

Sociological Study of the Effect of Political Culture on the Social Solidarity of Young People in Tehran

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Original Article

Abstract

INTRODUCTION: This sociological study aimed to investigate the impact of political culture on the social solidarity of young people in Tehran.

METHODS: The statistical population in this quantitative correlational study included young people who were aged 18 to 35 years in Tehran, Iran. In total, 382 cases were selected using Cochran's sample size formula, as well as cluster and random sampling method. The data were collected utilizing a researcher-made questionnaire the face and content validity and reliability of which were calculated via Cronbach's alpha at 0.80.

FINDINGS: According to the results, among the indicators of political culture, political values (with 51% agreement), political knowledge (with 59% at a high level), and political attitudes (towards the political system) (with 66.7% pessimism) were raised by the respondents. The regression test also showed that the variables were able to predict 39% of the total changes of the dependent variable (social solidarity). Therefore, political values (with a regression coefficient of 0.403), political knowledge (with a regression coefficient of -0.340), and political attitudes (with a regression coefficient of 0.338) had the highest regression effects on the dependent variable (social solidarity) in descending order.

CONCLUSION: The results showed a significant, positive, and direct relationship of political values and political attitudes with social solidarity. Moreover, there was a significant, negative, and inverse relationship between political knowledge and social solidarity.

Keywords: Political Attitudes; Political Culture; Political Knowledge; Political Values; Social Solidarity, Yong People.

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Introduction

Human beings are a social species, and the development of their personality occurs in society. Social cohesion and solidarity form the foundation of society and hold the members of society together. Solidarity refers to a social situation in which members are interdependent and mutually dependent on each other at the level of a group or community. Human gatherings form the networks of interpersonal relationships and unite them into cohesive social units. Such a context provides continuous social support, and through social exchanges, interdependence and commitment

are created among individuals. Durkheim believes that social solidarity is a moral phenomenon and considers it synonymous with the collective spirit that governs society. Wherever social cohesion is strong, it will be a powerful factor in bringing people closer together, thereby intensifying their contact, and increasing their opportunities for communication.

These settings provide continuous social support, and through social exchanges, interdependence, and therefore, commitment are created among individuals (1). According to

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Lucien Pye, political culture is the views, political feelings, and perceptions that determine and guide political behavior in any society. The components of political culture are not different rather they are regular and interconnected patterns that stand side by side and mutually reinforce each other (2).

Decreased social solidarity and a sense of belonging to society can have devastating consequences in society, including increased rate of migration, reduced life expectancy, personal isolation, feelings of separation and confusion in society, alienation, tendency to alien values, reduced emotional security, distortions of the relationship among rights, duties, and roles, difficulty in predicting social actions, distrust, law violation, refusal to obey orders, diminishing social harmony and social cohesion, and diminishing motivation for the progress and development of society. Given these issues, it is of significant importance to investigate the degree of social cohesion of individuals and the factors affecting it. The results of this study can be used to help prevent or reduce these harms.

In case of a conflict in the prevailing political culture in society and the continuing decline of social solidarity, the emergence of various forms of behavioral disorders -and even on a larger scale- street riots, lack of solidarity between people and the ruling system, increased rate of behavioral and psychological disorders, intensification of subcultures of heterogeneous social groups, alteration in the family relationships functions, minimized sense of shared social responsibility, and the prevalence of negative individualistic culture are inevitable. Furthermore, reduced social and moral solidarity has been changed to a threat to political and social health and sustainable development in a metropolis, such as Tehran, and among the youth.

Given a large number of young adults in Tehran and the dominance of new political values through virtual media, there is a necessity to address the issue of political culture and its impact on social solidarity. Therefore, considering the characteristics of the Iranian society and Tehran, the need to strengthen social solidarity, and the undeniable impact of political culture, this issue should be evaluated in detail. Accordingly, this study aimed to investigate the most important effects of political culture on the social solidarity

of the young people in Tehran, Iran.

Sharif Khatibi and Asadollahi (2020) investigated the role of social solidarity theory on customer satisfaction with social networks. The statistical population of this descriptive-correlational study included an unlimited number of Pakshoo Company customers. The sample size was determined at 384 cases according to Morgan's table. The data were collected through a researcher-made questionnaire with acceptable validity and reliability (Cronbach's alpha 0.76). The results showed a significant relationship between social solidarity and customer satisfaction with social networks (3).

Sayehmiri and Jani (2020) assessed the relationship between justice and social solidarity from the viewpoint of Imam Ali (AS). The data were collected using library, and the results showed that Imam Ali (AS) introduced a complete form of the relationship between justice and social solidarity, and his emphasis was on the existence of a direct and significant relationship between justice and social solidarity to achieve development (4).

In the same line, Derakhshan and Asayesh (2019) evaluated the threatening factors of social solidarity in the neighborhoods of Tehran metropolis. This applied study was conducted based on an analytical and survey method. The statistical populations of the study were the citizens of District 5 of Tehran, and the sample size was determined at 384 cases. The results showed that social solidarity in District 5 of Tehran was not in a good condition, and an increased number of factors threatening the social solidarity in the neighborhoods of District 5 led to the lower social solidarity (5).

The typology of the political culture of students in Kurdistan province based on socio-cultural variables was assessed by Ahmadi, Mohammadzadeh, and Majidi (2018). This survey study interviewed 380 students of universities in Kurdistan province. Considering the cognitive (political pluralism) and normative (practical involvement in politics) dimensions of political culture, the average orientation of the students' political culture was high. The findings also showed that 33.72%, 28%, 23%, and 16% of the students had democratic, indifferent, pragmatic, and limited political cultures, respectively. Furthermore, the political culture showed a significant relationship with political

socialization, family relationships, personality authoritarianism, religious orientation, age, education level, place of residency, and ethnicity of the students. The results of the multivariate regression analysis also revealed that the mentioned variables explain one-third of the changes in the students' political culture (6).

Shoaibi and Hazrati Soomeh (2016) conducted a sociological study of social solidarity and its related factors among the citizens of Tehran and presented a favorable model. The results showed that, in general, the social solidarity level of the citizens of Tehran was relatively weak, and among the effective factors, social participation, life satisfaction, and economic status had a greater impact on the degree of social solidarity. Moreover, among the dimensions of social solidarity, interaction and communication, harmony and community in values, and social trust were weaker, compared to other dimensions. The desired model to promote social solidarity in this study suggested the participation of as many citizens as possible through the formation of self-help groups and voluntary associations to provide citizen satisfaction, thereby promoting social solidarity among citizens (7).

Vienna (2019) in a study entitled "Political culture, problems, and trends of democratization", investigated the wave of democratization in Central Europe, Eastern Europe, Asia, and Africa.

The main question is about citizenship policy and the process of politicization of countries. This wave of democratization provides a unique opportunity to address the issues of identity formation, the creation of a political culture (possibly how to change cultural heritage), and the formation of people's participation in elections. The relationship between political norms and behaviors represents some of the research topics of our time. Respondents not only respond better to this wave of democratization but may help us better understand the basic principles of how citizens function in the political process (8).

The study of domestic and foreign studies on this issue shows that most of the researchers have studied political culture or social solidarity separately. Furthermore, foreign studies have been conducted according to the requirements of those societies, and indicators related to political culture in those societies do not fully comply with the cultural and social conditions and requirements in Iran. Accordingly, we require the localization of indicators in this regard. After studying the domestic and foreign investigations, it can be concluded that this issue is of critical importance, and no independent study has been conducted so far on the impact of political culture on the social solidarity of the young people in Tehran.

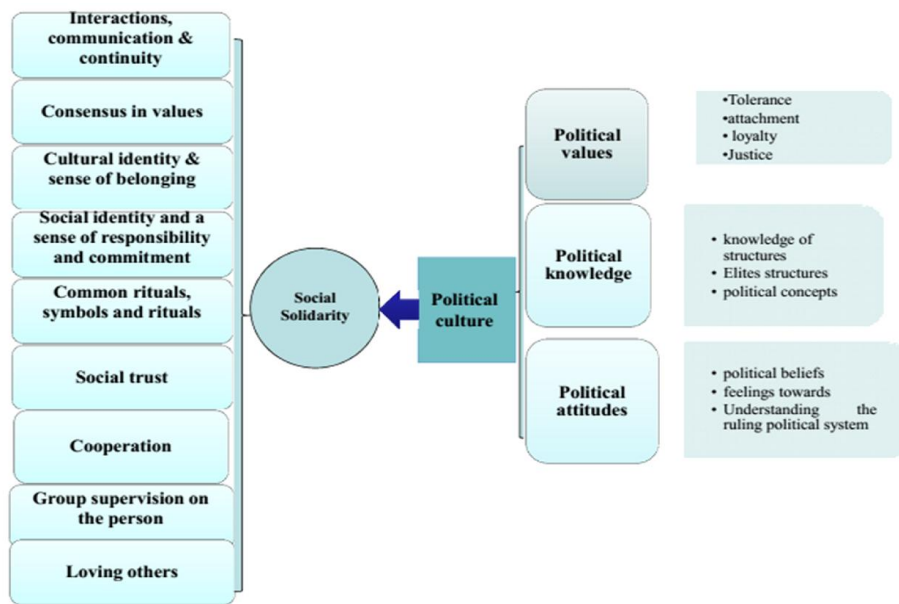


Figure 1. Theoretical model of the study

Political culture with its political values, attitudes, and knowledge is rated using the

Likert scale. Political values (with components, such as tolerance, attachment, loyalty, and justice), political attitudes (with components, such as political beliefs and feelings towards the ruling political system), and political knowledge (with components, such as knowledge of structures and elites, as well as political concepts) are measured in this regard (Figure 1).

Research Hypotheses

It seems that political values as one of the dimensions of political culture affect the social solidarity of the young people in Tehran.

It seems that political knowledge as one of the dimensions of political culture affects the social solidarity of the young people in Tehran.

It seems that political attitudes as one of the dimensions of political culture affect the social solidarity of the young people in Tehran.

Methods

This cross-sectional, extensive, and applied micro-study was conducted based on a quantitative and correlational research approach. The required data were collected at two stages. Preliminary information was collected through library and documentary studies, and the information was then collected using the field method. The statistical population of the present study included young people ($n=3,378,207$) who were aged 18 to 35 years old. To determine the sample size, Cochran's sample size determination formula was used:

$$n = \frac{\frac{z^2 pq}{d^2}}{1 + \frac{1}{N} \left(\frac{z^2 pq}{d^2} - 1 \right)}$$

Where,

n: is the number of selected samples

p: is the success rate in the community (considered at the level of 0.5).

q: is the failure rate in the community (considered at the level of 0.5).

Z a/2: is the value of the normal variable corresponding to the confidence level (which is equal to 1.96).

d: is the acceptable error (considered at the level of 0.05)

N: is the size of the selected statistical population (3,378,207 people)

Accordingly, the sample size was estimated

at 382 people.

Cluster and random sampling methods were used in this study, and the data were collected through a researcher-made questionnaire, as well as interview and observation as the complementary data collection tools. The content and face validity of the questionnaire were accepted. The prepared questionnaire was given to a number of qualified and selected professors, and their agreement on the indicators showed the accepted validity of the designed questionnaire. Cronbach's alpha coefficient was also used to assess the reliability of the questionnaire. The initial research questionnaire was distributed among 30 people who were selected completely randomly (pre-test), and it was then analyzed in SPSS software through Cronbach's alpha. Considering that the alpha coefficient of the indicators of this study was above 70%, the designed items obtained the accepted reliability.

Table 1. Reliability of the studied variables

Variables	Alpha values
Political values	0.79
Political knowledge	0.82
Political attitudes	0.69
Social solidarity	0.89
Total alpha	0.80

Findings

Participants

Out of the total participants ($n=382$), the majority of the cases in this study were male (54.5%). Furthermore, the mean age of the respondents was obtained at 29.3 years. Regarding the education level, 19.2%, 50.1%, 26.6%, and 4.1% of the respondents had a diploma degree and below, bachelors' degree, masters' degree, and a doctorate, respectively.

Descriptive findings

According to the above table, among the indicators of political culture, political values (51% agreement), political knowledge (59% high), political attitudes (towards the political system) with 66.7% pessimism were raised by the respondents.

Table 2. Frequency distribution and percentage of the respondents' responses to items related to political culture

Characteristics of political culture	Political values	Frequency	Agree	No idea	Disagree	Total
		Percentage	198	93	91	382
	Political knowledge	Frequency	High	Moderate	Low	Total
		Percentage	225	118	39	382
	Political attitudes (towards the political system)	Frequency	Optimist	Optimist/ Pessimist	Pessimist	Total
		Percentage	59	68	255	382
			15.5	17.8	66.7	100

Table 3. Frequency distribution of social solidarity

Variable	Low	Moderate	High	Total
Social solidarity	7.32	56.8	10.5	100.0

Dependent variable (social solidarity)

After examining the descriptive statistics of social solidarity, it was found that 32.7% of the respondents had a low level of social solidarity. Regarding the level of social solidarity, 56.8% of the respondents were at a medium level, and only 10.5% of the respondents had high levels of social solidarity.

Inferential findings

Estimation of the normality test of variables (KS) As can be observed in the above table, the Kolmogorov-Smirnov test results are not significant for both independent and dependent

Table 4. Estimation of the normality test of variables (KS)

Row	Variables	Value	Significance level
1	Political values	896.0	0.104
2	Political knowledge	524.1	0.075
3	Political attitudes	1.322	0.214
4	Social solidarity	1.096	0.097

Table 5. Relationship between political values and social solidarity

Independent variable	Dependent variable	Valid number	r value	Sig
Political values	Social solidarity	382	0.689	0.000**

** Significant at 99%

Table 6. Relationship between political knowledge and social solidarity

Independent variable	Dependent variable	Valid number	r value	Sig
Political knowledge	Social solidarity	382	-0.637	0.000**

** Significant at 99%

Table 7. Relationship between political attitudes and social solidarity

Independent variable	Dependent variable	Valid number	r value	Sig
Political attitudes	Social solidarity	382	0.198	**0.02

** Significant at 99%

variables since their values are greater than 0.05. Accordingly, it has a normal distribution and parametric tests can be used instead.

Pearson correlation coefficient test

Hypothesis 1: It seems that political values as one of the dimensions of political culture affect the social solidarity of the young people in Tehran.

According to the results of the above table, the Pearson R-value between the two independent and dependent variables is obtained at 0.689. Accordingly, there is a positive, direct, and strong correlation between these variables. In other words, an increase in the political values of the respondents leads to an increase in their level of social solidarity. The significance level is obtained at 0.000 which is less than 0.01; accordingly, the relationship is accepted statistically with 99% confidence at the error level of 1%. Therefore, there is a significant, positive, and direct relationship between the two variables of political values and social solidarity.

Hypothesis 2: It seems that political knowledge as one of the dimensions of political culture has an effect on the social solidarity of the young people in Tehran.

Table 8. Regression model and the relationship between independent variables and social solidarity

Correlation coefficient	Squared coefficient of determination	Adjusted R-squared	Standard error
0.673	0.396	0.389	10617.7

The results of the above table show that the Pearson R value between the two independent and dependent variables is -0.637. Accordingly, there is a negative, inverse, and strong relationship between them. In other words, an increase in the political knowledge of the respondents results in a decrease in their level of social solidarity. The significance level is obtained at 0.000 which is less than 0.01; therefore, the mentioned relationship is accepted statistically with 99% confidence at the error level of 1%. Consequently, there is a significant, negative, and inverse relationship between the two variables of political knowledge and social solidarity.

Hypothesis 3: It seems that political attitudes as one of the dimensions of political culture affect the social solidarity of the young people in Tehran.

As can be observed in the above table, the Pearson R value between the two independent and dependent variables is 0.198. Accordingly, there is a positive, direct, but weak relationship between them. In other words, an increase in the political attitudes of the respondents leads to an increase in their level of social solidarity. The level of significance is obtained at 0.02, which is less than 0.05; accordingly, the relationship is accepted statistically with 95% confidence at the error level of 5%. Therefore, there is a significant, positive, and direct relationship between the two variables of political attitudes and social solidarity.

Multivariate regression analysis

Using multivariate regression, the researcher can investigate the linear relationship between a

set of independent variables and a dependent variable in a way in which the existing relationships between the independent variables are also considered. Regression also helps explain the variance of the dependent variable, and it is accomplished in part by the participation of variables (two or more independent variables) in this variance. This type of analysis is quite suitable for studying the effects of several independent variables on the dependent variable (Habibpour and Safari Shali, 2012: 495). In this section, the dimensions of political culture, including political values, knowledge, and attitudes are analyzed as independent variables, and social solidarity is regarded as the dependent variable. Following that, the multivariate regression statistics are performed.

The results of this test estimate the value of the correlation coefficient among the variables at 0.673. Moreover, the value of the adjusted R-squared was determined at 0.389 indicating that the research variables could predict about 39% of the total changes of the dependent variable (social solidarity). In other words, a set of the independent variables predicted 39% of the variance of the studied social solidarity.

Considering the significance of the F-test value (863.26) at the error level of less than 0.01, it can be concluded that the research regression model consisting of three independent variables and a dependent variable (social solidarity) is a good model; furthermore, a set of independent variables can explain the changes in social solidarity.

Table 9. Significance of F-test

	Sum of squares	Degrees of freedom	Mean square	F-test	Significance level
Regression	098.5426	4	524.1356	863.26	0.000
Residual	668.7069	140	498.50		
Total	77.12495	144			

Table 10. Standardized coefficients and significance level of independent variables

Independent variable	Non-standardized coefficients		Non-standardized coefficients	t	Significance level
	B	Standard error	Beta		
Constant value	329.14	217.7		003.2	047.0
Political attitudes	434.0	087.0	338.0	979.4	000.0
Political knowledge	374.0	039.0	-340.0	701.9	001.0
Political values	475.0	082.0	403.0	759.5	0.000

As can be observed in the above table, the first section shows the regression effect coefficients of each independent variable on the dependent variable. In this section, the interpretation of regression coefficients is based on the beta coefficient. This statistic reveals the standardized regression coefficient of each independent variable on the dependent variable. Therefore, it can be used to determine the relative share of each independent variable in the model. In addition, the comparison of the variables shows the significant effect of political values, knowledge, and attitudes as independent variables on social solidarity (dependent variable). Accordingly, the standardized regression coefficient is significant for the independent variables at the error level of less than 0.01.

Furthermore, political values (regression coefficient of 0.403), political knowledge (regression coefficient of 0.340), and political attitudes (regression coefficient 0.338) obtained the highest regression effect on the dependent variable (social solidarity) in descending order. Based on the values of the Beta column, the regression equation of the regression model is as follows:

$$y = a + b_1 \cdot x_1 + b_2 \cdot x_2 + b_3 \cdot x_3 + \dots + b_n \cdot x_n$$

$$y = 329.14 + 0.475 (\text{Political values}) + 0.434 (\text{Political attitudes}) + 0.374 (\text{Political knowledge})$$

Discussion and Conclusion

The main objective of this research was the sociological study of the impact of political culture and its components on the social solidarity of the young people in Tehran. According to the results and considering the indicators of the political culture, the respondents demonstrated their political values (with 51% agreement), political knowledge (with 59% at a high level), and political attitudes (towards the political system) (with 66.7% pessimism). Furthermore, young people showed a moderate level of social solidarity, which is far from reaching the desired level. The social solidarity level of 32.7% of the respondents was at a low level, and 56.8% of the respondents indicated a moderate level in this regard. It is worth mentioning that only 10.5% of the respondents showed a high level of social solidarity. Given the empirical literature and the findings of this study, it should be stated that the current situation in Tehran has led to a kind of

negative perception, thereby reducing the sense of social solidarity among young people. Decreased social solidarity outcomes include a reduced sense of responsibility and participation, as well as reduced social interactions in society. In addition, most people have preferred to do their personal affairs to participate in social activities. It should be noted that due to differences in values, the younger generation has always high levels of expectations, and they are looking for modern values. These issues can reduce social solidarity.

The results also showed a positive and direct relationship between political values and social solidarity (at a significance level of 0.000 and a correlation coefficient of 0.689). Given the intensity of this strong relationship, it can be concluded that an increase in the political values of the respondents leads to an increase in their level of social solidarity. Therefore, there is a significant, positive, and direct relationship between these two variables. These obtained findings are consistent with the results of the studies conducted by Lucien Pie, Ronald Inglehart, Emile Durkheim, Takot Parsons, and Hajiani (12, 10, 13).

On the other hand, the results reveal a significant and inverse relationship between political knowledge and social solidarity (at a significance level of less than 0.00 and a correlation coefficient of -0.637). Regarding the absolute value, the intensity of this relationship is strong. In other words, an increase in the political knowledge of young people (as a dimension of political culture) results in a decrease in social solidarity and vice versa. These findings are in line with the results of studies performed by Gabriel Almond, Sydney Verba, and Hajiani (9, 11).

Furthermore, a positive and direct relationship was observed between political attitudes and social solidarity (at a significance level of 0.002 and a correlation coefficient of 0.198). Given the absolute value, this weak relationship indicates that an increase in the political attitudes of the respondents leads to an increase in their level of social solidarity. These results are consistent with the findings obtained by Lucian Pye, Parsons, and Hajiani (2, 11). After comparing the variables, the significant effect of political values, knowledge, and attitudes (independent variables) was observed on social solidarity (dependent variable). Accordingly, the standardized regression

coefficient for the independent variables is significant at the error level of less than 0.01. Moreover, political values (with a regression coefficient of 0.403), political knowledge (with a regression coefficient of -0.340), and political attitudes (with a regression coefficient of 0.338) obtained the highest regression effect on the dependent variable (social solidarity) in descending order. The findings of the present study demonstrated a low level of the young people's social solidarity (low [32.7%], moderate [56.8%], and high [10.5%]), and it is far from reaching the desired level. The results also revealed that if the political knowledge of young people increases as a dimension of political culture, social solidarity decreases; accordingly, it is of critical importance to pay attention to the content, tools, and mechanisms of transmitting political culture to young people, thereby increasing their social solidarity. It should be noted that the respondents in this study seek to maintain and promote social solidarity at the community level, and this shows their hopefulness and interest in removing barriers to social solidarity.

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Conflict of Interests

Authors declared no conflict of interests regarding the publication of the present study.

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