

**Examining the Relation between Social and Cultural Capitals, and
Citizens' Level of Tolerance
(Case Study: Citizens of Mashhad)**

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Received: 12 February 2020 Accepted: 16 September 2020

Extended Abstracts

1. Introduction

Tolerance is regarded as an important capacity and a component of development in societies. Without tolerance, individuals in the society would consider violence as the only means to confront different beliefs and ideas, resulting in disruption and chaos in the social system. In addition to being faced with the common issues of all Iranian metropolitan cities, Mashhad accommodates immigrants with a variety of nationalities, religions, and beliefs, with vast numbers of population living in the surrounding slums. Furthermore, 30 million pilgrims travel to the city, each year, with different motivations. Accordingly, the following questions are posed: What is the extent of tolerance and its various dimensions among citizens of Mashhad? Are there any differences between the citizens in terms of tolerance level? Can social and cultural capital influence the citizens' tolerance level?

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2. Literature Review and Theoretical Framework

King (1976) classifies tolerance into three classes including identity, political, and behavioral. Identity tolerance involves tolerance towards varying identities such as different religions, nationalities and ethnicities; political tolerance refers to reserving the rights of groups whom one opposes; and behavioral tolerance includes tolerance in gender relation patterns, tolerance towards crime, and tolerance towards criminals. Bourdieu regards cultural capital as a determinant of individuals' objective position in a social class. Accordingly, individuals under the effect of their cultural roots and upbringings act or respond differently when faced with various situations.

Putnam considers three components within the social capital which include networks, cooperation norms, and trust; Putnam also distinguishes between "in-group" and "inter-group" social capitals. In-group social capital reinforces exclusive identities and helps to retain homogeneity. These homogeneous groups would, in turn, transform individuals into people with similar contexts and opinions and expand their presumptions with respect to those outside their quarters. Subsequently, they would consider the opinions of others as wrong and find them a threat to their own existence rather than tolerating them. In contrast, inter-group social capital refers to networks that connects individuals to those outside their group of close companions (i.e., strangers).

3. Method

The present study was conducted using the survey method. Total population of the study included the entire citizens of 13 Mashhad municipality zones over the age of 15. Sample population was indicated as 400 and sampling was carried out using multi-stage cluster sampling. Data collection instrument was questionnaires. Examined variables included tolerance (in five dimensions of individual tolerance, social tolerance, political tolerance, gender tolerance, and religious tolerance), cultural capital (in three dimensions of internalized capital, objectified capital, and perceived capital), and social capital (in three dimensions of trust, solidarity, and participation). Data were analyzed using SPSS and AMOS softwares.

4. Results and Discussion

Findings showed the total tolerance at an average level. Based on the results of Pearson's test, it can be concluded that increased social and cultural capital in individuals raises their tolerance level. There is a significant relation between each of the five dimensions of tolerance (individual, social, gender, political, and religious) and social and cultural capital. According to the results of the study, the average individual and social tolerances of citizens were higher than average, while political and gender tolerance were below average. In each of these four

dimensions, the average values obtained by women, the middle-aged age group, individuals with higher academic education levels, single individuals, residents of privileged zones, and retired individuals were higher than those of men, other age groups, people with lower education levels, married individuals, residents of other zones, and people from other occupational backgrounds, respectively. Results of path analysis show that the cultural capital variable has a direct effect on the dependent variable with a value of 0.16 while the social capital variable involves a higher direct effect on the tolerance variable with a path coefficient of 0.52.

Higher levels of individual and social tolerances in a religious city such as Mashhad which is an immigration and/or vacation destination for pilgrims from all over the country with various beliefs and conventions represent the absence of problems and issues; here, citizens are able to coexist peacefully. Gender tolerance received the lowest average among other dimensions of tolerance. The dominance of patriarchal values in the society defines women as inferior to men; naturally, men at higher positions of power do not have a suitable tolerance level towards women, women are always expected to submit before men, and differences between men and women are resolved through male superiority. Absence of any relations between institutional cultural capital and tolerance dimensions demonstrate that receiving degrees in various majors would not raise tolerance; tolerance level is, in fact, increased by real consumption of cultural goods and sufficient time on the matter. There was also a negative, significant relation between trust and tolerance dimensions. Individuals with higher levels of interpersonal trust show less tolerance. Interpersonal (in-group) trust reinforces exclusive identities and maintains homogeneity. Rather than tolerating others, these groups consider the opinions of others as a threat to their own existence. Conversely, generalized trust has a positive relation with tolerance level; increased generalized trust that connects individuals to those outside their close quarters raises the level of tolerance. Additionally, there was a negative relation between institutional trust and political tolerance. It means that those who trust government institutions to a higher extent would show less political tolerance, are more conservative, and have a lower acceptance of alternative political parties.

5. Conclusion

Despite how tolerance and its dimensions were found to be at an average level among citizens of Mashhad, the risk of reduced tolerance among citizens still persists. Consequently, given the fact that the effect of social and cultural capital on improving tolerance among citizens is confirmed both in the present research and other studies, it is necessary to develop means to increase social capital; this is because the higher the social capital and generalized trust in a society, the higher

the society's level of tolerance. This ideal society is able to tolerate its opposition more easily as it involves a higher level of social tolerance.

Keywords: Tolerance, Social Capital, Cultural Capital, Political Tolerance, Gender Tolerance, Religious Tolerance

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