

The role of social capital in promoting sustainable development in Algeria

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Abstract:

It is interesting to see the recognition of the role of social capital in promoting sustainable development in Algeria. Social capital refers to the networks, norms, and trust within a society that facilitate cooperation and coordination among individuals and groups. The study's findings highlight the importance of social capital in creating a positive environment for development by fostering collaboration, trust, and solidarity among individuals and groups. This, in turn, leads to increased productivity and a stronger reward system, which promotes responsiveness and confidence in community work.

Investing in social capital can also help to deal with some of the challenges that hinder sustainable development in Algeria. For example, building networks of civil participation can help to promote transparency and accountability in government decision-making processes, which can improve the effectiveness of development policies and programs.

The recommendations provided by the study can be useful for policymakers and development practitioners in Algeria who aim to promote sustainable development. Indeed, by focusing on building and strengthening social capital, they can create a more conducive environment for development that is inclusive, participatory, and responsive to the needs of the community.

Keywords: role; social capital; mutual cooperation; trust, sustainable development.

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1. INTRODUCTION

The concept of "sustainable development" was first introduced in 1987 by the International Commission on Environment and Development, which established it through various international conferences and UN discussions. This concept came about for several reasons, most notably the pursuit of a new vision for national and international development, the protection of fragile ecological systems on Earth, economic growth while protecting the environment, and emphasizing on future generations' share of natural resources and involving all classes, including the weak and marginalized, in the development process.

It is worth noting that sustainable development includes social development by creating employment opportunities and providing food, education, and healthcare for everyone. Until recently, economic theories ignored the governing values and ethics of the social context in which the economic development process takes place, and development had purely material standards such as individual income averages, gross national product, consumption, and market freedom. However, the emergence of the concept of "sustainable development" drew attention to the need to incorporate values and ethical standards into the development process and to examine the most important social organizations that make up society and promote their organization. It is also important to examine the mechanisms that control them to maintain the growth and development of society without compromising its social security by investing in individual and collective social

capital and productive unity and coherence of society. This is what motivated many researchers and experts to call for the integration of social capital with material and human capital in the development process. Based on the above, this study aims to identify the role that social capital can play in sustainable development by defining the concept of social capital, its dimensions, sources, and defining the concept of sustainable development and its relationship to social capital, and finally identifying the mechanisms of the developmental role of social capital.

1.1. The questions:

The previous problem gave rise to a set of questions, the most important of which are:

- What is social capital? What are its dimensions and indicators?
- What is the nature of the relationship between social capital and sustainable development?
- How can social capital be leveraged to develop sustainable development in Algeria?

1.2. The importance of the study:

The importance of this study lies in shedding light on a subject that is rarely found in Arab studies in general and Algerian studies in particular, despite its importance and the increasing interest in studying it in Western research circles. This is the topic of "social capital." On the other hand, the study also addresses the topic of

"sustainable development" and analyzes the underlying relationship between these two variables and the role that social capital can play in the sustainable development process.

1.3. The objectives of study:

The study aims to identify the concept of social capital, understand its developmental role, highlight some international experiences for the purpose of learning from them, and invest in social capital to promote sustainable development in Algeria.

1.4. The method :

in our study, we relied on the descriptive approach. It is "a method of analysis that focuses on sufficient and accurate information about a specific phenomenon or subject, or a known period or periods of time, in order to obtain scientific results and then interpret them in an objective manner that corresponds to the actual data of the phenomenon" (Dweideri, 2000, p.183) . The descriptive approach takes two forms: quantitative description, which gives us a numerical description that illustrates the amount, size, or degree of correlation with other phenomena, and qualitative description, which describes the phenomenon and illustrates its characteristics. The latter form is suitable for our study, as we described social capital, its dimensions, indicators, and characteristics and described its role in the sustainable development process based on a review of various literature that addressed this topic. We then analyzed the relationship between social capital and sustainable development.

2. Social Capital:

2.1. Definition :

The concept of social capital involves two main aspects: the capital aspect and the social one. The term Capital according to the Merriam Webster Dictionary refers to "accumulated wealth, especially that used to produce more wealth." (Merriam Webster Dictionary) It is generally defined by tangible, permanent and convertible material things such as buildings, machines, etc. that can be valued when accumulated. As for the other aspect of the concept "Social", it "reflects respect for social relations and organizations to achieve the economic purposes of the economic system". (El Sarougy, 2009, p.19)

"The capital-related aspect basically indicates that social capital is formed through accumulation over long periods of time. Hence, it is difficult to imagine that social capital can be formed temporarily or quickly to serve an emergency situation or occasional condition. The community's stock of values and social ties is capital accumulated over time expressed by the concept of social capital. The social aspect in the concept refers to the obvious fact that social capital is not created by an individual himself - as is the case with human or material capital, but is formed within the framework of a social group whose members consent to join in order to exploit the benefits of membership in this group, as individuals - through their use of what membership in a group provides of commitment values and trust - actually exploit the social stock generated by membership

in the group, and this stock is in fact nothing but social capital generated by this group and accumulated over time". (Abdelhamid, 2010, p.19)

Pierre Bourdieu defines social capital as: "The set of current or potential resources associated with the acquisition of a strong network of institutionalized relationships of mutual knowledge and mutual recognition, or in other words associated with membership in a group. As a group of actors who are not only linked by common characteristics, but also connected by permanent and useful links, and these links cannot be reduced to neighborhood relationships in the physical (geographic) field or even in the economic field because they are based on non-separated material and symbolic exchange, institutional and continuous that assumes recognition of this neighborhood". (Bourdieu, 1980, p.2) For Bourdieu, social capital is a form of capital of strong relationships that create trust and good reputation among members of the network, and material and symbolic exchange makes this trust between them more effective. For example, the exchange of congratulations, gifts and assistance between members of a group enhances the relationships between its members and makes them stronger. Social capital is considered collective support that gives members a credit form, and it is maintained and enhanced when individuals continue to invest in social relationships. (Lin, 2003, pp 22-23)

However, James Coleman defines the concept as follows: "The concept of natural capital embodied in tools, machines and other means of production can be expanded to include human capital as well. If natural capital is created by making changes in matter to manufacture tools that facilitate the production process, then human capital is produced by changing people's attributes through developing their skills and abilities that make them act differently. In turn, social capital is produced when social relations between people change and facilitate social action". (Coleman, 1990, p304)

Robert Putnam says: "Social capital refers to the features of social organization such as networks, norms and social trust that facilitate coordination and cooperation for mutual benefit" (Putnam, 1995, p2) and "Social capital" draws attention to the fact that civic virtue is stronger when embedded in a network of mutual social relationships. A society of many virtuous but isolated individuals is not necessarily a society with a large amount of social capital" (Putnam R. , 2000, p19)

Based on the above definitions, we can define social capital as: The set of relations that link the actors of the social structure. It is also the actual and potential benefits and resources that an individual obtains through investing in his social relationships and interactions. It is also the set of collective values and ethical norms that govern social relations and interactions. The most important of these values is social trust that governs the framework of organizations and ties, and the most important of these norms is reciprocity that reinforces the production of social capital.

2.2. Dimensions of Social capital : (Turner, 2011,pp 12-16)

Social capital is a concept that has been widely discussed in literature, and its dimensions are often classified in different ways. There are three main dimensions of social capital: the relational dimension, the structural dimension, and the cognitive dimension.

- **The relational dimension:** refers to the interpersonal relationships between individuals and how they influence behavior. This includes factors such as trust, values, norms, obligations, and treatment. The quality of these relationships can be influenced by factors such as distance, history, and mutual closeness. Attitudes, behaviors, and actions are also influenced by the relational dimension. This dimension plays a critical role in social relations and should not be underestimated.
- **The structural dimension:** it, focuses on the characteristics of the social system as a whole. This includes factors such as the composition of networks, communication patterns, and the center of communication within the network. Information is also seen as a valuable resource in the structural dimension, as it can be transmitted through the network. However, it should be noted that the structural dimension is not enough on its own to create social capital; it needs to work together with the relational and cognitive dimensions.

- **The cognitive dimension:** which refers to shared representations, interpretations, and systems of meaning between individuals. This includes shared meanings, values, and interpretations in social relations. The cognitive dimension has a direct influence on the development of social capital and relationships. Shared visions and common goals are important in the cognitive dimension, and there needs to be congruence in responsibility and values. Group participation is also emphasized in the cognitive dimension; as collective knowledge can help individuals understand group tasks more accurately.

2.3. Sources of social capital :

Social capital has been extensively researched and classified in various ways, but we will focus on Putnam's classification. According to Putnam, social capital is a complex concept that includes three dimensions: ethical standards and obligations, social values such as trust, and social networks that include civil participation networks and voluntary associations. The level of trust among individuals is positively correlated with social cooperation, and two factors contribute to the growth of trust in modern society: reciprocity standards and civil participation networks. Putnam explains that civil participation networks contribute to the promotion of trust and the strengthening of reciprocity standards, which reinforce social trust. The three elements of social capital that Putnam identifies are:

- **Reciprocity:** This refers to the importance of standards that support social trust, reduce transaction costs, and facilitate cooperation. The general exchange standard is the most important of these standards, and it reconciles personal interest and solidarity, assuming that every individual act in the exchange system is typically a combination of short-term altruism and long-term self-interest. (Putnam R. ,2006, p.218)
- **Trust:** Putnam sees trust as a fundamental component of social capital, and the higher the degree of trust within a community, the greater the likelihood of cooperation. Social trust can arise from reciprocity standards and civil participation networks. (Ibid, p.215)
- **Civil participation :** These are a fundamental form of social capital, and the denser these networks are in a community, the more likely its citizens are capable of cooperating for mutual benefit. Dense, separate horizontal networks support cooperation within each group, but civil participation networks that transcend social divisions feed wider cooperation. (Ibid, p.221)

3. Sustainable Development :

The origin of the term "sustainable" in sustainable development can be traced back to the field of ecology, where sustainability was used to describe the formation and development

of dynamic systems that are subject to structural changes that lead to changes in their characteristics, elements, and relationships between these elements. In the context of economic and ecological sciences, the term "sustainability" is used to express the relationship between these two sciences. In Arabic, it is difficult to find a single word that accurately reflects the content of the English expression, which has more than one meaning. The verb "sustain," with its multiple meanings, is used to express the concept of sustainability.

3.1. The characteristics of sustainable development:

This era faces several challenges that threaten future generations due to values, customs, and ethics closely linked to economic progress at the expense of the sustainable use of natural resources. Sustainable development aims to maintain the environment and avoid all factors that may lead to its destruction. Some of its characteristics and objectives include: (Balout, 2005, p.358)

- Long-term development that focuses on the fate and future of future generations.
- Equality and consideration of the rights of future generations to natural resources.
- Sustainable development is a multidimensional and interconnected process based on planning and coordination between economic, social, and environmental development.
- Human beings are the means and goal of sustainable development, with a focus on meeting their basic needs and requirements.

- Sustainable development promotes the development of spiritual and cultural aspects and preserves the cultural identity of societies.
- Achieving a better quality of life for people by focusing on the qualitative aspects of development rather than just the quantitative aspects, and in a fair and appropriate manner between current and future generations.
- Respecting the natural environment and promoting a sensitive relationship between the natural and industrial environment.
- Raising awareness among people about environmental problems and developing their sense of responsibility towards them and encouraging active participation in finding appropriate solutions.
- Linking modern technology to the goals of society and employing it in a way that serves their interests without causing negative risks and effects on the environment.
- Continuously changing the needs and priorities of society in a way that achieves a balance between economic development and control of environmental problems.

3.2. The dimensions of sustainable development:

Sustainable development has several dimensions, including:

- **The economic dimension:** this refers to a sustainable economic system that allows for the production of goods and services to meet human needs and achieve continuous and permanent

well-being without harming the environment. This involves changing current production patterns and consumption that rely on natural resources, and searching for new and efficient methods to achieve sustainable economic development and meet economic needs without harming the environment from pollution. (Global System for Sustainable Development, [nsit.gssd.cedu//..http](http://nsit.gssd.cedu/))

- **The social dimension:** socially sustainable development aims to achieve justice in the distribution of wealth among individuals in society, provide all necessary services to all groups, eliminate all disparities between urban and rural populations, contribute to achieving social diversity, and allow participation in consultation for everyone and link them to decision-making to achieve freedom in that regard. A key factor in this aspect is reasonable demographic growth in any country and achieving a balance in this field with the government's capabilities, the state, and its natural resources, because any rapid demographic increase does not achieve a balance with meeting the needs of this population density due to the government's limited ability to keep up with this rapid growth. This, in turn, leads to an increase in the number of poor people, and thus suboptimal exploitation of wealth, which exhausts natural resources and hinders sustainable development, and burdens future generations.

- **The environmental dimension:** which requires the preservation of a stable base of natural resources, by following rational patterns of production and utilization to avoid depleting renewable energies, achieve biodiversity, air purity, soil fertility, and preserve biological diversity. Specialists in the environmental field focus on the environmental boundaries in their approach to sustainable development, meaning that every natural system has certain boundaries that cannot be exceeded by exploitation, excess, or depletion. This means that the deterioration of this environmental system must be avoided, and to protect the environment, consumption patterns and old production methods that harm the environment must be avoided. (Global System for Sustainable Development, previously mentioned reference).

3.3. The aims of sustainable development :

Sustainable development achieves a comprehensive and integrated process of conscious, long-term development. These goals can be summarized as follows:

- Improving the quality of life of the population in an equitable and demographic manner by focusing on qualitative aspects of growth, including economic, social, psychological, and spiritual wellbeing.

- Enhancing awareness and responsibility towards existing problems and encouraging active participation in decision-making for sustainable development programs and projects.
- Achieving rational exploitation and use of natural resources by reducing wasteful consumption of energy and natural resources and changing production methods to improve the environment while maintaining economic growth.
- Linking modern technology with societal goals by employing cleaner, more efficient technology to save natural resources from pollution, achieve climate stability, and accommodate growth in population and economic activity.
- Achieving social justice by reducing the gap between rich and poor and perpetuating disparity within and between countries.
- Activating political participation to bring about fundamental changes in consumption, sources, lifestyles, and environmental sustainability.
- Focusing on human development and building a knowledge-based society by providing knowledge, sources of information, means of learning, and encouraging innovation.
- Creating job opportunities through macroeconomic and sectoral development policies that promote sustainable patterns of consumption and production, especially in environmentally sustainable sectors.

- Overall, the SDGs aim to achieve sustainable development by addressing economic, social, and environmental challenges while promoting equity, participation, and innovation.

4. The Developmental Role of Social Capital:

James Coleman argues that natural capital is completely tangible and material, while human capital is less tangible as it is embodied in the skills and knowledge that individuals acquire, and social capital is the least tangible of the three as it is manifested in the relationships between people. Human and natural capital facilitate productive activity, while social capital supports it. For example, a group whose members demonstrate deep loyalty and trust towards each other will be more capable of achieving success than a group lacking these qualities. (Coleman, 1990, p. 304)

The importance of trust as a fundamental component of social capital is highlighted, and the strength of democratic and economic societies is directly proportional to the degree of trust, social participation, and volunteering in civil society institutions. Putnam believes that the decline of social capital in American society since the 1960s is due to a decrease in Americans' trust in each other and their participation in political and civic life.

Wright, Fleming, and Chadwick argue that well-functioning social networks within a region can play a useful role in achieving sustainable development by facilitating the rapid dissemination of information, experiences, and new resources throughout the area.

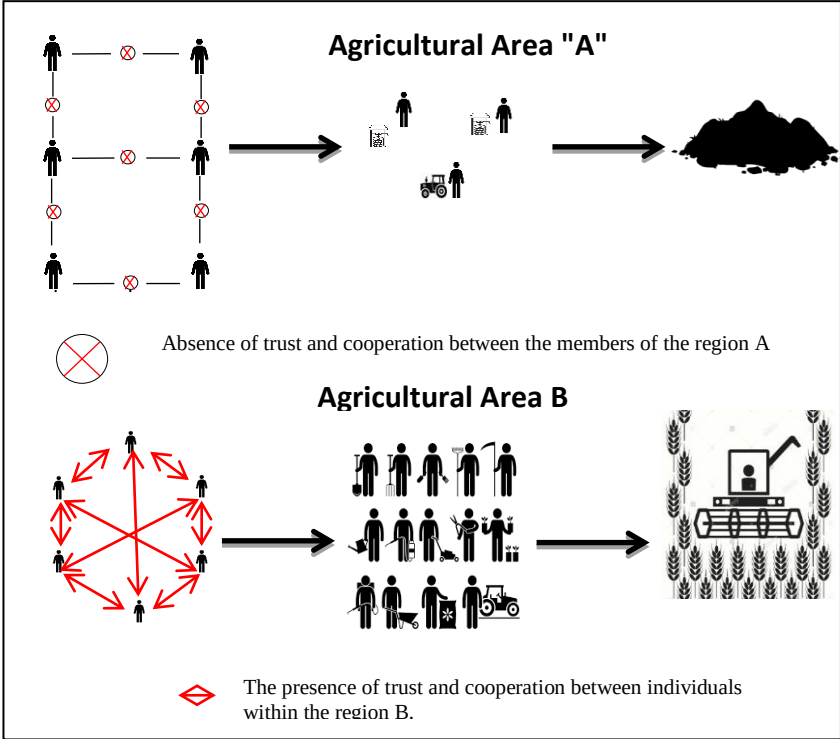
Sustainable development cannot be accomplished by any individual or organization alone, and it is necessary for individuals and organizations to work together effectively to identify and achieve change. Putnam's book "Making Democracy Work: Civic Traditions in Modern Italy," published in 1993, examines the institutional performance of twenty regional governments in Italy using surveys, interviews, and a variety of political indicators. He concluded that there were wide differences in the performance of governments in northern and southern Italy, and these differences were closely linked to the vitality of union life in each region. In northern Italy, where citizens participate extensively in sports clubs, literary unions, service groups, and choral associations, regional governments are effective in performing their duties, creative in their political initiatives, and effective in implementing those initiatives. In southern Italy, where patterns of civic participation are much weaker, regional governments tend to be corrupt and ineffective. Putnam explains this relationship between strong citizen participation networks and positive institutional performance in terms of "social capital" - the networks and standards of reciprocity and trust that are reinforced among members of community associations by virtue of their interaction and social cooperation. He argues that social capital has a positive effect on good governance because it enables members of the community to overcome the collective action dilemmas that can impede their efforts to cooperate to improve social life. (Putnam, D, Leonardi , Nanetti, & Y, 1993)

This means that regions with high levels of social capital will be more successful in implementing sustainable development than those with low levels of social capital. Wright and others argue that tracing the relationship between social capital and sustainable development over time indicates that they will reinforce each other; an increase in social capital will lead to an increase in the success of sustainable development initiatives which in turn will increase the stock of social capital in the region. In this context, Coleman cites the example of Jewish diamond merchants in a city in New York, who lend diamonds and jewelry to each other without insurance contracts based on trust and mutual cooperation. This strengthened their trade and made that market one of the largest diamond trading markets in the United States. (Coleman J. S., 1988)

"The role of social capital plays a pivotal role in sustainable human development, because the ethical commitments that form the essence of social capital only develop in a context of human interaction imbued with values. Moreover, it facilitates the implementation of sustainable development programs and projects, as it is more in harmony with prevailing circumstances. Focusing on social capital reflects recognition that the standard system is different to a degree that requires non-traditional, innovative solutions. It provides a lens for finding solutions to problems built on knowledge and local institutions" (Issaaf, 2015, p155), and we present the following example to explain the role of social capital in promoting

and developing sustainable development: Let us assume that there are two agricultural areas: Area "A" and Area "B". Both suffer from marginalization and several developmental problems, and farmers face many problems, most notably the lack of sufficient wells to irrigate their lands and the lack of modern agricultural equipment. In Area "A", there are many conflicts between farmers who do not trust each other, which makes it very difficult for them to cooperate to solve these problems. Each one of them thinks of finding solutions for his land separately and waits for the relevant authorities to provide him with the means and resources to dig a well in his land, and if one of them wants to dig a well or buy advanced equipment with his own resources, it will cost him a lot of effort and money. This results in the development of only a small part of the land in the area whose owners have the ability to achieve that, while the area as a whole will continue to suffer from the same problems. As for Area "B", farmers trust each other and always cooperate to improve their area. Based on mutual trust and cooperation among them and the strong social relationships that connect them, they find solutions to their problems. For example, they may join credit loan associations where they put a specific amount of money each month, and each time this amount is given to one of them. This enables each farmer to dig a well in his land and purchase the equipment he needs, which will increase the productivity of the area and thereby contribute to its development."

4.1. Figure (01): The role of social capital in promoting sustainable development



The above figure illustrates that social capital contributes to the development of sustainable development through mutual trust, cooperation, and social networks that bring individuals together and enable them to access resources at both individual and collective levels. "Social capital is the key to sustainable human development, as it is not limited to considering humans as the driving force of development, but also focuses on the relationships between people because they form the foundation on which social

ethics are built. If social capital seeks to improve an individual's decision-making ability, it seeks to improve the ability of individuals and the entire population to make decisions, as long as individual decisions recognized as a value within cohesive communities mean the entire community. Thus, social capital, by promoting the capacity of each individual, allows for the realization that expanding people's

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5. Mechanisms of Social Capital in Sustainable Development:

Social capital plays a role in development through a set of mechanisms, including:

- When social networks function well, they play a significant role in achieving development, as they facilitate the rapid dissemination of information, experiences, and new resources throughout the region.
- In networks that function well, individuals and organizations play all relevant key roles reliably, legitimately, and consistently.
- Dialogue between stakeholders is crucial because it enriches ideas and provides an opportunity to see who the supported actors are and who has been ignored based on network analysis and identifying the reasons for the presence or absence of actors in the network.
- Involving all parties, whether individuals or institutions, in the stages related to development programs and policies allows for increased trust, especially among marginalized groups.
- Encouraging teamwork, solidarity, and creating a development climate that encourages harmony among residents, increases their productivity in their work, and promotes a reward system for outstanding performance in various fields, thereby increasing the sense of cooperation and trust in community work.

6. Recommendations:

Social capital is considered a fundamental and effective element in economic growth, and many advanced countries treat it as an independent factor of production added to physical and human capital. The World Bank has worked through many initiatives to introduce this element into development policies, especially in poor and marginalized areas of third world countries. In order for Algeria to invest in social capital and integrate it into its development policies, it must follow a set of mechanisms and steps, including the following:

1. Giving importance to the issue of social capital in universities and academic research centers through studies, research, and conferences to introduce its determinants and importance in sustainable development.
2. Conducting survey and field studies in poor areas and analyzing social networks to identify the obstacles and hindrances to development in these areas.
3. Conducting field dialogues in poor areas and listening to individuals and involving them in development processes.
4. Encouraging teamwork and promoting values of solidarity, mutual cooperation, and face-to-face communication among individuals and between them and organizations.
5. Launching development initiatives and projects and involving individuals in them, which increases citizens' confidence and sense of care from relevant authorities.

6. Using communication and information technology to enhance communication and sustainable development. Policy makers can establish an infrastructure for electronic networks that connect individuals, organizations, and institutions within the region in a way that enables immediate communication between stakeholders.
7. As suggested by Paxton (1999), social capital maps of quantity and quality must be drawn in each region. This allows for an understanding of the roles of organizations and their relationships with each other and how this contributes to the development of sustainable development. It also allows for an understanding of the political context of sustainable development, making individuals, communities, and organizations that may currently be excluded from development visible.

7. CONCLUSION

While reviewing the literature related to social capital and development, we identified a recurring message that is social relationships provide opportunities to mobilize other resources that enhance growth, and that social capital does not exist in a political vacuum. The nature and extent of interactions between communities and institutions are the key to understanding the prospects for development in a given society. Evidence supports the argument that social capital can be used to promote or undermine the public good.

The most important example in this context is that, in the absence of official development mechanisms, poor and vulnerable groups use social links to protect themselves and develop their communities based on social relationships, values (trust), ethical standards (mutual cooperation), and face-to-face communication, which is the essence of social capital.

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