

A study of the condition of social capital in disadvantaged neighborhoods (Case study: Kerman city)

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Extended Abstract

Objective: Almost there is an agreement between the social scholars and researchers on the strong effect of the living in the poor neighborhood on the reduction of the individual's life chances because of the harmful outcomes of the poverty such as unemployment, disease, drug addiction, crime and delinquency. Moreover, there are a lot of studies in which the effect of the neighborhood conditions on social problems have been studied and based on the social disorganization theory they have shown that the structural characteristics of the neighborhood such as low economic status, high ethnic heterogeneity, high residential mobility and family disruption are related to the other social phenomena. The latest wave of the studies on "neighborhood effects" have been placed in the first row of academic discussions and social policy. These studies have focused on social capital, including social networks and trust, as a mechanism through which neighborhood disadvantages implement their effects.

This part of literature shows that living in the concentrated neighborhoods poverty reduces the availability of the residents to social capital and the low level of social capital in turn increases the density and accumulation of poverty. In fact, by adding inadequate social capital to the long list of the poor neighborhoods' social problems, the residents' situation will be more complicated and critical and they will experience such a critical and exhausting situation which makes escaping from poverty trap impossible for low income individuals and families. So, there is a mutual relation between poverty and lack of social capital. They interact and reinforce each other in particular geographical places and situations. This article aims to study the present status of two dimensions of social capital in the disadvantaged neighborhoods of Kerman: Structural (network of relationships) and cognitive (trust). Moreover, it tries to compare these two dimensions in disadvantaged and non disadvantaged neighborhoods and also to compare the disadvantaged one with national sample.

Method: The present study is a descriptive – analytic research. Questionnaire has been used for gathering information. The sample is 404 individuals selected through multi-stage cluster sampling in three deprived and marginal neighborhoods in Kerman. Also the national survey of measuring the country's social capital and the complementary research on the non- deprived neighborhoods in Kerman are used to compare the social capitals in the samples.

It's necessary to mention that the sample size in two studies on advantaged neighborhoods in kerman and in national level are respectively 400 and 14200 individuals. The data and findings of these two studies let us to compare the mean of the structural and cognitive dimensions of social capital in three groups in the disadvantaged, advantaged and national samples.

Results: The results of T-test shows that, in collective level, the amount of structural social capital in deprived neighborhoods is significantly lower than the non-deprived ones. These findings indicate that the relationship of the residents of deprived neighborhoods with the individuals who belong to the higher social-economic status, in comparison to the residents of the non-deprived neighborhoods, is significantly lower.

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The limitation of the relationship domain of the residents in the disadvantaged neighborhoods with the professionals reduces the possibility of their economic success and social mobility. Moreover, the limited domain of personal network of the residents in the institutionalized frameworks causes that their voices not heard and their real needs and demands not be reflected in the public organizations and institutions and also they cannot play role in policy making, planning and performing the programs by the governmental section. Moreover, the findings show that the amount of public and organizational trust (bridging social capital) of the deprived neighborhoods in comparison to the national sample which include all of the social classes and groups is significantly lower. This fact might make trouble in the cooperation of the deprived individuals with the public organizations and institutions for empowerment and improvement in their life. Also the findings indicate that the trust of the residents of the deprived neighborhoods in their relatives is more than the average level of the society. This dimension of social capital just helps to the residents' subsistence and their ability to adopt to poverty. It does not help to their economic success.

Conclusion: At last, the findings, in personal level, show that the variables such as age, education and income, have significant association to the structural social capital and the perception of justice and equality have significant relationship to cognitive social capital. These findings just point to two main points. First, there is a synergy between cultural capital (education), economic capital (income) and the disadvantaged residents' domain of personal networks. Second, when the disadvantaged individuals feel that society does not behave fairly, the organizational and public trust among them will be reduced. But if they feel that society behaves fairly, the organizational and public trust among them will be increased.

Keywords: Structural and Cognitive Social Capital, Bridging-Bonding Social Capital, Network Poverty, Organizational Trust.

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