

Impact of Social Capital on Political Participation: An Empirical Study of Balochistan-Province of Pakistan

By

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Abstract:

In the present epoch, political participation becomes one of an extensive and wide research interests as well the vital component for citizens due to a huge responsibility for building a strong democracy. The purpose of present study is to examine the role of two main factors of social capital i.e. political trust and social trust. For that, on the basis of literature support, a conceptual framework, conceptual model and hypotheses are developed for investigation. A deductive /quantitative approach is applied for achieving the suitable results of the proposed hypotheses. This is a cross-sectional (one shot) study in which data is collected through a survey questionnaire from the people who are casting their votes and participating in politics of Balochistan. A convenience sampling technique is applied for the data collection. Total 800 questionnaires are distributed by personally visits. Out of 800, total 460 samples are returned back. The response rate is noted as 57.5%. After cleaning and screening of data, 414 valid samples are applied for further analysis. Statistical Package for Social Science (SPSS) version 24.0 for windows is applied for data analysis, the overall; Cronbach's alpha (α) reliability of survey questionnaire is 0.783. Whereas, alpha for all variables (dependent and independent) being noted within their acceptable ranges. The overall, the findings of a study is suggested that there is a non-significant impact of political trust on political participation. On the other hand, social trust has a positive and significant impact on political participation in Balochistan-Pakistan. This study may provide a guideline for the political parties and government agents of Balochistan so as to develop the social and political trust towards political participation of a common people. Furthermore, this study may contribute in the literature of politics, and

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sociology of developing countries like Pakistan and specifically for Balochistan settings.

Keywords: Strong democracy; social capital; political trust; political participation; Balochistan.

Introduction:

In the present epoch, political participation becomes a challenge for every country so as to sustain and develop a strong democracy. However, the human societies which inspire for better political participation that may be obtained through the fruitful results in the shape of regional development. The political participation is defined as a production of general opinions and actions for bringing out a positive change in a civil society (Abbas and Nawaz, 2014) so as to boost such the political participation, social capital plays a significant role through developing the networks among such the people, and a way of intangible source of community for developing the trust regarding the pleasant life. Moreover, an individual in society having higher social capital it means he/she has a facilitation of social relations (Khalili et al., 2012). The social trust's concept has grown a great deal of acceptance in the social sciences (Sztompka, 2000; Siegrist, Cvetkovich and Roth, 2002; Subramanian et al., 2006; Bjornskov, 2007). According to Gambetta (1988, p. 217) the social trust as "an actor's belief that a person or a collective will perform such the actions (including providing information) that may prove helpful or not detrimental to him or her, thus, permitting the establishment of a relationship of cooperation". While Newton (2001a) proposed that social trust is usually elucidated as a trust or sureness in human society's members and organizations like communities, neighborhoods, and nations. It is probable to be the case that social trust would assign diverges definitions, but in overall, social trust reflects one's belief that others would not damage and hurt him/her. In a similar mode, the political trust is labeled as a belief that officials and political institutions would achieve their roles and responsibilities with an efficient way, and that the productivities of the institutional policies and management would benefit the main stream if not all members of society (Damico et al., 2000; Anderson and Lotempio, 2002). In the contemporary literature, the political trust is normally divided into two categories such as trust in political institutions (Damico et al., 2000; Mishler and Rose, 2001) like governments (Chanley, Rudolph and Rahn, 2000; Shi, 2001; Anderson and Lotempio, 2002), parliament (Hetherington, 1998; Newton, 2001a) and trust in political officials such as political authorities (Nilson

and Nilson, 1980), political actors (Shi, 2001), president and political authorities (Hetherington, 1998).

By realizing a reputation of social capital particularly the factors such as political and social trust towards political participation, the purpose of present paper is to examine the role of social capital (political and social trust) towards political participation among peoples' of Balochistan, Pakistan. This study may be a road map for the policy makers, planners and politicians for encouraging the people in politics through developing the political and social trust among the people of a civil society. Such study may provide a guideline for the political parties as well government agents to develop the social and political trust among common people of human society. Furthermore, this study may contribute in the literature of politics of developing country like Pakistan and particular for Balochistan settings.

Literature Review:

In the last decades, in Asia, Africa, Latin America and Eastern Europe, the existence of political participation have been increased among the citizens. Societies which inspire better political participation that may be getting fruitful results in the shape of regional development (Peregrine, 2017). From the perspective of Vryonides and Lamprianou (2013) the political participation denotes to paradoxical phenomenon by the exponents of positivistic or rational theories of human behavior. The institutions and social capital work together in provision of dynamic participation. Social capital substances, and its belongings are exaggerated when accomplished agents also being available who can support the individuals and societies that are attached with public decision-making developments. In such a field, the various researchers have been explored the role of social trust in stimulating political participation (Power and Clark, 2001; Benson and Rochon 2004). According to Stolle and Hooghe (2009) that the demographic factors such as age and gender have a positive and significant impact on political participation. On the other hand, gender gaps in political participation are lessening, male population which is still further vigorously involved as compared to females (Conway, 2001). In a similar vein, the education is a self-motivated and energetic forecaster of political participation (Verba et al., 1995). A study conducted by Jennings and Markus (1988) by focusing on correlation between political participation and socio-demographic variables such as gender, age, marital status. The results of such a study revealed that the younger people were more active in political participation as compared to

old age groups. The difference may be happened due to well education of youth then old people. In this sense, the education factor is perceived as a fundamental constituent of the formation of political participation (Verba and Ni, 1972). In a same way, Pacheco and Lange (2010) tested a model by examining the association between political participation and life satisfaction. The findings of such a study demonstrated that there is a positive and significant relationship between political participation and life satisfaction. In the context of Vietnam, education levels, share of male employed members, and fixed assets are positively linked with the intensity of non-farm participation (Tran et al., 2016). Regarding Kenya, Kivoi (2014) strongly recommended that political parties are not keen to try and have device the least one third legitimate requirement for their lists of candidates chosen so as to compete in elections. Lack of political benevolence by their male politicians is to comprise with women in structures of political governance and avoid blaming for imperfect participation in political parties (Mitullah and Owiti, 2007). Participation in political leadership is overbearing for women's empowerment because larger number of women in politics would support women's cause at every level (Oxaal and Baden, 1997). According to Cramer (2002) personal efficacy and free time are foremost predictors of nurses' organized participation. Concerning to social capital; Chenhall et al. (2010) completed a study about the relationship between control systems and social capital in organizations. The findings suggested that control system in organizations is predicted by social capital therefore the productivity level of the control systems hinge on the level of social capital in organizations. In organizations, the team work is formed through the social capital and organizational networks (Nan-Lin, 2008). In perspective of the political activism in Central America, the participation in community development organizations dependably forecast demand making in the six nations (Seligson, 1999). In Indian villages, Krishna (2002) strongly stressed that social capital promotes political participation. But, it is not necessary that for democratic participation. Furthermore, the protagonist role of new nurtured leaders in villages use channel for communication in high social capital villages. The social trust and associational activism dimensions of social capital enhance the political participation among the respondents (Pippa, 2002). Abbas et al. (2013) explored the relationship between knowledge practices and all the dimension of social capital. As a result, trust was a significant and strong factor which highlighted the strong relationship with knowledge practices as compared to other constructs of social capital. In a similar mode, having social capital within second life is unconnected to having social capital

outside the practical world. The steadiness of the instrument demonstrated to be outstanding for measuring social capital within second life and upright outside the virtual world (Huvila et al., 2010). Social capital also has a positive role for enhancing the business performance of companies through transaction costs, productivity and innovative activity. As a consequence of it, the company is promoted and succeeded by such activities through social capital (Murphy, 2013). In Sri Lanka, the sign of livelihood is a social capital. People develop formal networks in the community and trustworthy community-based organizations for the betterment and prosperity (Minamoto, 2010). Regarding such an important domain, the regression weights and graphical representation of the study of Kaasa (2015) pointed out that the cultural dimensions capture causes for different stages of social capital. More recently, a research conducted by Javaid (2017) for predicting the online political participation among youth of Pakistan. The outcome of such study investigated that social trust, self-efficacy, age, income, time spent on Facebook and group participation are the valuable and significant analysts of online political participation among youth. From the above literature, it is crystal cleared that the researchers largely have neglected the Balochistan province of Pakistan in perspective of political participation through the social capital (Mahmood et al., 2014; Javaid, 2017). To fill this wide gap; the present study attempts to find out the impact of social capital (political and social trust) on peoples' political participation in Balochistan.

Conceptual Framework:

The political participation of the citizen is hugely responsible for building a strong democracy. Thus; the concept has highly been discussed as a focal point of the debate among the scholars, policy makers so as to explain the formal and informal political involvement amongst the people (Rose and Munro, 2003; Van-Biezen, 2003). On the other hand, many people have been tried to avoid the traditional methods of political participation like membership in a party and vote casting (Putnam, 1993, 2000; Norris, 2002; Stoker, 2006). Though, the learning of political participation plays a dominant role in many political science studies, in spite of unclear meaning and concept. The political participation is defined as production of general opinions and actions for bringing positive change in human society (Abbas and Nawaz, 2014).

As mentioned in the literature, there is a positive and significant linkage between social capital and political participation (Putnam, 1995; Rogers, 2006; Nahar and Humaidan, 2013; Peregrine, 2017). Based on the positive

association between social capital and political participation, for the current study, the researcher proposed the following conceptual model along with two demographic variables (Figure I) for testing among the people of Balochistan -province of Pakistan.

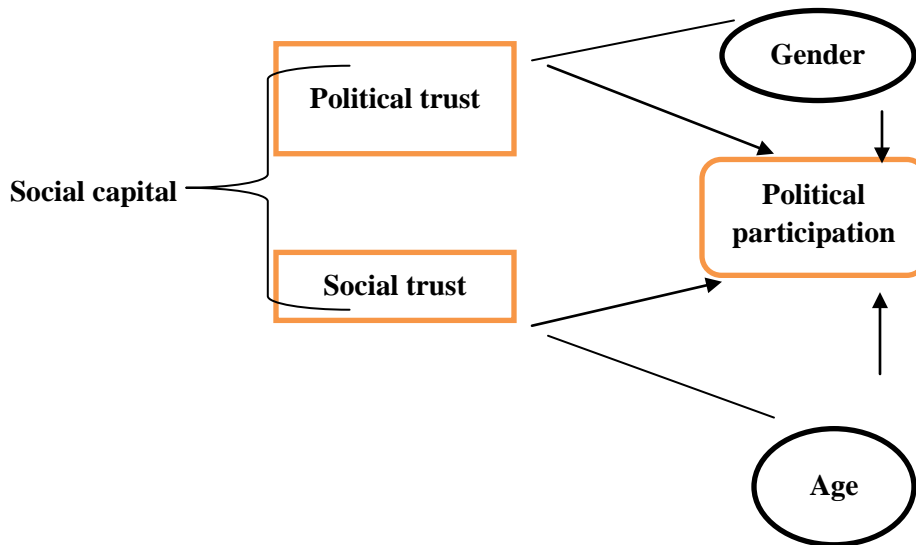


Figure I. Conceptual model developed by the researcher

However, a positive change in society is found possible through an active political participation by the citizens (Abbas and Nawaz, 2014). The social capital is regarded as “features of social organization such as networks, norms, and social trust that facilitate coordination and cooperation for mutual benefit” (Putnam (1995, p. 67). The social capital is an idea that elucidates the significant roles of people’s networks. Such the concept of social capital stands for elucidating the impact of social bonds that designed among neighbors on city liveliness (Sobel, 2002). According to Soithong (2011) there is a positive and significant association between social capital and political participation. The previous literature has examined the link between social capital and political participation with a specific manner. In perception of Warren (1999) that people voluntarily

tolerate the conceivable risks from irrepressible behaviors of those in interdependent relationships through trust. The trust has a positive and significant effect on political participation because individuals can invest capitals or resources which were kept by trust in political related behavior. Like other social spheres; the political area has also a lot of uncertainties and risk factors and which the political participation of people become worried for acceptance. Henceforth, we improve the ways in which we distribute our limited political assets by trusting institutions and elites (Warren, 1999). Based on the positive associations between social capital and political participation, the researcher developed following hypotheses for investigation in Balochistan.

Hypothesis 1: Political trust has a positive and significant impact on peoples' political participation.

Hypothesis 2: Social trust has a positive and significant impact on peoples' political participation.

Research Methodology:

This is a quantitative study in which cross-sectional data was collected. The researcher proposed a positivism approach that is regarded as a scientific measurement due to association with the behavior of people (Hatch and Cunliffe, 2006). Furthermore, such approach is a phenomenon which makes the track for credibility of data and is entirely suitable for the social sciences (Hirschheim, 1985).

Study Context and Respondents:

The context (area) of present study is Balochistan province including Kalat, Makran, Nasirabad, Zhob, Sibi and Quetta. The data would be collected from general public who are participating in the politics.

Survey Instrument and Data Collection Procedure:

The survey questionnaire was applied for getting the response from the participants. The questionnaire was adapted from the related literature of social capital and political participation. The questionnaire was administered in English and then Urdu on the basis of respondent's choice. The data was collected through personal visits of the different areas of Balochistan. The convenience sampling technique was applied for collection of the facts from the participants.

Study Variables and Measures:

The present study intended to examine the impact of social capital on political participation in Balochistan province. In this regard, such study is based on two independent variables like social trust, political trust whereas; the dependent variable is political participation.

Political Participation:

The political participation factor is about an independence to speak out the capability for taking part in public matters and chance to catalogue as a applicant be nominated and held office at all government's ranks. Six items were adapted from Asian Barometer Survey (2001). All items were measured by applying five-point Likert scale ranging from strongly agree=1, agree=2, neutral =3, disagree=4 and strongly disagree=5.

Political Trust: This is associated with confidence, belief in the principle of honesty, belief of people in politics, officers' efficiency fairness, truthfulness and a belief in public interests of government or state. Twelve items were adapted from the study of Soithong (2011). All items were measured by applying five-point Likert scale ranging from strongly agree=1, agree=2, neutral =3, disagree=4 and strongly disagree=5.

Social Trust:

This factor concerned with the trust in the people, feeling safe in the local area, positive outlook towards the current situation and confidence in receiving fair treatment from other people. Seven items were adapted from the study of Soithong (2011). All items were measured by applying five-point Likert scale ranging from strongly agree=1, agree=2, neutral =3, disagree=4 and strongly disagree=5.

Data Analysis and Results:

The data was analyzed by applying the Statistical Package for Social Sciences (SPSS) version 24.0 for windows. The necessary tests were conducted in order to authenticate the outcomes. In the last, the hypotheses were confirmed through Pearson's correlation and multiple regression analysis.

Demography of Respondents:

The demographic information for the gender highlights that a majority of 71% (n=296) respondents were males. While, 27% (n=115) female participated in the study. Moreover, 0.7% (n=3) respondents were others (she males or third gender). Concerning to the age of participants, a

majority of the respondents 45% (n=189) were in between 31-40 years of age. Whereas, the minimum number of respondents 4% (n=20) was noted for 60 and above years of age (Table I).

Table I. Demography of respondents N=414

	<i>Group</i>	<i>Frequency</i>	<i>Percent</i>	<i>Valid Percent</i>	<i>Cumulative Percent</i>
Gender	Male	296	71.5	71.5	71.5
	Female	115	27.8	27.8	99.3
	Others	3	0.7	.7	100.0
	Total	414	100.0	100.0	
Age	18-20 years	29	7.0	7.0	7.0
	21-30	96	23.2	23.2	30.2
	31-40	189	45.7	45.7	75.8
	41-50	56	13.5	13.5	89.4
	51-60	24	5.8	5.8	95.2
	60 and above	20	4.8	4.8	100.0
	Total	414	100.0	100.0	

Descriptive Statistics and Reliability Assessment:

The descriptive statistics including the scores of means and standard deviations were verified for observing an average evidence of the distribution. The maximum value for means observed like 2.983 (political participation) while minimum range, 2.228 (political trust). In a similar wave, maximum value of standard deviation was noted as 1.9833 (political trust) and minimum range, 1.0601 (political participation) (Table II).

In addition to this, the internal consistency (reliability of items) of the questionnaire was evaluated through Cronbach's alpha (α) reliability. The overall Cronbach's alpha (α) reliability was 0.783 (Table III). While alpha for all variables (dependent and independent) were detected within their acceptable ranges (III).

Table II. Reliability Statistics

N	Cronbach's Alpha	N of Items
414	0.783	25

Table III. Descriptive statistics and individual factors' reliability

S. No.	Factors	N	Mean	Std. Deviation	Cronbach's alpha (α)
1	Political participation	414	2.983	1.0601	0.901
2	Political trust	414	2.228	1.9833	0.822
3	Social trust	414	2.923	1.2395	0.887

Factor Analysis:

The factor analysis was conducted to reduce the controlling an amount of measuring items into a smaller set of new compound factors or dimensions (Rummel, 1970; Gorsuch, 1983).

In the present study, the factor analysis (FA) was completed so as to detect the number of items and fundamental structure of the variables in analysis (Tabachnick and Fidell, 2007, p.26). This method is more common in psychology and education research (Fabrigar et al., 1999; Williams et al., 2010) and in social sciences due to its leading position to investigate the human behavior. The principal component analysis (PCA) is a basic and significant portion of the multivariate statistics (Klinke et al., 2010). In this manner, the principal component analysis (PCA) was designated for making the initial solutions for the EFA.

Communalities:

As per the observation the total variance or difference of an original variable communal with other variables, the communalities were scrutinized (Hair et al., 2006). According to Field (2006) when a variable which does not segments anything with other variables as well means, it has communality of 0 (zero) even if, a variable which has no variance and having a communality of 1 (one). The items which display lower than score of 0.5 (50%) communalities are considered as well thought-out to be weak items (Hair et al., 2006). In the current study, among 25 items; some items were below the communalities of the suggested value 0.5 (Field, 2006). Consequently, such the items which appeared with the

communalities values of below 0.5 were omitted from the factor analysis. The revised or residual items and their communalities scores are given below Table IV.

Table IV. Communalities of the loaded items

Items	Initial	Extraction	Items	Initial	Extraction
POON5	1.000	0.810	POST3	1.000	0.796
POON2	1.000	0.802	POST5	1.000	0.661
POON4	1.000	0.833	POST8	1.000	0.796
POON3	1.000	0.834	POST9	1.000	0.848
POON1	1.000	0.820	POST10	1.000	0.846
SOST5	1.000	0.973	POST11	1.000	0.635
SOST6	1.000	0.981			
SOST2	1.000	0.959			
SOST4	1.000	0.967			
SOST1	1.000	0.905			

Factor Loadings:

Factor loadings are considered as well thought-out as very significant in the factor analysis. It offers the explanation of the correlations among items and their individual factors. According to Zikmund et al. (2010) that the reception of considerations of the factor that hinges on the factor loadings, nevertheless, factor rotation is robust mathematical method to condense the results of factor analysis. In the present study, range of factor loading endured in between 0.72-0.89 which is known as an excellent (Comrey and Lee, 1992) (Table V).

Table V. Factor loadings

	Rotated Component Matrix^a		
	Component		
	1	2	3
SOST6	0.983		
SOST5	0.978		
SOST4	0.974		
SOST2	0.970		
SOST1	0.943		
POST9		0.908	
POST10		0.906	
POST8		0.882	
POST3		0.882	
POST5		0.779	
POST11		0.714	
POON4			0.903
POON1			0.900
POON5			0.894
POON3			0.892
POON2			0.883

Extraction Method: Principal Component Analysis.

Rotation Method: Varimax with Kaiser Normalization.

a. Rotation converged in 5 iterations.

Hypotheses Confirmation:

The proposed hypotheses were confirmed with an assistance of the two steps such as Pearson's correlation (for determining relationship between dependent and independent variables) and Multiple Regression Analysis (MRA) (for confirming the effect of independent variables on dependent variable. Such the practices are more common for testing the hypotheses in social sciences (Kaijun and Sholihah, 2015). By applying Pearson's correlations and multiple regression ($r= 0.248^{**}$; $\beta=0.101$; $p> .01$) (Table VI& VII) the results showed that there is a positive and no-significant impact of political trust on political participation in Balochistan. Henceforth, hypothesis 1 (H1) was not supported. With a regard to hypothesis 2 (H2), the scores of Pearson's correlations and multiple regression ($r= 0.498^{**}$; $\beta=0.3881$; $p < .01$) (Table VI & VII). Therefore, hypothesis H2 was rejected.

Table VI. Pearson's correlation (N=414)

Variables	1	2	3	4	5
1 Political participation	---				
2 Political trust	0.248*	---			
3 Social trust	0.498**	0.333*	---		
4 Gender	0.214**	0.315*	0.227**	---	
5 Age	0.331**	0.340*	0.220**	0.393**	---

** . Correlation is significant at the 0.01 level (2-tailed).

* . Correlation is significant at the 0.05 level (2-tailed).

Table VII. Multiple regression analysis (N=414)

Demographic and Independent Variables	Dependent Variable <i>Political participation</i> β
Political trust	0.101
Social trust	0.388**
Gender	0.229*
Age	0.378**
F value	34.079**
R ²	0.233
Adjusted R ²	0.289

Note: p* < 0.10; p** < 0.05

Conclusion and Recommendations:

At present era, the political participation becomes one of an extensive and wide research interests as well the vital component for citizens due to a huge responsibility for building a strong democracy. The purpose of present study made to examine the role of two main factors of social capital i.e. political trust and social trust towards political participation in Balochistan. For that, on the basis of literature support, a conceptual framework, conceptual model as well as hypotheses were developed for investigation in a proper way. The proposed hypotheses were assessed through Pearson's correlation and Multiple Regression Analysis (MRA). The overall, the findings of a study suggested that there is a non-significant impact of political trust on political participation. On the other hand, social trust has a positive and significant impact on political participation in Balochistan-Pakistan. Concerning to social capital information, the state can play a significant role in building social and political trust by providing the support and opportunities to people so as to participate vigorously in politics and professional associations. The findings presented in the study revealed that the social trust play a critical role in Balochistan's politics. In this regard, the government of Balochistan should take such an issue more seriously. Of course, fostering social trust may bring out positive outcomes through enhancing economic efficiency. More prominently, it was also revealed that people of Balochistan have the negative perceptions regarding political trust which discourage and affect by dint of the different political historical context. In this sense, it is quite clear that generating political participation having no simple task. Though, the results of present study could be used to provide some practical strategies. It can be recommended that all levels of government must validate a genuine concern for political stability and economic development. This would allow people to be pleased with the performance of the governments and such the reason may encourage them to participate more and more in all stages of politics.

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