

## RELIGIOUS-SOCIOCULTURAL NETWORKS AND SOCIAL CAPITAL ENHANCEMENT IN PESANTREN

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### ABSTRACT

Implementing society empowerment models is crucial for addressing micro-level problems where government services often fall short. Despite evidence that social capital significantly contributes to development and poverty reduction, there remains a gap in understanding specific strategies and outcomes of social capital-based empowerment initiatives. This study aims to fill this gap by investigating the unique learning concept of Pesantren Rakyat Sumberpucung (PRS), which emphasizes low-cost, independent, flexible, and mutual assistance principles. Utilizing framework which includes structural opportunity to meet, know-how of social interaction, sense of belonging, and ethos of mutuality, this study employed qualitative research design. Data were gathered through participant observation, semi-structured interviews with village-level stakeholders, in-depth interviews and focus group discussion. The results indicate that the integrative model known as "Pancarukun," which includes initiatives such as *Jagong Mathon*, *Celengan*, *Ngaji Ngluruk*, *Lambung Pesantren Rakyat*, and *Fatehahan*, effectively strengthens socio-cultural-religious networks, fostering harmony and cooperation between PRS and the community. These strategies have successfully promoted a spirit of togetherness and consistent collaboration. In conclusion, PRS's approach demonstrates the potential of integrative community-based strategies to address diverse problems across sectors such as economy, agriculture, education, and culture. By leveraging social capital, PRS has created a sustainable model of community empowerment that can serve as a blueprint for similar initiatives.

Keywords: Community Development, Social Capital Strengthening, Pesantren, Sustainable Empowerment

### INTRODUCTION

The concept of social capital has evolved significantly through the seminal contributions of Pierre Bourdieu, James Coleman, and Robert Putnam. Bourdieu (1986) introduced the notion of social capital at the micro level, emphasizing individual access to resources such as information, influence, opportunities, and financial assistance. This perspective highlights how social capital operates within personal networks, enabling individuals to leverage their connections for personal and professional gain. Coleman's (1988) work expanded this view to include both micro- and meso-level networks, examining how family interactions and public relations influence individual and group outcomes. He underscored the role of social capital in educational attainment and collective efficacy. Meanwhile, Putnam (2000) further broadened the concept to encompass macro and meso levels, focusing on reciprocity norms, civic engagement networks, and the critical role of trust in fostering social capital. He differentiated between horizontal relationships, which connect individuals of equal status, and vertical relationships, which involve hierarchical, dependent interactions. These varying perspectives illustrate the multifaceted nature of social capital and its operation across different social strata.

Implementing society empowerment models is crucial for addressing micro-level problems, especially where government services are inadequate (Khan et al., 2020). Social capital significantly contributes to development and poverty reduction, impacting sectors such as microcredit, production, agricultural marketing, environmental protection, and knowledge networking (Seferiadis et al., 2015; Hartmann et al., 2023; Juhro et al., 2022). However, social capital is a complex concept, and efforts to strengthen it can yield different results depending on the context (Seferiadis, 2015). This complexity underscores the need for context-specific approaches in poverty alleviation initiatives, highlighting the importance of understanding local dynamics and social structures.

A study in five villages in Karnataka, India, demonstrated the effectiveness of local NGOs in improving community productivity by providing social capital inputs and fostering reciprocal collaboration (Larrson, 2002). Initially, these villages lacked structural social capital, making it difficult for residents to take independent, productive actions. The involvement of NGOs led to significant improvements, illustrating the crucial role of civil society in meeting needs that the welfare state often fails to address (Jaysawal, 2013; Hartmann et al., 2023). Civil society, through networks of civic engagement, fosters reciprocity, trust, and collective action, which are essential for grassroots democracy and socio-political awareness.

Pesantren, as traditional Islamic boarding schools, serve dual functions as educational and socio-religious community institutions. They contribute to community development through various empowerment activities (Muadi, 2020). Despite the interest from researchers in examining the social roles of pesantren (Jumain, 2015; Juhro et al., 2022), there remains a gap in understanding the specific strategies and outcomes of social capital-based empowerment initiatives. Pesantren Rakyat Sumberpucung (PRS) in Kabupaten Malang, established in 2018, exemplifies this by focusing on social capital for community empowerment. Its mission is to provide free, high-quality education to marginalized groups, including street children, the poor, and families of former prostitutes (Anwas, 2015). This study aims to fill the gap by exploring the unique learning concept of PRS, which is based on principles of low cost, independence, flexibility, and "*gotong royong*" (togetherness and mutual assistance).

## METHOD

This study employed a qualitative research design to gather and analyze data on the impact of social capital strategies on community development and empowerment. The research utilized participant observation, interviews, and focus group discussions (FGDs) as the primary data collection methods. The analytical framework for this study integrates Seferiadis' (2015) four key mechanisms for strengthening social capital: structural opportunity to meet, know-how of social interaction, sense of belonging, and ethos of mutuality. This framework will be applied to evaluate the strategies used by PRS to empower its community.

Data were collected through semi-structured interviews with village-level stakeholders to understand their perspectives on the implementation and effectiveness of the strategies. Additionally, in-depth interviews were conducted with *santri kalong* to gain deeper insights into their experiences and the impact of the empowerment strategies. The interview guide was based on Weiss's (1994) interview format, focusing on how the strategies are implemented to maintain social capital as an investment for sustainable society empowerment in PRS. FGDs were held to facilitate collective discussions among participants, allowing for a deeper exploration of the themes related to social intimacy and the role of strong civil society in sustaining social capital. All FGDs and interviews were audio-recorded and transcribed verbatim. To ensure data reliability, researchers meticulously reviewed each audio recording to correct any transcription errors. The data were then processed and analyzed using content analysis as suggested by Krippendorff (2004). This process involved several steps: selecting units of analysis from the

research sources, gathering information from various data sources, filtering and condensing data to identify key themes and patterns, drawing inferences, and conducting a detailed analysis. Finally, the analyzed data were presented through a narrative conclusion that encapsulates the research findings.

## RESULTS AND DISCUSSION

Historically, the meaning of pesantren has evolved in response to societal needs, reflecting its dual functions as an educational institution and a socio-religious community center. This evolution represents both fundamental and practical shifts. Initially, people attended pesantren solely to learn the Quran and Islamic precepts. Today, however, pesantren also offer general education similar to that provided in formal schools, preparing students for the job market where formal certificates are often required. Marzuki Wahid illustrates that discussions about pesantren remain fresh, relevant, and accessible. He highlights that despite being a traditional institution, pesantren possess a robust survival mechanism that enables them to confidently navigate and adapt to modern challenges. Abdurrahman Mas'ud (2004) cites Abdurrahman Wahid (Gus Dur), who noted that the cultural preservation idea is embedded in the pesantren's intellectual tradition. The curriculum includes classic literature passed down through generations, led by the unique leadership of the kyai (the main teacher or owner of the pesantren). These traditional texts are viewed through a modern lens, sustaining the tradition of "al-qadimi ash-shalih" and preserving the religious knowledge certified by great scholars of the past.

PRS is located in Malang regency and this pesantren is a community-based pesantren where learning is seamlessly integrated with the community, occurring anywhere and anytime without specific buildings like mosques or dormitories. It employs a unique learning system tailored to the diverse backgrounds of its students, from officials to the impoverished, ensuring that anyone identifying as part of the community is considered a student. Unlike conventional pesantren, it focuses on understanding and practicing universal Islamic values under scholarly guidance, with activities that can happen at any time, in various informal settings such as coffee shops, markets, and fields (Ghofur Yajali, personal communication, May 30, 2020). This inclusive approach incorporates Indonesian and Islamic values, making Islamic teachings accessible and adaptable, fostering a comprehensive understanding of religion among students and the broader community.

This study has gathered the data to achieve the objectives of the present study. The data includes Pancarukun for strengthening social capital that is employed by PRS and strategies to achieve social capital. The detailed findings are described in this section and followed by discussion on the findings.

### "Pancarukun" for Strengthening Social Capital

PRS aims to instill good deeds (*akhlâq*) and Islamic faith based on Ahlussunnah wal Jama'ah (following the Prophet's Tradition), particularly targeting marginalized communities to enhance their quality of life. To achieve this, the pesantren offers free, quality education to street children, impoverished families, and the local community. Initially, the operational costs were covered by Abdullah Sam, the owner of the pesantren. Over time, the community began to contribute voluntarily, with all donations meticulously recorded to ensure financial transparency and accountability.

A key aspect of the Pesantren's strategy is the "Pancarukun" model, where individuals with specific knowledge and skills are encouraged to teach and train others, fostering a spirit of mutual assistance and addressing the village's basic needs. This collaborative approach has led to the formation of various creative communities within the society, spanning sectors such as economy, agriculture, husbandry, education, religious teaching, and art. In the economic sector,

the community has initiated various businesses and startups, including handicrafts and construction materials production. Agricultural activities include cultivating and planting on vacant lands, such as courtyards and shorelines, while husbandry activities involve raising animals like rabbits, birds, and goats. Through these initiatives, the "Pancarukun" strategy effectively leverages social capital to empower the community and promote sustainable development.

To ensure the sustainability of the institution, PRS has implemented a strategy to strengthen social capital through an integrative model focused on community empowerment. This model, known as "Pancarukun" of PRS, includes initiatives such as *jagong mathon*, *celengan*, *ngaji ngluruk*, *lumbung pesantren rakyat*, and *fatehahan*. These initiatives form religious-sociocultural networks aimed at enhancing harmony and collaboration between PRS and the broader community. The "Pancarukun" strategy has consistently proven effective in fostering a spirit of togetherness and cooperation, strengthening the bonds between the pesantren and the community.

#### *Jagong Maton* (forum for social communication)

The term "*Jagong Maton*" has become well-known in the Sumberpucung community with the establishment of Pesantren Rakyat. Derived from the Javanese words "jagong" (chat) and "maton" (good/useful), it epitomizes conversations that are beneficial and meaningful. According to Abdullah Sam, *Jagong Maton* was developed as an adaptation strategy, considering the cultural context of Sumberpucung, where the community, often referred to as "abangan," engages in informal gatherings at various locations like train stations, residences, and even places like informal security posts and gambling areas. These gatherings, which include chats and card games, facilitate participatory conversations between teachers, students, and villagers, fostering a sense of community and collaboration. Through frequent participation in these informal conversations, valuable and accurate information about the community's needs and issues is gathered. This allows PRS to design relevant programs and activities, thus achieving its mission of promoting good deeds and Islamic faith without creating tension or pressure. The activities formulated during these gatherings are tailored to be inclusive and culturally resonant, making use of traditional music and casual settings to encourage participation. This approach ensures that the vision of *amar ma'rūf nahī munkar* (enjoining good and forbidding wrong) is implicitly achieved in a comfortable and engaging manner.

*Jagong Maton* serves as a forum for various community members to come together and discuss programs with cultural nuances. By incorporating elements like *Kejawen* music and relaxed chats, the forum attracts wide participation. Abdullah Sam, also known as Cak Dul, utilizes a relaxed conversational style, known as "*omong-omong klobot*," where discussions take place in informal settings such as village lobbies, over coffee, and traditional snacks. This approach, termed "*cangkrukan*," has been adopted as a class program at PRS and significantly contributes to community empowerment by allowing free dialogue and constructive satire, even when touching on sensitive issues (Ghofur Yajali, personal communication, May 30, 2020).

The implementation of *Jagong Maton* is supported entirely by voluntary donations from the community, fostering a strong sense of social capital in Sumberpucung. Abdullah Sam describes *Jagong Maton* as the soul of PRS, emphasizing concepts of "serawungan" (social interaction), "seneng" (happiness), and "seduluran" (brotherhood). This model of social engagement encourages mutual understanding and support, blending cultural and religious elements to strengthen community bonds (Abdullah Syam, personal communication, May 30, 2020). The flexible nature of *Jagong Maton* allows it to address various topics, from religion and culture to economics and social issues, making it an effective tool for community cohesion and problem-solving.

This forum for social communication allows community members to gather informally

to discuss various issues and share information. The participatory nature of these gatherings fosters a sense of community and collaboration, aligning with the concept of social capital as a means to enhance civic engagement and trust within communities (Putnam, 2000; Ali et al., 2023; Matthews, 2016). By creating a space for inclusive and culturally resonant discussions, *Jagong Maton* supports the dissemination of Islamic values and promotes community cohesion. This approach mirrors findings by Jaysawal (2013), who emphasized the role of civil society in fostering social cohesion and grassroots democracy.

#### *Celengan* (Saving for financial need)

In addition to the *Jagong Maton* strategy, PRS has developed another empowerment concept known as "*Celengan*." This initiative encourages the community to adopt a simple, frugal lifestyle and the habit of saving. Traditionally, a *Celengan* is a money-saving object, often made of clay and shaped like various animals or plants, used to teach children the importance of saving for future goals. In this context, the *Celengan* serves as a basic savings container for families to prepare for future needs. The *Celengan* proves particularly useful in times of emergency, such as sudden illness or other urgent needs. For instance, media reports have highlighted cases where individuals used their savings from a *Celengan* to make significant purchases, such as buying a motorbike with thousands of small denomination coins. This practice not only helps in emergencies but also enables families to accumulate wealth incrementally (Abdullah Syam, personal communication, May 30, 2020).

The *Celengan* strategy aims to foster an independent community, laying the groundwork for establishing a community bank for students in collaboration with other institutions. Abdullah Sam explained that a *Celengan* could evolve into a BMT (Baitul Maal Wa Tanwil), functioning as a people's bank. This BMT would serve as a medium for savings and loans, freeing the community from interest-bearing loans and rigid repayment schedules. It would also allow borrowers to contribute *infaq* (charitable giving) to support other economically disadvantaged families. Abdullah Sam emphasized that BMT must be interest-free, envisioning it as a tool to liberate people from poverty. *Celengan* practices can range from simple, traditional savings methods to more organized forms like establishing cooperatives or BMTs, as demonstrated by PRS. Essentially, the *Celengan* is a means to rejuvenate the economy by promoting financial prudence and effective money management. By adopting the *Celengan* model, families can continuously invest in their economic development, reducing dependency on external financial entities (Abdullah Syam, personal communication, May 30, 2020).

The *Celengan* initiative encourages the community to adopt a frugal lifestyle and the habit of saving. This practice not only prepares families for future needs but also fosters financial independence and resilience. The establishment of community banks, like BMT (Baitul Maal Wa Tanwil), as part of this initiative, further supports economic empowerment by providing interest-free loans and promoting charitable giving (*infaq*). This strategy aligns with the concept of social capital as a tool for economic development and poverty alleviation, as discussed by Narayan and Pritchett (1999). The *Celengan* model demonstrates how traditional saving methods can be transformed into organized financial systems that support community development and reduce dependency on external financial entities.

#### *Lumbung Pesantren Rakyat* (food security and economic empowerment)

*Lumbung Pesantren Rakyat* or the barn of PRS is aimed at ensuring that individuals can meet their daily needs without facing shortages. The primary goal of this initiative is to create food security within the community. Traditionally, a barn is a place to store grains that have been threshed by farmers before grinding, often a small building made of woven bamboo or clay. *Lumbung Pesantren Rakyat* adapts this concept to establish an institution with the vision of "Becoming a popular and dignified institution of the Islamic movement," focused on providing

a self-sufficient food supply for the people (Abdullah Syam, personal communication, May 30, 2020).

In practice, the Lumbung PRS initiative begins with encouraging community members to plant simple vegetables necessary for daily cooking, such as chilies, tomatoes, spinach, and eggplants, using polybag media and utilizing narrow spaces around their homes. Abdullah Sam emphasized that a minimum radius of nine houses in all directions should engage in this planting activity. This approach allows each family to reduce food expenditures, even if only by a small amount, thus contributing to greater self-sufficiency.

The initiative also aims to shift community behavior from being consumptive to becoming productive. Abdullah Sam noted that by planting and caring for their own food, individuals learn to appreciate the provision (*rizqi*) from Allah and avoid idleness. This productive behavior fosters gratitude and a sense of responsibility, ultimately helping individuals manage daily economic challenges more effectively. The flexibility of using different planting media, from plastic pots to simple hydroponics, ensures that even those with limited space can participate (Abdullah Syam, personal communication, May 30, 2020).

To mobilize the community for the Lumbung PRS program, the *pesantren* provides training on vegetable planting using hydroponic systems and techniques for fermenting animal feed. After the training, PRS offers business capital to help implement these practices at home. The produce and livestock can then be consumed by the families or sold for additional income, thus enhancing community participation due to the tangible benefits. This program not only ensures food security but also has the potential to improve economic stability and reduce dependency on market-available food, promoting self-sufficiency and resilience against economic pressures.

The Lumbung PRS initiative aims to ensure food security and promote economic empowerment by encouraging community members to engage in agricultural activities. By planting vegetables and raising livestock, community members can reduce their food expenditures and generate additional income. This initiative also fosters a shift from consumptive to productive behavior, promoting self-sufficiency and resilience (Galarza et al., 2024; Rusmawati et al., 2023). The training provided by the *pesantren* on hydroponic systems and animal feed fermentation techniques further supports these goals. This approach aligns with the findings of Wetterberg (2005), who noted that individuals with extensive social networks have easier access to resources, enhancing their ability to address community needs.

*Ngaji Ngluruk* (enthusiasm and determination for learning)

In Indonesian, "ngaji" means learning, studying, investigating, or researching, while "ngluruk" comes from the Javanese language, meaning to attack. The term "ngluruk" can be found in Javanese aphorisms such as "*Sugih tanpo Bandha, Digdaya tanpo Aji, Nglurug tanpo Bolo, Menang tanpo Ngasorake*" (rich without treasure, powerful without supernatural powers, attacking without troops, winning without celebration). This phrase suggests a spirited and determined approach. Therefore, "*ngaji ngluruk*" can be interpreted as learning with the fervor and determination of an attack in battle, symbolizing high enthusiasm and proactive engagement in learning.

*Ngaji Ngluruk* at PRS involves students, who are community members, learning with high enthusiasm. This approach emphasizes that learning should be as spirited as an attack in war, meaning it is done with great energy and commitment. Abdullah Sam mentioned that anyone who can teach is encouraged to share their knowledge, regardless of how many people attend. Even if only two people are present, the learning session, referred to as "*ngaji ala Jagong Maton*," takes place. This method fosters a culture of mutual learning and practice, where each individual can develop their skills and roles according to their abilities (Abdullah Syam, personal communication, May 30, 2020).

*Ngaji Ngluruk* not only enhances individual skills but also improves the overall quality of the community. Each family understands their roles and responsibilities, contributing to a supportive and cohesive environment. By promoting active participation and mutual respect, *ngaji ngluruk* elevates the community's social standing and fosters human dignity. If this approach is preserved and implemented across Indonesia, it has the potential to break down social barriers and enhance collective respect and humanity. This makes *ngaji ngluruk* a crucial part of PRS strategy to mobilize social capital for sustainable community empowerment (Samsu et al., 2021; Sutomo et al., 2018).

The concept of *Ngaji Ngluruk* emphasizes learning with enthusiasm and determination, symbolizing proactive engagement in education. This approach encourages community members to share their knowledge and skills, fostering a culture of mutual learning and practice. By promoting active participation and mutual respect, *Ngaji Ngluruk* enhances the overall quality of the community and fosters human dignity. This strategy reflects the principles of social capital, where shared learning experiences and community involvement strengthen social bonds and improve collective outcomes (Coleman, 1988). The success of *Ngaji Ngluruk* in breaking down social barriers and enhancing community cohesion demonstrates the potential of educational initiatives to mobilize social capital for sustainable empowerment.

*Fatehahan* (peace and happiness)

Al-Fâtiḥah, the opening chapter of the Quran, is known as *umm al-Qurân*, meaning the essence of the entire Quran. It encapsulates core life principles, including servitude, monotheism, divine attributes, praise, self-control, worship, devotion, supplication, hope, jihad, guidance, and objectives in relation to Allah, fellow humans, nature, and the promotion of good while forbidding evil (*amar ma'ruf nabî munkar*). Abdullah Sam highlighted these aspects while initiating the activities of the Al-Fatihah community through *riyâdah* Fatihahan at Pesantren Rakyat.

*Riyâdah* Fatihahan is relatively new at this pesantren compared to other spiritual practices, but it has already attracted hundreds of participants, including students and the general public. This ritual typically takes place from 11:00 PM to 3:00 AM, sometimes extending until the dawn prayers. Despite its recent introduction, the practice has garnered a significant following due to its profound spiritual benefits (Abdullah Syam, personal communication, May 30, 2020).

Initially, Abdullah Sam had no intention of conducting *riyâdah* Fatihahan in a congregation. He had been practicing the recitation of Al-Fâtiḥah for many years, starting from the fourth grade of elementary school, well before founding the pesantren. He received certification in reciting Surah Al-Fatihah from Kiai Agus Salim in Lasem, Rembang, Central Java, a renowned friend of KH. Abdul Hamid Pasuruan. Since then, Abdullah Sam has consistently practiced reciting Al-Fatihah at least 40 times every night.

The congregational practice began when a student named Achmad Yudianto sought a method to calm his heart and mind. Abdullah advised him to recite Surah Al-Fâtiḥah 40 times every Friday night. This routine brought significant peace and happiness to the student, who then suggested expanding the practice to a larger group. As a result, the Riyadhoh Fatihahan community formed, with hundreds of participants gathering every Friday night at PRS. During these sessions, they recite Al-Fâtiḥah 100 times, accompanied by other prayers (*istighasah*). The practice continues to grow, with more people from various regions joining to experience the spiritual benefits. Abdullah Sam emphasizes that the recitation of Al-Fâtiḥah should be maintained regularly, even if done alone or with family, to foster continuous spiritual growth and community involvement.

The "*Fatehahan*" initiative at PRS, centered around the communal recitation of Al-Fâtiḥah, demonstrates the profound impact of structured spiritual practices on community cohesion and individual well-being. Al-Fâtiḥah, encapsulating essential Islamic principles, serves as a

foundation for fostering peace and happiness within the community. Despite being relatively new, *Riyâḍah* Fatihahan has quickly garnered a significant following, attracting hundreds of participants, including students and the general public, due to its spiritual benefits. The practice, conducted from late night to early morning, offers a serene and reflective environment, which has contributed to its popularity. Initially a personal practice for Abdullah Sam, the transition to a communal ritual began with a student's request for spiritual guidance, illustrating the organic growth of the practice. The consistent recitation of Al-Fâtiḥah, alongside other prayers, has fostered a sense of unity and spiritual resilience among participants. This finding aligns with existing research on the benefits of regular spiritual practices, which enhance mental health, promote a sense of community, and build social capital (Elgar et al., 2020). The emphasis on maintaining this practice regularly, whether individually or with family, highlights its role in fostering continuous spiritual growth and reinforcing community bonds, underscoring the potential of religious practices in driving sustainable community empowerment.

### Strategies for Strengthening Social Capital as a Sustainable Empowerment Investment

To better understand the strategy of strengthening social capital carried out by PRS in carrying out the role of community empowerment in a sustainable manner "Panca Rukun", the picture below illustrates the flow of the Panca Rukun in PRS.

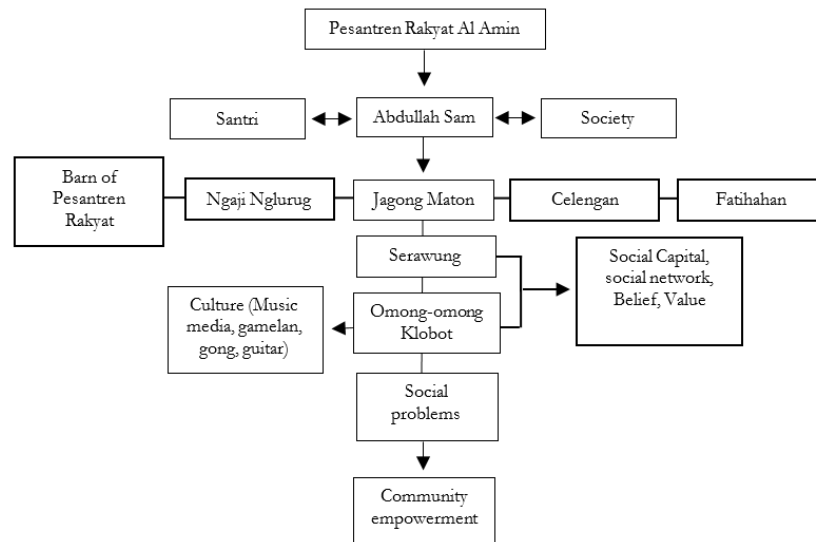


Figure1. PRS features “Pancarukun” as Social Capital Strengthening Strategy of Society Empowerment

Figure 1 vividly captures the strategy of strengthening social capital through PRS "Panca Rukun" model, demonstrating its effectiveness in addressing and solving social problems within the community. By implementing the interconnected components of *Jagong Maton* (community forums), *Celengan* (savings initiatives), *Lumbung Pesantren Rakyat* (food security and economic empowerment), *Ngaji Ngluruk* (enthusiastic learning), and *Fatehahan* (spiritual peace and happiness), the community can harness collective efforts to foster social cohesion and resilience. Each component plays a crucial role: *Jagong Maton* facilitates open dialogue and communal decision-making; *Celengan* promotes financial prudence and mutual support; *Lumbung PRS* ensures food security and economic self-sufficiency; *Ngaji Ngluruk* encourages a proactive learning environment; and *Fatehahan* nurtures spiritual well-being and unity.

The arrows in the flowchart highlight the seamless interaction between these elements, illustrating how they collectively contribute to an empowered society. This integrative approach enables the community to tackle various social issues, from economic hardships to educational



needs and spiritual growth, thus fostering a sustainable and empowered community. By leveraging social capital through these strategies, the community is not only able to address immediate challenges but also build a robust foundation for long-term development and resilience. This comprehensive model serves as a powerful example of how social capital can be mobilized to create empowered and self-reliant communities.

To better understand the strategy of strengthening social capital carried out by PRS through the "Panca Rukun" approach, it is essential to examine its epistemological aspects, consciousness, and management. Epistemology refers to the advancement of ideas, thoughts, and concepts to be developed; consciousness pertains to the behavior of people in following processes and achieving results; and management concerns the implementation and institutional advancement. These aspects must adapt to changes to ensure progress.

Community building often begins with investment in the social environment, fostering healthy and active social interactions. These interactions are crucial for developing formal participation spaces, such as organizations and community associations. The attitudes, behaviors, and relationships that arise from these interactions constitute the social capital of society. Social capital is a relational concept that enhances and supports interaction among people through systems that facilitate cooperation and trust, leading to the achievement of common social goals (Abdullah Syam, personal communication, May 30, 2020).

In the context of community regulation, social capital refers to specific processes among people and organizations that cooperate in an atmosphere of trust. This trust enables the achievement of shared social goals. Unlike physical infrastructure or means of production, social capital emphasizes relational aspects, such as beliefs, norms, and common values that promote social organization, cooperation, and collective action for the common good. Mufidah Ch (2012) identified several indicators of the success of this strategy: the reduction of gaps between different community groups, the emergence of solidarity and mutual aid, and the development of effective, non-coercive social movements. These movements are bottom-up and participatory, fostering a sense of shared responsibility and community engagement.

*Jagong Maton*, a community learning activity, supports the idea that even simple learning activities can have a significant impact on the community. These activities align with the findings of Jumirah and Heni Wahyuni (2018), who noted that high levels of community participation in such activities positively impact community empowerment. Wetterberg (2005) also concluded that individuals with extensive social networks have easier access to resources, enhancing their ability to address community needs. The presence of PRS and its problem-solving processes address core societal elements, including social, economic, political, cultural, and symbolic aspects, creating a balanced and equitable community structure (Horwitz & Horwitz, 2017).

Activities such as *seramung* align with Nahapiet and Ghoshal's (1998) views on shaping community norms. The participation and respect garnered by Abdullah Sam have led to new societal norms, which include values, behaviors, and beliefs that enhance social capital. Fukuyama (2000) also supports this, noting that norms formed through tradition and charismatic leadership foster social capital by regulating personal and group interests. *Jagong Maton*, *celengan*, *lumbung pesantren rakyat*, *ngaji nglurug*, and *fatebaan* are integral strategies in driving social capital in society (Koopmann, 2023). Literature suggests that social capital is crucial for designing renewal and improvement strategies to achieve collective goals (Anderson & Milligan, 2006; Loa, 2002).

In PRS, the challenge in explaining the relationship between social capital and empowerment lies in the relevance of social capital to various levels of analysis. At the individual level, empowerment involves beliefs about one's competence and understanding of the sociopolitical environment (Horwitz & Horwitz, 2017). This trust is built through community engagement with figures like Abdullah Sam. At the organizational level, empowerment involves

the practice of organizational empowerment, where institutions like PRS provide opportunities for community participation and control over their lives. Empowerment organizations must offer key resources and act as catalysts for change through implemented programs. At the community level, empowerment entails the community's ability to initiate improvements, respond to threats, and provide participation opportunities, as seen through the five pillars of PRS. They serve as social capital for the community (Ali, et al., 2023)

Community participation in collective action fosters empowerment, particularly through activities like *fatehaban* and *jagong maton*. Sustainable development of social networks and a sense of community belonging are essential for empowerment, involving participation in collective volunteering activities. This close relationship between students and kyai in PRS facilitates this process. Individual participation in decision-making and organized activities brings value to the empowerment process. In PRS, voluntary community involvement creates a comfortable environment, encouraging participation without burden. Utilizing local wisdom aids in the successful implementation of community empowerment strategies in PRS. Pesantren serves as learning institution for theology (Karman et al., 2023). At the organizational level within PRS, social capital manifests through community organization aimed at empowerment. Empowerment organizations feature democratic and participatory decision-making and joint leadership, as practiced by PRS. This approach aligns with Anderson and Milligan's view that empowerment organizations require structures that facilitate participation and create a conducive climate for empowerment.

## CONCLUSION

The article discusses the strategies employed by PRS to sustain social capital as a form of sustainable community empowerment. The integrative model, known as "Pancarukun" PRS, encompasses various initiatives such as *Jagong Mathon*, *Celengan*, *Ngaji Ngluruk*, *Lumbung Pesantren Rakyat*, and *Fatehab-an*. These strategies focus on strengthening socio-cultural-religious networks, fostering harmony and cooperation between PRS and the community. The implementation of the Pancarukun model has effectively enhanced the spirit of togetherness and consistent collaboration between the pesantren and its community members. This creative initiative has addressed various challenges across sectors such as the economy, agricultural and livestock development, education, religious activities, and cultural arts. By promoting these strategies, PRS has demonstrated the potential of integrative community-based approaches to solve diverse problems and support sustainable development.

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