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The Relationship between Social Capital and Soft Security

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ABSTRACT

With the advent of Soft discourse on security in today's world, the nature and concept of power, security as well as participation, Trust and loyalty of the people to government (social capital) play an important role in providing security and dealing with security threats and also increasing the power of countries. This means that the degree of security and power have different nature towards community in other words towards people; therefore social capital can be considered as a connection point of security in soft discourse in a way that an efficient social capital works as a factor increasing defensive competence and power of the political system and leading to political stability. In contrast, lack of a proper social capital leads to vulnerability of the system and political instability. The purpose of the present study was to show this relationship; so the main question of the study is what is the main effect of social capital on the soft security component? The question made a relationship with soft securities by creating an appropriate indicator of social capital. This kind of communication can be efficient, especially at election time. The methodology of the study was descriptive-analytical and data gathering was carried out by library and documentary method.

KEYWORDS: social capital, soft security, participation in society, and political stability

INTRODUCTION

The prevalence of the soft discourse in security and political studies suggests that the nature of concepts such as power, security threats and the relationship between them are changing; in the way that, top military and economic empowerment cannot be effective in increasing the defenses capacity (soft security) and power capacity (soft power) in confronting soft threats. However, in hardware discourse, power means the ability of power holder to force others to submit its will in anyway, while in soft discourse, soft power relies on the ability to shape others preferences through attraction and charm. In addition, hard threats means a kind of fear about the risks which may hazard the current secure situation of society and political system. The soft threat means having doubt about foundations, the infrastructure of a political system, the crisis of values and basic beliefs of a society and crises in behavioral patterns of society. In realism viewpoint, the traditional relationship of power and security means that the aim of more power is to achieve greater security although in soft discourse viewpoint, this relationship is in another way. So the concept of social capital and its effect on soft power and security was used in present study.

Addressing the issue

Social capital is one of the factors which its role in communities is more important than physical and human capitals. It is impossible or very hard to achieve cultural, economic and security developments without social capital. Unique values can contribute to social cohesion and thus provide a social order which underlies social security. Further to this, it Is impossible to make security without the participation and cooperation of people in all areas; therefore the loss or decline of social capital leads to numerous social problems, crises and conflicts (Amini, 2007, P:1).

Among the factors which improve social capital, one can refer to: reciprocal interaction and contact between government and people, reliability and public trust to government, the ability of optimal managing of the country by decision-makers, the realization of the basic functions of governments and to achieve maximum satisfaction of people, coexistence and respect within the country's boarders, not having centrifugal tendencies among different ethnic groups and religions, none-discrimination in recruitment for community management, the existence of common sense about national values and interests, acceptance of the role and ideology of the state and not to have separatist movements, economic and social rights without any discrimination, the high rate of therapeutic and restorative abilities of society against internal and external threats, regulated behavior of members of the community, defining rights and responsibilities and facilitating public accountability, relative prosperity balance between the segments of society, equitable distribution of public revenues and relative prosperity, maintaining and preserving public confidence and work ethic and commitment to humanitarian and

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ethical principles and the efficiency of regulatory system. The young generation can be considered as an important social capital by transparent and responsible criticism of the government, cultural freshness, strengthening the collective commitment and strengthen community identify which is the emotional basis of social capital. Social capital creates a kind of co-operation between different social groups by an atmosphere of trust and such a co-operation among the groups and their trusting to each other provide public benefits such as social security and also reduce the surveillance costs of official institutions, therefore, the present study has investigated the social capital and its relationship with soft security.

The importance of the research

Security and its stability is one of the most important constant concerns of governments and political actors at international level and even at national level. Evolving threats of countries and transition from hardware-oriented threats to the cultural, political and economic ones which are known by various titles such as soft threats, soft war, cultural invasion, cultural NATO and so on, and they have laid conditions to foundations for the soft-security; in the other word, since the nature of threats against the Islamic republic of Iran has mostly taken soft and cultural shape in recent decades, it is very important for the Islamic republic of Iran to form and supply soft security. In this way, a set of cultures and values of the community that each of them is producer of Iran's soft power, have prepared the conditions for reproduction of iron's soft security. Today, the role of social capital in a society is more important than physical and human capitals, particularly in the fields of governance, strengthening political legitimacy and increasing soft power. In the absence of social capital, other capitals lose their effectiveness and it is impossible or very difficult to develop cultural and economic aspects without social capital.

The purposes of the research

To explain the effect of the relationship between social capital and soft security To explain the effect of social capital on more securing

Research hypothesis

Social capital has positive effect on soft security, dealing with security threats and the power of a country.

Theoretical framework

The issue of security has always been one of man's concerns and the man has always to reduce the threats around him and to create a secure environment. In this regard three periods of classical, modern and postmodern are distinguished from each other. In classical period which took a long time, human being thought of his basic needs at different levels, had limited opportunities and lots of weakness and numerous threats surrounded him. In classical period, human being generally defined leisurely and relaxing feeling as not having threat. Security was defined as none-threat condition and had an objective aspect and insecurity was considered as a foreign enemy (Pour Saeed, 2009: p 304).

In the modern era, which started with the advent of the national state and progress of productive forces of cultural, social, political and economic bases, security was faced with a fundamental change, which led to human being having an increased level of facilities at its disposal; however, security is still viewed as hardware, which is defined as relief of threats that are foreign enemies at a higher level. In the postmodern era: security is affected by sweeping changes in the international system, developed communications, technological advancements, and unprecedented proximity to each other and increased of regional and global convergence. (Robert Mendel, 1998, page 19).

Some groups have investigated soft security as a concept derived from soft power (Pour Ahmadi, 2008: p161). According to this opinion, security is the first and most obvious dimension of the power. Any political decisionmaker or actor in national and international level looks for more power to achieve greater security. Therefore, soft power is a support for the soft abilities of a country and soft security situation caused by emergence of soft power of political units which provides comprehensive development. (Nasiri, 2002: p 34) In addition, soft power and soft security have direct relationship with each other and strengthening and weakening of each of them make the other strengthen or weak. This level of independence between the soft security concept ad concepts such as soft power and soft threat indicates a kind of negligence about the concept of soft security and its nondevelopment in security studies. One reason for this negligence is the existence of common domain between soft security and soft power concepts. It seems that governments were involved in power struggle during cold war and security was considered as a derivative of power, especially military power and it didn't have an independent meaning in public area and had not been studied as a separate concept. But it seems that, these concepts are different, despite their relationship with each other. It is very important to mention that soft security is not merely a result of such issues and this kind of security even can rely on hard power. According to another viewpoint, social capital is considered as a social organization such as trust, norms and networks which has been stated in the thought of theorists such as Coleman and Putnam. At the macro level, social capital represents a description for characteristics of the community or a group of communities which can increase the ability of collective and voluntary organization to solve interaction problems or general issues. In many cases, social capital has relieved the weakness of the government and has brought it at high level of stability. Social capital resources have many things in common with security components in any country, which directly and indirectly facilitate developing by building trust. (Jahanbin, 2014: p 55)

Social capital components and resources of soft power and security have a few things in common, which can establish safe relationship between these concepts. The social capital of any society and social capital will play the major role in providing security and power with soft resources of power and security getting more important. planning color revolution and security crises on the basis of social capital in post-communist countries over the past three decades indicates the fact that the effectiveness of social capital is the main source of guaranteed soft power and soft security and on the other hand, its weakness or lack of it lead to soft threats. Political instability is the final result of such process, which can clearly appear in critical times such as election time. the election process is on prepare opportunity to form or disturb social capital, because it can enhance or undermine existing norms and form new communications and also healthy or unhealthy election can change the public confidence. Social capital lies in civic and religious groups, family ties, informal social network, friends and relatives, reciprocity norms devotion and trust. Norms of trust and reciprocity among social networks are the resources of social capital. Social capital isn't a collective action but it is a set of norms and guarantees of trust and reciprocity in social networks which can solve insoluble problems of social actions, to conception of the social capital, it should be divided into two interrelated classes: structural and cognitive, the structural class links social capital with different forms of social organization such as roles, rules, procedures or practices, procedures and a wide range of networks which help to mutually beneficial collective actions and relationship. The cognitive class in also derived from mental processes and its results are ideas and is reinforced by culture and ideology. It means that norms, attitudes and belief that contribute to behavior-based cooperation, reinforce the cognitive class of social capital (Uphoff, 2000).

The widespread effect of any special idea is not appear by non-wisely use of powers but through satisfaction, which is implicit principle (Etemad, 2004: pages 48-52), in the other words, power is applied through hegemony of semantic system which makes collective mind and it only used to control and to provide security, when controlling through hegemon structures face failure and when the condition is critical (Pour Saied, 2009 254).

The above analysis wants to explain why the ruling power shouldn't be usually used. This interpretation about concepts of coercion and hegemony shows that as Eisenstodt has emphasized the legitimacy is linked to the issue of ((meaning)) (Chalabi, 2003 p 13) and is produced and reproduced in conceptual frameworks and hence, discourse and discursive relationship are the best support for legitimacy and legality in the new period.

In this sense, discourse means an expression system of a particular group of related and broad statements which deliver a meaning, a message and thought for induction and conveying a particular way of thinking, life style and a unique type of speech and behavior. In this sense, political legitimacy requires the production and reproduction of discourse relations, because politics inevitably is passed with normative language and always has an incomplete form of a dialogue which can be deciphered by studying the political debates and political legitimating. In better words, the language of politics forms a specific order and consolidates a hierarchy and makes decentralization (Safran, 2004, p10).

Therefore, the concept of (soft security) can be defined in internal and social dimensions and actually in relations between government and society and in compatibility with concepts such as legitimacy, consent (satisfaction), concern, hegemony and discourse. In this framework, soft security is a political position, in which the government (the Islamic republic) has an authority with hegemonic status in its relations with society and the authority is resulted by an ideological satisfaction (persuasion) rather than be based on structural and tool-like coercion. In fact this ideological satisfaction is on the basis of structural coercion and expands the concept of security and has developed the concepts to new areas and has led to emergence of new threats after the collapse of the bipolar system and has made it necessary to move toward globalizing economic, politics, culture and acquire new security knowledge in the face of new security threats. Today, only having military power (hardware) and its traditionally application is not enough to provide security (Pour Saied, 2009, p 305).

Norms and trust facilitate collective action and strengthening cooperation in multilateral benefits. The political trust and legitimacy increase citizen, support from the policies or their actions and performances in accordance with the law. Collaborative networks enrich social capital and social capital strengthen collective spirit-based internal belief which prevent from people separation (Pour Saeed, 2009, p 305)

Social capital or its components, such as networks, norms and trust, facilitate collective action and enhances cooperation for multilateral benefits. Political trust and legitimacy increase support of citizens for the policies or actions and their performance in accordance with the law. Collaborative networks enrich social capital and deepen it. And social capital strengthens internal belief based on the collective spirit the fruit of which is preventing people from becoming separated particle. (Ibid)

RESEARCH LITERATURE

Social capital and soft security

Security can be divided into two types of privative (negative) and affirmative (positive). While the traditional definitions of security emphasize the domination and consider security as a situation in which the sources of actors are safe against the threats of other actors, but the formation of social capital as a new intellectual framework has led to development of semantic boundaries of security and changing from domination to satisfaction. The new approach of security is affected by soft nature of social capital, which finally ends in the concept of accountability and is commensurate with the demands of citizenship elements in terms of understanding national security. The emphasis on accountability is due to the reason that its result is satisfaction or submission. The submission is derived from imposition to reach the position of dominance, but in affirmative (positive) discourse, it leads to citizens' satisfaction by responding to their demands which satisfy them and as a result creates an admission policy (Radadi, 2010, p325).

Social capital which refers to a compressed social network safeguards the system. Weakness and destruction of social capital increases the social capital casts of living for the people and government and also indirectly reduces the constant (satisfaction) of citizens from the government.

Social capital fosters the values of public participation by promoting trust and mutual solidarity of citizens and provides the conditions for organizations to be more efficient. By the lack of one of the social capital components, such as trust, the costs and pressure is increased and leads groups and even the government to consider behaviors only in security related form. One reason for the vulnerability of developing countries is low level of social capital. The shortage of trust-inducing behavioral principles increases the competition between rulers and people (Azari, 1998, p1).

Social capital and Production of soft power

Today, just having natural resources and no longer is the only capital for countries. A set of assets including utilizing from social capital leads to generating and enhancement of national power for countries. the level of people enjoying trust and other components in the field of social capital are among the measurement of soft power. No nation is able to move on the path of sublimity and achieve credibility in the international community, without enjoying soft power and building up consensus and social cohesion. This kind of trust can be reflected in two levels of people – people and ruler-people. The social capital focuses on discovering these indicators in communities (Ghodsi, 2010, p 233). Soft power supports foundations and valuable elements of the country by generating and spreading specific courses and special and attractive values. These changes begin from infrastructure and networks which generate and spread ideas and norms, especially in the areas of education, culture and the media. Since the definition of social capital is a culture-oriented subject and its keywords are based on trust and moral values, so it plays a major role in soft power. The soft power means the ability of set priorities, in such a way that it be accordance with invisible capitals such as cultural attractions, characters and values. For example, if a leader is to provide value which the people want to follow it themselves, the society will be run with less expensive costs. This kind of credibility makes people do things which decision-makers of soft power want, with their own will and interest.

Therefore, social capital is one of the most important resources of soft power. Social capital is important because it facilitates smoothing the process of producing power from traditional sources. According to the Tajfel, some social groups have intentioned to social capital to efficiently utilization of former resources. For example, continuous mobilization of human resources was an important source of power production which has been pursued in various forms. But, the transformation of social conditions make it impossible or very difficult to use these methods, therefore it needs new methods and ((emphasize on social capital)) to develop sources and also to reduce the actor's cost. By this way, actors are helped in two dimensions. Tajfel emphasis that successful and efficient groups and communities are those who have been of higher social capital can be understood and interpreted according to this matter. (Eftekkhari, 2009, p 323)

Increasing political participation and strengthening the communication network

There are significant differences in certain types of participation, especially among different races and social classes. Resources generated by non-political activities, such as organizational communications and skills acquired through participation in voluntary associations are useful for political participation. The related political resources which are performed in order to facilitate political participation have different dimensions among social classes and different races /ethnics. The most important of these resources are time, money and civil skills. In this regard, civil skills are defined as organizational and communicational skills are useful to various political participations. Participating in non-political voluntary associations plays a major role in this regard. It facilitates political participation in three ways:

A) Participating in non-political voluntary associations provides opportunity for people to promote related organizational skills and political communications.

B) It exposes people to political messages and debates which lead to political participation

C) According to Verba et al, non-political voluntary associations play an important role as a catalyst to attract political mobilization (Verba et al, 1993, p457).

Therefore the role of non-political voluntary associations is to disclose political message to the people and attract them in political activities. Numerous Studies in this field show that social networks have important role in defining political identity of people to participate in policy. When, tendency toward political activities occurs through interpersonal networks, the members of network are more likely to be interested in political activities. In addition diverse friendship networks increase the possibility of public participation in one or more political activities (Kittler & Bearcats, 2005 p 152-170).

The concept of social capital refers to the role of norms, social trust and effect of these resources on actors of social, political and economic areas. The social capital was firstly related to civic interaction and political participation by Robert Portman. In this viewpoint, there is a strong relationship between the existence of voluntary associations and life quality in the communities. Participation in voluntary associations leads to production of individual and collective benefits are directly caused by social capital dividing. Social capital can be considered as social networks, norms of interactions and reliability. (Portman, 1993, p 19)

Therefore communities with high level of social capital have more effective political structures and political elite. The citizens of communities with level social capital also participate in political events in higher level. Organizational membership is associated with promoting political participation due to the conscious strengthening of political participation culture. (Olzorum, 2003, pages 410-422) Non-profit social service organizations in urban areas significantly increase the likelihood of voting and encourage contacts with government officials. (Leroux, 2007: 410-422)

Social capital act in six ways to promote democracy in society which leads to increased soft security in the community. These six ways are:

1) By strengthening intrinsic values

2) Fostering civic virtue and political skills

3) Resistance to power and a closer look at government policies

4) Improving the quality and equality of people

5) Facilitating discourse and public consultation

6) Creating opportunities for citizens and groups to participate directly in governmental affairs (Fang, 2003, pp. 515-539).

People familiarity with the political norms and making trust in the society

Numerous studies have indicated that there are significant observations about the relation of social networks and political participation. Individuals of social networks are interested in political participation. In addition, personals friendship and family relationships greatly effect on political participation. The highest level of these networks effect was in social activities (67%), protest activities (68%) and promotional activities (57%). social networks, whether strong or weak, have a direct effect on elections, party affiliation and viewpoints about important political issues and controlling attitude variables at individual level (Levin, 2005, pages 132-151)

Friendship networks, particularly close friendships provide individual accessibility to political resources of information. Political activities are generated by social interactions within a social network. Generating political capital is relied on three important issues:

a) The political expertise of the network

b) The frequency of political interactions within the network

c) Size or extent of the network (lick and Hatched, 1998, pp. 567-584)

Absorption of the activists and the effect of any individual as his potential contribution to the network is the best predictor of political participation. Looking at the nature and content of the networks shows that three essential points within networks should be considered:

- a) The structure of contributor's relationship
- b) their collective view on a protest issue
- c) Deciding to become politically involved.

The above viewpoint suggests that social networks embedded in society significantly effects individuals perception about participation (Peso and Gina, 2001, pages 123-153).

Self- cantered social networks can predict the nature of participation in national elections. In most cases, people argue with their friends about political issues, which increase their interests in participating in national and electoral disputes. The membership of respondents in other networks has quantitative effects and if the members of voluntary associations discuss about political issues are more likely to take part in organizational affairs and

in the local community. Other personal characteristics such as political interest s and social relations are important predictors of political participations (Schuman and Soul, 1999, pages 1108-1083).

The relation between social trust and political participation or between social networks and political participation is not direct. The trust not only directly affects special types of political participation, but also indirectly affects political participation through facilitating the transfer of social networks resources and helping to create norms of reciprocity and shared commitments inside voluntary organizations. Trust solves the people problems about communicating with others based on the relationship of trust and social networks. In addition, social trust links us with those whom we are not familiar with (Oslaner, 1993, page 3). Social trust is not a hidden phenomenon and is appeared through personal experiences in friendship and in civic live. Civic, cultural and sport associations may pay more attention to development of social interaction networks. civic associations not only make communication easier, but also they facilitate the transfer of related information to reliable individuals, so they have huge contribution to strengthening social capital, and this issue is a valuable source to political, economic and social areas (Groovier, 1997, page 153).

Researchers have achieved to evidences about the direct effect of social trust to political participation.

From one point of view, participating in political system indicates the trust to and confidence in government. To vote and sign a petition and to write a letter to a governmental official all reflect confidence in government. The existence of someone who listens to their problems and is likely responsive is the result of trust; however political life is a kind of confrontation (or fight). When people cannot rely on political leaders and they become disappointed, they are more likely to be involved in political life, (Oslaner, 2002, p 193).

From the other viewpoint, civic community is not possible without social trust and the trust is critical. Not only is social trust useful for better running of society but also it is a special form of generalized trust which is based on modernity norms and necessary to formation of civics society. Trying to build a civilized society regardless of social trust is an absurd experience (Seligman, 1997, p 6)

Moreover, people who attract the trust of citizens are more likely to contribute to charities and in political and social organizations are more active, fulfill their tax obligations more, and are more tolerant of minorities comments, and show better civic virtues (Portman, 2000, p 137). In addition, those who have more social trust in secondary associations are more interested than others ingrowing common political interests (Westar, 2002, pp. 427-547).

Conclusion

It should be noted that, today social capital has significant effect on governance affair, strengthening political legitimacy and increasing soft power. In the other words, by the lack of social capital, other capitals lose their effectiveness in society; therefore, it is very difficult to have cultural and economic development without social capital.

Among the factors which improve social capital, one can refer to : reciprocal interaction and contact between role and people, reliability and public trust to government, the ability of optimal managing of the country by decision-makers, the realization of the basic functions of government and achieving maximum satisfaction of people, coexistence and respect within the country's boarders, not having centrifugal tendencies among different ethnic groups and religions, none-discrimination in recruitment for community management, the existence of shared sense about national values and interests, acceptance of the role and ideology of the state and not having separatist movements, economic and social rights without any discrimination, the high rate of therapeutic and restorative abilities of society against internal and external threats, regulated behavior of members of the community, defining rights and responsibilities and facilitating public accountability, relative prosperity balance between segments of society, equitable distribution of public revenues and relative prosperity, maintaining and preserving public confidence and work ethic and commitment to humanitarian and ethical principles and the efficiency of regulatory system.

Therefore it can be finally concluded that the formation of social trust as the foundation of social capital plays an important role in providing soft power for community, social relationship between different groups of people in society increase the sense of belonging and develop social trust. Accordingly, we should try to develop social relationships between different groups, in society. Therefore, it is necessary to do this by providing a strong social interactions and interrelations between social groups.

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