

UNRAVELING THE UNNOTICED: A CASE STUDY OF COMMUNITY-BASED MASJID AS AN INSTRUMENT OF SOCIAL CONTROL

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Abstract

This ethnographic study explains the social organization of a community-based masjid, located in a rural area on the northern border of Pakistan. The particular focus is on the manner the community-based masjid contributes as an agent of social control in immediate surroundings. Lesson class for religious education of young boys and namaz-e-jumma (Friday congregational prayer) are identified as two main mechanisms for maintaining social control in the masjid and beyond. It is argued that while the image of masjid is presented negatively in scholarly discourse, media and western world in particular, it has important contribution in betterment of social structure and orderly functioning of overall society. The religious lesson class contributes internal control by instilling the values and beliefs of faith while namaz-e-jumma contributes towards external control by strengthening the bonds and attachments among participants and to their community. This way the masjid contributes towards maintenance of informal social control in local setting and an effective tool of formal control. Further empirical research, such as found in this article, is needed for highlighting contributions of the masjid and its role in maintaining order in local community.

Introduction

The aim of this paper is to add some insights into the scarce body of knowledge about the role of masjid, a community-based religious institution, as an instrument of social control in its immediate community. We acknowledge that the assertion intended to address that community-based masjid contributes in the local community as a tool of social control is politicized. The Islamic political instrumentalization has attained widespread attention after 9/11 terrorist attacks in USA (Platteau 2011). The radical Muslim organizations such as Hezbollah in Lebanon, Hamas in Palestine, Taliban in Afghanistan, the Muslim brotherhood in Egypt and Jamaat-ud-Dawah in Pakistan have effectively used masjid for influencing the opinion of common masses towards their perspectives (Gupta and Mundra 2005). We simply employ well-known ethnographic methods, complemented by a survey, to gauge the masjid as an instrument of social control, leaving aside the political dynamics surrounding the institution.

In Pakistan, on the one hand, masjids having pro-US stance in political context have been frequently attacked by the discordant groups and worshippers have been killed (Usmani et al. 2010). On the other hand, masjids and attached seminaries are alleged to be the breeding centers for sectarian hatred and inciting violence like Shia-Sunni conflict in Pakistan (Haleem 2003). It resonates with the sociological input that religion and religious institutions have disruptive and destructive consequences, as maintained by Yinger (Yinger 1946) and Parsons (Parsons 1951). On the other hand, the classical theoretical formulations of Durkheim (Durkheim 1915), Malinowski (Malinowski 1948), Radin (Radin 1937) and some contemporary formulations of Davis (Davis 1949), Nottingham (Nottingham 1954) and Goode (Goode 1951) stress the positive, constructive, supportive and integrative, rather than negative, functions. The paradoxical perspectives and difficulties involved in specifying the role of religious institutions forced theorist Allen Eister to conclude that 'much further thinking about the logical prerequisites for theorizing in this field needs to be done' (Eister 1957).

Apart from the alleged attachment of masjid to extremism and militancy, differing arguments of its true functioning in wider society exist. There is lack of consensus as the role of masjid is advocated as a sanctuary as well as a center for community development. The first view holds that once built, the masjid can only serve the purpose of ritual worship of God as it does not belong to any human but to God, not figuratively but truly under Islamic law (Faruqi 1986). Contradicting it, the second perspective holds that masjid is the center for overall development of the whole community and serves the role of an educational, spiritual, social, administrative, governmental and preventive institution (Alavi 1989). After tsunami hit Indonesia, international donor agencies acknowledged the social role of masjid by providing funds for reconstruction of masjids in the name of community centers and not as masjids (McGregor 2010). Seeking a synthesis through development of a sociological appraisal, Gazalba maintains that worship is just one part of Islamic concept of culture which also includes politics, concept of knowledge, social interaction, economy, art and philosophy, etc. Thus, one may assert the masjid is equally tied with all of these and neglect of any of these leads to crisis in its functioning (Gazalba 1975).

The present article, however, intends to examine the micro-politics of social control in one specific masjid, the main sunni masjid located in a rural community on the northern border

of Pakistan – the Sunshine Community Masjid¹. In particular, the role of formal teaching class of local boys in masjid (religious lesson class) and that of namaz-e-jumma (Friday congregational prayer), as the prime instruments of maintaining social control, will be unraveled in detail. The examination of formal religious lesson class of traditional Islamic teaching in masjid-school, socializing young boys in rituals and belief system of faith, will explore the various processes operating as social control mechanism in the masjid and beyond. Similarly, the examination of namaz-e-jumma, an important feature of Islamic religious life, will highlight its contribution in creating a sense of community among the worshippers and their public commitment to a moral order shared by all. However, before discussing the ways Sunshine Community Masjid works as an agent of social control, it is essential first to become familiar with theoretical dimensions of social control and operationalize it in context of our study.

Social Control: Conceptualization and Contextualization in Sociological Literature

The rapid advancement and urbanization of the 19th century changed the dynamics of the world and necessitated the need to deal with the issue of social control in a calculated way and thus it entered the domain of sociology as its crux. The maintenance of social order, indirectly implying social control in its meaning, was a matter of concern for social scientists longer ago than the development of sociology as an academic and scientific discipline. ‘Mechanical and Organic Solidarity’(Durkheim 1984 [1893]) and ‘Gemeinschaft and Gesellschaft’(Tonnie 1887) were two of many such efforts of classical sociologists to elaborate the development of patterns of social relationships and formation of the whole society and thus dealt with social control in an indirect way.

In 1901, arguing for the possibility of orderly functioning of society, Edward Ross, in an influential publication ‘Social Control: A Survey of The Foundations of Order’(Ross 1901), supports the concept of social control in sociological theory. He tried to find the motivation or reason for harmonious living and cooperative association of individual members of society. He maintained that it was possible due to ‘engines of social control’ that were external to human being and coerced him to modify his desires, feelings and attitudes in total compliance to the expectations and rules of society. Coercion was enlisted as one of the many means of social control but others were also external to man like, persuasion, manipulation, normative consideration and suggestion. Although Ross conceded that social control is more reliable when it develops spontaneously from within the individual but the mechanism of ‘internal control’ was mentioned only marginally. The Ross’s perspective of the superordinate position of society over individual and enforcement to follow its prescription through external means of social control was also shared by some others like Pound (Pound 1942) and previously by Sumner (Sumner 1906). The matter of fact is that this perspective failed to tell how ‘external control’, could be diffused into individual personality or how individual behavior could be controlled through the mechanism of ‘internal control’.

This assumption was criticized and declared deficient and one-sided by social interactionism by maintaining that individual and society are not separate but interrelated in a

¹ For safeguarding the anonymity of mosque and believers, the names of persons and the identifying neighborhood characteristics have been changed, omitted or kept secret.

two-way process, having reciprocal influence. Cooley(Horton 1914[1909]) developed 'looking-glass self' concept to explain the social interaction process between individual and society taking place in three phases. The first phase concerns the appearance of individual to other persons in immediate surroundings like family, peers and the whole society. At the next phase, others give response after judging the personality either by accepting or rejecting, liking or disliking, admiring or condemning, etc. At the last phase, the individual receives the judgments and formulates his looking-glass self. This development of social selves by individual members places them in minds of others. This living in minds of others, so as to say, works as an effective instrument of 'internal control' for controlling the conduct of individual members of society.

George Herbert Mead(Mead 1934) shares this socio-psychological mechanism by maintaining that 'self' develops in two phases, classified as 'I' and 'Me', where social interaction takes place between individual and society. 'Me' represents the attitude of other members of society whereas 'I' represents the response of individual to the attitude of others. This fusion of 'I' and 'Me' emerges 'self' and thus the community enters into the mind of the individual. He further implies that the community becomes a determining factor in the mind of individual but his behavior is not necessarily determined by it. The individual first examines the attitude of community, instead of taking it for granted, and then the response comes. 'I' becomes this response that is not only affected by the community but also affects the community at the same time. Instead of being molded and conditioned by the attitude of others, the individual and society influence each other and produce and sustain the social order.

There are unresolved problems attached with the concept of social control that the aforementioned sociologists have yet to grasp empirically. There is overlapping between the concept of social control and social order and it is difficult to demarcate a dividing line between the two. It is also not clear whether social control should be treated as an independent or dependent variable in empirical research. This clearly shows a definitive lack of clarity in the concept of social control. Keeping all this in mind, Stanley Cohen(Cohen 1985)declared it 'something of Mickey Mouse concept'. Owing to this perplexity and lack of clear understanding, the concept is interpreted and utilized differently by different academic disciplines(Janowitz 1975; Meier 1982).

As a matter of fact, empirical research is needed for refining the theory, clarifying overlapping concepts and distinguishing the concept of social control from the concept of social order. This could be done by identifying the organizational context and then developing an applicable 'operational definition' of the mechanism of social control under investigation. Our study is such an effort to 'operationalize' social control at the micro level in socio-religious context of Sunshine Community Masjid.

Amitai Etzioni's(Etzioni 1964) influential typology of social organizations is relevant here for identifying the organizational context of social control in our study. He classified social organizations into 'coercive', 'utilitarian' and 'normative' on the basis of primary patterns of compliance. In coercive organizations, force or use of force is the dominant mode of social control over the subordinates. Prisons, concentration camps and correctional institutions are the examples of such 'total' organizations. The utilitarian organizations, on the other hand, use remuneration for maintaining control over the participants. The capitalist organizations employing professional, white-collar and blue-collar workers, working and obeying orders for

the sake of material rewards, fall under this category. The case of normative organizations is in total contrast to the coercive and utilitarian organizations. In this case, commitment to ideological and moral values as well as internalization of norms is the primary mechanism for maintaining social control. The main examples of normative organizations are religious and cultural organizations, voluntary associations and clubs and ideological political parties. A unique point is that conformity, in such organizations, evolves from internal beliefs and convictions held by the individual members.

In context of Etzioni's typology, Sunshine Community Masjid, being a religious and cultural community, falls under the normative type. Its participants have mutual social bonding which emerges from their shared beliefs, values and traditions. The internalization of communal norms, beliefs and values functions as the primary, but not the only, form of social control. Social control in our particular context means the extent to which Sunshine Community Masjid promotes order and regulates behavior through the social bonding of participants to the social and moral order. With this theoretical background of social control and its operational definition in practical context of our study, we now focus on Sunshine Community Masjid and its functioning as an instrument of social control.

Sunshine Community Masjid: Nature and Organization of Local Community

Sunshine Community Masjid is situated in a village located at the northern border of Pakistan. 85 percent of population of the village is estimated to be the followers of the Sunni school of thought while the rest belong to Shi'ite sect. The Sunni population is further divided into Ahli-s-Sunnah Wal-Jama'ah/Barelvi which is the traditionalist version of Sunni Islam and its modernist version, the Wahabi school. The worship structure and fundamental belief system of the two subdivisions of Sunni Islam have no major differences. The main point of departure is that of origin as the former has Indian and the later has Arabic origin. In total, there are 15 major Sunni and 2 Shi'ite masjids in the village, each reflecting some particular school of religious thought.

Almost all participants of Sunshine Community Masjid are permanent residents of locality. It is situated relatively far from the center of city so there is continuous and intimate face-to-face relationship among the participants, making it relatively permanent socio-religious community. Overwhelming majority of the participants of this masjid are followers of traditional version of Islam calling it Ahli-s-Sunnah Wal-Jama'ah. This school of thought is highly connected to and interested in Sufism and shows rare political, though benign, activism. They lay strong emphasis on rituals and traditional Islamic values and take pride in socialization of their children in these values.

The Pakistani nuclear family system is continuously replacing the old extended for a noticeable percentage of male bread winners working overseas particularly in Arab world. A bulk of the remaining run small businesses like grocery shops, bakeries, restaurants and so on. A rising majority of graduates cannot find some regular job and start assisting their families in running the small family business. The families without males at their head have to find the best way for socialization of children particularly internalization of Islamic values and norms. The working conditions are tough for those who run small private businesses. The overall atmosphere in the wider community can best be described as 'alienation' for the families without male head of households and 'exclusion' serves better for those working in tough conditions with marginal

profits and earnings. This situation has prompted them to seek solace in the religious and cultural institutions. The masjid has attained the status of central place for better socialization of children and bonding and networking among adult members.

All participants are proficient in Punjabi and Urdu. The religious lesson class in Sunshine Community Masjid holds great importance as it is the place where language, Islamic teachings, beliefs and rituals are learnt.

The Religious Lesson Learning Class: Organization and Contents

The number of young Muslim boys and girls attending the religious lesson class in masjid-school is around 110, within the age limit of 5 to 15 years. Almost all of these students attend the normal school in the day time. The boys and girls sit and learn separately in the masjid unlike the co-educational school environment. All the boys are taught by the imam sahib while the wife of imam sahib is responsible for instruction of girls at the second floor of masjid. The daily average of boys attending masjid-based class is about 60 at one time. The class is normally held at afternoon time between 3 and 5 p.m. and continues six days a week, with the exception of Fridays. The main prayer hall is used as the class which is specified for performance of daily as well as namaz-e-jumma in normal routine. The floor is covered with a green carpet and students feel very comfortable while sitting on it. Normally they sit in rectangular shapes with students covering three walls of the prayer hall. They have long wooden benches in front of them for placing holy Quran and their books and notebooks and each of the benches is large enough to be shared easily by three boys. The fourth wall is specified for imam sahib and off-limits to students so he can conveniently keep an eye on the activities of the students from his location.

The personality of imam sahib is predominantly traditional in outlook. He has relatively long beard and always wears traditional Pakistani clothes. He has formal learning in theology and good command over traditional Islamic literature. Imam sahib is fluent in Urdu and Punjabi while he can also communicate in Arabic and English. His strength, apart from all these educational qualifications, lies in the fact that he knows all Quran by heart. This learning and expertise in Quran has made his personality equally charismatic among both the local community as well as the students of masjid-school. Owing to this quality, he is greatly respected and his status is strengthened. He is not just a teacher in the masjid-school but a leading local community leader particularly in religious and spiritual contexts. It is not just a requirement but mandatory for students to show reverence for him and the parents as well as the whole community has no exception in this regard, manifesting closure of network as advocated by Coleman(Coleman 1988).

The daily routine of the class clarifies the situation of the present study in an eloquent manner. When the class commences, imam sahib sits in his place and calls the students one by one. Each student takes holy Quran and puts it on the bench lying in front of imam sahib. Immediately the boy starts recitation of the religious lesson given on previous day. If the student commits a mistake, imam sahib abruptly corrects him. As soon as this activity comes to an end, the student starts learning a new religious lesson specified by imam sahib during the remaining time of class. Each and every student has to go through this process of reading and learning Quran on individual level. Recitation of Quran is the main task and understanding the meaning is not considered important at this level. This looks like a very simple activity but it has certain important implications for linking these students to other members of the community. The

students memorize some verses, chapters and parts of the holy Quran. The Muslims are obliged to perform five daily prayers and it is essential to recite some verses and parts of Quran during these prayers. This activity of learning Quran enables the students to perform prayer and thus connect and communicate with God in individual capacity. Saying prayers in congregations connect these students with the whole community and thus strengthens their attachment and bonding with the society (Irwin 2002).

This style of learning Quran in Arabic language is just one component of the holistic religious socialization of the local youth in masjid. The pupils are also taught and instructed about the basics of Islam and its fundamentals². The imam sahib explains the details of Islamic faith in detail and the students are supposed to learn it by heart. At times, it is mandatory for students to learn some text in Arabic language. The instructions and the learning of these scriptures have important role in influencing and molding behavior on individual level. For example, a well-known Arabic scripture known as Iman-ul-Mufassal explains the faith in detail, 'I believe in Allah, His Angles, His Books, His Messengers, and the Last Day and in Taqdir (predestination), that everything good or bad is decided by Allah the Almighty and in resurrection after death'³. Through this and other similar religious lessons, students are instructed that believing in faith and obedience of teachings will be rewarded while the disobedience or rejection of the same will result in punishment. This process of bestowing reward or inflicting punishment may take place in this world, in the world hereafter or in both.

Long ago, eminent classical sociologists had paid heed to this connection of belief in supernatural power and molding of individual behavior. Emile Durkheim (Durkheim 1915) and Ross (Ross 1901) has explained that the behavior of an individual could be directly molded by unprecedented faith in the existence and unlimited power of supernatural. The personal proclamation of such beliefs, under conditions of face-to-face interaction, develops collective feelings of attachment to a religious community shared by all. The importance of such belief is emphatically described by Durkheim in the following words:

'(Religious beliefs) are always common to a determined group, which makes profession of adhering to them and of practicing the rites connected with them. They are not merely received individually by all the members of the group; they

² The five pillars of Islam cover its fundamentals. These are as follows: (1) Shahadah, the declaration of faith in Islam, is prerequisite for becoming Muslim and its English translation is 'There is no god but God and Muhammad (PBUH) is the messenger of God'. (2) Salah refers to five daily prayers. (3) Roza or Sawm means fasting from sunrise to sunset in a specified month called Ramadan. (4) Zakat is the economic contribution of well-to-do Muslims for the poor. (5) Haj is the annual pilgrimage to Mecca for those who can afford.

³ The Iman-e-Mufassal describes the faith in God, His Angles, Books, Prophets, the Life Hereafter and His unlimited power to decide the fate of all individuals. The Prophets and Books of Abrahamic religions, like Jesus and Bible, are part of the definition here.

are something belonging to the group, and they make its unit. The individuals, which compose it, feel themselves united to each other by the simple fact that they have a common faith. A society whose members are united by the fact that they think in the same way in regard to the sacred world and its relation with profane world and by the fact that they translate these common ideas into common practices is what is called a church (or a masjid added for comparison). In all history we do not find a single religion without a church (or a masjid added for comparison)'(Durkheim 1915).

This proclamation of Iman-ul-Mufassal and its recitation in the ritual congregational prayer helps individuals to identify themselves with the community and justifies their social and moral commitment to follow its rules and regulations. Any act that will disobey the rules of the group will be considered deviant and can have huge socio-psychological implications. The deviant will have to face the feelings of guilt and there is a threat of punishment in this world and the world hereafter, by the supernatural power as well as the community itself. Here, the common faith is translated into a common act of collective worship. The religious lesson class also intends to do the same by translating the common faith into shared tasks of the community.

Throughout the year, the timing of at least one congregational prayer falls during class duration. It is mandatory for all boys, particularly those above eight years, to say prayer in congregation. They go to wash room for making ablution for prayer. Ablution is a prerequisite for saying prayer and the boys learn how to make it. They first wash their faces, mouths, noses, arms and feet and then dry them with special towels provided for this purpose. Then one of the mature boys makes formal call to prayer in standard Arabic words. Following that, the boys stand in straight lines and offer prayer in congregation, led by imam sahib. They repeat the same practice all days during the class. While the manifest function of this prayer is solely worship and communication with the Creator; it also has certain latent purposes. Through this practice, the boys learn the rules, rituals and worship in Islam. This process of Islamic socialization trains the Muslim boys to participate in main congregational prayers along with the other adult members of community. In a way, this process integrates the boys into the mainstream socio-religious community. Hereby, they become the active participants in practical application of faith in daily life.

This socialization is just one component of the mechanism for maintaining social order in the class. Maladjustment and inappropriate behavior always threatens the smooth functioning of socialization process. In order to ensure the maintenance of social order, the masjid-school also employs certain direct methods. Sporadic and occasional use of corporal punishment is also part of this mechanism. While it is expected that the pupils will focus on the given religious lesson, at times the regulations of masjid-school are not taken care of and the whole atmosphere is disrupted. Some boys begin talking or punching each other while others use indecent language and make noise as well. This behavior not only diverts the concentration from the religious lesson but is also labeled as deviant from set standards of the masjid and the wider community.

Under such circumstances, certain disciplinary measures are taken for maintaining orderly atmosphere for instruction. The imam sahib sits at such a place that he easily keeps an eye on every boy and notes the activities going on in class. A wooden stick in his hands makes them realize that they are under continuous surveillance and their behavior is continuously being

monitored. If a boy gets involved in any inappropriate behavior, first warning comes in shape of staring. Most of the times, he realizes that wrong deed is noticed and automatically quits it and concentrates again on the given religious lesson. This is because he knows that message is transferred and he may face severe consequences if the misbehavior continues for a little while. But some students don't pay heed to this warning or else the impact is temporary and they again start misbehaving after little passage of time. The wooden stick comes into action as long as the misbehavior continues. The culprit receives some blows on the palms of hands, back or hips. Most of the boys become disciplined after this treatment as they become peaceful and refocus on religious lesson. Still some boys repeat the wrong behavior. Some immediate measures are taken by imam sahib to treat such stubborn wrongdoers. He might be separated from rest of the boys in the class or ordered to stand still and read the religious lesson for unlimited period of time. Interestingly, wrongful acts are continuously repeated by relatively older boys, normally above the age of 12 and the younger ones rarely repeat the misdeed. The disciplinary measure used against the habitual culprits is often accompanied by corporal punishment. The frequent misbehavior and continuous disruption of the whole class by the older boys force imam sahib to set a different class time for them. It should be clarified here that the use of corporal punishment for maintaining discipline of the religious lesson class is acceptable for both the parents of the boys and local leaders of the community. The overall perception of boys is also positive towards use of strict disciplinary measures for maintaining order in the religious lesson class. While the role of corporal punishment has largely disappeared from Western public schools, it can be found in certain, both religious and public, schools as mentioned in an essay on 'Corporeal Punishment in Schools' by 'Association for Childhood Education International' in 2011.

The masjid-school also keeps an eye on other activities and employs a tool for controlling misbehavior taking place outside the religious lesson class. Some students cause disruption during the performance of ritual prayer while complaints are also filed by victims who are beaten or hurt by fellows, especially outside the class. The eradication mechanism of this misdeed basically employs socio-psychological pressure, generally termed 'shaming' in scholarly discussions where the main focus is laid on the offense and not on the offender (Braithwaite, 1989). Once 'shaming' technique was employed when some noise and loud laughter was noticed in the back rows of the congregation during the performance of prayer. As long as the prayer ended, the imam sahib asked two 'good boys' to mention the individual who created noise and louder laughter during the performance of prayer. The culprit was identified without any wastage of time and ordered by imam sahib to come in front of the whole crowd, consisting of his classmates as well as some members of the local community. He was strictly questioned about the reason for laughing and pushing others during performance of ritual prayer. There was complete silence as the boy was too embarrassed to utter even a single word in response to the query. This scenario manifested silent approval of misbehavior and seeking of repentance by the boy. This situation of complete silence lasted for a few moments and then imam sahib harshly asked him if he was ashamed of his inappropriate behavior. The next step was an order for the boy to stand still against the front wall confronting the whole congregation until the conclusion of prayer with a formal prayer. The boy seemed clueless and without any choice but to follow the order. Everyone was looking at him while he was continuously staring at the wall.

After concluding the ritual prayer, imam sahib advised the boy that this sort of inappropriate behavior should not happen again. In addition, very politely he told the boy that he was actually a 'good boy'. Although, imam sahib never compromised on maintenance of order in

class and took it very seriously, he always accepted the repentance and reintegrated the wrongdoer as a normal participant of class. This whole process represents 're-integrative shaming' developed by Australian criminologist Braithwaite (Braithwaite 1989). It is basically a process whereby the offender is held responsible for wrongful act but repentance is deemed enough for his reintegration into the group as a graceful member. 'A sense of shame is the beginning of integrity' is the case of boy reintegrated after committing mistake.

The personal perspective of boys generally highlighted few positive viewpoints of their education. Some of them complained about inappropriate facilities for maintaining conducive environment for learning. The size of the class was large and thus strict measures were often taken for maintaining the house in order. This strictness discouraged many boys from attending the religious lesson class in masjid. Some others found religious lessons boring and irrelevant to their future professional careers. Whatever their opinion, all of them wanted to attend the religious lesson class and generally reported: 'It is the place where we meet with our friends regularly and can also make new friends'. The masjid-school also contributes to local community by keeping boys off the streets. It seems that the parents recognize this fact as some of the boys mentioned, that 'it is better to come to masjid for attending religious lesson class otherwise it will be difficult to pass tough time at home'. A dual social control process then emerges, parental pressure at home is not the only factor that motivates these boys to attend the masjid-school. Rather internal motives of boys also play important role in integration of these boys in the community and their identification with it.

Although, the masjid-school lacks many educational facilities and employs two apparently contradictory methods, through voluntary internalization of beliefs and application of threat and corporal punishment, as tools for maintaining social control in religious lesson class, the school can successfully transmit the Islamic faith, rituals and morality to the boys. Majority of the boys were equipped with enough skills for performing both individual and collective prayers, namaz-e-jumma and other important ritual prayers performed on important occasions of Islamic calendar.

Some important facts were revealed through a questionnaire that was purposefully distributed among 50 regular students of masjid-school within the age range of 10 to 15⁴. It was noticed that these boys found relevance between religious/spiritual teachings and their lives as Muslims. In response to a query 'how much of Islamic teachings should be followed in matters of daily life?' the response was as follows: three-fourth (73 percent) of the boys replied 'all Islamic teachings', while one-fifth (20.6 percent) boys said 'all major Islamic teachings'. On the same lines, only 6.4 percent of the boys replied that 'Islamic teachings that are concerned with rituals and worship', whereas none of the boys replied 'it is not necessary to follow Islamic teachings'. These statistics clearly indicate that the boys found huge relevance between the teachings of Islam and the chores of daily routine life. This excellent rate of relevance manifests the effectiveness of the religious lesson class in masjid-school in linking the pupils to the socio-religious order of their local community. This resonates very well with the assertions of prominent sociologists' Durkheim (Durkheim 1951) and Kornhauser (Kornhauser 1978) that the

⁴ The simple questionnaire was meant to check the perspective of boys about the relevance of Islamic teachings with the daily routine and secular life of Muslims.

more an individual is attached to the social and moral order of society, the more he/she will be influenced by it. It is abundantly clear that the religious lesson class in masjid-school instills internal control in the youngsters while also training and socializing them in rituals and manners of the faith. Friday prayer, an important Islamic ritual, is such a tool of external control that further diffuses the mechanism of social control in the sphere of community.

Namaz-E- Jumma (Friday Congregational Prayer): Feelings of Community and Commitment to Communal Morality

Performance of ritual prayer is an important characteristic of the Islamic religious life. The holy Quran and the traditions of the prophet lay huge stress on performance of ritual prayer for both men and women. The prophetic traditions declare it 'the foundation of Islam'. It is regularly observed in shape of five daily prayers, weekly Friday prayer, the annual Eid prayers as well as some special prayers for specific purposes. It is the most common way of worshiping the Unique God. A Muslim is obliged to pray the five daily prayers, most preferably, in congregation but the practicalities of modern fast life make it difficult to fulfill this responsibility. Majority of Muslims pray at home or at the workplace in personal capacity. Only a few people have the opportunity of performing congregational prayer in masjid.

On the other hand, the Friday prayer can only be performed in congregation and it is a must for Muslims to attend masjid without any distinction of gender, class or status (Goitein 1959). Gender separation is strictly maintained as ground floor is specified as prayer room for men while women prayer room is located on the upper floor. Worldwide believers of the faith deem Friday prayer highly important and take it very seriously. The Quran instructs very straightforwardly in this regard; 'When it is called for the prayer of jumma (Friday congregational prayer), hurry to worship of Allah and leave business' (Quran). Local people shut all business dealings and attend masjid on every Friday afternoon in order to fulfill the order of God. Surroundings of the masjid are crowded with worshipers around 1 o'clock. The masjid gets crowded and the entrance of the masjid is bombarded with incoming men, young boys as well as women who use the same entrance and move towards their specified locations on both floors. The wash rooms for ablution are always busy with worshippers making ablution and getting prepared for prayer. The hallway immediately outside the prayer rooms are flooded with colorful assortments of sneakers and sandals as everybody takes off shoes and then enters the main prayer hall and sits alongside other believers in straight horizontal rows, on a fully furnished carpeted floor. Special mats are placed on floor on every Friday. All participants sit with their faces facing towards mihrab (a special niche designed in the front wall facing Mecca) and minber (Islamic pulpit). Normally men and old persons occupy the front rows while the youngsters sit in the middle and back rows. Although there is no hard and fast rule for sitting arrangements in masjid, it indicates respect for elders in the community. At times, the masjid is crowded and there is no available space for the remaining believers who come a little late. In recent times, the number of men attending namaz-e-janaza has increased dramatically so they occupy the hallways and if necessary are directed up to the prayer room of women, where men occupy the front rows and women sit in the back rows. If weather is convenient then special mats are also laid on road adjacent to masjid for latecomers to offer prayer. There could be certain reasons for huge influx and attendance in namaz-e-jumma. Given the sense of being a Muslim by default, the major drive behind the attendance is more ceremonial and habitual and it is a part of social rhythm. The

avoidance of embarrassment represents another motivating factor for attending namaz-e-jumma regularly in nearby masjid.

The imam sahib wears traditional clothes and possesses charismatic personality. 1.45 p.m. is the time specified for starting formal prayer throughout the year but the imam sahib goes up the minber at 1.00 p.m. and starts khutba (oration) that lasts for 45 minutes. This practice is pursuit of the tradition of holy prophet where he used an elevated place to address the Muslim community about pertinent issues and policies(Khutba 1953). He mostly speaks in Urdu language but also mixes native Punjabi. Because the lecture is delivered from the prayer room of men, women can only hear the lecture through speakers on the upper floor. They sit on the carpet or lean against the wall in a comfortable, still requiring modest dress and style, way.

The contents of the preaching are carefully selected by the imam sahib. If any Islamic sacred date or event, like day of martyrdom of prophet's grandson Hussain, is closeby then its historical development and importance is discussed in detail. Current happenings in the local community as well as in the Islamic world, like unfortunate situations of Muslims in Kashmir, Palestine, Bosnia and situation in Afghanistan, are also sporadically mentioned in the sermon. Basically the sermon is a mechanism of reminding Muslims of their dedication to the moral values. A wide range of issues, ranging from personal to social matters, are discussed in context of obligations and prohibitions. Individual matters like dressing, eating, cleanliness and virtues of honesty, integrity, truthfulness, chastity, modesty, greetings, and etiquettes are thoroughly briefed along with obligations towards parents, neighbors, kin, the needy as well as society, state and overall humanity. Typical themes often address the challenges faced by Muslim community such as consumerism, hyper-sexuality and other temptations of worldly life. The khutba always relates to some sort of organic community in accordance to Tonnie's ideology, 'all kinds of social co-existence that are familiar, comfortable and exclusive are to be understood as belonging to Gemeinschaft'(Tonnie 2001). While some of its elements are universal but it always reflects the value orientation of an Islamic Pakistani community.

Knowing that the listeners may already have enough knowledge about these issues, the imam sahib relates and practically applies them to the routine life of local community. He discusses prohibitions imposed by Allah and also quotes examples from Islamic history, folklore tales and daily routine life. Amr-bil-marooof(order for virtues) and nahil anil munkir (forbidding from sins) and haram (prohibited) and halal (lawful) constitute the main theme of sermon. He maintains that becoming dearer to Allah is not easy as it requires discipline, extreme self-control as well as giving up of certain pleasures. He explains the damaging effects of sins on both personal and societal level. He stresses people to be truthful and honest and restrains from free mixing of opposite genders. Shifting his attention towards gender issues, he discourages women from wearing such clothes and perfumes that may attract the attention of men. However, females are allowed to express their individual styles and become fashionable while remaining truly within the bounds set by modesty. One way to do this is to bring more diversity in patterns and colors of dresses and headscarves and by decorating the dresses with ornate pins. He also refrains Muslim men from wearing flashy items like gold or silk chains that may draw undue attention or promote materialism. He warns the parents to be vigilant and keep an eye on activities of sons and daughters and rejects gender mixing to save them from corruption. Here he cites the case of excessive and undue use of modern technology particularly mobile phones and discusses its negative effects on personalities of youth and overall society. He emphasizes to be away from

sins and follow the instructions of Islam to be safe from the wrath of God. He cites saying of prophet: ‘the signs of the hypocrite are three: when he speaks, he lies; when he makes a promise, he breaks it; and when he is entrusted with something, he betrays that trust’. He declares lying as ‘mother of all evils’. Then he explains the condition of Muslims and proposes a solution as:

‘...the present state of Muslims is pathetic because they have abandoned their religion and tradition both on personal and collective level. We must learn a religious lesson and follow the teachings of Islam in letter and spirit. Once we return to Allah, he will remove our hardships and save us from evils. If we follow His orders and create a true community of believers where there is no hypocrisy, drugs or free mixing He will bless us with an ideal way of life without any evils, violence or hardships’.

The sermon ends with a concluding prayer in which everybody, holding hands up in the air, seeks forgiveness of committed sins and guidance for true path from God. The formal communal call to prayer is then made in Arabic language. ‘Allah Akbar’ (‘God is Great!’) rings out and swirls across the floors of masjid and outside. Immediately after the call, everybody performs specified prayers in individual capacity and then the imam goes up to minber and delivers first of the two formal sermons. The formal sermon is basically script in Arabic language that is standardized across the whole Muslim world. It consists of prayers and greeting for the prophet himself as well as the four caliphs, his descendants, companions and followers. At the end of the first formal sermon, the imam sits for two minutes on the minber signaling a break between the two formal sermons. He stands again and starts reciting the second formal sermon. Although, it is also standardized Arabic scripture as the first one, there is flexibility of modifying it according to will and circumstances. Generally, here guidance and strength is sought for rulers for implementing the law of Islam. It comes to an end with a verse of Quran ‘Allah commands justice, fairness and giving (dues) to close relatives.’ (Quran)

Both of the formal sermons are delivered in Arabic language and only a handful of listeners have enough proficiency in Arabic to understand the meaning but everybody listens to them with full concentration. The reason is that these formal sermons are integral part of collective prayer offered by the imam sahib on behalf of whole congregation. As soon as the second formal sermon comes to an end, all worshippers stand up in horizontal straight rows, facing the Ka’aba. The imam sahib starts recitation of Quranic verses in a religious rhythm specified for this purpose. The whole congregation listens silently and follows his actions during bowing, sajda (putting head on ground) and other specified rituals of prayer. At the end of collective prayer in congregation, every one performs the remaining prayer individually. Apparently the performance of namaz-e-jumma looks like a symbolic system of Islamic morality consisting of signs, sermon and rituals. A detailed examination reveals many other social functions of this collective social practice for the benefit of whole community. During the performance of namaz-e-jumma, the thoughts of the believers are focused upon:

‘...their common beliefs, their common traditions, the memory of their ancestors, the collective idea of which they are an incarnation; in a word, upon social things...the spark of social being which each bears within him necessarily participates in this collective renovation. The individual soul is regenerated, too,

by being dipped again in the sources from which its life came; consequently, it feels itself stronger, more fully master of itself' (Durkheim 1915).

This sociological explanation of religious life may seem at odds to Islamic theology to many but no one can negate the fact explained that having a shared faith and its translation in collective action enhances cohesion and increases the sense of community among the worshippers. The local community finds spiritual strength and security in their common shared sense of being a religious community. Namaz-e-jumma constitutes shared feelings of collective expression and unity. Through the congregational praying for the sake of one God, following one imam, facing one place (the Ka'aba), reciting or listening verses of the same Quran enhances unity manifolds. Muslims stand side-by side with one another in rows without any distinction or differentiation on any basis as no one is deemed higher than another before God. Everybody is equal in the eyes of Allah so there is no rich or poor, king or subject, or first or second class citizen. All participants stand shoulder to shoulder and worship in a structured and disciplined manner. This atmosphere of closeness and intimacy develops feelings of mutual affection particularly if the individual on the right or left side may be visibly different, perhaps disabled or of poor circumstances. The understanding that they are all creatures of God, obliged to serve and worship Him in accordance to His commands, really binds all the believers in a shared network.

The internalization of shared norms and use of 'we' and 'us' signifying the unity and communality have important implications as far as controlling individual and social undertakings are concerned as maintained long ago by Durkheim, 'we are moral beings to the extent that we are social beings' (Durkheim 1961). It is not that we are just dependent morally and socially on groups rather that we are largely influenced and controlled by them. Keeping social control perspective in mind, the public expression of shared emotions and unity exhibited by the worshippers during weekly namaz-e-jumma is of equal importance because this phenomenon renews the believers' dedication to the religious and moral values shared by all community. It reiterates the commitment to God and His orders as well as mutual commitment among the members of community to its values and norms. Embracing imam sahib and each other, at the end of namaz-e-jumma, gives a human touch to the commitment of the faithful worshippers of Sunshine Community Masjid. After Friday prayer, the men and women exit the masjid entrance and gather in small gender differentiated groups. The men greet each other and ask about those who are absent. If it is revealed that some of the absentees are sick, others volunteer to visit and console them; if they are found in some sort of difficulty, need or stress, others do their best to help them out. They meet each other and come to know one another in a much better way. Here the Muslim individual is introduced to the community and develops a feeling of greater belonging to the community. Attending namaz-e-jumma in masjid is a major source of solidarity, interaction and socialization in Islam.

Conclusion

The examination of social organization of masjid reveals important features about its constructive role in wider society. Although some individual incidents and political factors have attached some negative phenomena to masjid, its contribution, as a community-based institution, may clearly be recognized. It internalizes the beliefs and values of the faith and creates a feeling of belonging to community and shared morality among its participants. Alongside other social institutions, it creates the order of society and plays its role for maintaining it. The religious lesson class of young adults and namaz-e-jumma are two mechanisms that play an important role

in maintaining social control mainly in an indirect and informal way. It is obvious that there are many deficiencies in the religious lesson class and while it lacks impetus to ensure complete socialization of young Muslims into rituals, morality and belief system of Islam, it seems quite successful in instilling elements of 'internal control'. Namaz-e-jumma translates the Islamic morality into practical action on weekly basis and attaches the worshippers to the community by strengthening bonds among them. Internal control maintained by the internalization of Islamic morality and external control developed by cohesion of worshippers through public expression of internalized values in namaz-e-jumma are the reflections of informal social control. In the community-based masjid, a normative organization, however, the informal mechanism of social control is viable and appears more effective in maintaining order than the state-employed formal mechanism of social control.

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