



## Institutional Trust, Public Universities and Political Socialization in the Islamic Republic of Iran

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### Extended Abstract

In this paper, we try to examine the relationship between the three concepts of institutional trust, university, and political socialization. Institutional trust is one of the most important assets and needs of each institution to advance its functions. On the other hand, one of the most important functions of written and non-written of public universities in the Islamic Republic of Iran is to influence the process of political socialization of their main audience, students. The main issue of this article is that institutional trust as the most important indicator of social capital has a significant effect on the political socialization of undergraduate students at Tehran's public universities as a statistical society of this research. Postulating the theory of Robert Putnam on the concept of social capital, this article propounds this hypothesis that political socialization in every society carried out mainly through state institutions and the amount of citizen's trust to state institutions, which is called institutional trust and is one of the most important elements of social capital, is very important in the implementation process and the effectiveness of political socialization. Study of statistical findings in the case study of this study showed that with increasing institutional trust in public universities in Tehran, their effectiveness in increasing the political socialization of undergraduate students increase.

*Keywords:* institutional trust, social capital, political socialization, university

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## INTRODUCTION

Reviewing the definitions and viewpoints posed by social capital theorists indicates that the “Trust” is the focal point of this concept and it can be considered as the most fundamental part of social capital. Trust means reliance on another person, whether individual or group in terms of good will, considering the interests of others, even against own interests and providing true and correct information. On the other hand, one of the most prominent functions of social capital is the political socialization of citizens. It means teaching political roles, attitudes, values and political and social beliefs, civil morality and democratic behavior to perform the role of citizenship and interaction with the government. The concept of trust can be explained at three levels: individual, social and institutional. In this paper, our main indicator in the discussing the relationship between social capital and political socialization will be the concept of institutional trust. The hypothesis of this paper is that political socialization is considerably influenced by social capital and in particular institutional trust as one of its main attributes.

## PURPOSE

The main purpose of this study is to provide a framework for understanding the impact of institutional trust as the most important indicator of social capital on the process of political socialization of undergraduate students at public universities in Tehran.

## METHODOLOGY

In this study we used quantitative method in the form of survey by using questionnaire to collect information. Quantitative methods emphasize objective measurements and the statistical, mathematical, or numerical analysis of data collected through polls, questionnaires, and surveys, or by manipulating pre-existing statistical data using computational techniques. Quantitative research focuses on gathering numerical data and generalizing it across groups of people or to explain a particular phenomenon. On the other side, the word qualitative implies an emphasis on the qualities of entities and on processes and meanings that are not experimentally examined or measured [if measured at all] in terms of quantity, amount, intensity, or frequency. The statistical population of this study is the undergraduate students of 8 public universities in Tehran, Iran. The number of undergraduate students at public universities of Tehran is nearly 100,000 which is our research statistical population. Our selected sampling method in using quantitative method is “Simple random sampling”.

## RESULTS

The examination of statistical findings of this study showed that by increasing the sense of trust among undergraduate students of university toward, the university’s {other} students, staff, officials and professors, the level of their political awareness

and participation will also increase, their political attitude will be more influenced by the university environment and consequently, the main hypothesis of the study that is an increase in the level of institutional trust among undergraduate students at the university makes this institution more successful in advancing the process of political socialization confirmed.

### DISCUSSION

In this section, the following topics were discussed: 1. Social capital, definitions and its constituent elements including networks, norms and trust. 2. Explaining the concepts of socialization and political socialization. 3. Functions and methods of political socialization. 4. Political socialization institutions. 5. The relation between institutional trust and political socialization. 6. The relation between university and political socialization.

### CONCLUSION

Analyzing the indices of political socialization of the statistical population of this study, namely undergraduate students of public universities in Tehran makes it clear that the level of political awareness of students in comparison with other two indicators, political attitude and political participation is in a more favorable situation. This point indicates that along with the impact of influential variables such as mass media and social networks, the quantitative and qualitative status of the efforts of related institutions in this field, including the university, in shaping the cognitive framework of students and the younger generation of the political structure, influential events and influences, prominent personalities and authorities of the country are in a better position. The evaluation of indicators shows that after political awareness, the students' political attitudes have been in a better position. This asserts that other influential institutions in this process, such as the mass media and social networks possess a more conspicuous impact. The status of the indicator of political participation indicates that the institution's capacity to increase students' political knowledge has not been adequately utilized. The results showed that there is a positive and significant relationship between university management and the level of its' social capital. The improvement of the components of institutional social capital leads to the development of knowledge management at the university. In the absence of social capital, other physical and human capital will lose their effectiveness. Without social capital, it will be difficult to achieve political and social development, which is the goal of successful political socialization.

### NOVELTY

The innovation of this research provides a framework to understand the effective software components in advancing the process of political socialization in state institutions like public universities and the importance of social capital and, in particular, trust in this process.



Interdisciplinary  
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Abstract



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