

COMMUNITY INVOLVEMENT IN CRIME PREVENTION AND JUDICIAL PROCESS: THE EXPERIENCE OF SAUDI ARABIA

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Abstract

Although community justice, as a new trend, does not exist in Saudi Arabia in a strict western sense, local community does get involved in crime prevention and judicial process, such as community policing, community prosecution, and restorative justice sanctioning. These community involvements are based on Islamic religion, collective culture (such as tribalism) and social system (such as Sheikh and Umda system). Similar to community justice in western society, community involvement in crime prevention and judicial process in Saudi Arabia helps Saudi government to maintain social order and create a coherent and harmonious society.

Community justice is a relatively new trend in Western countries. The concept refers to all measures that explicitly include the community in the justice process (Karp and Clear, 2000), especially instances in which crime and justice affect community life. Community justice includes the processes of community crime prevention (Bennet, 1998), community policing (Goldstein, 1990), community defence (Stone, 1996), community prosecution (Boland, 1998), community courts (Rottman, 1996), and restorative sanctioning system (Bazemore, 1998). The traditional aim of community justice is not to replace the existing justice system, nor to invalidate any existing procedural rights of offenders and victims, but rather to arrange a sanction that is fair and substantively adequate to meeting the needs of the victim, the offender and the community, and further enhance the community quality of life (Clear and Karp, 2000).

Traditional criminal justice is normally claimed and realised by both judicial and police systems, which are governmental organs. In line with these agencies, the avenues of community justice are typically regarded to be democratic and decentralised. The distinct traditional boundaries between the role of the state and the role of community are challenged in the community justice approach. From this perspective, community justice is viewed to be far removed from Middle Eastern countries, which are often accused of being autocratic, thus, lacking the perceived foundations of democracy. However, at its core, the focus of community justice is public safety and the quality of community life, which is not exclusive to any governmental or political system. A look at Middle Eastern cultures illustrates that community justice does exist in these Islamic countries; moreover, presence may be more

substantial than in Western countries. Islamic countries are characterised with low crime rates (Fajnzylber et al., 1998; Haroon, 1993; Mohammad, 1991; Souryal, 1990; United Nations, 1993), which Western scholars tend to attribute to harsh punishments, such as amputation, beheading, or public stoning. However, the true reason may lie in less extreme aspects of society, including the prevalence of community justice.

Community justice in the Middle East, perceived as a partnership between formal criminal justice and the community, is deeply rooted in religion and social institutions. It operates at a policing stage, adjudicating stage, or correcting stage. They target community-level outcomes by focusing on problem solving (short- or long-term), restoring victims and communities, strengthening normative standards and reintegrating offenders (Crawford, 1995).

Islam and law

The word of 'Islam' means 'submission or surrender to Allah's (God's) will'. All Muslims must first and foremost obey and submit to Allah's will. Of course, Islam is not merely a religious influence but also a set of political, legal, economic, and social doctrines that influence and guide the norms and practices of believers and societies (Kurtz, 1995; Groves et al., 1985; Turner, 1974). For Muslims and for those living in Islamic states, theocracy heavily influences all matters, both public and private. Islamic law is controlled, ruled and regulated by the Islamic religion, which is inherently different from the common law or continent law systems. There is a lack of separation of mosque (church) and state in Islamic law – a fact that is often novel, and sometimes misunderstood, for non-Muslim scholars. The religion, law, and government are integrated. The judiciary is not an independent institution but an extension of the political authority. Although implementation of this concept varies across different Islamic countries, all governments and civil authorities are based on it (Wiechman, Kendall and Azarian: online). Saudi Arabia is a state which particularly sticks to traditional Islamic law which is known as Shariah law.

The Shariah law means the path to follow God's law. It is so comprehensive that it rules or regulates all public and private behaviours, ranging from such domains as border disputes, international conflicts, hygiene, diet, sexual conduct, and elements of child rearing (Abdel Haleem, Sharef and Daniels, 2003; Peters, 2005).

Shariah works not only as law, but also as an ideal ethical system (Turner, 1974). The Shariah law has five sources from which to draw its guiding principles. The first is the Quran, which is the holy book for all Muslims. The second source is the teaching of the Prophet Mohammad, called Sunna, which is not explicitly found in Quran. These first two categories of crimes are processed in Shariah court. The third source for Shariah law is Ijma, which is the consensus on specific issues reached by Ulama, who are religious scholars. The Ijma embraces concepts and ideas not found explicitly in either Quran or Sunna. The fourth source is Qiyas, which are judicial decisions made by a higher judge on cases occurring in modern society. This is similar to legal precedent in western common law systems. The Ijma and Qiyas are made to cater to the new crimes, which were observed in traditional societies. Judges have great discretion in applying Ijma and Qiyas to a specific case (Schacht, 1964). The fifth source is

called 'all encompassing', which theoretically includes all helpful information on specific cases, such as the New Testament, local custom, or a suspect's social status (Wiechman, Kendall and Azarian: online). The Ijma, Qiyas and 'all encompassing', in many cases, are developed through various governmental decrees which specify codes of behaviour and regulations. For example, fields such as corporate law, taxation, oil, gas, and immigration give rise to new cases that are usually handled administratively by governmental officials (Wiechman, Kendall and Azarian: online). In short, Islamic law is well established and updated to present time. Saudi jurisprudence will refer to resources and authentic documents to find the correct course of action if the Islamic regulations stated in the primary sources do not explicitly deal with every conceivable eventuality.

In Islam, there are three categories of crimes, namely Hadd (or plural, Hudud; meaning 'limit' set by God), Tazir and Qesas (Ali, 1985; Al-Thakeb and Scott, 1981). The Hadd are considered to be in violation of God's law and are felonies punished by a pre-established punishment found in Quran. The Tazir entails penalties related to crimes against society. They are similar to western misdemeanours. All acts that violate private or community interests are subject to Tazir. It is left to the discretion of judges to establish rules within the spirit of the Shariah to punish such acts. Judges are allowed great flexibility in punishing Tazir offenders. A guilty verdict could yield punishments ranging from the death penalty for espionage and heresy, to flogging, imprisonment, and fines for a variety of 'lesser' crimes. The Qesas are punishment for certain crimes, whereby the victim or her/his family has a right to seek retribution (called Diya in Arabic) and retaliation (Haroon, 1993). The flexibility of Tazir and Qesas leaves great room for community justice.

The role of community in Saudi Arabia

Muslim society tends to be more collective than modernised western societies, which may be attributed to its culture, homogeneity, and family network (Helal and Coston, 1991; Shelly, 1981). This may be at least partially attributed to religious influence. In Islam, collective duties are given more emphasis than individual rights. As is indicative of collectivist cultures, individual interests are typically subordinate to collective interests (Markus and Kitayama, 1991).

Some have said that it is difficult for ego to find a place in Muslims' hearts. Indeed, the Quran illustrates the importance of community and selflessness. It stipulates that Muslims should help other Muslims if they are in need. For many Muslims, the social will and the sense of community is Allah's gift, which individuals acquire through the auspice of social institutions and socialisation. It is widely recognised in Islamic society that it is necessary to make individuals aware of their role in his families and community.

A community-based identity among individuals is well established in all Muslim societies, including Saudi Arabia (Kurtz, 1995). The history of Bedouin tribes is not too distant a memory for Saudi Arabians, and its effects on community are apparent. For example, Muslims from the same tribe feel tend to feel closer and more intimate. Different from the West, the old people in communities and oldest bothers in family are more respected in Islamic societies. Every tribe or village community is led by Sheikh (also spelled Shaikh)

which literally means 'old man'. The Sheikh is senior, well aware of the local community, and highly respected by community members. In modern Islamic society, Sheikhs may be appointed by government or may inherit the position. Historically, the Saudi government has minimally interfered with the Sheikh's role or tribal affairs. A strong community-based identity and Sheikh system lays a solid foundation for community justice in Saudi Arabia.

In the cities, Umda (literately meaning 'mayor', also spelled Omda) are in charge of local community affairs. These men are essential controllers of the rhythm of daily life in various Saudi cities, and serve as a liaison between the administrator, the citizen, and resident. The Umda works for government on administration, but receives a little financial support from local community rather than from government because a small service fee may be charged to community members. Residential areas in cities are divided into several parts. Each area has one Umda to be in charge of miscellaneous affairs, particularly community security. The Umda is acquainted with community members in his area and familiar with all local affairs. Needless to say, community justice has its solid cultural and institutional roots in the Saudi cities.

At the same time, the judicial system in Saudi Arabia is accessible to the public too, which provides a precondition for initiating reparative and re-integrative processes (Moore, 1986). The public are encouraged to participate in the judicial process through Sheikh or Umda or themselves. In brief, religion and social system in Saudi Arabia determine that the rule-bound coercion or single interest usurpation is not the main mechanism in Saudi, but the deliberation based on local priorities, egalitarian principles and responsiveness.

Policing

Policing in the West used to be based on a detached professional model but it has shifted to an involved community model (Barajas, 1995; Bazemore and Griffiths, 1997; Bazemore and Schiff, 1996; Griffiths and Hamilton, 1996). Earlier than the West, it has been well recognised in Saudi Arabia that it is incorrect to assume that the onus of public safety falls entirely on the criminal justice system. Saudi Arabia, as a developed traditional state, has incorporated different variations of community policing in cities and rural areas.

Community policing, first of all, starts from religious education through mosque service. Islam not only stresses stopping crime by harsh punishment, but also emphasises the importance of preventing crime through the cultivation of religious consciousness and morality. Every Friday, when there is a prayer, a special topic is designed for the prayer, which is similar to Christian worship on Sunday. The imam delivers a speech to Muslims on the topic. The topic is centred on subjects relevant to and influential in the local community. These speeches serve to instil morality as a core motivator and to reinforce the Islamic principles of community life, including the importance of individual responsibility in maintaining community security. For example, if one community member commits a crime, or if the local community has been hurt by recent crime, the topic may focus on the importance of 'behaving well' or 'crime prevention'.

Such regular meetings through prayer not only function to maintain social order via direct education but also function to maintain social security indirectly. First of all, it develops a sense of community among Muslims. They grow up in the same community, pray together, feel a deep sense of belonging in the community, and therefore may feel a stronger drive to take responsibility on community matters. This logic, in line with anecdotal evidence, suggests that if someone in a Saudi community witnessed a wrongdoing (e.g. drunk driving or the breaking of a car window) he or she would likely report the violation to the local community authorities or police. Beyond developing a sense of community, the second effect of regular mosque services is that they instil respect for the laws and regulations in the attendees' minds. This increased salience likely reduces the crime rate in the community. Third, the mosque teaches people, particularly youth, how to behave appropriately and righteously in specific situations, ranging from sports to driving an automobile. Fourth, these services remind Muslims to take precautions and security measures for the well-being of property and children. This not only benefits the individual taking such precautions but the community's quality of life as well. Lastly, community mosque services provide Muslims with parenting skills based on generations of religiously-driven child-rearing practices. It is widely acknowledged by Muslims that early child education and the improvement of physical and mental health (such as developing the habit to pray in the mosque) have a great role in regulating their behaviour. These points clearly illustrate that Islam develops a sense of moral, conscientious community through regular prayers (Stark et al., 1982). These effects reduce the occurrence of crime and increase community monitoring in local community.

Community policing in Saudi Arabia is further based on rural and urban social systems. In the countryside, every village has its own informal committee, which helps to maintain social order in the village. The committee is composed of highly respected senior persons. These committee members, who are elderly, usually do not hold regular occupations. The men are typically pious Muslims and, as such, they attend mosque five times per day for prayer. After prayer, their duties may entail that they walk around and watch the goings-on of the village. If there are any new faces appearing in the village, they may approach him/her and ask him/her what s/he is doing there. If s/he is found to be suspicious, the strange person may be brought to the committee office for further investigation, at which point the police may be contacted for official detention.

For small conflicts that occur within the tribe/clan/village, the local community, and specifically the Sheikh, will bring both parties together and try to resolve the problem peacefully. Through this process, conflicts often do not escalate and serious crimes are prevented. A typical case would be couples in conflict. A Sheikh may use his influence and wisdom to persuade both parties and give suggestions to both sides. As a result, divorce is prevented. In the same vein, the conflict within the family can be resolved by the oldest brother in the family, and the negative effect can be minimised. Such kinds of community justice are so effective in Saudi Arabia that Wardak (2005) argues that the low crime rate in Saudi Arabia may be attributed to the fact that many trivial criminal complaints are resolved outside formal judicial institutions and remain undocumented by police. Indeed, it seems as though Islam is an influential social force generating powerful social sanctions (Groves et al., 1985).

In urban communities, there is a semi-official committee consisting of imam of mosque, teachers, industry and media leaders, and heads of family. Committee members may be assigned by government or assume the role through elections, with the former holding relatively more power than the latter. These individuals, led by Umda, work together with the goal of resolving family problems and preventing crime. Small conflicts between residents, once reported, may be solved by the committee at the initial stage. Strange persons appearing in their area may be investigated by Umda or committee members. In some large cities, such a function faded out a little due to expansion of cities in the late 20th century, but still exists widely in Saudi Arabia. Just because Umda system is so indispensable to Saudi urban citizens, for those cities, currently, there is an increasing awareness of revitalising the role of community involvement in community related justice in policing and security matters (Humaidan and Sheraya, 2009). Saudi administration in those cities is recalling restoring the role of Umda and even trying to enrol Umda in courses specialising in the suppression of crime. For instance, Tariq Fadaaq, the president of the Jeddah municipality, initiated a programme for the Umda's performance development to keep their positive and serious roles in the general and social development of their neighbourhoods. Umda in Jeddah act like unofficial police employees to provide help and services both in terms of investigation and research in criminal cases. Umda in Jeddah also contributes to maintaining social order by providing information about the local population, visitors and those wanted upon police request (Humaidan and Sheraya, 2009).

Adjudicating

There is no neighbourhood-based prosecution in Saudi Arabia in the strict Western sense, but we can see similar community court in Saudi Arabia, because local community plays a role in the sentencing process through consultation in the judicial process.

By and large, Western scholars have developed the consensus that Islamic law is strict, sometimes overly so; however, the strict punishment is based on strong evidence and careful considerations. The Islamic judge will look into the criminal motives, the tool used, the circumstance wherein the crime occurs, and the evidence of crime. The judge will impose the Hadd punishment only when the suspect confesses to the crime or there are enough witnesses to substantiate the legitimacy of the crime. Some flimsy evidences (circumstantial or hearsay evidence) or limited proof will not typically result in Hadd punishment. The judge has to rely on local community for evidences and then make a judicial decision. Typically, two witnesses are required to convict a suspect of a Hadd crime, but in some special cases, such as adultery, four witnesses are required (Quran, 24:4). If there is a doubt about the guilt of a Hadd crime, the judge must treat it as a Tazir crime (Schacht, 1982). Community members are encouraged to provide testimony if they witnessed the crime occur. Participating in the judicial process not only helps clarify the twists or confusions in criminal cases, but also fosters a sense of participation and joint cooperation among the community members. Such inclusion fits the spirit of community justice, which views crime as a violation not only against individuals, but also against their families and the community in which they live, instilling a duty in the local community to be involved (Wilkinson, 1997).

The most significant idea in Islam is peace. Therefore many judicial actions in Saudi Arabia are not to punish criminals, but to repair the harm done to the victim and the community through negotiation, mediation, empowerment, and reparation (Wilkinson, 1997). This is exactly what Western community justice holds. One typical example is the Diya system in Islam, which is congruent with criminological assumption of retribution in the contemporary common law system. The Diya (literally meaning 'blood money') system is a perfect combination of criminal law and civil hearing. In the 'bargaining process' for Diya, both the offender's and victim's families and/or tribes may sit down and discuss the case and decide the details of the Diya. This process is very similar to family conference adopted in Australia. If the offender's family can not afford the Diya once the verdict is death, his or her tribe may take the responsibility of collecting money within the tribe and help the offender's family to pay the Diya. The tribe sometimes pays the victim not to save the accused tribe member, but to save the tribe's reputation. Our interviews with Saudis expose one interesting example; one Muslim once stole 3 million riyals from his company owner and then disappeared. The victim of the theft turned to the thief's tribe for help. Consequently, the tribe agreed to return 3 million riyals to him, despite the fact that the thief had disappeared and recouping their losses was likely impossible.

In situations such as this, it is not only the tribe that can help, but also individuals. Islam states that if someone helps another at a critical moment, it will aid passage to heaven. Therefore, some people – perhaps even strangers to the offender – sometimes approach the victim's family on behalf of the offender to offer the victim or his family Diya for the purpose of lenience on the offender. Such efforts in seeking renouncement of the victim's families about their rights is a virtue apparent throughout Saudi Arabia. Royal families always play the role of mediator or hold up mediator's behaviours. The following are some typical examples.

- Case I: Ali ibn Khalaf Al-Ahmadi pardoned his son's killer after the intermediation of Prince Abdul Aziz Bin Saad, Deputy Governor of Hail, and a number of Sheikhs of tribes. He did not hesitate to declare his abdication for the sake of God Almighty (Aliqisidaiyah Newspaper, 21st March 2010).
- Case II: Khamis Mushayt was convicted of murdering a young man. Her case caused a heated discussion inside and outside Saudi Arabia, and gained substantial public sympathy. The Crown Prince, Deputy Prime Minister and Minister of Defence and Aviation and General Inspector Prince Sultan bin Abdul Aziz visited the victim's family for an amnesty for her (Al-Arabia TV programme, 2005).
- Case III: The Second Deputy Premier and the Interior Minister Prince Naif, in the presence of Governor of Taif, received Shaikh Baqmi who announced his abdication of his legitimate right of executing the murder. (Al Jazirah Newspaper, 26th July 2010).
- Case IV: Muhmil Mohammed Al-Harthy was murdered in 1990s. Many reconciliation committee members and Sheikhs went to see his father for his pardon. Persuaded by these people, the father of Slain Al-Harthy forgave the murderer. The Royal Prince Abdul Majeed bin Abdulaziz, Governor of Makkah region, expressed appreciation to the father and his thanks to all of those who contributed in this good endeavour, calling on God to reward everyone the best of rewards for their good deeds (Alriyadh Newspaper, July 13th 2005).

Stimulated by Islam and encouraged by the Saudi government, people from the low status also 'help' the offender in the same way. If the victim, his family, or his tribe takes the Diya, the punishment will be diminished based on victim's request. For instance, the offender should be executed according to punishment established in the Quran; however, the victim or victim's family can plea to the judge to be lenient in his punishment after casting a Diya verdict. Conversely, if the offender is an adult (at least 18 years old), the victim's family members may seek to have him publicly executed. If the offender is under 18 years old, the case can be postponed until they reach adulthood.

Judges are typically guided by a duty to respect the victim and his or her family's rights and decisions. Through this process, these individuals play an important role in specifying how the victim has been harmed by the offender and what they might need to be healed. The party of the victim has the right to demand punishment, to grant clemency, or to demand Diya. There are strict guidelines requiring that Diya be carried out through a proper and judicial authority. Any victim or his family taking money not mandated by a judge will be accused of committing a Tazir punishable crime. In short, the Diya system (forgiveness and passage to heaven) acts as a great incentive for the family and community (tribe or clan) to take social responsibility.

Throughout this process, members from the communities involved play an important role and have an impact on the final judicial decision. These family and community based procedural factors transform the justice profession from hidebound antagonism among citizens to interconnected processes of problem identification, information gathering, intervention and problem solving. All parties play a unique and important role in the pursuit of a just resolution to criminal incidents.

Correction

Normal judicial process is grounded in a set of procedures wherein due process is indispensable. Comparatively, in community justice, due consideration (an obligation to consider a range of needs and interests of victims and offenders and the communities in which they live) is indispensable. Traditionally, corrections enter the community, but the community plays a minimal direct role in corrections. The new trend tells that some localised and dynamic community-based projects, by involving citizens in setting sanctions and evaluating correctional priorities, can seek correctional results which restore victims and offenders (Karp, 1999; Perry and Gorczyk, 1997). The common practices in these new approaches include victim-offender mediation and reconciliation, conflict resolution, reparative probation, restitution, community service, victim services, and community capacity-building and revitalisation (Bazemore and Griffiths, 1997; OJJDP, 1998; Umbreit and Coates, 1999; Barajas, 1995; NIJ, 1996). Correcting in community justice, although not an officially established system in Saudi Arabia, exists in practice.

In Saudi Arabia, the offender's right is respected and considered in the judicial process. For instance, the domestic division of labour in Saudi Arabia is clear cut; males are the breadwinners of families, while females care to the household and other family issues. If

the patriarch were to commit a crime and was sentenced to prison, it would be a disaster for the family. The traditional justice model holds that it is necessary to preserve a criminal's freedom so as to counteract the rational incentives that underlie criminal activity. However, Islam holds that if a social system, through its law, decides to deprive the family breadwinner's liberty, his family then should not be punished as a result. Consequently, it becomes society's duty to provide assistance to the prisoner's family to ensure their adaptation during the economically challenging imprisonment period. Saudi society encourages direct intervention to provide assistance to the family in order to mitigate the negative effects of the imprisonment, so that they can sustain themselves and continue to perform a normal role in the community (Awa, 1993). Local communities and volunteer organisations often initiate services to help those families. For example, local communities, under the leadership of Sheikh, may offer monthly money or food to the families. In the traditional villages, the community is even regarded as being committed to taking care of those vulnerable families.

On a national level, the Ministry of Labor and Social Affairs of Saudi Arabia developed a special programme to support prisoners' families financially. The philosophy is not only to minimise the risks faced by offenders' families, so as to prevent more crimes, but also to guarantee the rehabilitation of the prisoners to ensure that they do not return to crime in the future. The social security budget for the programme in 2001 reached 3.6 billion riyals (Interior Ministry of Saudi Arabia: online). The offender's family can apply for financial aid or help provided by volunteers under the programme. Such community care for those families is therapeutic and is bound to achieve solidarity of community and national stability. In a nutshell, in Islam, the care given to the prisoner's family is seen as a part of their social and political rights. The society bears the responsibility and duty to build up a harmonious and peaceful community. The main goal of punishment in Saudi Arabia is not to inflict proportionate harm on the offender but to repair the damage done by the offender (Bazemore and Griffith, 1997).

Once prisoners are released from jail, they need to be incorporated back into society. The Western community justice model theorises about the importance of empowering prisoners so that they can live normally in society. Earlier than the Western societies, Muslim communities were addressing the issue of the rehabilitation of prisoners (Al-Youssef, 2003). They never hold the simplistic claim that the removal of 'bad guys' is the core strategy for solving community safety problems. For example, they may provide money to the prisoner's family, or offer him a job, training for jobs, or psychological counselling. These practices seem to help prisoners return back to the normal track and foster self-confidence, empowering them and raising their competency level. It is also apparent that using restoration as a principle of sanctioning, a concept that has only recently gained attention in the West (Bazemore and Umreit, 1994; Braithwaite, 1997; Van Ness and Strong, 1997) has been recognised and practiced in Muslim societies for generations.

As mentioned earlier, for Tazir crimes, Islamic judges are free to punish offenders in any manner they deem appropriate. The judge refers to *Ijma*, *Qiyas* or 'all encompassing' and then makes a decision. The only guiding principle for the judge is that he must answer to

God Allah and to the greater community of Muslims. In many cases, offenders are asked to provide social services to the community which s/he brings harms to. For instance, if one criminal were found to have stolen shoes from a mosque, he might be punished by cleaning the mosque for a certain period of time. Other common punishments for Tazir crimes include counselling, fines, public and private censure, family and tribe pressure and support, seizure of property, confinement in the home or place of detention, and flogging. For these punishments, the local community is highly involved in aiding the victim and the offender's family. Further, it strengthens the capacity of communities for self-regulation and realisation of the collective aims of welfare (Bursik and Grasmick, 1993, Sampson, Raudenbush and Earls, 1997).

Saudi local community involvement not only helps reintroduce offenders into society, but also helps victims and affected families to recover from the crime and justice process. First, victims may be restored by receiving restitution from offenders or either party's tribe, such as monetary compensation. For instance, if one citizen's car was stolen, his own tribe/village might raise funds within the tribe/village to purchase a new car for him, especially if the family's need was great. Second, victims may be offered services to help in their recovery from the crime, including medical, mental health, or other social services. These offerings serve as a source of normality after experiencing a crime and as an outlet for healing as well.

There are some special community-based organisations in Saudi Arabia which provide a wide variety of assistance to people in need, including victims, victims' family members, offenders, and offenders' family members. This assistance is available to ensure that marginalised members are not shunned, displaced, or exiled. The largest such Saudi organisation is Alker, which has branches in most of cities across the Kingdom. The Alker is not a professional organisation; many workers are actually volunteers from local communities, but they do provide help for the people or families involved in crimes or influenced by crimes. It is obvious that Saudi society doesn't exclude any members from the vision but tries to incorporate everyone through assistance, which is the base of community justice.

Conclusion

Opposite to the view that seems to be held by much of the Western world, Muslims do recognise the rights and responsibilities of various parties, such as offenders, victims, onlookers, community institutional representatives and criminal justice practitioners. Although there is no fully-fledged community justice programme institutionally established by the Saudi government or individual local communities, as in many Western societies, it does exist in Saudi Arabia semi-formally. Western community justice is featured on neighbourhood levels through problem-solving, decentralisation, community of quality life and citizen participation. The community-based judicial practice in Saudi Arabia has these same characteristics and can, therefore, be seen as community justice. In the crime prevention, crime adjudicating, or correcting process, community members (victim's family, offender's family, religious leader, tribe leaders, or the mass) are autonomously engaged in activities that address social problems peacefully and efficiently. Consequently, local residents see returns in the form of a sense of safety, a sense of justice, and a sense of community.

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