CHAPTER 5

DISCUSSION AND CONCLUSION
5.1. Overview of the study

The purpose of the study was to explain the relationship between social capital and quality of life and comparing the quality of life differences in Delhi (India) and Tehran (Iran) according to the level of social capital. Both the metropolitan cities of Delhi and Tehran as the country’s capital, with excellent employment opportunities and as socio-political forefront of both developing countries have attracted people from all over the country. Therefore, they both reflect the wealth and diversity of India and Iran wherein diverse religions, languages, customs and cultures co-exist in splendid plural harmony. Lack of knowledge about these characteristics always hinders the insights to gain the proper outcomes for quality of life development programs for both countries’ policy makers. In this regard, this study attempted to gain better understanding of the elements that are effective for the quality of life of residents in both societies of Delhi and Tehran. Parts of these elements were related to the quality of our relationships with others, formal and informal groups and institutions; that are expressed as social capital which is a missing element of development. This study has attempted to investigate the relationship between social capital and quality of life and to compare how quality of life in both developing societies differs according to their level of social capital in different localities as primary objectives. In addition, it is aimed to find out whether there is any relationship between social capital indicators viz. views towards locality, local solidarity, social trust, social communication, and social participation and quality of life?

In order to conduct the research it was important to determine what we really mean by the concept of social capital and quality of life. Meanwhile, as positivistic methodology was used in this study, it was based on circular dependence of theory and observation. According to the principals of positivism, theory always precedes practice. Hereby, it was attempted to tie theoretical framework to the observation of the social capital and quality of life relationships in this research. Therefore, after conceptualizing and reviewing the social capital and quality of life literature, in a broad manner a composite idea of Uphoff (1999) and Woolcock and Narayan (2000) on social capital was adapted as conceptual and theoretical framework of the study. Uphoff (1999) distinguishes between structural and cognitive social capital. Structural social capital involves various forms of social networks and communications that contribute to co-operation and civic participation. Cognitive social capital includes norms, values, attitudes, beliefs, shared understanding and those variables that hold people together. Structural and cognitive social capitals are complimentary; structures help translate norms and beliefs into well coordinated goal-orientated behaviour.
Drawing from these structural and cognitive dimensions of social capital it is possible to conclude that there is no single construct called social capital, but rather, social capital can be understood in a composite form of the central idea of social capital. Woolcock and Narayan (2000) have given a new perspective on this context. They conclude that quality of life is based on complementarity and embeddedness. Complementarity refers to mutually supportive relations between public and private actors and is exemplified in legal frameworks that protect rights of association. Embeddedness refers to the nature and extent of the ties connecting citizens and public officials. This framework is empirically verifying that a high level of embeddedness and complementarity between cognitive and structural dimensions of social capital of the residents in both Delhi and Tehran is associated with high level of quality of life. As conceptual definition of social capital and quality of life constructs, social capital conceptually refers in general to the institutions, relationships, and norms which shape the quality and quantity of a society’s social interactions and hold them together like glue (Woolcock and Narayan 2000). Quality of life refers to the individual’s subjective evaluation and their perception of their position in life which is incorporating physical health, mental and emotional state, level of safety, environmental quality, economic state, and their accessibility to social and public services (Philips 2006). Following is the theoretical framework and model of seven hypotheses tested:

- First hypothesis: There is a significant difference in quality of life variances between Delhi and Tehran according to level of social capital.
- Second hypothesis: There is a significant relationship between social capital and quality of life in Delhi and Tehran.
- Third hypothesis: There is a significant relationship between view towards locality and social capital in Delhi and Tehran.
- Forth hypothesis: There is a significant relationship between local solidarity and quality of life in both societies.
- Fifth hypothesis: There is a significant relationship between social trust and quality of life in Delhi and Tehran.
- Sixth hypothesis: There is a significant relationship between social communication and quality of life in Delhi and Tehran.
- Seventh hypothesis: There is a significant relationship between social participation and quality of life in Delhi and Tehran.
In order to deduce the abstract theory and move from general principals of the theoretical framework to specific realms of the facts should be observed and to test the hypotheses, the research design and approach as a kind of map as presented in third chapter. This chapter illustrates what we mean by social capital and quality of life operationally. According to the theoretical framework, social capital was defined in a broad manner, including both cognitive and structural forms. Five indicators of social capital were distinguished as independent variables: views towards locality, local solidarity, social trust (as cognitive social capital), social communication, and social participation (as structural social capital). In addition, quality of life was measured by six indicators: local safety, health state, mental state, quality of environment, accessibility to social services, and economic state.

Fourth chapter shows, our results of this study furnished several interesting reflections in the field of research and provided concrete data to test hypotheses and theoretical model. This chapter helps to discuss findings and compare with existing empirical evidences which are presented in literature review.

5.2. Discussion

The first and second hypotheses were pertaining to the relationship between social capital and quality of life. During the last decade, despite the wide range of social capital studies found to be associated with various dimensions of development (Putnam 1993; Knack and Keefer 1997; Grootaert 1998; Krishna 1998; Narayan and Pritchett 1999; Woolcock and Narayan 2000), we have only a few studies that paid attention to the relationship between social capital and quality of life and directly found the positive relationship between social capital and quality of life (Healy et al. 2002; Western et al. 2007; James 2009; Abdul-Hakim et al. 2010). According to the results found in this study, there was a strong and positive correlation between social capital and quality of life in both Delhi and Tehran. In addition there was significant difference in quality of life in both societies according to the level of social capital. A close look at the literature and empirical evidences advocate that there is a significant positive relationship between social capital and quality of life. Healy et al. (2002) found that intra community and inter community ties are associated with positive quality of life in different geographical contexts of New South Wales. Western and his colleagues (2007) in their study found significant positive relationship between social capital and quality of life. They indicated that social capital develops the quality of life both indirectly by ameliorating marginalization as well as by directly improving quality of life. James (2009) found similar result that is social capital improves the quality of life through sharing the information technologies in the rural areas of developing countries. Abdul-Hakim et al.
found that social capital has a positive sign and is significant in explaining changes in quality of life. Though, our results indicate that, social capital is important in explaining quality of life. The third hypothesis examines the relationship between view towards locality and quality of life. Peoples’ perception about the place where they live as cognitive indicator of social capital plays an important role in determining the individuals’ feelings about their life. Out of existing literature related to this hypothesis, Baker and Palmer (2006) suggested that positive perception about place where they live improves the quality of life through making positive identity in individuals. Some other scholars found that positive view about living area leads better quality of life through improving emotional fulfilment and life satisfaction (Bjornscov, 2003; Abdul-Hakim et al., 2010). In this study similarly, there was strong and positive correlation between views about local area and quality of life in both societies of Delhi and Tehran.

The forth hypothesis examines the relationship between local solidarity and quality of life. Local solidarity is a state of unity that describes the positive and supportive characteristics of the locality. In current theoretical debates concerning social capital, solidarity plays an important role for many of the processes which supposedly shape the feelings of better quality of life. Results associated with this hypothesis in Delhi tend to support the findings of Moxley (1973) on family solidarity and quality of life. It found the strong positive relationship between local solidarity and quality of life in Delhi. It suggests that high level of solidarity makes use of a wide range of aids to solve problems and it makes the feeling of better quality of life for local dwellers. Whereas, there was a strong and negative relationship between local solidarity and quality of life in Tehran that is, high level of local solidarity was associated with low level of quality of life in Tehran. In other words, unity and supportive relations among the respondents in poor area was greater than that in well-off area of Tehran.

Fifth hypothesis attempts to identify the relationship between social trust and quality of life. It is as a key cognitive indicator of social capital which is related to belief in the honesty, integrity, reliability and expected behaviour of others- a faith in people. The literature review reveals that most of the researchers found the positive relationship between social trust and quality of life (Knack and Keefer, 1997; Knack, 1999; Zak and Knack, 2001; Helliwell, 1994, 2003, 2006; Kelly, 2009). According to Knack (1999), high-trust societies achieve better quality of life due to lower transaction costs. Kelly (2009) found that high level of social trust promotes the individual’s engagement in the society and seeing themselves as valued member of their society. This feeling leads to the sense of better quality of life though. However,
Helliwell (1994), using data from a group of high-income OECD countries, found a negative relationship between social trust and quality of life. In the present study, the data collected from Delhi demonstrated a strong and positive relationship between social trust and quality of life, whereas, the data collected from Tehran suggested a small and negative relationship between social trust and quality of life. That is, the level of trust among the people who have better quality of life was lower than among the poor people.

Sixth hypothesis was to gain insight into the relationship between social communication and quality of life. Social communications and networks connote to the complex sets of relationships between members of a society. It was argued in social capital literature that an individual with strong social communication will have much better quality of life than without having any communications and relations (Siara, 1980; Strain and Chappell, 1982; Granovetter, 1985; de Graaf and Flap, 1988; Requena, 1991; Pinquart and Sorenson, 2000). In this study, our assumption is that the quality of life of a person depends on quality and quantity of his/her communications with others. Because, the important information, which help people to gain from useful opportunities or cope with problems, flow through social networks and communication with others. In this research, it is indicated that results found in Delhi support our assumption, while the results obtained in Tehran do not support it. It is found that there was a small and positive relationship between social communication and quality of life in Delhi. That is, high scores in social communications and networks were associated with high scores in quality of life. Whereas, there was a medium negative relationship between two variables in Tehran and high scores in social communication was associated with low scores in quality of life. It suggests that poor and excluded people are more interested in having intensive communication and network rather than rich people in Tehran.

Seventh hypothesis attempted to examine the relationship between social participation and quality of life. Social participation is engagement and playing in a variety of roles with others. Participation in the society is assumed to have positive relationship with quality of life and lead to a better quality of life (Putnam, 2000; Fukuyama, 2000; Field, 2003; Lindstrom, 2004; Petrou and Kupek, 2007; Wallace and Pichler, 2009), and a growing body of literature reporting the absence or negative relationship between these two concepts (Ziercsh and Baum, 2004; Sivesind and Selle, 2004; Greiner et al, 2004; Ellaway and Macintyre, 2007). Our findings in Delhi support the former relationship and findings in Tehran support the latter relationships. Statistical analyses in this study suggested that there was a strong positive relationship between social participation and quality of life in Delhi while there was a
medium and negative relationship between social participation and quality of life in Tehran. A close look at the literature advocates that on the one hand, involvement in associations and participation in civil society could help people indirectly to maintain them in a good condition of life through increasing the number of cohort acquaintances and thriving supportive networks (Glaeser at al., 2002). On the other hand, social participation by increasing the individuals’ cognitive capacities improves the quality of life through mental health improvements (Adam et al., 2006).

5.3. CONCLUSION

Social capital is regarded as an important determinant of quality of life. It refers to the extent to which communities provide individuals with opportunities through supportive relationships, generalized trustworthiness, and active involvement in local and social activities to increase their resources and decrease their social expenditures. In the first section of this chapter, we first clarified and discussed the relationship between social capital indicators and quality of life in comparison with other relevant studies and tested the hypotheses. In this study since research objectives are relevant with research questions, this section attempts to meet the research objectives by answering the research questions proposed in the first chapter of the thesis. Therefore, in order to conduct this section we will follow the research questions as follows.

1. Is there any significant difference in quality of life variances between Delhi and Tehran according to level of social capital?

Here we answer the first question of research to meet the first objective of the study proposed in the first chapter that is to gain insight into the comparison of quality of life differences in Delhi and Tehran according to level of social capital in both societies. To perform this analysis a Two-Way ANOVA was conducted. Results of the study showed that according to Table 4.12c there was a significant difference in quality of life in Delhi and Tehran according to level of social capital \( [x_{scrank}*x_{country}: F (2, 6598) = 11102.1, p = 0.000] \). In addition, the profile plot shown in Figure 4.157 also supports the same result in another way. It highlights that higher the quality of life, higher the social capital in Delhi; whereas, higher the quality of life, lower the social capital in Tehran. This indicates that even if the importance of social capital in explaining the quality of life variances in both societies was significant it asserts that the level of social capital in poor areas of Tehran is greater than well-off areas while in well-off areas of Delhi the level of social capital is greater than poor areas. Figure 4.158 shows the visual differences, i.e. where exactly located these differences in quality of life according to the level of social capital through provided model maps. Additionally,
Figure 4.159 and Figure 160 show the extent to which quality of life is sensitive to social capital in different localities of Delhi and Tehran. For instance, the later figures show that in poor area of Delhi, quality of life was 42% sensitive to social capital, whereas in poor area of Tehran quality of life was only 29% sensitive to social capital.

2. *Is there any relationship between social capital and quality of life in Delhi and Tehran?*

To answer this analysis a multiple linear regression was conducted for both Delhi and Tehran separately. Results obtained from Delhi and Tehran data showed that according to Tables 4.13a, 4.13b, 4.14a, and 4.14b there was a strong, positive correlation between social capital and quality of life in both societies \( r = 0.887 \) and \( 0.826 \) and \( p<0.01 \) that is, high scores on social capital are associated with high levels of scores on quality of life. This answer meet second objective of the study.

3. *To what extent the social capital indicators included in the model as predictors of quality of life can determine its variances?*

R square value in Table 4.13a indicates that 77 percent of the variance in quality of life in Delhi is explained by the five indicators of social capital as predictors in the empirical model. While, R square value in Table 4.14a shows that 68 percent of the variances in quality of life is explained by the four indicators of social capital as predictors in the empirical model. However, social communication is excluded from Tehran’s empirical model.

4. *To what extent total variance in quality of life could be uniquely explained by each predictor in both societies?*

The Part values are squared for all predictors in order to answer this question. Table 4.13d indicates that the view towards locality while the rest of predictors are controlled uniquely explained 17 percent of the total variance of quality of life. Social participation, social communication, social trust, and local solidarity uniquely explain the 5 percent, 2 percent, 0.4 percent, and 0.3 percent of the total variance of quality of life respectively while the rest of the predictors are controlled.

Table 4.14d indicates that the view towards locality while the rest of predictors are controlled uniquely explains the 19 percent of the total variance of quality of life. Social trust, local solidarity and social participation uniquely explain the 0.7 percent, 0.4 percent and 0.4 percent of the total variance of quality of life respectively.

5. *To what extent total variance in quality of life could be uniquely explained by cognitive and structural dimensions of social capital?*

Table 4.13d shows that 18 percent of total variance in quality of life in Delhi is uniquely explained by cognitive indicators of social capital (view towards locality, local solidarity, and
social trust) whereas only 7 percent of total variance in quality of life is uniquely explained by structural indicators of social capital (social participation and social communication). Table 4.14d shows that about 20 percent of total variance in quality of life in Tehran is uniquely explained by cognitive indicators of social capital (view towards locality, local solidarity, and social trust) whereas only 1 percent of total variance in quality of life is uniquely explained by structural indicator of social capital (social participation) that is included in the model as predictor while cognitive factors are controlled. In other words, it can be concluded that there is a good source of both cognitive and structural social capital in Delhi whereas there is only good source of cognitive social capital in Tehran and the level of structural social capital is low.

Aforementioned explanation to the five research questions met the five objectives of the study and the last objective also met by descriptive results discussed in chapter four through distribution maps and charts. The descriptive results in fourth chapter can be visualized by the distribution of the five indicators of social capital and six indicators of quality of life in six localities of Delhi and Tehran through 156 maps and charts. It may be concluded that according to the social capital literature it was expected to have a positive and linear relationship between social capital and quality of life (Bourdieu 1985; Coleman 1988, 1990; Fukuyama 1995, 1999; Putnam 1993, 2000; Woolcock and Narayan 2000). But, findings of the present study suggest the reverse relationship in Tehran. That means, the more developed areas have granted the lower level of social capital. According to the theoretical framework and obtained empirical model it is suggested that there was a failure in making complementarities between cognitive and structural forms of social capital and there were no embedded ties between public and private actors in social frontier in north of Tehran. In addition, more interesting findings were presented through empirical model maps and graphs (see Figures 4.158, 4.159, 4.160) which are depicting the geographical distribution of the social capital impact on quality of life in both Delhi and Tehran. The most important thing for policy makers is that the model maps and graphs show the quality and quantity of the location of the area which is either low or high sensitive to the social capital. This study tentatively illustrate that using GIS can reveal the trends, qualities, and quantities of either subjective or objective factors in ongoing policies and programs in every society. It is finally concluded that in both societies the cognitive predictors of quality of life were more important than structural predictors. It suggests that in order to have better quality of life and to forge mutually beneficial and accountable ties between different peoples, positive sum oriented attitudes, perspectives and values should be focused rather than zero sum oriented attitudes.
5.4. IMPLICATIONS AND RECOMMENDATIONS

5.4.1. Theoretical implications

The findings of this research advanced our knowledge about social capital and quality of life in both theoretical and practical sense. First of all this study has provided theoretical insights in understanding how social capital components influence on quality of life in diverse societies of Delhi and Tehran. While previous studies focused on certain aspects of quality of life and social capital, this study extends our understanding of quality of life by including six dimensions: viz. safety, health, mental/emotional, environmental, accessibility to services, and economic. It also extends our understanding of social capital by including both the cognitive and the structural dimensions. In order to gain insight for better understanding of both social capital and quality of life distribution, geographical information systems have been used as complementary techniques for current statistical techniques. These have helped to develop a successful guideline in obtaining descriptive and inferential results. These results could bear potential for driving the future of the development programs to ensure a consistent and viable quality of life program in both societies.

5.4.2. Implications for policy making

This study found that in both Delhi and Tehran structural indicators of social capital had lower exposure rather than cognitive indicators. This means that structural dimension of social capital did not have enough opportunity to translate the perspectives and attitudes of residents as cognitive dimension of social capital. Thus, it is recommended that both the governments of India and Iran should expand the opportunities for citizens in particular in poor localities to play more roles in state-public relations in a multi-dimensional method. It is also recommended that the governments as the final arbiter and enforcer of the rule of law and as the ultimate provider of the public goods in both countries should facilitate the positive developmental outcomes. In addition, governments in particular the government of Iran could improve the quality of life through facilitating and enhancing the positive supportive relations between the poor and developed localities. In this context, the embedded ties among the citizens could be improved through obligation-expectation strategy between the poor and rich citizens. In both Delhi and Tehran Media also can help to improve the communication and interaction between people to forge its mutually beneficial and accountable ties by focusing on positive sum oriented behaviours and interactions between different agents from different levels. Using GIS to conduct a longitudinal research helps
policy makers to understand the trends in subjective issues in every localities and families as well to trace a proper plan for future.

5.4.3. **Recommendations for future researches**

This study highlights that social capital explores the complexity of social relations and interactions by recognizing that they can impact at different levels and have both direct and indirect effects on quality of life. However, all of the policy implications for interventions in quality of life improvement programs are premature without future detailed analyses and researches. This study indicates a number of points which future researches should take care of.

- This study represented a more comprehensive understanding of social capital and quality of life in two heterogeneous societies. Future researches should conduct more detailed analyses of social capital and quality of life in an indigenous society.
- The complexity of social capital framework needs to be matched by the use of multi-dimensional measurement tools.
- Using GIS in surveys to collect and generate the data requires and matches with a simple random sampling method in an indigenous field of research.
- Conducting a longitudinal research and using a path analysis is required to establish the direction of causality between social capital and quality of life.
- Research into the effects of bonding, bridging, and linking social capital on quality of life to see whether it is the nature of the relationship that is important or where those relationships take place.