust

Community of Trust

Feeling of Safety

Mutual support among extended family members and neighbors

Existence of active voluntary Associations in the community

Discussion

- Richard Sennet (1996) and Zygmunt Bauman (2000) reject and disqualify the ideal of urban community, because it oppresses freedom and individuality, and because it is unrealistic – a nice fairy tale and not a reality in our world.

We recognize the potential disadvantages of cohesive communities, yet we see the search for community as a real major social force, which is imbedded in the nature of human beings and is strengthened by the rapid changes and the growing uncertainties and risks that persons of our time are confronted with. Hence, we join the search and the wish of planners to foster communities.

Discussion (cont.)

- Sandercock (2002: 203) described the history of planning as an “attempt to manage fear in the city”. We acknowledge fear of various risks as an organizing factor in cities, yet propose to express the goal in positive terms: Supporting and creating trust, rather than managing fear.
- Community of Trust is culture-related; since different societies have different cultures, the meaning of Trust differs from one cultural setting to another.

Implications for Planning in Gaza

- **Adopt culturally-sensitive planning**
- **Avoid plans and actions that may harm the trust relationships typical to Gaza's neighborhoods**
This requires to enable most residents to continue living with kins and not with "strangers"
This requires facilitation of self-help / user-controlled upgrading of the existing housing rather than demolition and redevelopment

Implications for Planning in Other Cultures

- **Development of *Communities of Trust* is proposed as a goal for planners of human settlements everywhere**
- Planners are requested to distinguish between socio-cultural settings in which they should avoid action that may destroy existing trust relationships, and settings in which developing trust and feelings of safety is a leading goal



Question for Future Studies

How can planners promote communities of trust in various cultural settings, especially in the multi-ethnic and multi-cultural cities typical of developed countries of the 21st century?



Thank you

Functions of Trust

Trust has important functions in all societies:

- ❑ Promotes long-term social stability;
- ❑ Reduces the costs of exchange and transactions;
- ❑ Enhances the quality of life;
- ❑ Enables more effective, sustained and quick cooperation and coordination among people and organizations;
- ❑ Reduces risks and complexity ;
- ❑ Trust is central to human existence : a “precondition for the existence of any society”;

The Absence of Trust

- The absence of trust leads to Community and social disorganization, which, in turn, increases crime and delinquency rates.
 - Social disorganization refers to the inability of a community structure to realize the common values of its residents and maintain effective social control.
 - High levels of disorder promotes mistrust and destroys the sense of community
- (see Ross, Mirowsky and Pribesh, 2001; Skogan, 1990; Taylor and Shumaker, 1990; Greenberg and Schneider, 1994).

Conclusions

- The conceptual framework of *Community of Trust* is suggested as an analytical tool for understanding residential areas as spatial-social structures.
- The search for community is a real major social force, which is imbedded in the nature of human beings and is strengthened by the rapid changes and the growing uncertainties and risks that persons of our time are confronted with.
- Because Community of Trust is culture-related and since different societies have different cultures, the meaning of trust differs from one cultural setting to another