An Institutional Approach to the Tehran Bazaar

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ABSTRACT: Tehran bazaar is located in the south of Tehran-capital of Iran. Its fame isn’t because of historical case, but its social-political activities have given centrality to Tehran bazaar among Iranian bazaars. The aim of the study of the Tehran bazaar is done with an institutional approach. Our method is the case study, and specifically, the qualitative method. The data were gathered from several different types of interviews as well as non-participant observation in 2015. The findings show structural changes in Tehran bazaar that have occurred since 50 years ago. These changes have happened in the institutions in Tehran bazaar. Our main emphasis in the article is on the relation between religion and economy in Tehran bazaar as an institutional change. The weakness of the relationship between the institutions makes some problems in Tehran bazaar such as forgery and dishonesty in economic activities, to which we have to pay attention at the end of this article.

KEYWORDS: Tehran; bazaar, institution, religion, economy

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1. INTRODUCTION

The market, as part of the economic institution in contemporary societies, has been of interest to the thinkers of social sciences and economics. In spite of the existence of numerous works in this field, theorists have not addressed the social dimensions of the bazaar, but have been more involved with its economic aspects. Swedberg (2005) maintains that even the economic theories have often been unable to explain the complexity of the phenomenon well enough.

Douglass North and Bernard Barber (1977) noted that the literature on economics was more concerned with the implicit rather than the explicit study of the concept of the market. As Swedberg puts it, “There exists even less material on the market as a social phenomenon than as a price-making mechanism” (Swedberg, 1994, p: 257).

The Tehran bazaar, with its 200-year-old antiquity, is considered a traditional case. Tradition and religion are closely related; besides, Tehran bazaar has functioned as a religious base throughout history. Thus, the commercial prestige of Tehran bazaar has greatly been influenced by religion. Religion sets the moral norms for business in Bazaar. The adherence of Tehran Bazaar merchants to moral norms has made the old merchants to be loyal on their covenant of economic activities. They are committed, according to the religious values and traditions, to the terms of the contract, which usually is expressed verbally. In such a normative framework, if someone disobeys the terms of the contract, he/she will be severely punished by other merchants and people avoid dealing with him/her (Granovetter, 2002).

The present article aims to study the social institutions of Tehran bazaar. Since among the social institutions of Tehran bazaar, the institution of religion is of great importance, the study at hand will focus on it.

2. LITERATURE REVIEW

Mohammadi (2014) reviewed the influence of modernist on cultural characteristics and economic boom of Tabriz Bazaar, using qualitative method, in Master’s dissertation entitled “reviewing affecting factors on social change of Tabriz Bazaar, the second Pahlavi period so far”. He provided the research findings in aspects of economic, social, political and cultural and frame work changes; and sought to review Tabriz market changes and the reasons for these changes in any dimension. He writes: The most important economic changes of Tabriz bazaar are non-compliance of Bazaar conditions with modern economy and reduction in its boom, the loss of some guilds and non-creation of new guilds in the Bazaar; the most important social changes are shifting normative construction and reducing in observance of ethical norms; the most important cultural changes are decline in religious commitment and failure to observe religious norms, reduction in relation with religious scholars and the spread of education among merchants; and the most important political changer are undermining the power and cohesion of merchants.

Pourghasem (2013) reviewed the ethic status of carpet and gold merchants in Khoy city, using qualitative method and depth interview with participating observation technique, in Master’s dissertation entitled “ethic in Bazaar, a study of professional ethic of three generation of jewelers and carpet-sellers in Khoy bazaar”. According to researcher’s point of view, Bazaar in Iran is not only a place for exchange and economy, but also a social institution besides politic and religious institution ever. This social capital and the trust resulting of it, rooted in religion and resulted from it. Merchants by using their social basis besides proselytizing, with their certain ethics had been seen as a role model in the community. In the past, Bazaar had the name equivalent to confidence. An institution that acted as a mediator between the power and the masses. The position of Bazaar and merchants has changed due to generational change going on in Iran. The new generation that emerged, are youth that concentrated on economic activity and set aside the accompaniment with religion and politics. The first generation religion-based
morality is deformed to custom-based morality in second generation and professional ethic in third generation; and consequently, the second and third generations also lost their mediation role. And this event has more appearance in the third generation that has replace religious references by self-referential.

Habibi (2011) reviewed the main and subsidiary frame works of Grand Bazaar of Tehran, and economic and social elements, and central grouping of its activities in a study entitled “The history of Grand Bazaar of Tehran, bazaars and markets in its periphery in two hundred years so far”. The subject of this research is about three main pillars of Grand Bazaar of Tehran: framework aspect, economic organization and staffing organization. In addition to making all three subjects, understandable as parts of a whole and coherent structure; examined the the interaction of its parts in contexts such as the process of creating and manufacturing Bazaar space, Shaping the activities of production, distribution and exchange in Bazaar and communication with foci outside of it, and the pattern of organizing the labor force and employees in various parts of Bazaar in format of guilds and like that. In this study, the most attempt is used to examine the form of Bazaar and its morphology, indeed. From the author’s point of view, the purpose of social and cultural orientation of contemporary period is reducing the role and basic function of Bazaar in economic, cultural and political life of cities and replacing with modern bureaucracy. The consequence of these interventions are the loss of framework values, economic efficiency, and social and moral values of Bazaar that had showed it as a total and dynamic society at a time not so long. So that some of the irregularities and turmoil in Bazaar community –that had self-regulation and order-orienting quirk- by transforming its main functions, challenged the mental image of this valuable experience and is has been threatening the perspective of social life of this phenomenon in future society.

Slater and Tonix (2008) in a book entitled “Bazaar community (Bazaar and modern social theory)” believe that among current approaches about social and economic organizing, ideas related to Bazaar take an important role. In recent decades, Bazaar models have been dominating in strategies and changes related to managing social and economic affairs; whether this domination be in the format of neo-liberal restructuring of capitalist advanced economic, or in the format of in-transition economics discussion of post-communist societies, or structural adjustment programs in developing countries. The logic of Bazaar had given such a wide way of thinking about social institution and more generally about human that concepts included competition, investment, regulation and selection could be used on different issues such as people’s life career, access to public services and even private activities. The authors believe that nowadays, in different contexts, different interpretation of Bazaar is being invoked; including operational interpretations of ad agencies, the perceptions of managers using Bazaar model to adjust the relation between different parts, and nominal calculations that econometric specialists do.

3. THEORETICAL FRAMEWORK

3.1. Bazaar in sociological theory

Among the classical sociologists, Max Weber was the most interested in the discussion of market. He attempted to depict economical sociology. However, sociologists such as George Simmel and Emile Durkheim have also mentioned market in their writings. Simmel emphasized the role of money in society, and Durkheim underscored the effects of normlessness on the different aspects of individuals’ behavior, especially on economy. Weber stressed such notions as exchange, competition, and even the existence of a physical community for the process of bargaining. He pointed to the element of struggle or conflict in the market and used the term “market struggle”. Furthermore, he emphasized struggle among the participants in the market (Swedberg, 1994, p: 257).
Of the contemporary social scientists, Talcott Parsons, Neil Smelser, and Karl Polanyi can be mentioned. Parsons and Smelser (1956) presented some suggestions for the development of market sociology. They claimed that market could be conceptualized as a distinct social system. They attempted to illustrate theoretically and based on (AGIL) model a different structure of the market. However, the picture of market was less abstract in Polanyi’s work (1957). He holds that in the past there were only two types of market, the local market and the foreign market, each of which had its specific regulations, but neither led to an economic breakthrough. However, there are two turning points in the history of Europe that have triggered the advent of modern economics: the creation of domestic (national) markets by the mercantilist government and the elimination of all market regulations during the mid-nineteenth century in England (Swedberg, 1994, Pp: 266-267).

Mark Granovetter, by investigating the role of friends and acquaintances in employment (job seeking), became a pioneer in the network approach to the market, and Immanuel Wallerstein presented the theory of the modern world system, in which trade and international markets played a key role (Swedberg, 1994, p: 267).

It is noteworthy that Polanyi and Bourdieu have similar views in that they both consider the market as a less conceptual entity. For instance, Bourdieu places more emphasis on the institutionalization of the market to the extent that he claims that the market is devoid of the element of conflict, though according to Swedberg (1994, p: 267), Bourdieu, like his rival Fligstein, believes in the existence of some kind of struggle in the market (Fourcade, 2007, p: 1023).

It is obvious that both the classic and neo-classic economists have paid much attention in their analyses of economic performance to the rational choice theory, and specifically to maximization of interest (Karimi, 2008). However, Bourdieu devised a new idea by propounding the concept of “interest” along with such concepts as “habit”, “field”, and types of “capital”. In fact, he linked an economic concept with social concepts and presented a new interpretation. Bourdieu’s main idea is that the economic life is the result of the contact between the actors and their desires (habits) in the economic fields, and that markets are deeply affected by the nature of this field. The economic field could be a firm, an industry, a country, or the entire world. If the case is an industry, its structure will include the power relations among the firms through which the capitals in their various forms (e.g.: financial, technological, social …) are maintained. In this case, the dominant and dominated firms are in constant conflict. What happens outside this field plays an important part in the struggle within this industry. For instance, the government is a power that affects whatever happens within this field. The market is part of, and dominated by, the dynamism of this field. According to Bourdieu’s view, analyzing the market through the concept of social networks is insufficient to investigate the role of politics, the viewpoint of the actors, and all the characteristics that the market as a social institution can possess (Swedberg, 2005, Pp: 247-249). Bourdieu admits that distinct fields of the society have spaces with their own fundamental rules within which the actors act according to the habits based on their previous experiences. Indeed, they participate in the field that is profitable for them. Each field, too, has its own specific benefit. Therefore, we have worlds of religious, economic, capitals (Swedberg, 2005, p: 381).

### 3.2. Social Structure of the Market

Initially, it is necessary to mention some points about social structure. Generally, there are three different approaches to social structure: Institutional structure, Relational structure, and Corporal structure. In institutional structure, the social structure encompasses those cultural and normative patterns that determine the expectations of economic actors of others’ behavior and organizes stable relations between them.

However, relational structure refers to the social structure that includes social relations and connections per se and is the pattern for the mutual relations and reciprocal dependence
between the actors and their actions as well as the position and place that they have in the society (Lopez & Scott, 2006, p: 13).

In recent years, new approaches to the third dimension of social structure have emerged to challenge the existing dimensions. This viewpoint is rooted in theoretical linguistics, anthropology, and more recently, in evolutionary psychology. These scientists believe that social structure is similar to the structure of oral and written language. According to this viewpoint, the institutional and relational patterns result from people’s actions. These people owe to the capabilities that enable them to shape themselves in an organized manner through their actions. These capabilities are indeed the behavioral qualities; thus, social structure should be equated with corporal structure. This structure is found in the habits and skills embedded in individuals’ bodies and minds, enabling them to create, recreate, and transform the institutional and relational structures (Lopez & Scot, 2006, p: 14).

In Parsons’ view, social structure is “a modeled system of social relations among actors”. He suggested that these models of social relations should be considered as normative models, or social institutions (Lopez & Scot, 2006, p: 43).

Parsons was inspired by the institution idea of Veblen (1899, 1904) and Commons (1924, 1899 – 1900). Commons defined social institutions as “definite and approved ways of bilateral dealings” which are common in the society. These institutions are manifested in the norms, customs, traditions, and rules which shape the people’s wants and deeds, like the actions in the market and election campaigns, which are based on specific economic and political institutions, which in turn are based on more common social institutions studied by sociologists. This exactly is Durkheim’s “non-arbitrary element of the contractual”; that is, the normative frameworks related to trust and commitment assumed in conventional relations (Durkheim, 1893).

In Parsons’ view, social institutions make up the skeleton of the society. These social institutions are such major structures as marriage, monogamy, endogamy, patriarchy, ownership, contract, bargaining, goods barter, bureaucracy, expertise, education, etc. In addition, there are minor institutions that have temporary nature, such as queuing, conversations among individuals, etc. These major and minor institutions are gathered under such institutional infrastructures as feudalism, patrimonialism, industrial system, and capitalism.

It should be mentioned that in the present article, the social structure of the bazaar is considered an institutional structure, based on the approach that Tehran bazaar is a social system made up of institutions. One of the most important institutions under whose dominance the economic action is carried out is the institution of religion in the bazaar.

3.3. Institutional Approach and Tehran Bazaar

One of the most influential subjects in the discussion of the bazaar lies in the realm of the modern science of institutional economics. This branch of thought can be traced to the works of Renald Coase, who put forward the concept of “social costs”. His main argument was that economic transactions involve “social costs”, and that these costs are different from the direct production costs. In Tehran bazaar, too, social costs or “transaction costs” include costs of time and money spent on information seeking in the bazaar, and costs of drawing up contracts and maintaining their execution.

In this regard, we can find similarities with Polanyi’s arguments on establishing market relations. Polanyi’s ideas are part of the criticisms of neoclassic economics. Oliver Williamson is considered one of the most important theorists of modern institutional economics. In Williamson’s approach, as in the customary neoclassic theory, too, economic organizations are assumed as unified computing agents that make decisions. According to this view, the organization can be explained based on maximization of profit. That is to say, in competitive conditions, corporate structures are created so as to achieve more efficient economic gains (Slater, 2007).
Both Coase and Williamson, by explaining economic institutions according to the quality of maximizing profit through reducing social costs, still remain within the framework of neoclassic tradition. Another branch of institutional economics, which is associated with theorists such as Douglas North and Jeffry Hodgson, puts aside the priority of attention to the market efficiency in order to explain different organizational frames. This set of works owes to a great extent to the “traditional” institutionalism mainly presented by Veblen. However, several figures contribute to the newer versions of institutionalism. Although these viewpoints commonly take into account an evolutionary approach concerning the emergence of institutions, this approach is based on the analysis of the effects of historical changes on economy, namely, unwanted effects and consequences, rather than on a simple and clear-cut logic of maximization of interest. The most important point here is that these alternative views present an extensive definition of “institution”. According to these views, institution includes rules, ways, and norms whereby economic activities and market exchanges are arranged and organized.

In presenting a social model, the emphasis on the systematic nature of economic action is based on the assumption that people internalize these rules and adjust their expectations of others’ behavior on these grounds. These common expectations are placed adjacent to the more explicit rules devised by economic organizations as well as beside the legal rules which ensure the stability of the market transactions. Furthermore, the personal relations in unofficial networks also function along with the corporate structures and relational conventions in order to harmonize economic action. This interpretation can be compared to those of Mark Granovetter, who holds that both official and unofficial relations, such as the relations within and between firms shape economic processes (Granovetter, 1985; Slater, 2007). In this regard, It should be mentioned that Neil Fligstein, in an attempt to make a link between modern institutional approach and Bourdieu, remarks that in the market as a field, the formal and informal rules should be heeded. He continues that it is the visible social relations that cause the stability of competition in the market. Therefore, the entire social hierarchy within one field will be reproduced from one period to another. Modern institutional view and Bourdieu maintain that the social structures of the market affect the actors’ orientations and ultimately, these orientations lead to transformation in the form of market performance (Jepperson, 2002 as cited in Fourcade, 2007).

3.4. Tehran Bazaar
Tehran bazaar, with an area of approximately 110 hectares, occupies 16 percent of the total area of the metropolitan Tehran and is enclosed in the shape of a trapezoid by four main axes in the south of the city. The bazaar zone carries the heaviest load of the city traffic. Also, the highest percentage of referrals have entered this zone in search of employment, which is evidence for its economic importance (Karimi, 2008). The bazaar is part of the institution of economy in which relatively large numbers of structures, hierarchies, and behavioral similarities can be seen. Although bazaar has an economic atmosphere by nature, this does not diminish the importance of the other dimensions of it. The history of the past 100 years of Iran reveals the prominence of the social, religious, and political dimensions of the bazaar, or better to say, the bazaar traders.

3.5. Historical and Political Dimensions of Tehran Bazaar
Throughout history, whenever Tehran bazaar has sensed threat to its independence, it has overshadowed the political history of Iran by the reactions it has shown. The last of such events was the victory of the Islamic revolution in Iran. According to social scientists such as Ahmad Ashraf (1983 & 1988), the coalition of the bazaar and the mosque led to the formation of one of the most important forces in the triumph of the Islamic revolution of Iran.
In most of the works, the authors have not neglected the historical dimension of the Iranian bazaars. As mentioned before, one of the most important writings available on the bazaar and bazaar traders belongs to Ahmad Ashraf (1980). By reviewing the history of the past 100 years of Iran and highlighting the social, religious, and political dimensions of the bazaar, he reveals the prominence of the bazaar and tradesmen in the history of the country.

Ahmad Ashraf (1980), in dealing with the social characteristics of the merchants during the last years of Qajar dynasty, refers to their lofty social position and remarks that those who were placed in the upper rank of the social pyramid and hierarchy of the bazaar were also placed among the dignitaries along with the religious authorities and government officials in the social system.

Moreover, the tradesmen of the period, due to their commercial relation with the West, sent their children abroad to study. Hence, by learning the foreign language, they were able to get acquainted with the Western culture sooner than others and adopt some of the Western characteristics, manners, and way of thinking which suited the interests of their class, e.g. freedom, establishment of constitutional government, and democracy (bourgeois democracy) (Ashraf, 1980).

He describes the political characteristics of the prominent merchants and claims that the increase in financial power, and supervising the tradesmen’s affairs as well as the network of collecting and distributing on a large scale have caused the increase in the merchants’ political power. The increase in dissatisfaction with despotism, lawlessness, and arbitrariness of administering the country affairs caused the bazaar traders, along with the vanguard clerics and city intellectuals to take over the leadership of the anti-despotic and anti-colonial political movements and play a major part in these movements. The merchants’ collective campaign started with their attempts to solve their problems in creating the assembly of merchants’ representatives in Tehran and other major cities, and then became manifest in tobacco boycott movement and constitutional movement (Ashraf, 1980).

Another research that evaluates the bazaar during three historical periods is that of Mohammad Tavakkol (2002). He acknowledges that the traditional bazaar has been the most influential social organization in the social-political changes of Iran during the recent century and even during the recent centuries.

Tavakkol examines the bazaar during three historical periods. The first period is in fact the time when the bazaar is considered as a power pillar. This period begins from the Safavid reign and continues until the establishment of constitutionalism. The second period is that of fight for power. It is the period when the bazaar is in conflict with the political power. In other words, after the establishment of constitutionalism and the problem of petroleum, the bazaar goes under pressure and gets involved in a fight for power that continues until the Islamic revolution.

The third period is the period after the revolution, i.e., the period of power climax.

During the Safavid reign, one of the social forces that took shape was the bazaar. The oldest bazaars of Iran were those of Tabriz, Qazvin, and Isfahan, which were Safavid power centers. He writes:

“If a government does not have the power to determine the status of the social forces through accurate analysis and prudence; in fact, if it does not establish organizational justice at the social level, it cannot maintain its power and will be involved in anarchy. The Safavid government had three institutions of power: first, tribal government;
This social order went on until the time prior to the tobacco movement. In fact, after this event, separation of the three pillars of power, bazaar, and clerics started. It was at this time that the bazaar changed from a socio-economic force into a social-political one.

During the Pahlavi reign, due to modernization and the increase in oil income, the economic power of the bazaar diminished. However, it gained a more active social and political presence (Tavakkol, 2002, p: 37).

Tavakkoli continues that:

*The only social force that has always defended shiism - in its common sense – and has had organizational power as well has been the bazaar* (Tavakkoli, 2002, p: 38).

He believes that the bazaar has had ideology, social relations, civil-political organizations, distribution system, management, economic knowledge, and financial resources. Meanwhile, union relations, religious boards, religious authorities, and the existence of charitable institutions such as charity funds and interest-free loan systems have assessed the discipline and stability of the bazaar.

In analyzing the third period, he claims that:

*The bazaar was the most influential force which succeeded, after the revolution, in gaining a place in the management system of the country and playing its intended role. After the revolution, the bazaar went out of the circuit of work distribution which existed in the past, and as a social-political force did not evaluate its real and natural role and status and went beyond its true status, so like other political forces it fell into the route of expansionism ....... Each social force is formed based on some necessities. Whenever this force ignores its real status, it becomes vulnerable. The bazaar is no exception to this rule* (Tavakkoli, 2002, Pp: 42 – 44).

Another new research on the above-mentioned topic is a book by Arang Keshavarzian (2007) under the title of “*The Bazaar and State in Iran*”. In this research, Tehran bazaar has been studied from the viewpoint of political economics. In Keshavarzian’s view, Tehran bazaar is a highly complex case which can be studied from different dimensions.

He claims that since Tehran bazaar does not enjoy the architectural quality as that we can see in the spacious bazaars of Istanbul or Isfahan bazaar, it is not legible for historical investigation. Therefore, Tehran bazaar has not attracted the attention of the scientists who focus their investigations on such topics. In his research, Keshavarzian has used methods of field study and non-participant observation and documentation. During the two years of his scientific study, besides visiting Tehran bazaar (tea bazaar, carpet bazaar, and glassware bazaar), he traveled to other bazaars such as those in Kish, Qeshm, Khark, and Bandar Abbas islands, Bandar Lengheh, and Hamburg free port, where hand-made rugs were purchased. Thus, he interviewed both the tradesmen of Tehran and people who were directly or indirectly related with Tehran bazaar, and asked their opinions on the relationship between the bazaar and government. Also, he has interviewed the members of Chamber of Commerce, Minister of Commerce, Trade
Unions Organization, Plan and Budget Organization, Markazi Bank, Tea Organization, Trade societies, and the Islamic Society of the Bazaar.

On the whole, the researcher has tried, taking into account the internal factors of the bazaar including the social and economic factors, to study the effect of the bazaar on the external dynamics or its political effect on other governments, especially since Pahlavi reign up to now from the viewpoint of political economics (Keshavarzian, 2007). Furthermore, Keshavarzian (2004) in the conclusion of his article “In Search of a Meaning for the Bazaar” states that:

“At present, particularly in today’s developing world, economies are mostly governed by governments. The networks of the agents not only deal with each other, but they also have interactions with external forces, which include in the present study the trade agents not affiliated with the bazaar, and more specifically, the government. I hope, by generalizing economic sociology to state economics, to be able to show that it is not solely the agents who create and accept relations within the network, but the kind of relations and the frame of networks are dictated to them by political economics. It is the politics that determines how the networks, resources, and official institutions should be linked” (Keshavarzian, b, 2004, p: 165).

3.6. Socio-cultural Dimensions of the Bazaar

In this section, we will deal with the socio-cultural function of religion in the bazaar. Religious societies and circles are places where the bazaar traders involve in creating relations outside the scope of their class or business.

During the 1350s (1970s), some of the anthropological researchers doing research on Tehran bazaar argued that the weekly meetings of the bazaar traders played a great role in creating the settled connections within the social relations. The weekly or two-weekly meetings or gatherings of the bazaar traders assembled the smaller groups of bazaar merchants, and in these meetings the previous week’s events were discussed. The administrators of these gatherings were the merchants of a definite neighborhood. The gatherings were organized by the neighborhood mosque. These societies did not take into account the class or union borderline. These sessions were not restricted to topics on jurisprudence or theology, or to the presentation of examples of people’s religious beliefs.

They were indeed locations for the regular meetings of the members of the bazaar based on their trade union or ethnic background as well as places for their wives and daughters to meet each other. The topics of the discussions and traditions were sometimes linked to the worldly issues and included such matters as the economic and political news or even finding a suitable spouse for the son or daughter of a certain merchant. In the course of these meetings, members proceeded to raise funds for the merchants who had faced financial misfortunes, or for the construction of mosques, Hosseinieh (special mosques), theological centers, and hospitals. They also arranged wedding or mourning ceremonies, and in case it was necessary, they punished the bazaar traders who had committed “breach of the bazaar rules” by spreading rumors and disgracing them. Thaiss subtly concludes that:

“It is through these bazaar gatherings that every individual gets the chance to meet and talk with others …….. Or personal relations are created and expanded in the networks, or some relations are broken. It is through these interpersonal networks and the participation of the same individuals in several meetings during the week that the bazaar information, ideas, and rumors are spread” (cited in Keshavarzian, a, 2004, p: 22).
4. RESEARCH METHODOLOGY

In the present study, the qualitative method has been used. In the qualitative method, comprehensive interview is one of the known ways mostly used when the data are collected. Researchers utilize the deep (comprehensive) interview as their general strategy, or choose it from among the several available methods, for collecting data. Interview has specific strong points. The researcher can obtain plenty of data (through interview) very fast. It is possible to obtain a large amount of information from individuals. And after the interview, the result can be rapidly summarized. The researcher should have a considerable skill in these fields: listening, building relationship with others, posing questions, taking necessary steps, and finding out the gist of the matter.

Sampling: Sampling is an accurate and effective way of collecting data about a large number of subjects, and if it is carried out based on scientific criteria, the results of a quantitative research can be generalized to the entire statistical population (Vaws, 1997: P: 86). However, in the qualitative research, the sampling method is theoretical, so the results cannot be generalized to the statistical population. The reason is that in the qualitative research, probable sampling is not necessary; furthermore, the social conditions are by no means the same in different places at different times so that it would be possible to replicate the research (Blake, 2000: 328). In the present research, theoretical sampling is the process of collecting data for the purpose of theorizing, whereby the analyst simultaneously gathers, codifies, and analyzes his data, and then decides which data to gather in the next stage and where to find them so that he can develop his theory as it appears by itself. It should be noted that the process of sampling comes to an end when we have reached the so-called theoretical saturation. In other words, in qualitative sampling, the number of the subjects is determined by the theoretical saturation criterion; i.e., when the researcher comes to the conclusion that having further interviews does not provide him with new information or insight and that the data are being repeated and nothing new is found out, he stops the procedure of sampling and data collection (Mohammadpur, 2010, Pp: 325-326).

In the research at hand, with regard to the research objectives and in order to obtain better and more complete results, we took into consideration the concept of sampling with maximum changes. In sampling with maximum changes, the environments, activities, events, and well-informed individuals are deliberately chosen in the way that they can provide the researcher with as many different and diverse situations as possible (Wimmer & Dominick, 2005, p: 181). At any rate, in the present study, we have attempted to select the samples who have experienced maximum changes, activities, and events so that they would present us with distinctive and extensive situations of different experiences and ideas to help us to arrive at better conclusions. To sum up, it should be noted that in this research, theoretical sampling has been used. This means that the researchers have tried to use deep (comprehensive) interviews with all the groups who were involved in economic or even non-economic activities.

5. RESEARCH FINDINGS

In order to investigate the situation of Tehran bazaar, we had deep (comprehensive) interviews with 24 individuals who, in various social roles, were engaged in economic and non-economic activities in Tehran bazaar during the year 2009. The following table shows the summary information of the interviews.
Table 1: Occupation of the interviewees in Tehran bazaar (2015)

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Interviewees</th>
<th>Number (Mean age)</th>
<th>Interviewees</th>
<th>Number (Mean age)</th>
<th>Interviewees</th>
<th>Number (Mean age)</th>
<th>Interviewees</th>
<th>Number (Mean age)</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Porter</td>
<td>1 (45)</td>
<td>Clergyman Prayer-leader</td>
<td>2 (55)</td>
<td>Accountant</td>
<td>1 (36)</td>
<td>Importer of smuggled goods</td>
<td>1 (60)</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Apprentice</td>
<td>1 (30)</td>
<td>Bank manager</td>
<td>2 (50)</td>
<td>Broker</td>
<td>1 (60)</td>
<td>Member of trade union</td>
<td>3 (65)</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Owner of producing workshop</td>
<td>4 (50)</td>
<td>veteran</td>
<td>4 (75)</td>
<td>Average merchant</td>
<td>4 (45)</td>
<td>Total</td>
<td>24 (55.5)</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

The subjects were asked questions about the problems of Tehran bazaar and the comparison of present Tehran bazaar with that of 50 years ago. It should be mentioned that each interview took 1:45 on average.

The researcher has tried as far as possible to include in the interviews middle-aged individuals (mean age 55.5) with enough experience in the bazaar so that it would be possible to compare the old and new bazaar in the study.

5.1. Similarities and differences

The respondents, who were all makes, spoke around a number of pivots. Concerning the similarities, almost all were unanimous about religiosity in the bazaar. They stated that Tehran bazaar has changed to a great extent from the point of religiosity and observing religious behavior and that there is a considerable decline observed in religious behavior.

The most important point is that the majority of the interviewees (Approximately 70%) addressed this issue directly; that is; they focused their interviews exclusively on the institution of religion in the bazaar and its effect on the social system of the bazaar and the consequences that followed the decline of religiosity in the bazaar as an economic institution. For instance, in one of the interviews, it was said:

“In comparing yesterday’s tradesmen with today’s tradesmen, I should say that the tradesmen of yesterday were pious, benevolent, and religious; they were well-ordered in business. The status of the bazaar trader was as important as that of a major general in social prestige and religious belief. They used to recite Holy Koran at their leisure time”.

In another part of the interview, the same respondent said:

“In the past, when a bazaar trader had made a bargain and received a Hansel, but his neighbor hadn’t, he would send his customer to his neighbor’s shop, but nowadays brother takes his brothers customer”.

The old bazaar from the view point of another veteran was:

“In the past, traders and merchants used to be pious.......... Now all of them have gone astray”. Then he continued: “In the past, cheating was rare, e.g., in weighing goods”.

Yet another veteran said in this regard:

“People used to be God-fearing and were possessed with proper Islamic ethics, but now they have all passed away”.

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A clergyman said:

“In the past, it was believed that saying one’s prayers in the bazaar mosque would be more rewarding. The bazaar tradesmen generally studied business ethic first, and then started their business. In this case, the context would get a holy aura to prevent those committing sins”.

Some of the interviewees (approximately 16%) did not directly compare the old and new bazaar, but they pointed to the problems that were related to the consequences of the decline in the relationship between the institution of religion and the institution of economy. In fact, they somehow referred to the changes that have taken place in the institution of religion and have led to the structural changes of the bazaar, the kind of changes which, according to Parsons, would lead to structural changes if they happened in social institutions.

Moreover, the respondents paid special attention to the functioning of this institution. Whenever they talked about piety or “religious dignity” as they put it, they immediately mentioned the consequences of these changes and the previous functions of religion in the bazaar system. For instance, one apprentice, in response to the question of what he had learned in the bazaar, said: “Sometimes you have to keep away from [moral] principles in order to protect your interests”.

Other topics on which the rest of the respondents (14%) were unanimous were related to the other problems of the bazaar, such as bankruptcy of the producing firms, which had caused recession in the bazaar; the traffic load, which a respondent (a porter) mentioned; and problems of eroded texture and un-safety of the bazaar due to explosions and fires, which some respondents mentioned.

Differences in the views expressed by the respondents were related to the roles they played in the bazaar. For instance, one of the respondents, who owns a producing workshop, said:

“I turned off 6 machines in the workshop within the first 6 months of this year and 50% of the machinery in the next 6 months …….. Other factories are going out of work ………. The factory owners’ reputation is in danger”.

Another interviewee, a bank manager, said:

“If the bazaar goes into recession, the departments affiliated with banks will also suffer recession”.

One union council member had a nostalgic interpretation of the bazaar problems. He said: “In the past, we used to be as intimate as family members, but now we have grown to be strangers”.

6. CONCLUSION AND DISCUSSION

What went before showed the similarities and differences of the research findings. In this section we will deal with the theoretical conclusion, which has also been mentioned in some of the research findings section.

One of the factors effective on the changes in Tehran bazaar that the respondents referred to is the change in the population texture of the bazaar during the last fifty years.

The change in the population texture of the bazaar is divided into three parts: 1) the entrance of the second generation of bazaar traders; 2) the entrance of retired employees into Tehran bazaar; and 3) the entrance of women buyers and sellers into Tehran bazaar.

The last factor the respondents referred to was in turn the result of modern urban transportation facilities and the emergence of Tehran subway. In this regard, one of the respondents said:
"The subway drops off people in the bazaar and has made it easy even for women to come to the bazaar". Another respondent remarked: "The bazaar is overcrowded with women; it didn’t use to be so".

One of the mechanisms that can relate this change of the population texture of Tehran bazaar within the last fifty years to the structural changes of Tehran bazaar is the change of values. Tehran bazaar is an economic environment affected by its surrounding environment. The value changes that have happened in the surrounding environment penetrate into the bazaar through the three factors mentioned above under the heading of population texture change.

It should be mentioned here that values can be considered as one of the change factors. Society is first and foremost the outcome of the social performance of a group of actors, and it is the motivations that make up the social performance, cause it to move and act in a certain direction, or prevent it from taking other routes or making other choices. Therefore, ideas affect social changes only when they turn into values that can provoke a strong motivation, or when they are presented to the people of the entire society in the form of a suggested ideological system (Rocher: 2004, p: 70). Thus, it could be said that cultural values are among the change factors as well as factors resisting against change (Kia, 2002, p: 24).

A social system faces crisis when cultural values are not synchronized; that is, when the gears do not fit in right. Such incongruities occur when the new values unsuitable to the social system (i.e. the values that are incompatible with traditional values) enter the society. However, new values in turn enter the society through the modernization of the society and by the entrance of the new technology which brings about a rapid change.

The rapid progress of technology and the changes resulting from globalization have caused social transformations. The emergence of these social transformations have affected the consistency and integrity of the cultural units and components of the society in the way that part of the culture has rapidly changed, but the other parts have not changed or have changed very slowly. This has led to the emergence of cultural retardation and backwardness, which is an example of the socio-cultural vulnerability of the society (Rafipoor, 1997).

It is noteworthy that if values are not supported cognitively, they change. But if they are supported, they will be safe from change and the attack of incongruent values (Hitlin, 2004, p: 379). One of the reasons why the traditional values were not reproduced concerns the internal factors of the bazaar, which are referred to as relational disorder in the domain of culture.

Challabi (1996) holds that the prevailing social relation in the cultural domain is of negotiative relation type. Here we will deal with moral negotiative relations. If the density, the frequency or dispersion of the performers involved in these relations is low, then the society has moral relation disorder.

Conversely, as a result of the expansion of the mentioned relations in the society, gradually the conceptual atmosphere of such moral subjects as justice, freedom, honesty, generosity, virtue, trustworthiness, etc., and a realistic understanding of them will also expand (Challabi, 1996, Pp: 163-164).

The respondents in this research have also pointed to this dimension of institutional relations, namely, the relation of religion and economy. They stated that these kinds of relations that were common in the bazaar in the form of attending religious ceremonies, public prayers, or the attendance of merchants in the certain lessons of theological centers pertinent to their economic activities, such as the ethics of business, which most of the bazaar traders of the past attended in the morning before starting their daily business, have declined nowadays.
In their opinion, this change is of importance when it also affects the bazaar functioning. Religiosity in the sense of observing the religious and moral norms in the bazaar has numerous outcomes. If one of the moral outcomes of religiosity should be honesty, then it is obvious how much the decline of honesty could be of importance in the economic transactions of the bazaar.

Another topic the interviewees dealt with was related to the social dimension of the institution of religion, which referred to the decrease in the dominance of norms in the bazaar.

This part can also be added to the first topic; i.e., since Tehran bazaar is a social-religious community, the ethical norms of the bazaar in the past depended on the institution of religion. Hence, with the decline in religiosity in Tehran bazaar, it can be expected that the dominance of ethical norms will also decline.

Norms are rooted in social values, and values are of importance to this research in that they play a key role in reducing the social costs in economic transactions. It should be noted that many researches have confirmed the relationship between values and religion; e.g., Huismams and Schwartz (1995). They found out that there is a reciprocal effect between the religiosity of individuals and their values, and that those who possess the values of certainty, self-restraint, and submission verity toward external honesty have more tendency toward religiosity (Hitlin et al., 2004, p: 375).

Religiosity in the sense of observing the religious and ethical norms in the bazaar has numerous outcomes. One such outcome is honesty. It is quite obvious how much honesty counts in the economic transactions in the bazaar.

In a word, with regard to the section dealing with the differences, it should be said that although the respondents made their points more from a technical standpoint (e.g. the workshop owners) or from an organizational perspective (e.g. the bank managers or accountants), discussing the economic rather than moral issues of the bazaar, yet all of them –whether with a technical, organizational, or social viewpoint- had one thing in common, and that was the decline in the prosperity of Tehran bazaar.
REFERENCES:


