

Theory of Sharecropping from an Islamic Economic Perspective: A Study in Peninsular Malaysia

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Place of Fieldwork: Egypt

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1. Research Background

Basically, sharecropping is a contract between a tenant and a landlord combining privately owned resources for the production of certain jointly agreed outputs, the actual outputs to be shared according to certain mutually accepted percentages as returns to the contracting parties. In Islamic law, *al-muzara'a* and *al-musaqa* can be reflected as forms of sharecropping. From the classical point of views, there were tremendous debates among the major Islamic legal schools about the legality or illegality of the principles of *al-muzara'a* and *al-musaqa* from the perspective of Islamic *fiqh*. Therefore, the contemporary views from Islamic scholars regarding these principles are very crucial and necessary.

2. Research Purpose and Aim

Objectives: 1) to examine about the legality of the principles of *al-muzara'a* and *al-musaqa* from the current views of Islamic scholars; 2) to study the suitability of the principles of *al-muzara'a* and *al-musaqa* in activating idle agricultural land; 3) to study the applications of the principles of *al-muzara'a* and *al-musaqa* in Islamic banking and finance institutions and also agricultural land development institutions.

3. Results and Achievements by Fieldwork

From classical Islamic scholar's views, the principles of *al-muzara'a* and *al-musaqa* have split into two main ideas; leasing and sharecropping (partnership). Therefore, from the interviews with Islamic scholars from Azhar University, Cairo University and Alexandria University, it can be concluded that the principles of *al-muzara'a* and *al-musaqa* are legal from Islamic jurisprudence and valid to apply among the landlord and the farmer. From this fieldwork also, it

can be stated that the principles of *al-muzara'a* and *al-musaqa* are similar to the contract of partnership (*al-mudaraba* and *al-musharakah*).

In the meantime, a library research was conducted to gain monographs or manuscript and resources at several libraries such as in Azhar University, Cairo University, Faisal Bank Library and Saleh Kamel Islamic Economics Research Center.

In Cairo, I also visited *Majma' Buhuth al-Azhar al-Sharif* (Islamic Research Academy) and *Dar al-Ifta'* to gain *fatwa* or statement from this authority council in Egypt regarding the principles of *al-muzara'a* and *al-musaqa*.

In spite of these, during this fieldwork, I also visited agricultural district in Tanta, which is one of the main agricultural areas in Egypt. This is important in my research to make a comparative study between Egypt and Malaysia in developing agricultural land development within Islamic world. At end, a comparison among these countries will be made for the products of Islamic finance which offered for agricultural land development.

In conclusion, from the fieldwork, it can be said that the principles of *al-muzara'a* and *al-musaqa* are the partnership in farming between the landlord and the farmer to develop agricultural land, whereby one or more individuals enter into a contract to invest in an agricultural enterprise. Output of the enterprise is shared between the partners in accordance with the agreement stipulated in the contract.

4. Implications and Impacts on Future Research

From this fieldwork, I can further my research about suitability of *al-muzara'a* and *al-musaqa* for the development of agricultural land development especially in activating idle agricultural land and then proceed into suitable Shari'a rules and suitable banking mechanisms for their application.

Selected Pictures:

1. Interview with Prof. Dr Hussein Shehatah at his Research Centre, Professor of Economics at Azhar University.



3. One of the main agricultural areas in Egypt located at Tanta.



2. Library of Azhar University (Thesis)

