

Investigating the Effect of Social Capital on Political Culture (Case study: Teachers of Khorramabad)

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Abstract

The aim of this study was to investigate the effect of social capital on the political culture of teachers in Khorramabad. The theoretical framework of the research has been developed using the approach of sociology and social psychology and with emphasis on Giddens and Putnam theories. This study was a cross-sectional and descriptive study. The present study was conducted in 1398 among 436 teachers in Khorramabad, who were selected by appropriate sampling method. Data analysis was performed using SPSS statistical software version 25 at both descriptive and analytical levels. The research findings indicated that between the cognitive dimension of social capital ($r = -0.149$, $P = 0.001$), communication ($r = -0.227$, $P = 0.000$), structural ($r = -0.236$, $P = 0.001$) and there is a significant relationship between teachers' political culture; in other words, with increasing all three dimensions of social capital, the amount of teachers' political role increases.

Keywords: Political culture, Social capital, Teachers.

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1. Introduction

Today, the study of political culture has gained a specific place in political sciences and political sociology. Political culture comprises of a system of empirical beliefs, situations, and expressive-emotional value signs, which enact the political action. Political culture is the product of both the collective history of a political system and the life histories of the members of the system (Pye, 199, p. 41). Therefore, political culture is a particular aspect of the public culture, which is stated as a set of values, approaches, and political knowledge that define the political process within the society. These values are comprised of political attitudes, beliefs in the political hierarchy or political equality, political skills, political merits, political knowledge and awareness, sense of security or insecurity, national or ethnic loyalty, and political participation. Furthermore, the political culture is an influential factor in the formation of political systems and attitudes of the community toward government policies based on legitimacy, freedom, and citizenship rights (Panahi and Kurdi, 2010, p. 3).

Many scholars have emphasized on the role of elites and the middle class in the development and dynamism of a democratic political culture. The educational system is one of the institutional areas of every society, which is responsible for the production and reproduction of the political culture through the function of culturalization and political socialization. The history of education indicates the radical approach of governments to the peripheral countries over time. On the other hand, some analytical teachers take a different and opposing position toward this approach, and the issue could be addressed by considering the multiple and opposing approaches that are adopted by political parties and factions. One of these criteria is the omission and inclusion of the materials in textbooks, which could transform the responsibilities of teachers and social roles based on specialized training, appropriate education, and updated learning materials (Hamidi Sharif, 2003, p. 90).

Teachers are members of the social middle class, who are not only quantitatively important, but also play a key role in the social function and education of adolescents in cities, especially in Khorramabad city, Iran. Their

knowledge of the political system and political culture significantly helps stabilize the political and structure of the society. In addition to the pedagogical function of teachers, they are considered to be a role model for students, adolescents, and the youth in terms of intellectual, political, and practical recognition. As a result, addressing their political culture is of critical significance. The present study aimed to establish a conceptual framework based on the theoretical issues of the political culture, which identify its orientations among the young teachers in Khorramabad city, who are members of the middle class and one of the pillars of the political culture and sociability. Another objective of the study was to investigate the impact of social capital on the political culture of the young teachers in Khorramabad city.

2. Review of Literature

According to the literature, limited studies have been focused on the political culture and its specific history in teachers. Most of the studies have assessed the social aspect of this culture, and the political values have been overlooked. Some of these articles are as follows:

- Ahmadi, Mohammad Zadeh, and Majidi (2018) in a study entitled "Typology of the Political Culture of Students in Kurdistan Province Based on Sociocultural Variables"; in this survey, 380 university students were interviewed in Kurdistan province. The average orientation of the political culture among the students was high based on the cognitive (political pluralism) and normative dimensions (practical involvement in politics). The results of the political culture orientation of the students indicated that 33.72%, 28%, 23%, and 16% of the students had democratic, indifferent, pragmatic, and limited activities, respectively.

- Rahbarqazi, Gashool, Arabian, and Ashnaei (2016) conducted a study entitled "Participatory Political Culture and the Effects of Social Capital" using a survey format for data acquisition and analysis. According to the results, cognitive social capital enhanced the extent of the participatory political culture.

- Abbasi Esfajir and Esfandiari (2017) conducted a study entitled "Factors Affecting Students' Political Participation at the Islamic Azad University of

Sari Branch: A Case Study". A researcher-made questionnaire was used for data collection from 722 students of the Islamic Azad University of Sari. The validity and reliability of the questionnaire were confirmed by face validity and the Cronbach's alpha coefficient, respectively, and data analysis was performed using statistical software. Given the level of political participation and after dividing the social capital into three variables of participation in voluntary unions, social trust, and participation in social networks, significant correlations were observed between the dimensions of social capital and the level of political participation.

- Habibpour Gatabi and Mousavi (2016) performed a research entitled "Correlation of Social Capital and Political Participation in Qom Citizens: A Case Study", which indicated positive correlations between the components of social capital and political participation. According to the results of multivariate regression analysis, among the four predictors of social trust, social cohesion, awareness, and informal social participation, only the last two variables were positively associated with political participation. On the other hand, awareness was more influential compared to informal social participation. According to the results, all the variables affected the political participation of Qom citizens directly, indirectly, and in both forms in the order of awareness, informal social participation, social trust, and social cohesion.

- Based on the conventional typologies of political culture, Kurdi (2012) introduced a four-part classification of political types, including indifference, subjugation, reformation, and revolution. The political variations of the respondents were elaborated by factors such as education, social security, gender, social class, religion, social capital, and mass media usage.

- Panahi and Kurdi (2010) carried out a research entitled "Social Factors of Political Culture: A Case Study in Golestan Province", in which the characteristics of the political culture and its diversity and correlations with the social factors in Golestan province were investigated. The sample population of the study included 562 individuals selected from the city centers of Golestan province, and data were acquired using quantitative (survey) and qualitative methods (semi-in-depth interviews). The findings indicated the diverse political culture of the sample population, while also indicating that the four

criteria of education, social security, religion, and gender were relatively capable of elaborating on the changes and differences in the political culture. Similarly, Movahed et al. (2008) conducted a study entitled "The Correlation between Social Capital and the Political Participation of Women", in which they investigated the women living in Shiraz city based on Pierre Bourdieu's notion of cultural conflict as a theoretical framework. The obtained results indicated significant correlations between the dimensions of social capital and level of political participation of the respondents.

- Kirbish (2013) conducted a survey entitled "Political Participation and Non-democratic Political Culture in Western Europe, East-Central Europe, and Post-Yugoslav Countries", arguing that based on Inglehart theory, and due to the limited political culture, the citizens of post-communist countries were reported to be less politically active to participate in political processes compared to their Western counterparts.

- Ikeda and Boase (2011) performed a study entitled "Multiple Discussion Networks and Their Consequences in Political Participation", in which they discussed the positive effect of social networks on political participation. However, it was argued that heterogeneous networks have an adverse effect in this regard and reduce political participation. According to the findings, direct and indirect political discussions could increase political participation. Moreover, involvement in discussions with those who have conflicting views did not reduce political participation; in other words, a positive correlation was observed between heterogeneous political attitudes and political participation (Ahmadi et al., 2018).

- McVey and Vowles (2005) performed a research entitled "Virtuous Circle or Cul De Sac? Social Capital and Political Participation in New Zealand", in which they claimed that declining voter turnout among New Zealanders indicated the reduced political participation in this country. They also discussed that political and other civic participation (e.g., membership in associations and unions) originate from the general concept of social capital. This theory defines associations as the learning centers that foster and promote the trust and civic participation of citizens. However, the study by McVey

indicated insignificant correlations between social capital and various forms of political participation.

3. Theoretical Background

Considering the significance of culture in the theoretical views of political sociologists, views toward political culture could be classified into two main categories of order-oriented and conflict-oriented, which have been discussed in the following sections.

A. Order-oriented: The sociologists who are exponents of this view have been influenced by Parsons and especially Max Weber regarding culture and its place in the social system and action theory. Based on the level these sociologists have been influenced by Parsons or Weber, they are categorized into two groups of 'structural-functional approach' and 'structural-interpretation approach' (Panahi and Kurdi, 2010, p. 3).

I. Structural-functional approach: This approach is comprised of three theories of civic, political culture, political culture, and political development and regionalism, which have been briefly overviewed.

- Civic Culture Theory: Gabriel Almond introduced this concept in 1956 for the classification and comparison of political systems (Almond, 1956, p. 396). In the book of "Civic Culture", Almond and Verba argued that political culture refers to a political system that is internalized in the cognitions, feelings, and assessment of individuals (Almond and Verba, 1963). These scholars believed that it is possible to transfer and transform the political culture through political socialization. Other scholars have also emphasized on the role of social factors in the political culture within the context of the civic culture theory. For instance, Lipset has mentioned the function of egalitarian ideals, tolerance, recognition of opposition, belief in the freedom of speech, and respecting the opinions of other to be paramount (Saboori, 2002, p. 74). According to Lerner, the emergence of a participatory political society is the result of urban development, public education, and evolution of communication tools (Bashiriyeh, 2001, p.16)

- Political Culture and Political Development Theory: The two significant exponents of this theory are Pye and Verba. Pye has examined the political

culture based on the political development of societies, stating that political culture comprises of a system of empirical beliefs, situations, and expressive-emotional value signs, which enact the political action. Accordingly, political culture is the product of both the collective history of a political system and life histories of the members of the system (Pye, 1991, p. 41). He also argues that all the political systems there are composed of a minimum of two political cultures, the elite, and masses (Pye et al., 2001, p.161). Ronald Inglehart is another exponent of this approach and believes in the freedom of speech, political engagement, respecting the opinions of others, and supporting revolutionary causes. The political order is the specific criteria that determine the mental contexts of specific political behaviors (Inglehart, 1994, pp. 62-83).

- **Regionalization Political Culture Theory:** Daniel Elazar (1972) has criticized the views of Almond and Verba regarding the existence of only one type of political culture in each society. Accordingly, there are three specific cultures in the United States, as follows:

a. *The moralistic political culture* aims to improve public welfare with the participation of the majority.

b. *The individualistic political culture*, which includes the individuals who are pessimistic about their government and political elites and reluctant to participate in politics.

c. *Traditionalistic political culture*, which is overconfident toward the political system and political elites, and the political affairs are left to the elites (Henderson, 2007, p. 112).

II. Structural-Interpretation Approach: This view is comprised of two theories, as follows:

a. **Cognitive-Structural Theory:** Michael Gross is the principal exponent of this approach, who has emphasized on the promotion and continuation of the democratic political culture and its components. This theory addresses the individualistic motivations in compliance with social norms. The transformation of the political culture in this approach depends on the cognitive development of individuals and their perception of interests for engagement in political actions (Qeysari and Shakoori, 2002, p. 36).

b. Political Culture and Political Symbolism Theory: This approach considers the attitude toward political symbols as the actual political culture. These symbols legitimize the political system; on the other hand, they serve the interests of the elites and their position. The change in political culture in this theory is elaborated by the emphasis on the variability of symbols. Therefore, when the elites manipulate and present new interpretations of the symbols, new patterns of political behavior emerge, thereby leading to changes in the political culture (Qeysari and Shakoori, 2001, p.42).

1. Hegemony Theory and Political Culture: Antonio Gramsci greatly expanded the concept of hegemony and has discussed the political culture in the context of his theory of civil society. According to this view, civil society creates a consensus that serves as the embankment of the stronghold in a liberal state. This concept is similar to the definition of Almond and Verba regarding the political culture. However, they oppose Gramsci despite the influence on their views. In his writings, Gramsci has discussed the removal of the border between civil society and politics since he assumed that civil society, which regulates a party and political organizations, is regulated by the ruling political power and dilutes the effects of political organizations and sphere of power and politics (Fernandez and Riley, 2006, p.119). Gramsci also believed that by using the hegemony of political culture, it is possible to promote governments and control the mentality of the political actors. Therefore, political culture is an influential factor for the hegemony of the ruling capitalist class over the society.

2. Public Sphere Theory and Political Culture: Jürgen Habermas proposes the components of the political culture in the framework of the analytical theory of the public sphere. Habermas concludes that the public sphere of political culture is comprised of political institutions, political dialogue and debates, and various types of political participation, which are critical to political culture. He also believes that the scope of the public sphere has expanded due to technological advances, such as the media.

3. Theorizing Revolutions and Political Culture: Johan Foran utilizes the concept of the political culture in his elaboration of the impact of culture on revolutionary processes. Foran defines the political culture as a polyphonic and

potentially radical method to understand the society, and sometimes these methods are selected by various social parties to describe and understand political and economic developments, which encompass their lives. He claims that the ideal fulfillment of human resources in the society demands the realization of the political culture of opposition and resistance. Opposing political cultures could be derived from various sources, such as ideologies, cultural traditions, language dialects, ideas, nationalist sentiments, socialism, democracy, and religion. Accordingly, social classes, gender, and race also play a critical role in the formation of political culture (Foran, 2005:273).

3.1. Theoretical Framework

Social capital could strengthen and contribute to social bonds as a central component of interpersonal relations, which in turn form the basis of the participatory culture. Scholars believe that social capital could increase and improve public participation by reducing the costs of social cooperation. Since social capital reinforces the norms and mutual trust of the community members, political participation becomes a collective commodity that increases depending on the level of social capital in a society. Social participation could increase political engagement on its own regardless of awareness, trust, and social norms.

In the 1970s, Olsen argued that the theories of social movements directly emphasize on the effects of social bonds on the political participation of citizens. Similar to Verba and Nie, he also assumed that the opportunities designed by voluntary associations develop individual skills, which are critical in mobilizing the public for political purposes. The radical democracy perspective presented by Evans and Boyte (1992) attempts to free spaces in the social lives of individuals in order to increase their opportunities for developing connections, skills, intellectual maturity, and democracy. Since social connections are mostly not directly involved in political activities, the proponents of de Tocqueville regarding these associations as a democracy school increases political participation through enhancing the social capital (Verba et al., 1995, p. 373). This approach has highlighted the positive aspects of social capital in recent years.

There are two main theories regarding the effects of social capital; some scholars believe that opposing ideas and conflicting social relations reduce the participatory culture. Meanwhile, theorists such as Huckfeldt et al. claim that differences in social bonds could increase political indifference (Hatchfeld et al., 2001,p.22). Confirming this hypothesis means that the individuals with higher social engagement are less inclined to a participatory culture (Hardin, 1999, p. 14). Consequently, there is an indirect and negative correlation between social engagement and the participatory culture. Another critical theory that scholars have a higher more consensus upon considers the effects of social capital similar to other forms of capital as a means to increase intellectual independence and a wide range of available opportunities. The individuals who have stronger intellectual independence could rely on themselves for problem-solving and tackling the challenges of their daily lives. These theorists believe that political, cultural, and social issues could be overcome with the efforts of social agents. Accordingly, the social capital theory helps predict the role of social bonds in increasing the demand for the participatory culture. In this respect, Mark Granovetter believes that a participatory culture could be promoted among citizens by reinforcing weak bonds since the presence of strong social bonds surrounds social actors, thereby restricting the exchange of information between the individual and social environment. In other words, while stronger social bonds mean that citizens have common interests, weak bonds indicate that citizens obtain information from various domains (Granovetter, 1973).

Barret (1992) asserts that a diverse flow of information bridges the structural gaps in the society and reduces the conflicts among various social classes, thereby increasing the empathy of individuals for solving common political problems. By confirming the mentioned hypothesis, it is expected that individuals with free access to a wide range of affiliated social capital demonstrate a greater demand for a participatory culture. Since affiliated social capital connects individuals to wider scopes and contexts and increases their demand for political activity, these associations promote the participatory culture among citizens by reinforcing weak social bonds.

In general, social capital provides the required motivation, information, and skills for influencing the participatory culture. Members of social groups often have common norms and values, which could entice them for a participatory culture. In this regard, Dawson and Wallendorf surmise that compared to the variable of social class, the social capital has an even higher predictive power to support and vote for a specific political party. This is because individuals select political parties based on the accepted norms, and heterogeneous voting leads to the notoriety and isolation of a specific party. First, this social risk probably spreads the voting behavior among the individuals who have a stronger and wider social network. Second, participation in various social parties enhances the social connections of individuals, multiplying their access to political resources, which ultimately affects their voting behavior and political activity (Dawson and Wallendorf, 1985, p. 589). In this regard, Verba et al. have concluded that individual participation in non-political institutions (e.g., social unions) increases the opportunity for political discussions among the members and enhances their inclination toward the participatory culture. Moreover, the members of these associations could promote social relations and other contributing factors for effective social activity by using social networks and gaining access to various sources of information (Rahbarqazi et al., 2015, p. 103). Consequently, these characteristics of the social capital are action-oriented.

Social capital is the power to expand, enrich, and provide resources for social action. Social capital is generated from social interactions, and its existence is dependent on the presence of individuals. Social capital is a component of interaction; when the performance of social capital is promoted, goodwill and mutual trust are fostered within a relationship, and mental convergence and cohesion increase. Therefore, the growth of social capital creates opportunities for social actors to improve their capability and increase the likelihood of success. On the other hand, social capital deficiency may impose costs on social action, hindering it or causing conflicts between the existing actions (Tashakor and Moeini, 2001, p. 31). Robert Putnam elaborates on interaction as the cornerstone of social capital and the main link between social and political relations (Putnam, 2000, p. 134). Members of sports teams

contact with each other regularly, and their issues are revealed as a result; this concept is more tangible from the perspective of social groups. Similarly, the citizens who are a member of social unions meet with different individuals. In a healthy and positive environment, this will reinforce the positive characteristics and build mutual social trust. Members of these associations positively welcome and trust newcomers. Putnam also argues that communicative, structural, and cognitive bonds and their resulting social trust infuse citizens with the spirit of cooperation, integration, and cohesion (Putnam, 199, p. 89). Accordingly, social capital allows individuals to develop a spirit of cooperation by common behaviors; in other words, the generalized trust of social capital causes individuals to help others without expectations.

Participation in specific social activities promotes the quality of citizens. Compared to others, these individuals are more likely to become blood donors, fulfill their obligations to tax paying, respect the views of the minorities, and participate in the other forms of civic and political union (Putnam, 2000, p. 137). As is highlighted by Anthony Giddens (1994) and many other sociologists, if we consider the rules and methods of a hierarchical democracy and injective changes of institutions as the basis of the movement and consolidation coefficient of democratic societies, social capital is considered a critical resource for the development of democracy and acceleration of the democratization process. Similar to the concepts of physical and human capital, social capital relates to the characteristics of a social organization (e.g., networks, norms, and trust), which facilitate coordination and cooperation for mutual and collective interest. The benefits of such view are manifested in the appropriate effects and outcomes of social capital on democracy and political development. As Putnam believes, social capital resources such as trust, norms, a network of horizontal relations, and civil society are vital to democracy and participatory political culture. Social capital affects the formation of democracy and a participatory culture by reinforcing the components of civil society, capable citizens, and a peaceful culture.

The following hypotheses were derived from the theoretical framework of the present study:

- 1- There is a correlation between the political culture of teachers and their cognitive dimension of social capital.
- 2- There is a correlation between the political culture of teachers and their communication dimension of social capital.
- 3- There is a correlation between the political culture of teachers and their structural dimension of social capital.
- 4- There is a correlation between the political culture of teachers and their social capital.
- 5-

4. Methodology

This cross-sectional study was performed using a correlational method. The sample population included all the young teachers in Khorramabad city, Iran. The Cochran formula was used to determine the sample size of 436 individuals. The P-value and q-value were calculated based on the pretest results by examining the dispersion of each variable as a dual nominal variable. As a result, the maximum dispersion of 0.5 and 0.5 was determined using the Cochran formula.

In this study, the participants were selected via multistage sampling from the schools of Khorramabad, which were selected via cluster sampling; to this end, the schools of each region were selected initially. Finally, stratified random sampling was applied proportional to the study. The findings of the samples, interviews, and questionnaires were accessible via simple random sampling.

Theoretical and Operational Definition of Independent and Dependent Variables

I. Political culture pertains to a collection of attitudes, beliefs, and feelings of the majority of the members of a society toward politics and the government and consists of the community beliefs toward the ideological foundations and moral codes of a political system. The political culture of a society, which encompasses idealistic or pragmatic ideas, originates from the mental understanding of individuals regarding political dimensions and is influenced by the political, social, and historical events of a specific society (Mohseni Tabrizi, 2011).

In the present study, the variable of political culture was evaluated using a questionnaire based on the indices of political tolerance, support of freedom, political participation, political knowledge, gender equality, political interest, and political preference of the democratic system. Table 1 shows the number of the items, range of political culture variables, and their indices.

Table 1. Number of Items, Range of Political Culture Variables, and Their Indices

Indices	Number of Items	Range
Political Tolerance	4	20-4
Support for Freedom	5	25-5
Political Participation	5	25-5
Political Knowledge	4	20-4
Gender Equality	4	20-4
Political Interest	3	15-3
Political Preference of Democratic System	4	20-4

II. Although social capital has multiple definitions, it could be defined as a source to expedite collective action, which is composed of public, political, and social affairs (cognition) and encompasses trust (public/generalized trust and institutional-civil trust), norms or mutual behaviors (cooperation) within social networks, their structure, and participation (Firoozabadi, 2005). Ghoshal and Nahapiet have suggested various dimensions for social capital, as follows: **A-** the cognitive dimension, which addresses the trust, attitudes, and commitments of the association based on cognition, providing a universal concept of goals and values for union members by using a common language; **B-** communication dimension, which indicates the interactions, trust, and mutual communication of the members inside and outside an association; **C-** structural dimension, which is composed of the links, activities, and organized teamwork in a society (Ghoshal and Nahapiet, 1998, p. 14). In this study, the three dimensions of social capital were measured using a questionnaire scored based on a typical five-point Likert scale.

A - Cognitive dimension: This dimension addresses the trust, attitudes, and commitments of the association based on cognition, providing a universal concept of goals and values for the union members by using a common language (Ghoshal and Nahapiet, 1998, p. 14).

1. I feel valued in the society.
2. I am not afraid of death since I have a satisfactory life.

3. I always try to remove the garbage that others have thrown in public.
4. I believe that by helping others, I am helping myself.
5. I usually volunteer to help local groups.
6. I do not feel safe walking outside after midnight.
7. Most people are not trustworthy these days.
8. If someone's car breaks down near my place, I invite them into my home and let them use my phone.
9. I rely on the help of my friends whenever I need it.
10. My neighborhood is a safe and secure place to live.

B - Communication dimension: This dimension indicates the interactions, trust, and mutual communication of the members inside and outside an association (Ghoshal and Nahapiet, 1998, p. 14).

1. If I have to leave the house for a while, I ask my neighbors to take care of my children.
2. I have met with some of my neighbors over the past week.
3. I have been talking to my friends on the phone over the past week.
4. I have participated in the social unions of my neighborhood during the past six months.
5. I am an active member of a local club/organization.
6. I do not feel comfortable participating in local organizations.
7. I usually speak with others every day.
8. I usually have an outdoor dinner or lunch with my friends on weekends.

C - Structural dimension: This dimension is composed of the links, activities, and organized teamwork within a society (Ghoshal & Nahapiet, 1998:14).

1. I usually visit my family, relatives, and friends in their houses.
2. I prefer making my purchases from the shops of my friends.
3. I seek the help of local advisors to solve my problems.
4. I have helped sick neighbors over the past six months,
5. I have participated in local emergency service provisions over the past three years.
6. I have been involved in organizing new services in local institutions.
7. If I have an opposing idea, I cannot express it easily.

8. I have not had a verbal conflict with any neighbors over the past year.
9. The presence of multicultural residents has promoted my neighborhood.
10. I enjoy being around people with different lifestyles.
11. My neighbors welcome strangers all the time.

Data acquisition was performed with the participation of five trained investigators in the briefing session, who were instructed on the completion of the questionnaire and referred to the respondents randomly to receive the answers via face-to-face interviews and complete the questionnaires. The validity of the questionnaire was confirmed using content and construct validity, and its reliability was confirmed using the Cronbach's alpha. The initial questionnaire was distributed, completed, and pretested by 30 teachers in Khorramabad. By addressing the shortcomings and problems, the final questionnaire was designed. Data analysis was performed in SPSS version 25 using descriptive and analytical statistics. The descriptive statistics included the measures of central tendency and quantitative dispersion variables. The Kolmogorov-Smirnov test was used to assess the agreement of the studied variables with the normal distribution, and the correlations between the variables were evaluated using a correlation test. In addition, Pearson's correlation-coefficient was applied, and the significance and confidence levels of 0.05 and 95% were obtained, respectively.

5. Findings

In total, 2.3% of the respondents were male, and 47.7% were female. In addition, 84.9% of the respondents were married, and 15.1% were single. In terms of ethnicity, 170 participants (39.0%) were Lurs, 11 (29.8%) were Fars, 8.1% were Kurds, 9.6% were Bakhtiari, and 2.5% were Turks.

Table 2. Frequency Distribution of Demographic Characteristics of Teachers

Variable	Options	N	%	Variable	Options	N	%
Gender	Male	228	52.3	Ethnicity	Fars	130	29.8
	Female	208	47.7		Lurs	170	39.0
	Total	436	100.0		Kurds	79	18.1
Marital Status	Single	370	84.9	Bakhtiari	42	9.6	
	Married	66	15.1	Turks	11	2.5	
	Total	436	100.0	Other	4	0.9	
				Total	436	100.0	

Table 3. Frequency Distribution of Research Variables among Participants

Dimensions	Variable	Number of Questions	Minimum	Maximum	Average
Political Culture	Political Culture	29	45	116	84.7729
	Cognitive	10	21	44	31.1170
Social Capital	Communication	8	8	38	25.5505
	Structural	11	15	50	33.0092
	Social Capital	29	55	113	89.6766

According to the information in Table 3, the mean score of the political culture of the respondents was 84.77 (score range: 29-145), which signified the moderate value of political culture among the teachers. In addition, the score of social capital in the cognitive, communication, and structural dimensions was moderate.

Table 4. Pearson's Correlation-coefficient of Social Capital and Political Culture of Teachers

	Political Culture	Pearson's Correlation-coefficient	Significance
Dimensions of Social Capital	Cognitive	0.149	0.001
	Communication	0.227	0.000
	Structural	0.236	0.001

The present study aimed to investigate the three dimensions of social capital, including the cognitive, communicative, and structural dimensions. The obtained results indicated a positive, significant correlation between the social capital and political culture of the teachers. Furthermore, Pearson's correlation-coefficient indicated significant associations between the cognitive dimensions ($r=0.149$; $P=0.001$), communicative dimension ($r=0.227$; $P=0.000$), and structural dimension ($r=0.236$; $P=0.001$) with the political culture of the teachers. In other words, the increment of these dimensions resulted in the higher political culture of the teachers.

6. Conclusion

The present study aimed to investigate the impact of social capital on the political culture of the teachers in Khorramabad city. The development of political culture is regarded as a fundamental necessity of a society for cultural and sustainable growth, which promotes the awareness of individuals on various political events in the society and on a global scale. Therefore, it is of critical value to examine the impact of political culture on the expansion of democracy in the society. The growth of a society is relative to its level of public culture. Therefore, it could be inferred that political culture is a set of

belief systems, moral codes, and symbols of a society that control the political behavior in a political system. The structural, communicative, and cognitive dimensions of social capital enhance the political culture and behavior by reinforcing the weak bonds among citizens. According to the literature, limited studies have been focused on the political culture and its specific history in teachers. The results of the present study confirmed the influence of the cognitive, communication and, structural dimensions of social capital on the increased political culture of the teachers, which is in line with the theories of Giddens and Putnam. According to Anthony Giddens (1994) and many other sociologists, if we consider the rules and methods of a hierarchical democracy and the injective changes of institutions as the basis of the movement and consolidation coefficient of democratic societies, social capital is a critical resource for the development of democracy and acceleration of the democratization process. Similar to the concepts of physical and human capital, social capital relates to the characteristics of a social organization (e.g., networks, norms, and trust), which facilitate coordination and cooperation for mutual and collective interests. The benefits of such views are manifested in the appropriate effects and outcomes of social capital on democracy and political development. According to Putnam, social capital resources such as trust, norms, a network of horizontal relations, and civil society are vital to democracy and the participatory political culture. Furthermore, social capital affects the formation of democracy and a participatory culture by reinforcing the components of civil society, capable citizens, and a peaceful culture. As a result, citizens with higher social capital are reluctant to participate in a limited and subordinate political culture and are inclined to engaging in a participatory political culture. The results of the present study are consistent with the findings of Habibpour Gatabi and Mousavi (2016), Abbasi Esfejr and Esfandiari (2017), Tajbakhsh (2009), Movahed (2007), Iman and Moqaddas (2002), Vossoughi and Hashemi (2004), Akbari (2006), Putnam (1993), Kirbish (2013), Ikeda and Boase (2011), McVey and Vowles (2005), and Rahbarqazi, Gashool, Arabian, and Ashnaei (2016).

Putnam (2000) argues that social capital plays a critical role in the participatory political culture. According to Tajbakhsh, there is a dialectical

correlation between social capital and democracy. In this regard, social capital provides a suitable ground for the growth, maturation, and consolidation of democracy by reinforcing its constituent indicators and components.

- Since a universal culture, moral values, goals, and awareness have positively affected the participatory political culture, it is advised to create the required basis for a participatory culture by enhancing the cognitive and social capital of teachers.

- The present study was performed using the survey method and a questionnaire for data collection. Since the presence of several variables complicated the data analysis, the further investigations in this regard could be conducted using other methods, such as interviews, case studies or longitudinal studies, to examine this social phenomenon.

- Since political culture consists of multidimensional and complex variables, it is advised that further investigations address one of these variables exclusively.

- The current research was conducted in Khorramabad city; in order to achieve a broader scope, complementary studies should be performed in other cities or across the country, and their results should be compared with our research. This article was extracted from a doctoral thesis in political sociology approved by the Faculty of Humanities of the Islamic Azad University of Dehaghan. Hereby, we extend our gratitude to all the teachers of Khorramabad city for assisting us in this research project.

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