

Quality of life and Social Capital in Mashhad City in Iran

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Abstract

There are two main dimensions for quality of life: objective quality of life and subjective quality of life. Objective quality of life is the objective facilities and chances in one's life. Facilities help people to be healthy and use their life chances. Subjective quality of life is sense of being advantaged so that the consequence of positive subjective quality of life is sense of happiness. In this research the relationship between social capital and quality of life and its two main dimensions have been examined. Data drawn from a survey in Mashhad city in Iran show that social capital has greater role in explanation of quality of life in relative to income and education. Income is the most important factor for explanation of objective quality of life and social capital is the most important factor for explanation of subjective quality of life. Also income has considerable effect on subjective quality of life and social capital has considerable effect of objective quality of life. Education has some positive effect on both dimensions of quality of life.

Keywords: quality of life, social capital, Mashhad, income, education, social network

Introduction

Although concept of Quality of Life has various applications, and it has been used in several and different fields, but it is too difficult to address a clear and complete definition for it (See Ogburn 1946, Campbel et al 1976, Philips 2006). People usually have a light full picture of their QoL in their mind. Also they usually know the conditions that they will feel prospers for example more income, having a house (or a bigger house), nice car, much holydays and so on. Also people declare that in such circumstances everybody will have prospers feeling (collective life quality). For example, existence of beautiful and calm city and without traffic jams, unemployment and poverty and existence of clinical facility for everyone and so on (George 1981: 351, Schuessler and Fisher 1985: 129, Milbrath 1978:36, WHO QoL Group 1993: 5).

The most sprit and prevalent distinguished survey of Quality of Life is between subjective and objective Quality of Life. Also it is possible to put distinguish between individual and collective Quality of Life. However difference between objective and subjective aspects of QoL could be

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known as distinguish between behavior and perception (Veenhoven 2007, Diener & Oishi 2000, Kahneman 1999, Argyle 1996: 26, Mukherjee 1989, Philips 2006: 23&31).

Quality of Life	Objective	Subjective
Individual	Income, insurance, education, ...	Happiness, life satisfaction
Collective	Income average, ratio of insurance, literacy	Average of sense of happiness, average of life satisfaction

Veenhoven 2007

Quality of Life and Social Capital

After understanding the nature and definition of QoL, the consideration must be focus how people can get QoL's indicators. If we say access to QoL has expenditures and preconditions, then usage of Bourdieu conceptualization will be useful. Expenditures and preconditions could be summarizing in capital. Capital is the asset that could be used for desired recourse achievement. Also this asset can be used as a new capital for increasing itself. Base on Bourdieu point of view, everybody's capital can be divided into four types: first material capital such as valuable economic assets like money and other foundations. Second cultural capital including values, norms and social ability that somebody internalize them and can used them to access the scarce resources. Third is social capital including useful social relationships for accessing to scares resources and finally human capital that is including skill and knowledge that everybody obtains. Each type of this capital can be useful in the process of obtaining the others (Field 2003, Bourdieu and Wacquant 1992). Also every indicator of QoL can be defining with considering the above mention capitals.

Among these capitals, social capital has a special characteristic; firstly it is the only capital that builds up during a relationship. Secondly it is not completely transferable similar to other type of capital. The most characteristic of social capital is its clarified relation whit individual position in social networks. In the other words, individual social capital is sum of values of his or her positions in various social networks(Coleman 1994: 300-302, Putnam 2000: 19, Field 2003). Also these individual positions will be as a demander or divider of the individual share from desired QoL. Therefore it can be said there is a high correlation between social capital and QoL (Puerta Francos María 2006, Hayashi Yoshitsugu and Black John 2005, Requena Felix 2003, Besser Terry L., Recker Nicholas and Agnitsch Kerry 2008).

Data Analysis and Discussion

Because social capital is the provider of some individual capabilities for usage of QoL's indicators, then our main hypothesis is that "social capital has impacts on QoL".

This research is a survey study which is implemented in Mashhad city. The respondents were Mashhadies families' supervisors. In order to measure social capital, there dimensions including social trust, social participation, and social networks were considered. The trust was measure

based on its three contributions including inter-individual trust, generalized trust and trust to institution. Social participation is a collection of conscious and voluntarily action which have done with public profit considerations. Level of social participation is measured through its two aspects: formal participation and informal participation. A social network is including a group of individuals with social relationship that common characteristic or characteristics that put them in their relationship.

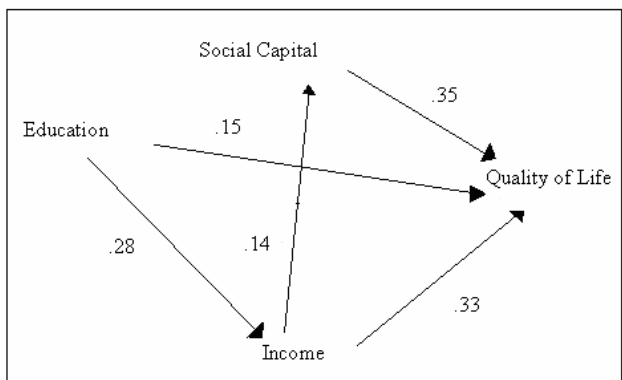
Based on definition which is used in this research, the QoL is the share of everybody from subjective and objective aspects of desired life qualities. This variable is measured through its tow subjective and objective dimensions. For subjective dimension measuring, the feeling or sense of individual from him/her self and also his/her position in society was considered. For objective dimension measuring everybody was asked to declare his/her abilities about providing his/her material needs at various fields.

In order to survey the impact of social capital on QoL the regression model was used. In these analysis variables such as family income and education was considered as interferer variables. Base on the results, the multiple correlation coefficient was equal 0.6 and adjusted coefficient was equal to 0.35. Three factors including family income per members, education and social capital are determiners of QoL variable. The regression model is meaningful with 99 present of confidence level.

Standardized equations of linear regression:

- $QoL = .35(\text{Social capital}) + .33(\text{income}) + .15(\text{education})$
- (R=.60; adjusted r square=.35)
- $\text{Objective QoL} = .18(\text{Social capital}) + .48(\text{income}) + .03(\text{education})$
- $\text{Subjective QoL} = .40(\text{Social capital}) + .12(\text{income}) + .16(\text{education})$

Analysis of survey data shows the role of social capital in more highlight in QoL determination. Also, comparison between independent variables with two types of QoL (objective and subjective QoL), indicate that the material capital (income) has a more impact on objective QoL than other variables. From the other side, the social capital has more impact on subjective QoL. But the impact of social capital on objective QoL and impact of income on subjective QoL is considerable. Beside two above mention variables, the human capital (education) has some positive impact on both subjective and objective QoL. The model of path analysis was displayed below.



Conclusion

As mentioned before, during these research indicators for measuring social capital was selected in both private (family, kinship and etc.) and public aspects. From this point of view the level of social capital in both of them was at the average level. Because of citizen presence in both private and public fields, there is necessity for improving social capital at both of them. The data analysis results show, the private field and especially family bounds in comparison with public field has a more solidity. Also the findings show the individual life quality is more depend on private social capital than public social capital. This means social capital resources are more relay on particular social networks than on generalized social networks. This kind of concentration can be an indicator of citizenship inequality for usage of social capital and in following inequality in QoL. It is clear an important part of citizenship behavior that is at the middle of policy makers focus, will be done in public sector. Therefore improving social capital at public sector can increase quality and quantity of citizenship behaviors and also improve the QoL. Reinforcement of social capital related to public sector can increase QoL that produced from this sector.

Therefore based on what said above, for more adjusting distribution of QoL in Mashhad city, more emphasis must put on reinforcement of public social capital. In the other word, for improving QoL, the social capital of city must be increased and it is not possible to improve the distribution of QoL only based on increasing private social capital.

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