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## THE RELATIONSHIP BETWEEN SOCIAL CAPITAL ENHANCEMENT AND SOCIAL HARM REDUCTION

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### ABSTRACT

*Present study aims to examine the relationship between social capital enhancement and social harm reduction at District 12 of Tehran city. This is an applied, descriptive and correlational research. Population of the study included all the inhabitants of District 12, from among whom 313 individuals were selected as the participants of the study based on simple random selection. The sample size was estimated using Cochran formula. Researcher-made questionnaires of social harm and social capital were used as the instruments to collect the related data. The collected data were analyzed using SPSS22 as descriptive (frequency, percent, demographic features) and inferential statistics using factor analysis and structural equation modeling (SEM) methods of analysis. Results of data analysis showed a significant negative effect of social capital on social harm.*

**Keywords:** Social Capital, Social Harm, Applied Research.

### INTRODUCTION

Social pathology is a new concept taken from biological science based on the similarities the scholars found between physical illness and social deviations. Following the development and growth of sociology, the concept was used to study and find the cause of social disorders. The issue of social harms has been long examined by the scholars. As the industrial revolution and demands expanded, the deprivation due to the impossibility to meet the needs of life led to serious development and expansion of corruption, revenge, crime, wandering, theft, sexual deviations and other social harms (Zakeri et al., 2012).

Social harms can be more or less found in various communities and differ only in terms of the severity and rate. Suicide, for instance, is a harm found in all the societies. However, it is high and significant in some and low in some others. Divorce, armed robbery, theft, rape, addiction and other harm or social deviance are found in all societies (Aghaiee and Teymour Tas, 2010). Social harms which are defined as the malfunction of the collective functions or misbehavior or the individuals are real and regular phenomena, despite being diverse in terms of type and ratio. Regularity of these harms makes it possible to control them. Therefore, the social harms can be treated and prevented. Prevention of social harms depends on the scientific knowledge and regular features governing the harm changes in the society and application of scientific findings in the process of social planning. This is one of the main challenges, most of the governments, specifically in developing countries like Iran, are facing (Jafari, 2001). It seems that social capital is one of the most effective or controlling factors for social harms. According to the sociologists, at the onset of any social system formation, the effect of interpersonal relationships is essential

for the social life and its survival. It was based on these relationships which people could have easier access to mutual benefits and supports. Following the social developments, some changes were made at interpersonal relationship leading to easier interactivity which is now known as social capital. Social capital is a new concept which has been recently introduced in social, economic and medical area. It can be claimed that social capital plays a social role more significant than physical and human capital; since other capitals would have no efficacy in its absence. Social relations are the interpersonal communication framework have made individuals to expand their communication structures and networks through expanding their relationships and activities. Social relation and ties in fact form the social capital of people at a social construct.

### ***Review of Related Literature***

Social harms or deviations are present in every society. However, these harms are significantly increasing in developing countries including Iran which has made the authorities to get concerned and also has increased other problems including social insecurity. Accordingly, it can be concluded that assuming our society to be accelerating toward some social harms, has put the social security into a high risk. Furthermore, given that increased social capital can be related to social capitals, the studies conducted in Iran have found that lower social capital has a direct negative effect of social security and so provides the condition for more social harms. Thus, it can be concluded that lower social capital is one of the reasons for emergence and increased social harms in Iran.

### ***Social Capital***

It is a value which can be used to increase current source or create the new one. Social capital indicates the quality of the social relations and interactivity of the social actors. Weight and diversity of the relationships and social interactivities at micro, middle and macro scale determines the social capital.

Social capital theories have studied the concept at three levels:

- At personal or micro level: every individual in a society are generally members of some networks. They can make use of the interests of membership. Fukuyama has focused on this level.
- Group or middle level: relations based on trust between group members resulted in the formation of social capital. This capital is shared by all the group members so that they can use it for the advancement of their affairs. Kelman and Putnam have focused their theories on this level.
- Social or macro level: a large number of volunteer groups in society and their horizontal relations is based on trust. They produce social capital so that all the group members can make use of it. Fukuyama, Putnam and Bourdieu have taken this level into account.

### ***Social Pathology***

Social pathology as the study of social deviations is the study of social disorder origins. In fact, social pathology is the study of disorders, abnormalities and harms such as unemployment, addiction, poverty, suicide, divorce and others along with the causes and ways to prevent and treat these problems. It is also the study of social disorder condition. In other words, social pathology studies the origins of social disorders, irregularities and problems; since there would be disorders in a society where the norms are not followed and the behaviors are negatively



affected. That is, harms are caused when the social norms are not followed. Failure to adhere to social norms results in social harms.

#### *Relationship between social capital and sense of social security*

Social capital is one of the main components enhancing society and making a safe and desirable society. Social capital is the raw material of a civil society resulted from the daily interactivity of individuals and leading to creation of social communities and networks based on trust, mutual cooperation and rules of social action. The importance of social capital along side the neighboring relations at various levels, is an important factor explaining social insecurity variances in society; thus, awareness about social capital of the members of a society and its role in explaining the social security and its components are essential in the form of a scientific study. Bahripour et al (2013) in a survey examined the relationship between social capital and sense of socially secure among the +18 years old citizens of Kashan. Findings of the study indicated the effect of social capital of the citizens on their sense of socially secure.

Bayat (2010) conducted a study to explain the relationship between social capital of the police force and public security. There was a correlation between the social capital of the police and public security.

Fathi and Fadavi (2012) in a study entitled an analysis of social harms among the youth during 2008-2009 and mediatory factors showed that economic issues, poverty, unemployment and household problems and their effects on families are among the factors increasing social harms. Furthermore, it was found that sense of emptiness, despair, sense of guilty, depression, addiction, failure, acute emotional crises, severe illness, and lack of happiness are among the factors leading to social harms among the youth.

Sharbatian (2012) in a study entitled as reduced social capital and development of social harms showed that the police are one of the main supervisory organs which can prevent social harms as the main solution to social problems. Furthermore, the socially-oriented police performance can play a significant role in effective diagnosis and analysis of the harms if it can inform members of the society about the main factors reducing social capital in a regular way.

Wright and Fitzpatrick (2006) in a study entitled as social capital and adolescent violent behavior found that the importance of social capital factors across domains as significant resources moderating violence outcomes, especially parent-child relationships and school affiliation. Although we hypothesized that greater sports and club participation would decrease tendencies toward violence, results indicate otherwise. The study was conducted among a national sample of secondary school students.

Wright et al (2001) in a study entitled as the relationship between social capital of family and delinquent behaviors. It was found family social capital reduces delinquency rates over time and moderates the effects of mistreating. Also, parental effort in terms of time spent and the amount of their attention decreases the probability of commitment of delinquent behaviors and socialization by delinquent peers.

Parcel et al (2006) in a study entitled as family social capital and children's behavior problems showed that family social capital correlated with socialization of social norm in children. They also believed that there are specific mechanisms through which family social capital promotes norm transmission across generations.

#### *Hypotheses*



Main Hypothesis: there is a significant relationship between social capital enhancement and social harm in the society.

#### ***Secondary Hypotheses***

- a) There is a significant and direct relationship between social trust and reduced social harm in the society
- b) There is a significant and direct relationship between social cooperation and reduced social harm in the society
- c) There is a significant and direct relationship between coherence and social solidarity and reduced social harm in the society
- d) There is a significant and direct relationship between social norms and reduced social harm in the society
- e) There is a significant and direct relationship between social interactivity and reduced social harm in the society
- f) There is a significant and direct relationship between social responsibility and reduced social harm in the society

## **METHODOLOGY**

This is an applied, descriptive and correlational research.

#### ***Population and Participants***

Population of the study included all the inhabitants of district 12, Tehran, 131 of whom were selected as the participants of the study. Cochran formula was used to estimate the sample size. The estimated sample size was 293 which was reduced to 313 to increase the confidentiality of results and decrease the error of measurement.

#### ***Sampling Method and Instrument***

Participants of the study were selected based on simple random sampling. The first data collection instrument was a researcher-made questionnaire of social capital measuring seven aspect of social networks, trust, corporation, mutual understanding, relations, values, and commitment. The questionnaire included 24 items and rated based on a five-point Likert scale (5=strongly agree, 4=agree, 3=neutral, 2=disagree and 1= strongly disagree). It was tried to be as short and intelligible as possible. Five-point Likert scale was used as one of the most common and reliable measurement scale. Validity of the scale was evaluated and approved by some experts. The reliability of the questionnaire assessed using Cronbach's alpha. The alpha coefficient of 0.93 indicated the acceptable reliability of the questionnaire.

#### ***Data Analysis***

Main Hypothesis: there is a significant relationship between social capital enhancement and social harm in the society.

**Table 1: mean and standard deviation of research variables**

	Mean	SD	N
Social harm	75,55	16,33	313
Social capital	58,07	12,48	313

As shown in table 1 above, social harm had a mean of 75.55 percent and standard deviation of 16.33. Social Capital had a mean of 58.07 and a standard deviation of 12.48.

Table 2 shows Pearson correlation coefficient of social capital and social harm:

**Table 2. Pearson correlation coefficient of social capital and social harm**

		Social harm	Social capital
Social harm	Pearson Correlation	1	-.429
	Sig.		.000
	N.	313	313
Social capital	Pearson Correlation	-.429	1
	Sig.	.000	
	N.	313	313

As shown in table 2, the correlation coefficient of social capital and social harm was -.429 percent with a significance level of less than 0.05. Thus, there is a negative and significant relationship between view of social capital and social harm. That is, social capital enhancement results in lower social harm and vice a verse.

Table 3 illustrates the regression of social harm with components of social capital.

**Table 3. regression of social harm with components of social capital**

Model	Sum of Squares	df	Mean Squared	F	Sig.	R	Adjusted R-Squared	SD
1	Regression	27214/91	6	4335/81	30.92	.000		
	Residual	46124/93	306	150/73		.609	.371	12/28
	Total	7339/27	312					

Table 3 shows the F statistics with 6, 306 and 30.09 degree of freedom which is higher than the standard with a significance level of less than 0.01. Accordingly, as shown by adjusted R-squared, 31.1 percent of the view about social harm is predicted by social capital components. Table 4 shows the regression coefficients.

**Table 4. Regression Coefficients**

Model	Non-standard coefficient		Standard coefficient	T	Sig.	
	B	Standard error	Beta			
1	Constant	138,930	0,072		27,390	.000
	Social trust	-.649	.169	-.179	-3,832	.000
	Social cooperation	-.844	.216	-.180	-2,909	.000
	Social coherence	-.833	.199	-.190	-4,189	.000
	Social norm	-1,030	.291	-.247	-0,333	.000
	Social interactivity	-1,030	.209	-.238	-4,928	.000
	Social responsibility	-1,356	.204	-.319	-6,631	.000

As it is shown in table 4, the non-standard coefficients of the -.649 for social trust, -.844 for social cooperation, -.833 for social coherence, -1.533 for social norms, -1.030 for social interactivity and -1.356 for social responsibility were obtained. As it is seen in table above, the social capital components had a significance level of less than 0.05. therefore, it can be predicted with 99% confidence that these variables can predict the social harm.



## DISCUSSION AND CONCLUSION

Results of the first hypothesis showed that there was a significant relationship between social trust and social harm of the inhabitants at district 12 of Tehran. This is in line with the findings of Bagheri and Elmi (2012) and Afsari (2014).

It can be explained that one of the most important features of social trust is to strengthen the relationship between individuals and this enhances the cooperation and coherence among members of the society and consequently the civil capacity is increased. Thus, given the important role of social trust and expanding social ties and cooperation among members of the society, it can be concluded that higher rate of membership in social network leads to higher social interactivity and support. This can result in lower social harm and increased sense of security at mental level (Mostafapour et al, 2012). Bagheri and Elmi (2012) showed that given the development of civil society, higher rate of membership in groups and NGOs, expanding interpersonal social relations, active participation in social affairs, establishment of capable social management can enhance the social trust and prevent the expansion of social harms. Furthermore, Afsari (2014) found that higher social trust results in lower tendency to social harms among the adolescence.

Therefore, given the findings of the study, it can be concluded that since trust is one of the most important aspects of interpersonal relations and provides the condition for cooperation among the members of the society, social trust includes criteria such as honesty, objectivity, consistency, fairness and all the things developing interpersonal relationships based on continuous operation of these components. Therefore, higher social trust would lead to higher social cooperation and thus less social harms. It can be concluded that there is a significant relationship between social trust and social harm among the inhabitants of district 12 in Tehran.

Analysis of the data related to the second hypothesis indicated a significant relationship between social participation and social harm in society. These results were in line with the studies of Mostafazadeh (2010) and Parvin et al. (2013). It can be concluded that social cooperation of the citizens involves the tasks and commitments. Cooperation of the citizens in social affairs of their society is not a passive but an active state to share the capabilities, knowledge and abilities. Having a better society requires purposeful cooperation. That is, citizens should try to change their society into a better place with public and active cooperation. Observing the right of others would motivate the citizens to be responsible and try to solve the social problems (Mostafazadeh, 2010). Moreover, it can be stated that according to the social pathology theory, which is one of the first theories explaining social harms; the social harms are the result of illness in society and disorder of basic functions. This theory emphasizes the impairment of social function and social cohesion of some members and groups as the cause of social harms and illnesses. Social illness occurs when members of a society are not properly socialized and do not observe the norms and values. It is also possible that the members of this society are not as sociable as to be involved or can accept the norms and values of society. Mostafazadeh (2010) showed that social cooperation can reduce social harms. Furthermore, Parvin et al (2013) also showed that social cooperation can be one of the controlling factors for social harm. Thus, it can be concluded that there is a significant relationship between social cooperation and social harms.

Results of data analysis for the third hypothesis showed a significant relationship between social coherence and social harms. The result was in line with the findings of the studies by Mirzakhani and Darvishi (2014), Sharbatyan (2012) and Isterly (2006). It can be concluded that social



coherence is an issue concerned since the emergence of social theories along with the concepts such as rule-orientation, social solidarity, trust and sense of social belonging. In addition, social coherence can be measured through the level of trust among members of the society and how much they help each other. Nowadays, successful implementation of crim prevention plans and reducing social harms based on social approaches requires sub organizational actions of related institutions, including the police, to increase social trust, solidarity and participation. Social cohesion is a concept influencing the national power and identity (Mirzakhani and Darvishi, 2014). Istely (2006) in a study found that social cohesion presented by the components of cooperation developed among the members of the society and social groups based on social accepted frameworks to develop the social cohesion and to reduce crim prevention and social harms. In addition, Sharbatyan (2012) stated that lack of social coherence and solidarity inside the family and even among social organizations led to higher social harm, lower social capital and more social insecurity. Mirzakhani and Darvishi (2014) also showed that considering the indices, components and aspects of social cohesion in the society results in crime prevention and reduced social harm. Thus, it can be concluded that there is a significant relationship between social coherence and solidarity with social harm.

The results of data analysis for the fourth hypothesis indicated a significant relationship between social norms and social harms. This is in line with the study of Mazidi et al (2012). It can be argued that social norms have always been exposed to changes during the time and in industrialized and economically developed societies, the normal social changes have increased in line with the industrial and economic changes. Iran has also recently witnessed changes in social norms due to various reasons; so that removal of informal social norms has trivialized the meaning of life and so increased the change for social harms. On the other hand, the alternative institutes have not been created to define the norms and social interactivity of the new condition. This has had some social consequences including higher rate of crim, poverty, delinquency and social harms in general leading to a social disaster (Sharepour, 2001). In other words, strong commitment to normal order is probably accompanied by simultaneous trust since when people trust each other, they can make sure about observing the mutual social requirements and norms. In contrast, when people are highly suspicious of others, they would not trust the protecting forces which leads to a condition for higher social harms.


Mazidi et al (2012) showed that higher social norms and stronger society results in lower social harm. Thus, it can be concluded that there is a significant relationship between social norms and social harms.

Results of data analysis for the fifth hypothesis showed a significant relationship between social interactivity and social harms. This is in line with the study of Pourmosavi et al (2013). It can be argued that interactivity refers to the relationship between two or more individuals or groups. These relationships can be in form of cooperation, understanding and friendship or conflicts and sometimes in form of indifference and coexistence. In other words, interactivity is the relationship and mutual dependence of individuals and their behavioral orientation which can be in form of hostility or friendship. Pourmosavi et al (2013) in their study showed a significant relationship between interactivity and reduce social harm. Thus, it can be concluded that higher social interactivity and more communication among individuals leads to lower rate of social harms since they cooperate more. Accordingly, it can be concluded that there is a significant relationship between social interactivity and social harms.



Results of data analysis for the sixth hypothesis indicated a significant relationship between social responsibility and social harms. There no study on the relationship between these two variables. However, the finding is indirectly in line with the study of Slajegheh and Shojaiee (2014). It can be argued that responsibility is not an abstract concept but it is value supported by individual and social ethics, conscientiousness, honesty and integrity, and many other positive values. However, if avoiding to take responsibility or even worse, the adverse for responsibility replace the responsibility, it would lead to development of other problems such as negligence in doing the tasks. Moreover, remembering the negligent individuals and authorities about their responsibility is equal to their anger and exclusion from the community (Hosseini, 2012). On the other hand, taking responsibility is a nature and distinguishing feature of human being. The man who does not take responsibility of what he or she did even in front of God, is not a human being any more. Furthermore, in a society where people work as machines and have lower sense of responsibility, it is probable to have higher rate of social harms. Slajegheh and Shojaiee (2014) found a significant relationship between all dimensions of social capital (trust, cooperation, cohesion and solidarity, norms, interactivity, and responsibly) and social harms. Thus, it can be concluded that there is a significant relationship between social responsibility and social harms.

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