The Status of Institutional Trust as the Main Element of Social Capital in Political Socialization

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Abstract
One of the concepts that has received significant attention in humanities, both qualitatively and quantitatively, is the concept of social capital. It refers to those stocks of social trust, norms, and networks that people can draw upon to solve common problems. Social capital is an input to production like physical and human capital and recognized by the scholars in Humanities as the missing link in analyzing and managing current issues in human societies. Networks of civic engagement, such as neighborhood associations, sports clubs, and cooperatives, are an essential form of social capital; the denser these networks, the more likely it is that members of a community will cooperate for mutual benefit. Although measuring social capital may be difficult, there are excellent studies that have identified useful proxies for measuring social capital, using different types and combinations of qualitative, comparative, and quantitative research methodologies. In political science, there have been studies investigating the political functions of social capital in areas such as political development and political participation. Nevertheless, the role of social capital in political socialization, considered as one of the most important processes by governments and political systems, has neglected so far. The question addressed in this paper concerns the effect of social capital and its most important index, institutional trust, on the process of political socialization of citizens. Institutional trust refers to the dynamic relationship between an individual and an institution. It is a form of trust that distinguished by the potential magnitude of its effect.

Keywords: Social Capital, Government, Socialization, Political Socialization, Institutional Trust.

Introduction

Reviewing the definitions and views expressed by social capital concept theorists suggest that "trust" constitutes the focal point of this concept. In other words, trust can considered as the most important and most fundamental part of social capital (Khezri, 2006). Trust can defined as reliance on the other actor, whether individual or collective. In terms of intention, social capital is considering the interests of other
people, and sincerity in words in form of providing the correct information and honesty in behavior. There are three main elements in the above definition that could be raised simultaneously or separately: honesty, efficiency and altruism. Robert Putnam (2000) defines social trust as the most important component of social capital. He believes that trust will facilitate cooperation and with the rise of the level of trust in a society, the possibility of cooperation increases (Miszetal, 1996). On the other hand, one of the most prominent functions of social capital is citizens’ political socialization. This involves training in political roles, attitudes, values, beliefs, civic moral and democratic behaviors sufficient to permit citizens to become involved in citizenship roles and interactions with government (Morales, 2002).

The concept of trust can be explained at three levels: individual, social and institutional. For this article our main indicator in discussion with social capital and its relationship with political socialization would be the concept of institutional trust. For years, institutional or political trusts as major indicators of social capital have been basic concepts in a variety of theorizations in political science and sociology academic resources. This concept has a close relationship with basic concepts in politics such as political participation, political culture, political efficacy and also social capital which leads to placing this issue in the research spotlight; this is because distrust toward government institutions has a variety of side effects for each country such being with examples principally such consequences as reduction in political participation, disobedience from laws, tax evasion, lack of support from the government in crisis and emergency situations (Seyedemami & Montazeri Moghadam, 2012).

Institutional trust as a focal point concept of social capital is a footstone for forming groups, organizations and networks that lead to sustainability and survival of societal institutions, whether governmental or nongovernmental. Societies that enjoy institutional trust are participatory, knowledgeable and responsible societies. Furthermore, societies that are confronted with low trust or distrust are not able to create complex and necessary institutions and it has brought them exorbitant costs (Bustani, 2005). Institutional trust in this paper is defined as citizens’ confidence towards government institutions and description of situations in which members of society think that these institutions will do what is right even in the absence of ongoing monitoring (Seyedemami & Montazeri Moghadam, 2012).

Literature Review

As samples of the articles and works which have been written within the scope of this article, we can refer to these instances: "Reviewing the definitions, concepts and Ways to Create social capital (With Emphasis on Social Trust)" written by Kamal Dorrani and Zahra Rashidi (2008) in which the relationship between social trust with participation and security feeling has been examined. The paper titled "State and Social Capital" written by Mohammad Khezri (2006) is about the importance of social capital in good governance and its vulnerability against the state, actions and measurement. The last sample is "Social Capital and Political Socialization"; an article written by Hussein Rafi (2008) in which the ratio between these two variables has considered among students has discussed. As a different aspect from cited works and other works in this area, our paper attempts to examine the weight of social capital in determining the level of success of the political socialization process theoretically.

Research Questions

The main question of this paper is ‘what is the role of "social capital" and “institutional trust” (as its most important component), on the process of "political socialization"? Our hypothesis is that “Institutional trust” as the most prominent index of social capital has a great role in the implementation and effectiveness of the political socialization process.
Theoretical Framework

The theoretical framework for this paper is Robert Putnam's theory (1993) that is about the concept and functions of social capital. Putnam’s first recommendations on social capital discussions began from the end of his studies on local government planning in Italy. Using the concept of social capital, Putnam (1993) wanted to show the existing differences in civic engagement more clearly. He initially presented his findings about the performance of institutions and civic engagement levels in detail. Then he presented his definition of social capital as the characteristics of a social organization including trust, norms, and networks.

These features can improve the efficiency of society by accelerating coordinated activities. Later on, Putnam (1996) added the element of “participants” to his previous definition of social capital. This new element refers to the people who benefit from social capital interests individually than collectively. The core component of social capital, according to Putnam (1993), is the networks. Social relationships affect the efficiency of individuals and groups. In his view, social communications mean interpersonal communication, social networks, interaction, and trust criteria that develop and are transferable from a social condition to another one.

Explaining the concept of social capital

In American political science - specifically with theories of pluralism, thinkers have analyzed the relationship between participatory life and democracy. They have used phrases similar with social capital to integrate concepts like social solidarity and cohesion that have been inspired by the efforts of writers like James Madison and Alexis de Tocqueville (Melkonian, 2012). John Dewey (1899) was probably the first one who used the term social capital, but he did not provide a definition for that. Classical sociologists such as Marx, Simmel, Durkheim, Weber, and Parsons have paid attention to the concepts such as urgency, the collective interest, values, and social trust, which are the dimensions of social capital (Tavassoli & Mousavi, 2005).

In general, there is a consensus that it was Hanyfan (1916) who first interpreted the concept of social capital, explaining the importance of participation in making schools more efficient. Afterwards, as pointed out by a group of Canadian urban sociologists in the 1950s (Seeley, Sim & Loosley, 1956), Jacobs (1961) presented a new interpretation of social capital stating that intensive social networks in old suburban complexes and urban areas constitute a form of social capital. In those areas, people show more responsibility in connection with maintaining cleanliness, absence of street crime and other decisions about improving the quality of life, in comparison with formal institutions such as the police force (Wall, 1998).

Political scientist Robert Salisbury (1969) has developed the meaning of this phrase so that social capital is a vital part in the formation of profitable groups. Glenn Lowry (1977), an economist, paid attention to revitalizing social capital by using this term to describe “urban economic development” (Warren, 2005). Pierre Bourdieu (1977) presented the first integrated explanation and interpretation of this term. James Coleman (1980) further discussed social capital and proceeded to explain its elements and completing parts. Since the 1990s, the concept of social capital has increasingly gained appeal by World Bank since 90s (Putnam, 2000).

People will satisfy their needs and lives instinctively by interactions with fellow humans. The effects of these actions are such that their removals make life impossible. Meanwhile, scholars in Humanities have called these interactions social capital (Tumin, 1967). Generally, social capital includes resources and tools that individuals, groups, institutions or communities use to achieve their goals. The term social capital has...
been the subject of many investigations in the humanities and social sciences in the past few decades and extensive literature has allocated to it (Ejtehadi, 2007).

**Social Capital Definitions**

Social capital is based on different interpretations and applications. So a multiplicity of applications leads to a multiplicity of social capital definitions (Halpern, 2005). Social capital has been frequently employed to describe superior management functionality (Moran, 2005), improvement in the efficacy of multi-functional groups (Evans and Carson, 2005), the value of discretionary treaties and strengthening relations of a supply chain. Earlier attempts to define social capital have frequently insisted on its usage as a resource for public interest or individuals (Koka and Prescott, 2002).

Some of the most cited social capital definitions are as follows: 1. Networks, associations and institutions that are shaped by common norms and relationships based on trust to facilitate cooperation (Sharifiansani, 2002). 2. Bilateral relations, interactions and networks, which emerge within human groups, and the level of trust that is found among a particular group and community because of commitments and norms linked to the social structure (Alvani & Seyednaghavi, 2002). 3. From the perspective of Winter (2000), social capital is the bilateral interests of social relations which are created by norms, trust and mutual interaction. 4. World bank: Phenomena that formed due to the effect of social institutions, relationships and norms on the quantity and quality of social interactions. 5. Baker recognizes social capital as a resource that actors take from particular social structures (Baker, 1990). 6. Social capital is a set of relationships, interactions and social networks that exist among individuals and social structures and facilitate social relations and actions (Ghaffari, 2005).

In addition to Robert Putnam, other scholars have theorized in the social capital field too. For instance, Nan Lin has an individual definition of social capital as investment in social relations with the aim of profit return in the business arena (Lin, 2001). By introducing the theory of social resources in 1982, “Lin” stated that acquiring social resources and using them could lead to better social-economic opportunity (Lin, 1982). James Coleman (1980) defines social capital from a practical perspective: a variety of individuals with two elements in common, all of them included as part of social structures which facilitate some actors’ activities in that structure. Social capital is that which is derived from a network of relationships, trust, a sense of reciprocity and social norms which facilitates the personal or social activity.

Pierre Bourdieu (1985) distinguishes between four types of capital: economic, cultural, symbolic and social. His perspective on the concept of social capital is an instrumental view and based on profits of social capital owners and purposeful establishment of social relations with the aim of creating this type of source. Francis Fukuyama (2002) points out that there is no agreement on the definition of social capital. He believes that social capital is shared norms and values that strengthen social cooperation and are based on real social relations.

**Classification of Social Capital**

Social capital is generally classified at the micro, intermediate and macro level. At the micro level, it is studied in the form of personal relationships and communicational networks between people and the norms and values governing them. Accordingly, social capital includes issues such as intensity and quality of the relationships and interactions between individuals and groups. It also involves the sense of mutual commitment and trust towards common norms and values and is seen as a sense of belonging and social cohesion. 2. The intermediate level of social capital encompasses some aspects of social structures and facilitates specific actions of agents within the system or social structure. This concept includes horizontal and vertical communications that involves organizations and their relations like clubs, associations,
companies, political parties and NGOs. In fact, social capital exists in social relations and social norms among the groups that are involved in participatory affairs. 3. At the macro level, social capital includes contractual and structural relationships of major institutions such as state, political governance and legal and judicial systems. This level includes formal relations and structures, such as political governance rules and regulations, the political participation rate and the formation of political institutions. In other words, at the macro level citizens/individuals are faced with structural social capital, or institutional trust, involving trust in government and specialized systems (Azkia and Ghaffari, 2005).

Social Capital Elements

Networks: social network is a social structure made up of a set of social actors such as individuals or organizations and other social interactions between actors (Wasserman, S. & Faust, 1994). The social network perspective provides a set of methods for analyzing the structure of whole social entities as well as a variety of theories explaining the patterns observed in these structures. Putnam considers two features in network that are influential in the production of social capital: 1. Network structure: Networks that produce social capital by promoting strong norms of comprehensive cooperation and strengthening trust and facilitating cooperation. 2. Network compaction: As the number of networks and their compaction becomes more, there will be more likelihood for citizens to cooperate for mutual benefits (Putnam, 2000).

Norms: informal and common perceptions, rules and customs that prescribe, prohibit or modify specific behaviors; like honesty, universalism and legalism (Alvani, M. & Seyednaghavi, 2002). Putnam (1993) divides cooperation norm as balanced and generalized. He believes generalized cooperation is for the time that somebody does something for others without expecting an immediate response and having assurance to get response perhaps even without knowing him/her.

Trust: Trust stems from empirical, moral, and individual contexts, and refers to the belief that others will contribute to the welfare of oneself by doing something or avoiding it (Warren, 2005). Putnam (2000) believes that there is a positive correlation between trust and cooperation. This means that as the trust increases among social actors, cooperation and facilitation in action rises too. Trust is not an involuntary and unintentional element; it requires predicting an independent actor’s behavior, which is based on sincere trust in communities and impersonal and indirect trust in societies. According to Putnam personal and intimate trust, which is limited to face-to-face encounters and is connected to a particular type of social capital in its territory, transforms to generalized or social trust by balanced and general reciprocity norms. It consequently creates generalized social capital in the society (Putnam, 2000).

Institutional Trust

Institutional trust is an abstract state of trust toward institutions and organizations such as schools, army, universities, courts and the police. Institutional theories suggest that citizens’ trust toward any institution is the result of its proper functioning. Trust toward an institution has a completely rational basis that relates to the evaluation of citizens from the performance of that institution (Seyedemami & Montazeri Moghadam, 2012). The level of trust that people have toward various institutions is different in societies and is subject to change over the time.

Procedural trust is another type of confidence toward institutions. Procedural trust is the trust that exists in institutionalized actions or procedures of organizations, and citizens believe that if organizations follow these procedures and actions, they can achieve the best results. One example can be the trust in democratic practices (elections, representation of a majority of votes, etc.) as the best means to fulfill the interests of the majority of the population and earning the most reasonable compromises in case of conflicting interests.
Another example can be the trust in legal procedures as the best means to achieve the most accurate and fair judgments (Sharepoor, Razeqi and Gholamzadeh, 2011).

Giddens (1995) divides trust into two types; Trust between people and trust of people in institutions (Abstract systems). With institutional trust, citizens do not need to contact authorities. However, many non-professional actors interact with system agents. He calls these encounters access points. Access points in institutions provide the necessary context for the encounter between known and unknown agents. In other words, non-professional actors face institutions’ agents in access points.

Giddens linked his theory about the nature of modern institutions to the mechanism of trust in abstract systems, particularly specialized systems. He believes that “in conditions of modernity, the future is always open” (1990) and relates this openness to rethinking knowledge and its relationship with organizing social functions. He believes that the futuristic aspect of modernity is mainly shaped through trust in abstract systems; this means that non-professional actors trust in specialized systems. Giddens argues that people’s experiences of access points and information that are available to them through the media and other sources strongly influence trust or distrust approaches toward specific systems (Giddens, 1990).

Unlike Giddens, Sztompka (1999) believes that trust can only exist among humans and it is not possible between natural phenomena. In his opinion, trust in the institutions and organizations, institutions such as schools, universities, the military, the church, and the police that have a particular structure and involve interactions, are among the most abstract ones.; He believes that the level of trust in institutions is different between various societies and in a specific society over time. He, then, establishes the relationship between existential security and social systems. He believes that when people speak about existential security, they subconsciously consider trust in the systems which represents the enforceability of the social systems, the strength and durability of the society, the effectiveness of the economic or political regimes, etc. In this case, we trust a general system.

According to Sztompka, trust in the whole system could be called legitimacy of the system. Sztompka refers to charismatic and legal legitimacy based on Weberian theories and believes that charismatic legitimacy requires personal trust, but legal legitimacy requires institutional trust (Sztompka, 1999). According to Claus Offe (1999), institutions may seem strong and respectful because of their age; however, they owe their reputation to positive attitudes and understanding of the people who are engaged in these institutions. Moreover, some institutions are more understandable and receive support easier than other institutions. The quality and significance of these institutions is the critical factor in gaining loyalty and trust of those they control.

This is where the quality of institutions becomes important. Institutions, if designed well, can be grounds for social trust. It means trusting the people engaged with the institutions and with whom we have never had any contact and/or shared any social bond. Institutions allow us to trust their operators, because they provide reference points and binding values that are reliable and serve to justify and semanticize institutions’ rules. Not all institutions function by bridging strangers to create social trust. However, those that are sufficiently meaningful, reasonable and convincing for others can create converging tendencies and commitments. If institutional meaning is unclear, or their binding claims are unrecognizable, doubtful and inconsistent with the obtained results, they will not gain strangers’ trust. When we say that an institution is meaningful for citizens, it refers to the situation in which the institution’s values and existing form of life is valid in order to support that institution and its rules continuously. Knowing the meanings and justifications that institutions provide allows the participatory observers to determine to what extent they can trust the people who reside in an institutionalized regime, although they are strangers (Offé, 1999).
Offe (1999) believes that the constructive function of institutions lies in their ability to shape and inform behavioural trends. According to him, institutions achieve constructive function if people who work in these institutions or are under their control become familiar and saturated with the binding thoughts embodied in them. According to him, institutions generate trust in two ways: first, through their approach; second through their strategy for minimizing the risks that threaten the people who trust them. In other words, institutions facilitate trust through reducing concerns that stem from trusting strangers. In the latter case, institutions such as insurance companies, social security systems and courts can compensate for or reduce the consequences of the damages caused by trusting others: the stronger the individual social rights, the easier the building trustworthy relationships.

In total, institutions create trust among strangers in two ways. First, they encourage others’ obedience, by their moral authority and constructive effects. Secondly, they can limit the dangers of trusting strangers by providing supportive social rights. Thus, in terms of Offe, institutions are involved in the conversion and expansion of interpersonal trust to social trust. They represent special values and they perform in such a way that provides the reasons and motivations for loyalty and adherence to these values. The ability of the institutions as trust mediators will severely weaken if their agents ignore some or all of these values, do not embody them in their performance, or do not have the appropriate enforcement guarantee (Sharepoor, Razeqi and Gholamzadeh, 2011).

Explaining the Concept of Socialization

The historical background of the term socialization goes back to 1828 (Chilcote, 1994). However, in the United States of America Georg Simmel employed this term for the first time in 1895 (Simmel, 1957). Later on, Anthony Giddens (1977) and Ernest W. Burgess (1916) expanded it. This term found significant vogue in sociology with the publication of two articles in the American Journal of Sociology (Wirth, 1938). Perhaps, the simplest definition of this term is that socialization means ensuring that an individual’s behavior complies with varied conditions and phenomena in society. Rogers Scruton (1986) defines socialization as stages where a person gains the appropriate features required for membership in society; the most important achievement of this process is self-understanding as a stable social being who is guided by norms, roles and relationships with others. There are four different approaches towards socialization:

1. Socialization as a form of education.
2. Socialization as a process of transmitting culture and cultural patterns (this approach is close to anthropologists’ views).
3. Socialization as a function of society to protect itself.
4. Socialization as a process of character formation and playing social role (this approach is closer to psychology field).

As is implied in the cited definitions, the third approach is the closest to the field of political socialization (Tanhaei, 2000).

Political Socialization Approaches

1. Classical theory: Anthony Orum (2000) draws on social psychology theories in the study of evolution of individuals’ perceptual cognition during their life. He refers to Four theories that make political socialization study possible:

a. Theory of cognitive development: This theory pursued first by “Jean Piaget” and subsequently by American psychologists such as Lawrence Kohlberg. Piaget believed that the evolution of individuals’ cognitive organization is based on the environment in which they grow. A similar evolution process exists in understanding a political system and in developing cognitive organization. This process assists in making ethical and value judgments about this system, and in particular about political culture.
b. Social learning theory: In this theory, the main emphasis is on the early stages of life that play an important role in the establishment and growth of information and knowledge. This theory applied in the study of political character by Sears and Bandera.

c. Mental analysis theory: The origins of this theory go back to Sigmund Freud and Erik Erikson. Ericsson points out that an individual’s knowledge of culture and politics in the early stages of life can reconstructed in subsequent stages and by practical experiences (Orum, 2000).

d. Social role theory: The intellectual roots of this theory go back to people like Charles Horton Cooley (1918) and George Mead (1934). At the beginning of the twentieth century, they placed an emphasis on learning and the acquisition of social roles and on transferring criteria, attitudes, values and desires. This learning takes shape in institutions that are responsible for sociability, particularly the family, because it has the most important role on the individual's adaptation with the external environment. This analysis method followed by Robert Merton (1996) paid attention to the study of political socialization among students in American universities.

2. Modern perspectives and analysis: In the new perspectives related to the last decades of the twentieth century, analyzing the issue of political socialization has broader dimensions and focuses on the study in this field in a particular way. At the beginning of the 70s, political scientist David Easton released the surveys that dealt with political socialization in the United States as a field study in collaboration with some contemporary psychologists such as Hoes and Denis. (Easton, 1969)

They tried to design a theoretical sample to study the political socialization in children and students and explained it in four processes: 1. politicization stage: At this stage, the child begins to grow politically and make effort to understand the politics. 2. Recognition and reconceptualising stage: This stage begins when the child begins their relationship with the political system. They then recognize some forms of political or general domination. 3. Example stage: In this level, the child begins to make value judgments towards the current political condition. 4. Evolution to institutionalization stage: Making value judgment about all components of the political system (Ibid).

Explaining the Concept of Political Socialization

Political socialization is an educational process that helps to transfer norms and acceptable behaviors of the established political system from one generation to another. This process aims to train or breed individuals so that they become efficient members of the political community (Alam, 2004). In some works, the roots of attention to political socialization go back to the ideas of Plato. His focus was on the importance of child training in utopia and ancient Greek society (Plato, 2003). In contemporary times, many scientists have shifted their attention to this issue. For instance, Charles Merriam (1934) tried to study the quality in the shaping of the political socialization process in many European governments during the twentieth century. Furthermore, sociologists such as Max Weber, Karl Marx and Talcott Parsons have played a prominent role in social and political socialization study (Offe, 1999). Richard Dawson and Kenneth Pruitt (1969) turned political socialization into a formal and theoretical concept.

Here are some of the most cited political socialization definitions:

1. From the perspective of Michael Rush (1992), political socialization is a process in which people become familiar with the political system in a specific society and shape their reactions toward political phenomena.

2. According to Almond and Powell (1966) Political socialization is the process by which political cultures are maintained and changed.
3. Political socialization is an educational process that aims to indoctrinate values, norms and orientation in people’s minds so that they trust their political system (Alam, 2004).

4. The political socialization process focuses on people’s political culture to perform three functions: maintaining, changing and establishing a new political culture (Hormoz, 1997).

**Functions and Methods of Political Socialization**

**Family:** The first acquaintance with political concepts, issues and trends takes place through family. It connects individuals and society to each other. Children and adolescents are naturally influenced by and dependent on their parents (Mansouri, 2007).

**Educational Institutions:** Lucian Pye (1966) explains political socialization process in three stages for students: »Early socialization process« in which students get acquainted with the dominant culture of the society and learns how to be a member of a society that is governed by specific political and cultural structure through a formal and informal educational plan. «Political socialization process» in which with continuation in interaction with institutions concerned with educational structure, students start their political learning process and learns how to understand and judge political events. 3. Political engagement process, which refers to the time that an individual turns to an active participant citizen.

**Peer Groups:** this term refers to groups whose members have a relatively similar social position and close ties with each other. The groups such as playmates, friends, colleagues and neighborhood youth are samples for peer groups (Hormoz, 1997). In the early years of life, family is responsible for transferring fundamental political trends and information to children. Afterward, the role of the family in this process decreases gradually and the influence of peer groups increases instead (Ghanadan and others, 1996).

**Work Environment:** A child who has grown up in a family, which is democratic, will react to the employers who have inhumane treatment to him. Participation in the collective bargaining process or participating in a strike will give them a powerful socialization experience to both employee and employer (Ibid).

**Mass Media:** The mass media could be important in creating consolidation and coordinating people’s opinions toward political systems. The media have a direct role in shaping people’s fundamental orientations and specific thoughts in all countries that have mass communication technology. Lucian Pye emphasizes that the mass media are the best available method for socialization and a decisive factor in modernization (Pye, 1966).

**Government and Party Agencies:** Formal or informal direct contact with political system elites creates a pluriplist force that is one of the major factors in political socialization. Political parties play the direct role in political socialization by political propaganda, electoral campaigns and activities, and presenting political ideas in written or oral form (Ibid).

**The Role of Institutional Trust in Political Socialization**

The process of political socialization in each country takes shape due to political and non-political institutions which have established by state as political system’s main agents. Thus, as the level of people’s trust toward these institutions rises, the probability of effectiveness and realization of targeted goals in political socialization process will increase. Institutional trust is considered as social capital’s focal point. This concept is a social and cultural fact that has root in historical backgrounds and experiences. When trust turns to a culture and people start to rely on formal and informal institutions in a society, this condition will
take root in the normative system which have high influences in different levels. Trust in the political system and its institutions are issues that have always attracted the attention of scholars in the humanities and especially political science. The concept of institutional trust also linked with the concept of legitimacy that refers to the entire political system and its fixed nature.

Institutional trust can be seen as attitudes towards governments, so that institutional distrust will be the expression of the opinion that the government does not operate properly and achievements do not fulfill in accordance with citizens’ expectations. Advanced countries are those who have a high level of citizen’s participation in important affairs and various political and social fields due to citizen’s institutional trust. Institutional trust is a fundamental component of established order in society. Because setting up this order would be possible with much less cost due to existing institutional trust in society. Sociologists have found that without trust, it is not possible simply to provide our daily life. Today there is most agreement on this issue that institutional trust is an essential component of all continuous political and social relations. It can be said that institutional trust is a social and political action that should be preserved like the air we breathe or the water we drink. Social justice, security, freedom, moral values and government effectiveness are variables that have the most significant role in institutional trust. As society members feel more justice, political system will gain more legitimacy and acceptability.

Trust in traditional societies develops through certain institutions. In such societies, people find their identity in tribe and family. A traditional society has potential sources for personal and group identity. Nevertheless, the process of transformation in developing societies leads to the structural imbalance for traditional society that brings about identity crisis. As a result, there is no trust among individuals and in the states. A political system will achieve public support provided it has legitimacy. This would increase the capabilities of the system in advancing political socialization process and in turn overcoming crises. Increased legitimacy plays a role in the renewal and control of power and improves decision-making. A government will be successful in the process of political socialization when citizens have confidence in its institutions. It can achieve trust by expanding people’s true participation, systematizing its political structure, increasing the efficiency of its administrative system, and connecting values to the performance and policies of the political system (Ghavam, 1992). Disunity and dispersion increases distrust in society. To avoid this, the government should bring all citizens under a set of common values, constructive beliefs, and social and political institutions. This prevents violence, conflict, and the reduction of social capital in society (Ibid). The most important factor in advancing the process of political socialization is mutual trust between people and the political system. This facilitates citizens’ participation in political affairs, and its absence will lead to undesirable outcomes. In these circumstances, the willingness of people to participate and intervene in the internal political dynamics will be very low. Awareness about people’s desires and demands would help political systems to create equilibrium between economy and politics, which would lead to the preservation and promotion of political legitimacy (Nasohyan, 2008).

Historical documents illustrate widespread distrust not only between people, but also between elites and the kings. Mashkour (1987) states that after Hormuz (Iranian king who ruled from 272 to 273 A.D) was appointed as Khorasan (a province in Iran) governor by his father, Sassanid Shapur (ruled in Iran from 241 to 272 A.D), he felt his father’s distrust towards himself. Therefore, he decided to cut off his right hand and sent it to his father to prove his honesty and loyalty. Another study explored the role of people’s trust in government in the political development field (Bustani, 2005).

Producing and maintaining the social trust is one of the main concerns of each country's political system. In today's turbulent world, trust is an elixir that brings about progress, development, and flourishing for all countries. Trust, especially in its institutional form, arises from performance, power, and interactions of institutions.
This paper will show that the state facilitates the process of political socialization by preparing for confidence building and increasing the level of institutional trust, for it is the main component of social capital. Hence, the government must provide the necessary contexts for encouraging people to cooperate and stimulate collective measures in coordination with government institutions, activities, and politics. This process leads to an increase in social capital of government that leads to the fulfillment of political socialization. The realization of this goal can be carried out at three levels: social, individual, and institutional confidence building.

In social confidence-building, the government increases society’s trust through policies such as the provision of health and public education, unemployment insurance, and a comprehensive social security system to develop relationships. Trust between people, government officials, and political elite leads to a comprehensive development of society.

In individual confidence building, the government should provide the necessary motivation for people, especially the poor, the disabled, and other vulnerable populations to increase their participation in collective action. This represents the government’s intent to empower and support them. Economic and educational poverty and vulnerability to social risks reduces people's actual and potential readiness to adopt policies. Therefore, they cannot cooperate with various governmental institutions.

In institutional confidence building, the government must encourage cooperative interactions by making its institutional environment efficacious. This provides the necessary tools to a transparent explanation of civil rights and orient various governmental institutions to fulfill these rights. Institutions are game rules for members of society as they interact with each other. When these game rules are undefined, unclear, unenforceable or biased, inclination to follow policies and strategies provided by government institutions decrease. In other words, “trusting” and being “trustworthy” are not only the inherent characteristics of the population, but also an aspect of the institutional structure that people believe in and act within it (Fukuyama, 1997). Therefore, if the institutional structure of government does not make reliability and keeping promises for members of society beneficial, their willingness to supply these norms will decrease. In fact, a large part of people’s behaviours shapes in response to this structure, rules, and functions that it governs. Hence, the role of social capital and trust as its main index is undeniable in the effectiveness of the political socialization process (Khezri, 2006).

A clear definition of citizenship rights and serious institutional protection of it reduces existing transaction costs in social interactions. Consequently, these transactions become less costly and people’s tendency to take advantage of intermediary institutions in this interaction increases. Furthermore, as the transaction costs increase in society, public confidence declines and people become inclined towards limited, single and specific cooperation. The establishment of citizenship rights not only gives meaning to institutional interactions and structures for society members, but also makes compliance and cooperation with trends and orientations of government institutions a beneficial option for people. Building trust for the production of social capital means that the government should establish a social environment that produces trust. This situation causes the government to gain citizens’ trust in its measures and policies and makes participation in society management and cooperation with government institutions meaningful for citizens.

Therefore, stability in government behaviours and policies, decentralization of power, transparency and accountability, tolerance in construction and dynamics process of civil society, and creating the necessary space for activity of nongovernmental and market economy are very important. In fact, the government should attempt to design a cooperative institutional structure and consider participants as manufacturers of required social capital for advancing the process of political socialization (Francois, 2002).
One of the factors that increase the amount of trust in the political system is independent identity of non-governmental structures and institutions. However, this issue should not lead to separation of the structural performance and consequently diffraction and dispersion of the system. However, despite independent coordination and solidarity between the structures must maintained (Ghavam, 1992). In this process, the goal is to bring people out from apathy to take full advantage of available resources, both material and spiritual for more accountability.

Relying on an assumption that the institutions define rules and policies based on standards, values and practices, this obligation makes citizens obey the rules. As a result, this situation gives to that policy the power of shaping and influencing. People’s distrust toward legal frameworks that underlie the process of political socialization is a reaction that society shows against dummy criteria, old and inconsistent regulations with the aforementioned situations. In a closed political system, inasmuch as the real demands do not transfer to the political system, policymaking is without regard to national interests, so people adopt a negative stance toward these policies. In fact, it can be said that people’s distrust toward law and policies is distrust toward the government and its institutions. The solution for this issue is to involve people in the government administration (Falsafi, 1992).

Distrust also affects the function of communication channels between the political system and people including political parties and the media. When established communication channels do not transfer people’s demands to political systems, this leads to distrust of these channels. Lack of mutual trust between people and government causes a sort of political alienation and apathy for the masses against established systems.

In this case, society does not participate in political affairs and considers itself apart from them. As a result, the whole society will be engulfed by a limited or subdominant political culture. When people do not use these channels to present their requests and demands, this will have a negative effect on the role of institutions on processes such as political development and socialization (Nasohyan, 2008).

Reduction in government’s outsourcing and institution building in the sections that are possible to administer by the private sector and civil society are strategies and policies that may not lead to increased levels of people’s trust in government institutions, because it is probable that their nongovernmental management has had better feedback than governmental management.

This hypothesis is on the basis that the highlighted presence of government and elimination of the private sector and civil society, presents government’s distrust toward referred sections specifically and society generally. When governments intervene in areas apart from what is defined for them, including the provision of public goods and addressing the issue of output and procurement standards, distrust will spread to government institutions that are engaged in these areas in particular and other government institutions in general. Therefore, qualitative and quantitative level of the state and its institutions intervention in society and its routine affairs is one of the influential factors on people’s institutional trust as manufacturers of social capital. Government’s competence and eligibility is another factor that has a key role in placement of people’s institutional trust toward government institutions.

A competent and efficacious government takes steps in this direction by having sensitivity and making effort to modify inefficiencies and weak points of related institutions and providing high quality public management. In fact, such a state would make the people confident that collected taxes and other public revenues will be spent where they are preferred. In this way, the decent and efficacious government will contribute to production of institutional trust and social capital by maintaining and strengthening interaction based on brokerage relations between itself and society (Khezri, 2006).
Conclusion

One of the important issues that the government of any society faces is the management of the political socialization process. The type of management outlined is important because it perpetuates legitimate and necessary political values and attitudes for the survival of the political system. Government institutions have the main role in the process of political socialization. Therefore, in a society, the level of social capital in general and institutional trust in particular toward Government institutions performance is very important in advancing the process of political socialization. On the other hand, having social capital is very hard to obtain and can be easily destroyed due to its nature and the influence of multiple factors. Hence, governments need to adopt measures towards their institutions to prevent dysfunctions that reduce people’s institutional trust. As a result, the process of political socialization will have done well by those institutions. Some of these strategies include: 1. Increase in scientific and managerial ability of institutions managers and staff to increase their efficiency. 2. Increase in satisfaction of people who are connected to institutions. 3. Expand support and empower civil society and NGOs, which reduces the outsourcing of government institutions in unnecessary issues and increases the level of government popularity. 4. Establishment of meritocracy system in the appointment of government officials working in institutions. As conclusion, the most efficient type of political socialization of society members could be earned through generating social capital and increasing the level of institutional trust among citizens.

References


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