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**SOCIOLOGICAL EXPLANATION OF THE RELATIONSHIP BETWEEN SOCIAL
CAPITAL AND RELIGIOSITY PATTERNS AMONG STUDENTS OF SHIRAZ
UNIVERSITY IRAN**

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ABSTRACT

The purpose of this study was to investigate the sociological explanation of the relationship between social capital and religiosity patterns among the students of Shiraz University, Iran in the academic years of 2014-2015. The method which was used in this study was a survey and a questionnaire was used to collect data. The sample size was calculated as 376 individuals using Cochran formula. The results indicated that social capital had a positive and significant relationship with age and marital status. Religiosity patterns which have been classified into three categories, namely, rituality, mystic and moralist had a positive and significant relationship with social capital. The results also indicated that moralists and ritualists enjoy more social capital than mystics and also age and social sciences were other predictors of social capital variable. Finally, with the addition of four variables, the explained variance was reached to 0.23.

**Key words: Social Capital, Religiosity Patterns, Ritual Pattern, Mystic Pattern, Moral
Pattern**

INTRODUCTION

Sociologists, since the inception of the sociology, insistently tried to explain social constructs on the basis of humans' performances, believing that humans are social in nature. Religion, also, as a key factor in socialization process, has been interesting to many sociologists. Regardless of epistemological issues we consider religion not as a social and mundane phenomena – as some sociologists have claimed- but as divine and supernatural and yet for human and highly affecting in directing the individuals' and society's performance.

The purpose of this study was to investigate the role of cultural capital (use of media, newspapers, books and education) and social capital (relation, social participation, trust and solidarity) in shaping the individuals' religiosity patterns. Although religious beliefs and organizations are of such a variety that makes it difficult for scholars of this major to come up with a comprehensive and globally accepted definition of religion (Giddens, 2009), in this study religiosity is an individual trait and the religious individual is loyal to the commandments and the patterns of the religion; the religious individuals will obtain

a specific attitude toward existence and their actions and personalities will be different from others (Shojaei zand, 2011). However, the definitions of religion and religiosity are quite different. Religiosity is recognition and a faith in the sole creator (God), the prophets, afterlife and commandments and having affections toward God and prophets and other believers and doing the religious duties for the sake of approaching God (Khodayari fard, 2009).

There are different ways of entrance of religion in social arena one of which is training experts who are religious and committed to the religious beliefs. University, as one of the most important manager training centers, like any other society (community) has a dominant attitude arising from vast collection of functional, structural... norms. University, since its inception, has always been facing issues which attracted the social thinkers. The quantitative and qualitative developments of universities and the widespread desire to enter this center fuel some internal and peripheral issues for this important system. One of these important issues is the change in students' attitude toward religious and traditional beliefs. This is considered as a

challenging issue in a country which steps in the direction of religion and needs religiously committed experts to supervise the social statuses. Social environments, generally, and academic environments, specifically, have needs and requirements. By needs, it is meant the conscious or subconscious capacity and influence power on individual's behavior which is usually emerges in the environment in the form of institutionalized interactions and collective soul. And by requirements, it is meant the determinism of constructs and laws that individuals must accept if they are to live in the social environment (Homazade, 2012).

One of the issues that were of great importance to thinkers and theorists in the course of history was how to explain the social and cultural factors in the kind of religiosity style. Today, Iranian youth are under the influence of their religious culture on one hand, the culture which is respected by their families and local communities, and on the other hand affected by educational institutions, mass media (local and foreign) and the structural elements of the modern world (Seraj zade, 2012). Hence, the role of these factors in shaping the religiosity is worthy of investigation. This study was aimed to explain sociologically the

relationship between social capital and religiosity patterns of the subjects (respondents). Investigating the relationship between background variables (age, sex and ethnicity) and social capital was the minor objective of this study. In addition, the other objective of this study was the investigation of the relationship between the components of cultural and social capital and patterns of religiosity.

REVIEW OF LITERATURE

Many classic and contemporary sociologists like Weber, Parsons, Fukuyama, Greeley, Warner, Roof and Ammerman considered religion as a factor that can cause social capital. Parsons believed that there is a greater chance in Islam than in other religions for the development of social capital because of the positive attitude toward life and toward society and policy and also because of the attention to the believers' social responsibilities (Fasihi, 2007). In mayor's opinion, religion can tangibly help the improvement of family relationships and can also serve as a factor in the development of social capital (Molahasani, 2010). Canland also noted that religion can be a basis for the social capital by creating social and family networks and relationships with other people and also by application of norms toward

other people thus creating loyalty, respect and honesty and by application of norms toward other people (Canland, 2013). Evans believes that civil activities and rituals done together with friends, family members and other believers can be an important step toward the improvement of social capital (Evans, 2000). Smidt believes that the nature of social capital created through religion is quantitatively and qualitatively superior to other kinds of social capital and he also believes that religious social capital is superior to other kinds of capitals, regarding the quantity, stability, amplitude and existing capacity. In Fukuyama's classification of the factors that create social capital, religion is considered an external factor. Religion occupies a great part in human culture and by creating common beliefs and values among its followers and by evoking them to do common religious exercises and rituals, gather them together and thus reinforce the social solidarity.

And it seems that improvements in the quality of these relationship networks will affect the level of social capital (Qasemi and Amiri, 2011). Regarding these theories, religion can improve social capital. Many local and foreign studies were done in this regard some of which will be reviewed here.

Masoudnia et al (2013) investigated the relationship between social capital and religiosity in Isfahan University, Iran. The results of this study revealed that except the exogenous variable of constructionist that didn't have a significant relationship with religiosity, other aspects of social capital (institutional norms, spontaneous constructionist) had positive and significant relationship with individuals' level of religiosity. The results indicate that religious beliefs have a positive effect on social capital and can lead to the increase of level social capital in the society. Mohammadi et al (2013) in a study titled "spatial analysis of the effects of religiosity on social capital" concluded that there is a significant relationship between urban and rural areas regarding the relationship between social capital and religiosity. The results also indicated that the influence of religiosity on the social capital is greater in rural areas than in urban areas. Afshani et al (2012) in a study which was titled "the relationship between religiosity and social capital in Najaf Abad city, Iran" concluded that there is a positive and significant relationship between the different aspects of religiosity and components of social capital. In addition, intellectual and ritual aspects of religiosity

structure had the greatest positive correlation with different aspects of social capital. Ganji and Sotoude (2011) in a study which was titled “the relationship between different kinds of religiosity and social capital (a theoretical and experimental approach among the citizens of Kashan, Iran)” concluded that those kinds of religiosities that include more social elements (like juridical-political, ritual and accrual-belonging) have a positive relationship with social capital and can lead to its improvement while those kinds of religiosities in which individual elements are dominant (like informal and immediate kinds) have a negative relationship with social capital. Ketabi et al. (2004) in a study which was titled “religion, social capital and social-cultural developments in Isfahan, Iran” concluded that religiosity has a positive relationship with social capital. Johnson and

Jang (2004) in a study titled “the effects of religiosity on depression among African-Americans” concluded that religiosity can improve the social capital because group activities will encourage trust, honesty and positive interactions.

Smidt (2003), in his study, concluded that religious values can increase individuals’ participation in charities (as social participation). Canland (2000) however, in his study, concluded that religiosity doesn’t necessarily lead to social capital improvement. Greeley (1997) revealed that in countries the level of religiosity has a positive relationship with social capital and specifically with participation and trust. Dynes and Quarantelli (1980) concluded that religious values can reinforce volunteering affairs like voluntary organizations.

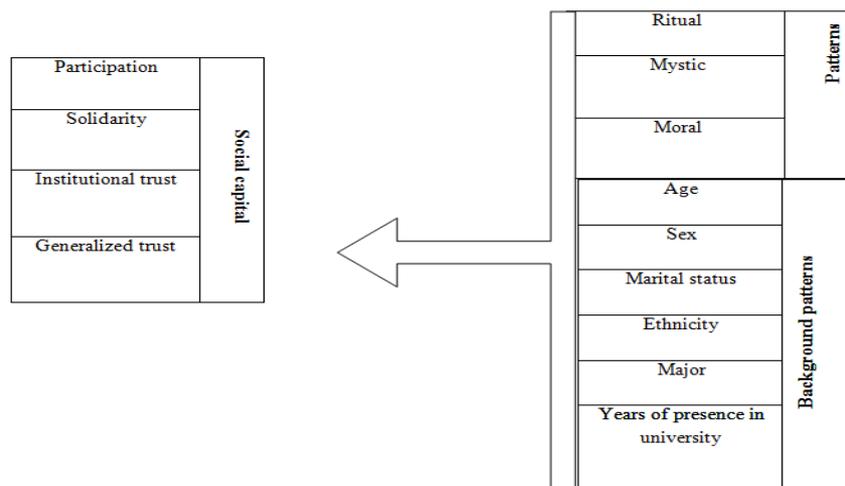


Figure 1: The Empirical Model of the Research

Research Hypotheses

Social capital is significantly different regarding to Age.

Social capital is significantly different regarding to sex.

Social capital is significantly different regarding to marital status.

Social capital is significantly different regarding to ethnicity.

Social capital is significantly different regarding to major.

Social capital is significantly different regarding to the years of presence in university.

Social capital (participation, institutional trust and solidarity) has a significant relationship with religiosity patterns (ritual, moral, mystic).

METHODOLOGY

This study used a quantitative approach and a survey method. The instrument used in this study was a questionnaire. The population of this study was 17884 individuals including BA, MA and PHD students of Shiraz University, Iran in the academic year of 2014-2015. The statistical analysis of this study was done by statistical software SPSS and regarding the level of the variable measurement; appropriate data were used in this study. The sample size was

calculated 376 individuals using Cochran formula.

Validity and Reliability of the measurement instrument

Face validity was used to investigate the accuracy of the indices and items regarding to each variable and to calculate the validity of the questionnaire. This was done by asking the experts who were sociology professors to confirm the validity of the questionnaire, giving them the definitions of the concepts and variables. To calculate the reliability of the scales that were used in this study, initially 30 questionnaires were investigated and obtained data were investigated by Alpha Cronbach's formula in SPSS software. After the final investigation in the initial stage and having modified the measurement instrument, the final questionnaire was modified and the data were collected. The calculated Alpha Cronbach's were as follows: religiosity with 16 items (0.86), ritual pattern with 5 items (0.74), mystic pattern with 4 items (0.80), moral pattern with 7 items (0.63) and social capital with 23 items (0.73).

RESULTS

The results of the study, as indicated in the table 1, revealed that age had a negative

and significant relationship with social capital.

Table 2 shows the average score difference test of religiosity patterns regarding to sex. Results showed that religiosity average score was approximately the same in women among men and also among Persian and non-Persian individuals but social capital level of the married individuals were more than single individuals.

The statistical analysis in table 3 indicates that social capital level was higher in students of humanities.

As shown in table 4 all aspects of social capital had positive and significant relationship with religiosity except the social

solidarity that did not had any relationship with mystic pattern.

Multi Variable Regression Analysis

Table 5 explains the dependent variable in stepwise manner using a multi variable regression equation. 4 variables were added to the equation. R^2 (coefficient of determination) shows that with the addition of moral pattern variable 18% of the dependent variable can be explained. The results also indicated that moralists and ritualists, enjoy more social capital than mystics and also age and social sciences were other predictors of social capital variable. Finally, with the addition of 4 variables, the explained variance reached to 0.23 %.

Table 1: The correlation between age and social capital of the subjects

Variable		Social capital
Age	Correlation coefficient	0.784
	Significance level	-0.014
Variable		Social capital
Age	Correlation coefficient	0.784
	Significance level	-0.014

Table 2 The average score difference test of social capital regarding to sex, ethnicity and marital status

Variable	Number	Average	SD	t	Significance level
Man	104	69.14	12.842	0.001	0.999
Woman	272	69.14	10.247		
Persian	283	69.19	10.648	0.156	0.876
Non-Persian	93	68.99	12.100		
Single	323	68.54	10.877	-2.638	0.009
Married	53	72.81	11.194		

Table 3: Average score difference test of social capital regarding to the majors

Major	Numbers	Average	SD	F	Significance level
Social sciences	123	67.89	11.411	3.707	0.006
Humanities	77	73.38	10.105		
Engineering	49	68.20	0.379		
Basic sciences	51	68.41	12.143		
Art	76	67.99	10.620		

Table 4: Correlation coefficient analysis between social capital and its aspects with religiosity patterns

Variable	Ritual	Mystic	Moral	
Social capital	Correlation coefficient	0.439	0.351	0.479
	Significance level	0.000	0.000	0.000
Participation	Correlation coefficient	0.388	0.301	0.431
	Significance level	0.000	0.000	0.000
Solidarity	Correlation coefficient	0.205	0.031	0.343
	Significance level	0.000	0.547	0.000
Generalized trust	Correlation coefficient	0.184	0.031	0.230
	Significance level	0.000	0.547	0.000
Institutional trust	Correlation coefficient	0.410	0.294	0.344
	Significance level	0.000	0.000	0.000

Table 5: The main elements of multi variable analysis using Forward method for the prediction of social capital variable

Stage	Added variables	R	R ²	Adjusted values of R ²	B	β	F	Significance level
1	Moral pattern	0.434	0.189	0.187	0.228	0.313	86.749	0.000
2	Ritual pattern	0.454	0.206	0.202	0.146	0.193	48.338	0.000
3	Age	0.468	0.219	0.213	0.096	0.114	34.647	0.000
4	Social sciences major	0.480	0.231	0.222	0.652	0.108	27.712	0.000

DISCUSSION AND CONCLUSION

Among cultural, social, political and economic subsystems, University is considered a cultural subsystem. That is a position in which it can control and supervise other subsystems through value and norm system and through knowledge and information production. Besides university, Hausa (a seminary where Shi'a Muslim clerics are trained) and other thought and culture builder centers are also considered as cultural subsystems. Generally, university is not defined by its structure. It is defined by its functionality. That is, university must break many of the threatening structures by training creative students. However, not only it does not do so but also university itself has become a threat. Another objective of university is to provide the tools which are

strategies and tactics for achieving the objectives. University specifies the limits of admissible actions. However, the university which is rooted in the existence of our world is at the mercy of socialization (Afrouq, 2006). The overall result of this study was that the more religious the individuals were the more social capital they will possess. This result was in line with the studies done by Masoudnia et al. (2013), Ketabi et al. (2004), Afshani et al. (2012), Greely (1997), Dynes and Quarantelli (1980) and Smidt (2003). This correlation was greater in individuals whose moral pattern of religiosity was more salient. That is because, as Johnson and Jang (2003) acknowledged, group activities reinforce trust, honesty and positive interactions.

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