

The Role of Gender in Social Capital Formation

¹Hassan Daliri and ²Sara Shahanavaz

¹Department of Economics, Faculty of Economics and Social Science,
Bu Ali Sina University, Hamadan, Iran

²Department of Regional Planning and Development,
Faculty of Social Science, Allameh Tabatabai University, Tehran, Iran

Abstract: Social capital is a new concept with many applications in social sciences. Recent studies indicate that gender has an important role in the formation of social capital. The data of this research have been gathered via a questionnaire containing 35 questions and fulfilled by 198 students of Isfahan University of Economics and Administrative Sciences. This study examines the accuracy of the assumption among the study sample. The main question is whether there is any difference between women and men vis-a-vis the quality and quantity of social capital. Results of the study indicate that the quantity of social capital in men is higher than women. Also the results show that the quality of social capital among women is of subjective social capital (bonding social capital) and men have a higher objective social capital (bridging social capital). Therefore, the researchers can propose that the government should create appropriate infrastructure in order to promote the cultural perspective of social life in the regard of women's participation.

Key words: Social capital, gender, trust, network, norm, Iran

INTRODUCTION

There was always social life and action based on trust in human behavior. But this behavior called social capital was introduced first by Hanifan (1916). Since, then the concept was developed by many social scientists. Among the important role played by Bourdieu, Coleman and Putnam (Field, 2003). But their comments also faced much criticism (Fine, 2001). One of the main criticisms was that they did not care to gender roles (Davies, 2001; Molyneux, 2002; Field, 2003; Bezanson, 2006). With the Putnam (2000) in his book *Bowling Alone*, tried to take into account gender as a factor in the formation of social capital. But it seems to be saying that he lacked basic detailed (Field, 2003). Coleman and Bourdieu almost no attention to the gender role in social capital formation (Morrow, 1999). However, many social scientists now believe that gender is an important factor in the formation of social capital (Westermann *et al.*, 2005; De Silva, 2005; Van Emmerik, 2006). Feminist critics believe that the high civic participation is largely dependent on social capital. Their opinion, ignoring gender will cause the social capital is introduced as incorrect (Lowndes, 2000).

In almost every society there are different social and cultural conditions for men and women. These differences

led to create men and women actions different against similar events. So, the researchers can ensure that different social capital formation among women with men.

In this study, the researchers will review the role of gender in the form of quality and quantity of social capital. The researchers used a questionnaire with 35 questions for test this hypothesis: Social capital is different in men and women.

MATERIALS AND METHODS

The researchers used a questionnaire with 35 questions for estimating the most important indicators of social capital. The study population consists of students of Economic School of Isfahan University (Iran). Number of population was 1525 and the sample included 199 people. This society will include 63% women and 37% male. Cronbach's alpha (Cronbach's α (alpha) is a coefficient of reliability. It is commonly used as a measure of the internal consistency or reliability of a psychometric test score for a sample of examinees) was calculated with equal 0.76 so, the researchers can have confidence in the results of questionnaires. The researchers measure social capital. The researchers have classified it in three categories: Trust, network and norm (Putnam, 1993;

Coleman, 1998). The researchers measure trust in three aspects: trust of family, government and generalized trust; measure network in two aspects: Social communication and social connection measure norm in two aspects: Respect to social rules and access to information. So, here the researchers can judge the quantity of social capital but to measure the quality of social capital (For measure potential quantity of social capital used 20 questions and for measure actual quantity of social capital used 15 questions), the researchers classified questionnaire questions into two groups: First, those measurements are potential quantity of social capital and second, those measurements are actual quantity of social capital. For testing the assumptions of the research, the researchers used statistics t-student.

RESULTS AND DISCUSSION

Trust: Trust is the willingness to make oneself vulnerable to another person's actions based on beliefs about that person's trustworthiness (Palgrave dictionary). Trust as a source of Social capital that sustains economic dynamism and governmental performance (Putnam, 1993). Trust in the various studies is divided into several categories (Giddens (1990) divided it in two categories and Pollit (2002) divided in three categories).

According to Table 1, among three aspects for the trust, only difference between men and women in generalized trust was significance. Test results show that women have lower generalized trust than men and it is statistically significant but trust of family and trust of government in the men is less than woman and that isn't statistically significant.

Therefore, the researchers conclude that the study population, men are more generalized trust than women. However, the results according to the ruling culture of Iranian society would be acceptable because Iran's especially attitude to women, they participate in social interactions less than men. Hence, women are not traverse the first confidence-building steps that occurred during the interaction.

Network: According to Table 2 no significant difference between the average social connection between men and women samples but men have higher social communication than women in the sample which is statistically significant.

Many sociologists believe that communication depends repressors (Jackson *et al.*, 1993; Jackson, 2000). In Iran there are repressors factors that cause social communication women less than men.

Table 1: Results of comparison mean test for trust

Categories	t-test	Result
Trust of family	0.0125	Men less than women
Trust of government	0.2450	Men less than women
Generalized trust	-4.7400	Women less than men

Table 2: Results of comparison mean test for network

Net work	t-test	Result
Social communication	-4.470	Women less than men
Social connection	0.879	Men less than women

Table 3: Results of comparison mean test for norm

Norm	t-test	Result
Respect to social rules	0.128	Women less than men
Access to information	-6.854	Men less than women

Table 4: Results of comparison mean test for quality of social capital

Social capital	t-test	Result
Actual	-5.412	Women less than men
Potential	1.854	Men less than women

Norm: We measure is the norm in two categories: Respect to social rules (Arrow, 2000) and access to information (Katz and Lazarsfeld, 1995; Guiso *et al.*, 2000).

Table 3 shows respect to social rules women more than men but it isn't significant. According to Table 3 is significant difference between the average access to information between men and women samples and men have higher access to information than women in the sample.

Quality of social capital: So, far we've test quantity of social capital differences between men and women but whether the quality of social capital formation is different between these two groups? As was said to answer this question we divided social capital to the two categories: First, those measurements are potential quantity of social capital that aspect of it that shows the inner desires of people for social interaction may be destroyed by the repressor factor and not become actualized. Second, those measurements are actual quantity of social capital is that part of the repressor factors could destroy them and they were actualized.

Table 4 shows the results of testing this hypothesis. Considering the Table 4 actual social capital in men more than women. It is interesting that the results show potential social capital in women is more than men. So, we can conclude that there are a repressor factor that causes women in the sample cannot transform her potential Social capital to actual social capital.

CONCLUSION

The results showed that women are less in the indices access to information, social communication and generalized trust than men so that the difference is

significant. In addition, women are potential social capital more than men. Since, this type of social capital is less positive effects on society (Norris and Ingelhart, 2003) so, the social planner should be to remove the repressor factor to women also able to convert potential social capital into actual social capital.

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