



RELIGIOSITY, PERSONAL VALUES, AND SOCIAL CAPITAL IN THE MIDDLE EAST AND NORTH AFRICAN (MENA) COUNTRIES

ORTA DOĞU VE KUZEY AFRİKA (MENA) ÜLKELERİNDE DİNDARLIK, KİŞİSEL DEĞERLER VE SOSYAL SERMAYE

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Öz

Sosyal sermaye, din ve kişisel tutumlar üzerine yapılan çalışmaların çoğu Avrupa ülkeleri üzerine yapılmıştır. Orta Doğu ve Kuzey Afrika (MENA) bölgesinde, dinin ve kişisel tutumların sosyal sermaye üzerindeki etkisi hakkında ikna edici ampirik kanıtlar yetersizdir. Bu çalışma, 9 MENA ülkesinde dinle ilgili özellikler, bireysel bakış açıları ve sosyal sermaye arasındaki ilişkiyi analiz etmeyi amaçlamaktadır. Çalışmada, Dünya Değerler Anketi'nin 7. turundan bireysel düzeyde verileri kullanılarak prososyal sermaye sivil normlar ve sivil aktivizm üzerinden ölçülmüştür. Literatürde yaygın olduğu gibi, tek bir dindarlık ölçüsünü kullanmak yerine, MENA ülkelerinde dindarlığın önemli kavramlarını kapsayan kendini dindar olarak tanımlama ve ibadet sıklığı gibi diğer kavramlar kullanılmıştır. Dindarlığın ve kişisel tutumların sivil normlar ve aktivizm üzerindeki etkisini belirlemek için doğrusal regresyon modeli kullanılmıştır. Regresyondan elde edilen bulgulara göre, sosyal güven sivil normlarla negatif olarak ilişkilidir ve sivil aktivizmle pozitif ilişkilidir. Kendini dindar olarak tanımlama ve ibadet sıklığı değişkenleri sivil normlar üzerinde olumlu bir etkiye sahipken sivil aktivizm üzerinde negatif etkiye sahiptir. Ayrıca devletin otoritesini kabul etme ile sivil aktivizm ve sivil norm arasında negatif ilişki bulunmuştur. Bu sonuçlar, MENA ülkelerinde bireylerin genellikle düşük düzeyde sivil aktivizme sahip olduklarını, ancak yüksek düzeyde sivil norm sergilediklerini göstermektedir.

Anahtar Kelime: Sosyal Sermaye, Dindarlık, Sivil Normlar, Orta Doğu ve Kuzey Afrika, Sivil Aktivizm.

Abstract

The majority of studies on social capital, religion, and personal attitudes have been done on European countries. In the Middle East and North Africa (MENA) region, there is a lack of convincing empirical evidence on the impact of religion and personal attitudes on social capital. This study aims to analyze the relationship between characteristics related to religion, individual perspectives, and social capital in 9 MENA countries. Using individual-level data from Round 7 of the World Values Survey, we measure prosocial capital through civic norms and civic activism. Rather than following a single measure of religiosity, as is common in the literature, we consider other measures that encapsulate important notions of religiosity in MENA countries, such as self-defined religiosity and frequency of prayers. Linear regression model was used to determine the effect of religiosity and personal attitudes on civic norms and activism. According to the findings from the regression, social trust is negatively related to civic norms and positively associated with civic activism. While religiosity-related variables in terms of self-defined religiosity and frequency of prayers have a positive effect on civic norms, they have negative effects on civic activism. In addition, a negative relationship was found between accepting the authority of the state and civic activism and civic norm. These results show that individuals in MENA countries have low levels of civic activism but exhibit high levels of civic morals.

Keywords: Social Capital, Religiosity, Civic Norms, Middle East and North Africa, Civic Activism.

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Geniřletilmiř Özet

Bu alıřma, Hofstede'nin 6 Kltrel Boyutunu kullanarak MENA lkeleri baėlamında sivil aktivizm ve sivil normlar zerinde dinin ve kiřisel deėerlerin etkisini arařtırmaktadır. Bu alıřmada, Dnya Deėerler Arařtırması'nın en son 7. Round (2017-2022) verileri kullanılmakta ve Mısır, Irak, İran, Trkiye, Yemen, Libya, Fas, Lbnan ve Tunus'tan oluřan 9 MENA lkesindeki sosyal sermayeyi etkileyen faktrler incelenmektedir. 1981'de bařlatılan Dnya Deėer Anketi (WVS), bir lkenin 18 yař ve zerindeki tm yerleřik nfusunun ulusal temsili rneklerini iermektedir. Bu alıřmadaki rneklerde, 12321 katılımcıdan %49,9'u erkek ve %50,1 kadınlardan oluřmaktadır. Ankete katılanların %44,4' 30-49 yařları arasında olup %68,6'sı orta gelirli ve %42,8'i orta eėitilimidir.

alıřmada, aıklayıcı deėiřkenler  gruba ayrılmıřtır. Birinci gruptaki aıklayıcı deėiřkenler, bireyin kendini dindar olarak tanımlaması ve din trenlere katılım sıklığı ve ibadetlerle llen inan yoėunluėundan oluřmaktadır. İkinci aıklayıcı deėiřken grubu, yařama dřknlk tutumları, otoriteye ynelik tutumları, bir Őeye ait olma deėerleri ve dnyaya ynelik tutumları len kiřisel deėerler ve tutumlardan oluřmaktadır. Kiřisel tutumların her biri, eřitli WVS maddelerinden eklenerek bir indeks Őeklinde oluřturulmuř ve her bir indeksin gvenilirliği iin Cronbach's Alpha hesaplanmıřtır. rneėin, bir indeks olarak yařama dřknlk tutumları; bir bireyin yařam zerinde algılanan kontrol dzeyini, mutluluk dzeyini, finansal tatminden memnuniyet ve znel saėlık durumunu len WVS maddelerinden oluřmuřtur. Bu endekste daha yksek puanlar, daha yksek genel yařam doyumunu seviyelerini ve daha fazla zgrlė gstermektedir. İkinci kiřisel tutum seti, aidiyet ve kolektivitizmdir. Bu indeks, bir bireyin kendi toplumunun ve topluluėunun ayrılmaz bir parası olarak nasıl hissettiėini len WVS ėelerini iermektedir. Daha yksek dzeydeki kolektivist tutumlar, kiřinin topluluėuna ve grubuna daha yksek dzeyde ait olduėunu gstermektedir. nc aıklayıcı deėiřken grubunda ise  farklı indeks hesaplanmıřtır. Birinci endekste, bireylerin iindeki buldukları kıtanın ve lkenin ne derece bir parası oldukları llmřtr. Bu endekste bireylerin yařadıkları dnyaya ve evreye ait olma dzeylerini len iki WVS maddesi kullanılmıřtır. İkinci endekste, bireylerin otoriteye karřı kiřisel tutumlarını lmek iin iki WVS gesi kullanılmıřtır. Bu WVS maddelerinde bireylerin gelir eřitizliği gibi konularda hkmetin ne derece aktif olması beklenildiėi llmektedir. Otoriteye yksek deėer atfeden bireyler, otoritenin daha fazla mdahale etmesine ynelik tercihlerde bulunurlar. Son olarak, tek bir WVS maddesi kullanılarak toplumdaki genel gven dzeyi ve bireylerin bařkalarına karřı genel olarak gvenip gvenmedikleri llmřtr.

Bu alıřmada, sosyal sermayeyi tanımlayan sivil aktivizm dzeyleri ve sivil normlar olmak zere iki baėımlı deėiřken bulunmaktadır. Sivil Normlar Endeksi, WVS veri setinde ahlaki davranıř ve normlarla ilgili drt soruya dayanmaktadır. Bu sorularda bireylere, gereksiz yere devletten yardım talep etme, rřvet alma, haksız yere mal sahibi olma ve vergilerde hile yapma gibi belirli davranıřları haklı grp grmedikleri sorulmaktadır. Daha yksek indeks deėeri, daha yksek seviyede bu tr istenmeyen sosyal davranıřlara karřı ıkılmayı gstermektedir. alıřmadaki ikinci baėımlı deėiřken, katılımcılara belirli sivil aktivizm davranıřlarında bulunup bulunmadıklarını soran drt WVS sorusuyla hesaplanan Sivil Aktivizm Endeksi'dir. Bu endekste bireylere bir gruba veya kampanyaya baėıřta bulunmaları, hkmet yetkilileriyle iletiřime gemeleri, bařkalarını siyasi konularda harekete gemeye teřvik etmeleri ve bařkalarını oy kullanmaya teřvik etmeleri zerine sorular sorulmuřtur. Bu endekste daha yksek sivil aktivizm seviyesi, bir toplumda sosyal olarak aktif olma eėilimi Őeklinde tanımlanmaktadır.

Yukarıda aıklanan aıklayıcı deėiřkenlerin sivil normlar ve sivil aktivizm zerindeki etkileri, doėrusal regresyon analizi kullanılarak incelenmiřtir. Modeller, 9 MENA lkesinde aıklayıcı deėiřkenlerin sivil normlar ve sivil aktivizm zerine etkili olduklarını gstermiřtir. Buna gre sivil norm ve sivil aktivizm dzeyleri, yařama dřknlk ve kolektivist tutumlarıyla pozitif iliřkilidir. İnsanlar daha yksek dzeyde yařam dřknlėine sahip olduklarında, hayattan daha fazla memnun olduklarında ve yařamları zerinde daha fazla kontrole sahip olduklarında, daha yksek dzeyde sivil normlar gsterme eėiliminde olmakta ve iinde buldukları topluma daha fazla aidiyet hissetmektedirler. te yandan, daha yksek dzeydeki otorite tutumları, sivil normlarla olumsuz iliřki ierisindektir. Daha fazla hkmet mdahalesini tercih eden bireylerin yařadıkları toplumun lehine hareket etme olasılıkları daha dřk ve rřvet kabul etme ve mlk alma olasılıkları daha yksektir.

İnsanlar genel olarak bařkalarına gvendiklerinde sivil aktivizme daha fazla eėilim gstermektedirler. Daha dřk sivil aktivizm seviyeleri, otoritenin daha fazla var olmasına ynelik tutumlarla iliřkilidir. Bir diėer deyiře insanlar hkmetin daha fazla mdahale etmesini tercih ettiklerinde, sivil aktivizm eylemlerine daha az katılmaktadırlar. Bununla birlikte, insanlar iinde buldukları toplumun ayrılmaz bir parası gibi hissettiklerinde sosyal olarak daha aktif olmaktadır. te yandan, insanlar kıtalarına ve lkelerine daha fazla entegre olduklarını hissettiklerinde kendi toplumlarıyla daha az meřgul olmaktadır. Son olarak, kendini dindar olarak tanımlama ve ibadet sıklığı, sivil aktivizm zerinde olumsuz bir etkiye sahiptir. Buna gre ok dindar olan ve daha fazla ibadet eden insanlar daha dřk sivil aktivizm eėilimi ierisindektir. Buna zıt olarak, din hizmetlere daha sık katılan insanlar daha yksek dzeyde sivil aktivizm gstermektedir. Sonu olarak bu alıřma, WVS verilerine gre, MENA lkelerinde bireylerin genellikle dřk dzeyde sivil aktivizme fakat yksek dzeyde sivil norma sahip olduklarını gstermektedir.

INTRODUCTION

The social and political landscape of the Middle East and North Africa (MENA) has changed ever since Arab Spring. As a result, scholars have become interested in researching social capital in a number of Arab countries. Since the inclusion of Arab countries in the WVS, much scholarly attention has been given to "Arab political culture" and "Muslim political culture," and multiple studies have drawn empirical findings (Tausch, 2016). Other studies that focused on MENA or individual countries include Tausch (2018; 2018a) on Arab political culture, Grinin et al., (2018), Stenslie and Selvik (2019), Akcomak (2011), and Harris et al., (2015). There is no agreement in the literature on what sources and factors shape social capital components. More specifically, there is a paucity of literature on the potential impact of cultural and personal values, as well as religiosity, on social capital (Kaasa, 2019; Saukani and Ismail, 2019; Christoforou, 2011; Mondéjar-Jiménez et al., 2011). Studies from developed countries have dominated social capital research (Kaasa, 2015; Halman and Luijkx, 2006; Mondéjar-Jiménez et al., 2011). In other words, other geographical regions such as Africa, Asia, and the Middle East have received little attention in the literature on social capital.

Scholarly literature has portrayed the Middle East and North Africa (MENA) region as one of strong family ties and similar religious and cultural compositions. Religion plays a significant role in the Middle East as a guiding paradigm in all aspects of life. The religious makeup of the MENA region is similar. Except for Lebanon, the Muslim population share is 92.35% in Egypt, 99.20% in Turkey, 95.70% in Iraq, 99% in Morocco, 99.80% in Tunisia, 97.20% in Jordan, and 97% in Libya. Religion serves important and diverse functions, including serving as a substitute for the rule of law and political ties (Grinin et al., 2018). Unfortunately, cultural and personal values are often overlooked in studies on social capital in the MENA region despite the fact that religious beliefs and behaviors influence our economic and political behaviors and perceptions (Berggren and Bjornskov, 2011), as do societal beliefs such as tolerance for corruption and democracy (Nettler and Marquand, 2001; Gouda and Park, 2015). Furthermore, many current studies overlook civic engagement and activism as measures of social capital.

This study focuses on some insights into how religiosity and personal attitudes affect social capital in the MENA region, a relationship that has not previously been thoroughly examined. It focuses on social capital as a form of social solidarity, with civic norms and civic activism serving as proxies. The purpose of this study is to examine the impact of religiosity and personal values on citizens' levels of civic activism and civic norms in 9 MENA countries from a sociocultural perspective. The proposed model of the effects of religiosity and personal values on civic activism and civic norms was assessed using data from the WVS 7th Round (2017-2022) on 9 MENA countries. The findings suggested that respondents' personal attitudes and religiosity levels influence their civic activities and civic norms.

The structure of the paper is as follows. The following section provides a theoretical background on social capital and discusses how personal values and religiosity variables affect it. The methodology is then discussed, along with the methods and results. Finally, a conclusion is reached, as well as limitations and implications for future research.

1. THEORETICAL BACKGROUND

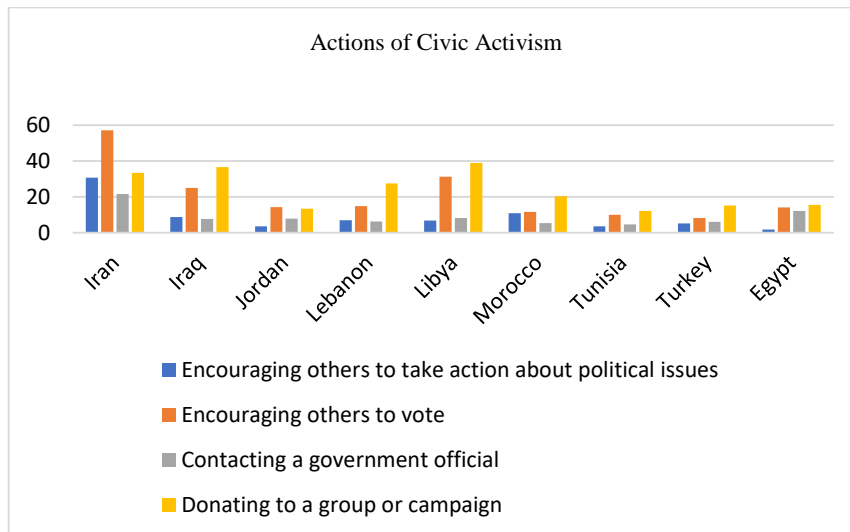
1.1. Social Capital as a Form of Solidarity

Portes (1998: 6-7) defines social capital as "the capacity of actors to secure benefits through membership in social networks or social structures." It refers to the voluntary means and processes developed within civil society to promote collective good (Thomas, 1996). Other scholars define it in terms of trust and civic cooperation norms (Fafchamps and Minten, 2002; Knack and Keefer, 1997). Such cooperative norms encourage people to support and assist one another through reciprocity norms (Ahern and Hendryx, 2003). Social capital is defined as a type of embeddedness in social networks that can be used to leverage solidarity actions such as monetary donations, organizational membership, and participation in political parties and civic groups (Nieminen et al., 2008; Stadelmann-Steffen and Freitag, 2011). As a result of its explanatory power in answering the most fundamental question in political and social research: what motivates people to act for collective goals and keeps societies together, empirical research on social capital has advanced (Achilov, 2013; Welzel et al., 2005).

The intensity of civic engagement is sometimes used to define social capital, reflecting its critical role in the formation of democratic societies. Scholars describe social capital using various proxies, such as civic engagement (Putnam, 1995), voluntary association membership (Lam, 2006), and group membership (Christoforou, 2011; Han et al., 2013). The term "civic engagement" refers to the cross-cutting ties and social relations that exist in both formal and informal volunteer groups and networks with diverse membership (Narayan, 1999). When individuals engage in reciprocal and altruistic behaviors, this type of social capital represents solidarity practice, which can be civic or political (Manatschal and Freitag, 2014). For example, Krishna and Uphoff (2002) discovered that community attributes related to participation, such as level of experience in dealing with community problems, positively affected the social capital index. Similarly, Kaasa (2013) regards civic participation as one dimension of social capital because it includes actions that address public concerns. Voting, perceptions of local services, and involvement in political parties and civic groups are examples of civic participation (Nieminen et al., 2008).

The most recent wave of the WVS includes four items on various forms of civic activism, as shown in Graph 1. Egypt ranks first in terms of contacting government officials, followed by Turkey, and Tunisia ranks last. Donations to groups or campaigns are highest in Libya, followed by Iraq, and lowest in Tunisia and Jordan. Egypt has the lowest rate (3.3%) of encouraging others to act on political issues, while Morocco has the highest (21.3%), followed by Turkey (19.1%). Libya has the highest score for encouraging others to vote (23%), followed by Iraq (18.2%), and Tunisia (7%). Turkey has the highest percentage of petitions signed (20.9%), followed by Morocco (16.1%), and Egypt has the lowest (7.5%). Morocco has the highest rate of attendance at lawful demonstrations (23.4%), while Egypt has the lowest rate (2.6%). Unofficial strikes are most common in Morocco (22.5%) and least common in Jordan (8.9%). Morocco has the highest rate of boycott participation (38.1%), while Egypt has the lowest (4.5%).

Graph 1. Actions of Civic Activism in MENA Countries. Percentage of Respondents answering as “have done” these Civic Actions.



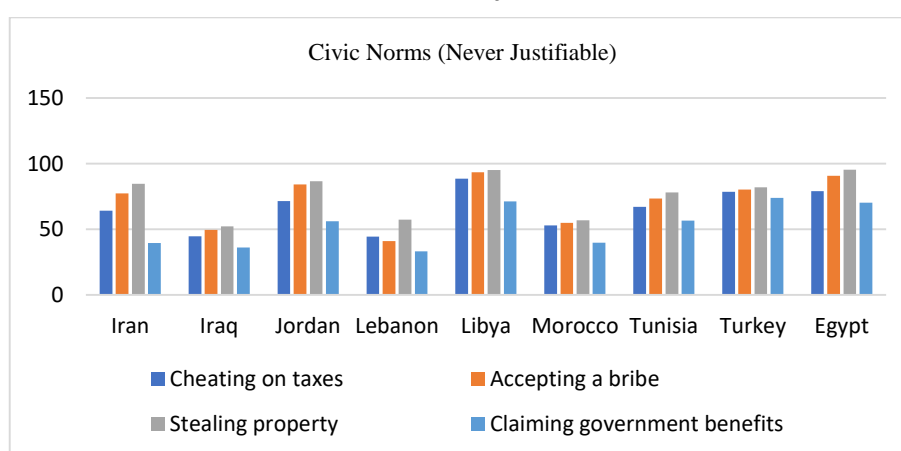
Source: own elaboration based on (WVS data, 7th Wave, 2017-2022).

Civic norms, another proxy for social capital, describe individuals' attitudes toward cooperating with anonymous individuals in the context of the prisoner dilemma (Knack and Keefer, 1997). They include norms of good citizenship, helping others, and concern for the public good over self-interest (Ghazinoory et al., 2014). Alternatively, they are what Letki (2006: 306) refers to as civic morality: "civic morality refers to the idea of civic responsibility for the public good, and implies obedience to the rules, in addition to honest and responsible behavior." It encourages citizens to maximize public rather than private gains, thus discouraging corruption and free riding. Civic norms would assist people in determining whether free-riding behaviors are justifiable in order to appear more ethical in such cases. Civic norms are one social capital proxy that acts as a constraint on individual self-interest, increasing

individuals' contribution to public goods provision (Knack and Keefer, 1997). Such items depict a social dilemma as a result of widespread selfish behavior. For example, if many people were dishonest and claimed government benefits to which they were not entitled, taxes would be raised for everyone. Similarly, if everyone avoids paying the fare, public transportation fares will rise (Irwin, 2009).

Graph 2 depicts the percentage of people who believe that certain social behaviors are never justified. The prevalence of such behaviors would reflect free-riding attitudes (H'Madoun, 2011). It reveals that 54.7% of participants oppose receiving government benefits, while only 4.4% justify doing so. Stealing property was never justified by 77.3%, while it was justified by a negligible percentage of 0.4%. Approximately 63.8% of Iranians, 44.8% of Iraqis, and 71% of Jordanians would never justify tax evasion. 86% of Libyans, 44.2% of Lebanese, 53% of Moroccans, 66.7% of Tunisians, 78.1% of Turkish, and 77.8% of Egyptians share this view. Bribery was rejected by 90.2% of Egyptian and 90.6% of Libyan respondents, respectively. Bribery was deemed unacceptable by only 41.2% and 49.5% of respondents in Lebanon and Iraq, respectively.

Graph 2. Civic Norms Indicators in 9 MENA Countries. Percentage of People Stating They Found such Behaviors “never justifiable”



Source: own elaboration based on (WVS data, 7th Wave, 2017-2022).

As shown, the majority of MENA citizens do not justify vicious behaviors such as stealing or accepting bribes. However, most citizens showed lack of civic activism actions.

1.2. How Values and Religiosity affect Social Capital?

When studying social capital, it is important to consider the factors that influence social roles and groups. First, assigned categories include race, gender, region, ethnic membership, and age (Van Oorschot and Finsveen, 2009). Second, religious beliefs are an important part of one's identity and influence one's decisions and behaviors (Ayob and Saiyed, 2020). Similarly, personal values are the goals and motivations that guide people through their lives. People behave in accordance with their value priorities. What appears important to A may be insignificant to B (Cáceres-Carrasco et al., 2020). Because altruistic behavior is expected to be repaid at an indefinite future time by an indefinite individual, generalized reciprocity contains an element of uncertainty (Whiteley, 2000; Portes, 1998).

This raises the question of how to strengthen social fabric by increasing civic norms. However, before attempting to leverage social capital's stocks, it is critical to understand what shapes it. Given that social capital can be accumulated and destroyed in the same way that physical capital can (Cáceres-Carrasco et al., 2020), the expanding literature on social capital includes a contemporary stream of research that documents how social capital is produced. Long-term sources such as culture, spirituality, and religion-related variables, as well as short-term events such as civil and political events, have been proposed by scholars such as Van Oorschot et al. (2006), Delhey and Newton (2005), Halman and Luijkx (2006), Kaasa and Parts (2008), and Saukani and Ismail (2019). First, culture is regarded as a source of social capital and a factor influencing the degree of cooperation among individuals (Acemoglu, 2008; Glaeser et al., 2004). Second, religion is a factor that influences social capital (for reviews, see Nwankwo et al., 2012; Katz-Gerro and Jaeger, 2012).

Culture is something that everyone has in common. It is a pattern of underlying ideas and other symbolic systems that is unique to a particular group or society (Mueller and Thomas, 2001). Giorgi et al. (2015) defined culture as a set of values, toolkits, or frames. It refers to individual and collective beliefs, social norms, and personal preferences that are influenced by the environment (Aghion and Howitt, 2009). Furthermore, cultural values visible in daily rituals and practices that an outside observer can notice influence behavior and judgment of how appropriate specific behavior is (Fargher et al., 2008). Individuals' values are their aspirations for how things should be done, and they represent their preferred practices (House et al., 2002). Religion is another set of values and principles that influence people's behavior and preferences. Religion and religiosity serve as a lens through which one can see oneself and others in relation to one another and the world (Ul-Haq et al., 2020; Lam, 2002).

Some researchers investigated the impact of religiosity or religious denomination on some aspects of social capital, such as individual voluntary association participation and social trust. Stromsens (2008), for example, argued that membership in religious organizations and church attendance influenced social capital formation (Berggren and Bjørnskov, 2011). Grootaert and Van Bastelaer (2002) and Krishna and Uphoff (2002) examined the role of spirituality as an indirect variable and component of social capital alongside trust, culture, norms, and social relations. Using a three-dimensional model, King and Furrow (2004) investigated how religiosity-related social ties influenced moral outcomes via common vision, trust, and social interactions. Religion was discovered to have a significant impact on social capital and an indirect impact on health (Yeary et al., 2012). Schwartz and Huisman (1995) found a link between religiosity and values like commitment and respect, as well as a de-emphasis on values like pleasure, in their study. Guagnano and Santini (2020) argued in a study of European countries that an active citizen is aware of the importance of religion, attends religious services, and has a good income level.

Values are a multifaceted concept that can be used to describe either individuals or social groups (Vauclair, 2009). Individual values and social norms can interact in a systematic way (Bernheim, 1994), implying that personal attitudes and values should be considered as influencing factors in civic participation. Mondéjar-Jiménez et al., (2011), for example, investigated the individual-level determinants of social capital components (social participation, political participation, institutional trust). They investigated how individual attitudes (education, collectiveness, work, and gender differences) influence social capital dimensions. According to Kaasa (2015), countries with similar cultural backgrounds can demonstrate comparable levels of social capital. Hofstede (1983) was the first to present a national culture framework with multiple dimensions, as well as country indices to measure these dimensions. These cultural dimensions are individualism versus collectivism, power distance index, masculinity versus femininity, long-time versus short-time orientation, indulgence versus restraint, and uncertainty avoidance.

Individualism versus Collectivism (IDV). Individualism describes the degree to which people care for themselves rather than being integrated and loyal to a consistent group harmony (Gorodnichenko and Ronald, 2011). Collectivism, on the other hand, describes the extent to which individuals perceive themselves as members of groups and tightly knit communities (Triandis and Gelfand, 2012). The degree to which less powerful members of institutions (family, society) accept unequal power distribution is measured by *Power Distance versus Closeness*. Higher values indicate a greater tolerance for inequity in power distribution (Gorodnichenko and Ronald, 2011). *Restraint versus Indulgence*. Indulgence refers to the degree to which societies tolerate free gratification of basic human motives related to having fun and enjoying life (Warter and Warter, 2020; Lu et al., 2021), whereas restraint reflects "a conviction that such gratification needs to be curbed and regulated" (Hofstede et al., 2010). People in indulgent societies believe they can improve their lives and pursue their dreams because of their perception of personal self-control (Graafland and Jong, 2021). *Masculinity versus Femininity (MAS)* refers to how people deal with motivation—whether they prefer competition or consensus (Warter and Warter, 2020). The masculinity index describes men's dominance over women and the extent to which masculine values such as assertiveness and competitiveness, success, and achievement are dominant. Femininity values, on the other hand, emphasize concern for others, tolerance, modesty, quality of life, solidarity, and cooperation (Beugelsdijk and Welzel, 2018; Gorodnichenko and Ronald, 2011; Berghe et al., 2020). *Uncertainty Avoidance vs. Acceptance (UA)* assesses people's tolerance for

uncertainty and the extent to which they are uncomfortable in tense situations. This dimension reflects how well people can improvise and cope in unexpected situations (Acceptance) or how strongly they prefer to work in well-organized and predictable environments (Avoidance). Finally, *Long-Term Orientation (LTO) vs. Short-Term Orientation (STO)* describes the time horizon displayed by individuals in a society. Individuals in long-term-oriented countries are modest, pragmatic, and thrifty. Individuals in short-term oriented societies, on the other hand, are more religious and nationalistic, with a stronger emphasis on consistency and principles (Beugelsdijk and Welzel, 2018).

1.3. A Sociocultural Overview on the MENA Region

The majority of MENA countries are societies that value family ties, religion, national pride, power distance, work, rigid gender roles, security, and distrust. Their sociocultural outlook reveals the region to be conservative and patriarchal (Afiouni, 2014; Ostapenko, 2015). For example, a WVS question in the 7th Round asked a total of 12322 respondents in 9 MENA countries (Egypt, Iraq, Jordan, Tunisia, Iran, Morocco, Libya, Turkey, and Lebanon) how important religion was in their lives. Religion was very important to approximately 81% of total respondents, and religion was important to 14.3%. Table 1 displays country scores for Hofstede's previously discussed cultural dimensions. The 7th Round of WVS data show that Libyans, Jordanians, and Egyptians are more religiously devoted; 42%, 39.1%, and 34.7%, respectively, and reported attending religious services more than once a week. In contrast, only 9% of Turks, 9.6% of Iranians, 11.6% of Lebanese, and 19.9% of Iraqis said they went to religious services more than once a week, or once a month, respectively. Countries with moderate levels of religious service attendance included Morocco, Iraq, and Tunisia. Additionally, religious services were reported to be attended more than once a week by 33.7% of Moroccans, 29.8% of Tunisians, and 19.9% of Iraqis. In terms of frequency of prayer, 94.8% of Libyans and 80% of Egyptians reported praying several times per day. The majority of Jordanians (79.2%), Iraqis (76.7%), and Tunisians (72.6%) reported praying several times per day, while more than half of Moroccans (69.6%) and Iranians (63.8%) did not. Lebanon and Turkey had the lowest percentages of religiosity in terms of prayer frequency, at 47.2% and 43.1%, respectively.

Table 1 displays the rankings of 9 MENA countries on Hofstede's cultural dimensions. The MENA region is known for having high power distance cultures in which people expect authorities to act rather than actively participate in social processes. These societies place a premium on rules (Kaasa, 2019; Kaasa, 2015). Given that MENA countries are characterized as high-power distance societies, authorities are expected to play a larger role, with qualities such as respect for authority and obedience expected. Except for Iran (58) and Turkey (66), all of the current MENA countries have high PDI scores. People accept the hierarchical order in high power distance societies; everyone has a place. High uncertainty avoidance reflects an intolerance for unconventional behavior and risk. Iraq and Turkey have the highest UAI scores (85), followed by Egypt (80), with Lebanon and Iran scoring 50 and 55, respectively.

Social interaction and belonging to a larger group are essential for meeting social needs and improving individuals' living conditions through the accumulation of social capital (Hanifan, 1916). As Table 1 shows, MENA countries score high as collectivist societies. People in collectivist societies connect through cohesive and strong groups. People are then assumed to be loyal to such organizations (Kaasa, 2010). In collectivist countries, group loyalty is exchanged for group support, resulting in a passive mentality that prevents participation (Kaasa, 2019). The WVS Round 7 includes questions that capture how close the respondents felt to their own village, town, or city. Approximately 74% of respondents in 9 MENA countries said they felt very close. Another question asked how close respondents felt to their district and region; 68% felt very close. Another WVS item inquired about respondents' level of closeness to their home country. 74.3 % of respondents said they felt very close. Three WVS items captured feelings of belonging to one's surroundings, ranging from the village to the country. Additionally, besides WVS items about belonging to one's own society, two WVS items represented respondents' feelings of closeness to the world and their continent. Questions asked the respondents about how close they were to their continent and to the world. About 39.9% of all respondents said they felt connected to their continent, and 37.1% said they felt connected to the world.

Table 1. Country scores under Hofstede's Dimensions

Country/dimension	Iran	Iraq	Jordan	Lebanon	Libya	Morocco	Tunisia	Turkey	Egypt
PDI	58	95	70	75	80	70	70	66	70
IND	41	30	30	40	38	46	40	37	25
MASC	43	70	45	65	52	53	40	45	45
UAI	59	85	65	50	68	68	75	85	80
LTO	14	25	16	14	23	14	-	46	7
IVR	40	17	43	25	34	25	-	49	4

Source: Hofstede Insights (April 2022)

Although the Iraqi people made optimistic predictions about democracy and freedom following Saddam Hussein's fall, the economic, political, and social crises shattered that dream and increased Iraqis' pessimism and skepticism. Egypt has a turbulent history, but Egyptians are known for their good nature and resilience. They are frequently described as amusing, cheerful, and welcoming. In Egypt, on the other hand, fatalism is widely practiced as a survival strategy. Egyptians accept problems because it is simply Allah's Will, but they do not deny that such an attitude reflects a careless nature and a lack of optimism about the future. For example, a WVS item asked respondents in 9 MENA countries to rate their level of happiness on a 4-point Likert scale: "1=not at all happy, 2=not very happy, 3=quite happy, 4=very happy." Only 19.4% said they were "very happy," while 61% said they were "quite happy." Another WVS item asked respondents about their perceived level of freedom and control over their lives. The answers ranged from "1=nothing at all" to "10=a lot." Another WVS item asked respondents to rate their level of life satisfaction on a 10-point scale (1 completely dissatisfied, 10 completely satisfied). The mean for 9 countries was 6.32, with 11.5% completely satisfied and 4.2% completely dissatisfied. Libyans were the most satisfied with their lives, while Lebanese were the least satisfied; 39.8% and 2.1%, respectively. 5.6% of the total respondents were satisfied, while 7.1% were dissatisfied. A WVS item asked respondents to rate their subjective state of health on a 4-point scale, with 4 indicating "very good" and 1 indicating "very poor." Approximately 45.7% and 22.1% of total respondents said they were good or very good.

A high MASC score indicates a society with low participation in voluntary activities, a male-dominated society, and distinct gender-based social roles (Almutairi et al., 2021; Kaasa, 2015). Countries with low MASC scores, such as Lebanon and Turkey, indicate a high prevalence of values such as sympathy, cooperation, tolerance, and solidarity. For example, Kaasa (2019) that is scoring high on UAI was negatively related to civic participation in a European context. Similarly, high scores on MAS were related to low participation in voluntary activities (Kaasa, 2015). Individuals in short-term oriented countries maintain virtues related to both the past and the present, such as respect for tradition, fulfillment of social obligations, and face protection. According to Hofstede, African, Muslim, and Latin American countries are short-term oriented, whereas East Asian countries are primarily long-term oriented (Guo et al., 2018). According to Hofstede, Muslim and Arab states fall under the restraint dimension. Restraint cultures are characterized by cynicism, a low value placed on leisure, and pessimism.

2. METHOD

Some researchers studied social capital in the MENA region. For example, Harris et al. (2015) found that social capital influenced management practices in Jordan by using shared norms, trust, and networking behavior as social capital proxies. Younsi and Chakroun (2016) investigated social capital and health in the Middle East and North Africa and discovered bidirectional causality from social capital to health and vice versa. Kasmaoui et al. (2018) used trust as a social capital proxy and discovered that it has a considerable influence on growth in the MENA region, yet it is weaker in comparison to the rest of the world. Jamal and Tessler (2008) studied Muslim politics using individual-level survey data on Muslim attitudes in the Arab world. Similarly, Achilov (2013) studied civil society in the Muslim world context and its relation to democratization in Muslim politics by measuring individual-level data on Muslim attitudes.

Based on previous discussions, the purpose of this study is to fill a gap in the literature by investigating the extent to which prosocial norms and social activism in the MENA region are influenced by factors such as religiosity, authority attitudes, degree of life indulgence, degree of closeness to a collective society, and closeness to the world attitudes. Unlike previous studies that focused solely on a single measure of religiosity or a single set of attitudes, this study attempted to capture various dimensions of religiosity, personal values, and civic norms actions in the MENA region, within a model that considered the region's social and cultural background.

Value surveys, such as the World Value Survey, use an equivalent scale to ask the same questions about values that are personally important to the respondent. Such values represent personal rather than cultural values. Cultural values can be measured at the individual level using the concept of morality. Vauclair (2009) proposes methods for operationalizing moral values, whether they are individual or social group moral values. These distinctions served as the foundation for empirical research into cultural values in society and their impact on behavioral traits. Individual cultural values can be measured by categorizing them in a value taxonomy. This method assesses values using importance ratings, reflecting what individuals or social groups want. The debate centers on the nature of shared cultural values and their reflection on what one "ought" to value or strive for as a life goal (Vauclair, 2009).

Averaging the responses of individual respondents can reveal the dominant value emphasis in society. Individual values are shaped in part by a shared culture and in part by unique individual experiences. Individual variations around this average stem from individual experiences, and this average represents a proxy for the common parts of the values (culture) (Jong, 2009). However, it is perplexing how culture is measured at the cultural level to reflect what is socially shared and acceptable, but it cannot be applied to individuals whose responses were aggregated in the first place (Vauclair, 2009). Differences arise as a result of statistically disparate information applied at the individual and national levels. When whole nations are analyzed, patterns reflected in Hofstede's dimensions are observed. Any attempt to apply Hofstede's model to individuals or to combine two distinct analysis levels by applying country-level dimensions to individuals is referred to as an "ecological fallacy¹."

To overcome the problem of non-normal distribution in WVS categorical data, the WVS data were normalized using the Min-Max Method on a 0-1 scale. Many researchers have used normalization as a common strategy (for review, see Cammett et al., 2020; Mattes and Sloane, 2015; Acemoglu, 2008; and Fargher et al., 2008). Furthermore, normalization allows for equal weights and proper variable analysis. To derive personal attitudes and values, factor analysis through principal component analysis (PCA) was used as a method of data reduction due to the exploratory nature of the research. The Kaiser-Meyer-Olkin (KMO) is found to be 0.745. Bartlett's test of sphericity shows that χ^2 is (41755.199) significant at .000. The factor analysis reveals 4 factors to be retained as the eigenvalues over 1. These 4 factors account for 61% of the total variance. These 4 factors represent personal attitudes and are constructed as summated indices. (1) One factor that captures individuals' perceptions on issues related to their degree of control over life, life satisfaction, subjective health, and their levels of freedom. (2) A factor capturing the perceptions on one's belongingness to the collective society. (3) One factor describes the degree to which respondents feel as part of the collective world and continent they live in. (4) A final factor includes WVS items that capture perceptions on individuals' views on authority intervention in issues such as income inequality (See Appendix). Table 2 provides an overview of the normalized variables included in the empirical analyses.

Table 2. Descriptive Statistics for Variables

	Min	Max	Mean	Std. D
Belief Intensity	0	1	.92	.18
Frequency of attending religious services	0	1	.25	.26
Frequency of Pray	0	1	.91	.26
Self-religiosity	0	1	.85	.24
Social Trust	0	1	.23	.42
Belongingness Attitudes	0	1	.82	.16

¹ Ecological fallacy refers to the error of making inferences about individuals from aggregate-level data.

Democracy Attitudes	0	1	.70	.21
Life Control Attitudes	0	1	.64	.16
Authority Attitudes	0	1	.56	.26
World Attitudes	0	1	.64	.32
Civic Activism	0	1	.28	.27
Civic Norms	0	1	.78	.29

Notes: Civic norms, civic activism, belongingness attitudes, democracy attitudes, life control attitudes, authority attitudes, and world attitudes are created as summated indices.

2.1. Sample and Data Source

We use WVS Round 7 on 9 MENA countries to develop a set of personal attitudes at the individual level rather than the cultural level. Individual values are defined as motivational goals and guiding standards for people's lives when measured at the individual level. The total sample size is 12321 people from nine MENA countries, including Egypt, Iran, Turkey, Tunisia, Iraq, Jordan, Lebanon, Morocco, and Libya. Participants' ages ranged from 30-49 years old; 26.4% were aged 50 and (over or older) . Participants' educational levels included 31.1% with a middle education, 42.8% with a lower education, and 26.1% with a higher education. It had 49.9% female and 50.1% male respondents. Due to missing data, the listwise option is used in linear regressions.

2.2. Operationalization of Variables

There is still no agreement on a standardized or single measure of social capital since it is a multidimensional concept. Moreover, due to the lack of long-standing cross-country surveys to measure social capital, contemporary research has used different proxies for social capital (Nieminen et al., 2008; Saukani and Ismail, 2019).

Individual-level data, rather than aggregated cultural values, are used to measure individual values and attitudes in this study. We chose the most common indicators suggested in the literature based on prior research. Measurement scales adapted from other studies were modified to fit the MENA context where necessary. The majority of previous research has concentrated on regions other than MENA. However, there are widely accepted proxies for social capital. Through the use of additive scales, proxy measures have been developed. Following the operational definition and subsequent review of these proxies, related ones were chosen. Based on such discussions of sociocultural context and cultural values, we use individual-level data from the WVS, 7th Round to determine personal attitudes and values in MENA countries.

2.2.1. Explanatory Variables

The WVS contains a diverse set of questions that can be used to develop more general and up-to-date measures for various concepts and variables. The majority of questions concern individuals' attitudes toward life, family, society, the environment, gender roles; democracy and government; health, religion, spirituality, and moral standards (Gorodnichenko and Ronald, 2011). As a result, besides religiosity, we develop sets of individual attitudes and values related to phenomena such as happiness and satisfaction in life, acceptance of unequal power distribution, and feelings of belongingness to society and the world one lives in.

Social Trust. Social trust is the generalized trust in strangers or the proclivity to cooperate in large numbers in a prisoner-dilemma context (Knack, 2002; Jong, 2009). A WVS question "Generally speaking, would you say that most people can be trusted or that you need to be very careful in dealing with people?" has been used by numerous studies as a proxy for generalized/social trust (Sulemana and Issifu, 2015; Woolcock and Narayan, 2000; Kasmaoui et al., 2018; Knack and Keefer, 1997; Sedeh et al., 2021; Knack, 2002; Jong, 2009; Berggren and Bjornskov, 2011). The corresponding response "most people can be trusted" indicates the general level of trust in society. The item is encoded as a binary scale (1= most people can be trusted; 2= need to be very careful). It was recorded on a dichotomous scale "1=most people can be trusted," and "0=need to be very careful." Citizens in MENA countries have low levels of social trust. Only 12.8% of all respondents said most people can be trusted, while 87.2 percent said one should be cautious. Country averages ranged from 7.4% in Egypt to 14.8% in Iran, indicating that most people can be trusted.

Religiosity. Because there is no shared theoretical foundation, measuring religiosity is a challenging task. The values dimension of religiosity is represented by people's attitudes and moral rules and behaviors as a result of their religiosity (Remizova et al., 2022). Religious communities and religious services represent regular interactions and deep links among people (Katz-Gerro and Jaeger, 2012), so we measure religiosity using three WVS items. Two items were used to assess religious intensity: (a) frequency of attending religious services and (b) frequency of praying. The third item is self-defined religiosity, which inquired as to how respondents defined themselves as religious or non-religious. Another WVS item asked the respondents about the extent to which religion was important in their lives. We refer to this variable as 'intensity of belief' since it measures how individuals view religion as very important in their lives.

The following four independent variables were derived through factor analysis, as explained previously.

Life Control Attitudes (Values). WVS includes questions that assess an individual's attitude toward his or her perceived indulgence in life. These items include questions about one's level of satisfaction with one's life, feeling of happiness, satisfaction with one's financial situation, freedom of choice and control, and state of health. Individuals who do not believe they have control over or can change their lives may be unmotivated to participate in collective actions. This could also be the result of a belief in destiny and the inability to change the past or the future. Libyans, Jordanians, and Iranians had the greatest sense of control over their lives, while Lebanon and Egypt had the least. Another WVS item asked respondents to rate their level of life satisfaction on a 10-point scale (1 completely dissatisfied, 10 completely satisfied). A WVS item asked respondents to state their subjective state of health if it was good or poor. A summated score is based on these 5 items. The higher levels of life control values on this index reveal that individuals have attitudes that value more freedom, satisfaction with life, financial satisfaction, and better subjective health. On the other hand, a lower score means more restraint and less enjoyment in life. If individuals do not believe they can control or change their life, they might not be motivated to involve in collective actions. This might also be an outcome of belief in destiny and that one cannot change the present or the future. Cronbach Alpha for the scale is .740.

Collectivism and Belongingness Values/Attitudes. Three WVS items captured feelings of belonging to one's surroundings, ranging from the village to the country. The degree to which individuals feel autonomous or embedded in their groups is referred to as collectivism. We compute a three-item index based on three WVS items that refer to feelings of belonging to one's home: "How close to home do you feel: your village, town, or city?" "I consider myself to be a member of my local community." "I consider myself to be a citizen of the [country] nation." The Cronbach Alpha coefficient is .846.

Attitudes toward the World. In addition to WVS items about belonging to one's society, two WVS items represented respondents' feelings of closeness to the world and their continent. Questions asked the respondents about how close they were to their continent and the world. About 39.9% of all respondents said they felt connected to their continent, and 37.1% said they felt connected to the world. Items were combined to form a scale, yielding a Cronbach's Alpha of .816.

Attitudes toward Authority. Two WVS items captured attitudes toward authority acceptance and expectations (income equality vs. greater income disparities, private versus public state ownership of businesses). The first question asked respondents to express their thoughts on income inequality and whether they prefer more equal incomes or approve of larger income differences. The second question asked respondents about their preferences for private versus public ownership of businesses.

2.2.2. Dependent Variables

Trustworthiness/ Civic Norms. Knack and Keefer (1997) developed a trustworthiness index based on WVS items to assess the strength of civic cooperation norms. Civic norms of cooperation are measured using four items on social engagement and social ethics in which respondents indicate whether they find such behaviors justifiable (a) "claiming government benefits to which you are not entitled," (b) "stealing property," (c) "cheating on taxes," and (d) "someone accepting a bribe in the course of their duties." Four items were added together and averaged to create an index. Cronbach Alpha for the four-item scale is .915.

Social/Civic Activism. WVS's most recent wave includes new questions about social activism, such as donating to a group or campaign, contacting a government official, encouraging others to act on political issues, and encouraging others to vote. An index was created by adding and averaging four items. Cronbach's Alpha is equal to .759.

2.3. Empirical Analysis

The linear regression model served as the foundation of our investigation. Personal values measured at the individual level, as well as religiosity variables, were important independent variables. Cronbach's Alpha was calculated for variables representing personal values that were made up of different indicators that formed an index.

The use of linear regression allows for the measurement and estimation of the impact of major predictors on civic activism and civic norms. Our main independent variables are personal values related to life control, authority attitudes, attitudes toward the world, and collectivism attitudes, religiosity-variables (frequency of religious service attendance, frequency of praying, self-defined religiosity), and social trust. The regression coefficients for predictors and dependent variables are listed in Table 3.

2.3.1. Effects of Religiosity and Personal Attitudes on Civic Norms

$$\text{Civnorms} = \beta_0 + \beta_1\text{servicattend} + \beta_2\text{pray} + \beta_3\text{religiosity} + \beta_4\text{Beliefint} + \beta_5\text{soctrust} + \beta_6\text{collectivism} + \beta_7\text{Lifecontrol} + \beta_8\text{worldattit} + \beta_9\text{authattitu} + \varepsilon$$

Table 3 shows that the regression model significantly predicts civic norms as a dependent variable, with (F (1444.228; 9); $p = 000^*$), as shown by ANOVA results in Table 3. The Durbin-Watson stat is 1.421.

Table 3. ANOVA Results for Regression Predicting Civic Norms

	Sum of Squares	DoF	Mean Square	F	Sig.
Regression	544.807	9	60.534	1444.228	.000*
Residual	441.234	10527	.042		
Total	986.041	10536			
Durbin-Watson stat	1.421				

Notes: Degrees of freedom is denoted by DoF. Significance level is 5%

In Table 4, regression results are displayed. VIF values show that multicollinearity was not a concern, since VIF¹ values are below threshold level (VIF < 5).

Table 4. Regression Model Predicting Civic Norms in MENA Countries (N=10537)

Predictors	B ²	Std (SE B)	β	t-values	Sig.	CI-Lower Bound	CI-Upper Bound	VIF
(Constant)	.704	.015		46.282	.000*	.674	.772	
Frequency of attending religious services	-.669	.010	-.590	-70.356	.000*	-.688	-.649	1.656
Frequency of Pray	.116	.008	.099	13.837	.000*	.100	.139	1.209
Self-Religiosity	.049	.009	.039	5.333	.000*	.031	.080	1.227
Social trust	-.171	.006	-.241	-29.555	.000*	-.183	-.160	1.558
Belief Intensity	.083	.012	.051	7.186	.000*	.060	.106	1.198
Collectivism Attitudes	.127	.014	.068	9.010	.000*	.099	.155	1.340
Life Control Attitudes	.035	.013	.018	2.710	.007	.010	.060	1.047
World Attitudes	-.073	.007	-.076	-10.530	.000*	-.087	-.059	1.241
Authority Attitudes	-.021	.008	-.018	-2.644	.008	-.036	-.005	1.038

¹ Variation Inflation Factors (VIF) have a threshold level (VIF < 5).

² Since variables are measured on different scales, unstandardized regression coefficients are reported as well.

Notes: *B* denotes unstandardized regression coefficients; the standard error for *B* is denoted by *SE B*. β denotes standardized Beta. T-values are expressed and $*p < 0.05$, where * denotes a significant level at 5%. Confidence Intervals are denoted for *B* at 95.0 % Confidence Intervals.

The regression results in Table 4 show that civic norms are significantly impacted by social trust. Lower social trust is associated with higher levels of civic norms. Prayer frequency and self-defined religiosity are both positively and significantly related to civic norms. The more frequently people pray and identify as religious, the higher their level of civic norms. Every increase in praying frequency increased the level of civic norms by .116. Self-described religiosity has a positive impact on civic norms. On the other hand, the frequency with which religious services are attended has a significant negative impact on the extent to which people reject such behaviors as bribery and stealing property. Religion may foster trust through special ingroup networks inside such religious services. These results are similar to what Delhey and Newton (2005) stated in their research which is, religious diversity may have a negative impact on social integration and, consequently, social capital formation.

Civic norms fall by .669 for every unit increase in religious service attendance. Civic norms are related to attitudes toward life control positively. People who have more control over their lives, are more financially satisfied, and have better subjective health tend to behave more ethically in terms of civic norms. Individuals who favor unequal power and those who prefer authorities to take an active role in their surroundings are more likely to engage in unethical behavior such as tax evasion and bribery.

In terms of collectivist attitudes, the more people feel connected to their society and environment, the more likely they are to reject free-riding behaviors like bribery and property theft. It can be argued that when people feel like they are a part of their society and community, they will act ethically. On the other hand, there is a negative relationship between one's attitudes towards the world and civic norms in one's world. This is represented through a statistically significant relationship between world attitudes and civic norms. When people feel isolated from the rest of the world and continent, they behave less ethically and are less likely to reject the four behaviors listed above. Life control attitudes have an insignificant positive effect on civic norms. The level of civic norms exhibited by citizens is influenced by their level of happiness or perceived control over their life. Attitudes toward authority have an influence on the level of civic norms. The more favorable attitude people hold toward authority figures, the lower is civic norms' level they exhibit.

According to the coefficient of determination (R^2), the current model accounts for approximately 55% of the variation in civic norms across 9 MENA countries. The results show that the current model has sizeable explanatory power.

2.3.2. Effects of Religiosity and Personal Attitudes on Civic Activism

Second, we regress our predictors to investigate their impact on civic activism in MENA countries. Results are shown in Table 5. Personal values and religiosity had a statistically significant effect on civic activism ($F(201.318; 9; p = .000^*)$). The Durbin-Watson stat is 1.607.

Table 5. ANOVA Results for Regression Predicting Civic Activism

	Sum of Squares	DoF	Mean Square	F	Sig.
Regression	119.219	9	13.247	201.318	.000*
Residual	673.321	10233	.066		
Total	792.540	10242			
Durbin-Watson stat	1.607				

Notes: Degrees of freedom is denoted by DoF. Significance level is 5%

$$Civicactivism = \beta_0 + \beta_1servicattend + \beta_2pray + \beta_3religiosity + \beta_4Beliefint + \beta_5soctrust + \beta_6collectivism + \beta_7fLifecontrol + \beta_8worldattit + \beta_9authattitu + \epsilon$$

Table 6 shows the findings from the regression, with civic activism as the dependent variable. VIF values show that multicollinearity was not a concern, since VIF values are below 5.

Table 6. Regression Model Predicting Civic Activism in MENA Countries (N=10243)

Predictors	B ¹	Std (SE B)	β	t-values	Sig.	CI-Lower Bound	CI-Upper Bound	VIF
(Constant)	.235	.019		12.065	.000*	.196	.273	
Frequency of attending religious services	.323	.012	.316	26.765	.000*	.299	.346	1.678
Frequency of Pray	-.020	.011	-.018	-1.826	.068	-.041	.001	1.211
Self-Religiosity	-.039	.012	-.034	-3.344	.001*	-.062	-.016	1.229
Social trust	.062	.007	.096	8.424	.000*	.048	.077	1.581
Belief Intensity	-.034	.015	-.023	-2.282	.022	-.063	-.005	1.208
Collectivism Attitudes	-.012	.018	-.007	-.659	.510	-.047	.024	1.331
Life Control Attitudes	.118	.016	.067	7.236	.000*	.086	.150	1.046
World Attitudes	-.048	.009	-.055	-5.428	.000*	-.065	-.031	1.229
Authority Attitudes	-.004	.010	-.004	-.452	.651	-.024	.015	1.039

Notes: *B* denotes unstandardized regression coefficients; the standard error for *B* is denoted by *SE B*. β denotes standardized Beta. T-values are expressed and * $p < 0.05$, where * denotes a significant level at 5%. Confidence Intervals are denoted for *B* at 95.0 % Confidence Intervals.

Six of the nine explanatory variables have a significant impact on civic activism in MENA countries according to the findings. Civic activism is influenced positively by social trust. Higher levels of social trust are linked to a greater proclivity to be an active citizen. To put it another way, when social trust is high, social activism or collective action increases. Similarly, civic engagement, political participation, and cooperation are all positively related to social trust according to Irwin (2009).

Higher levels of life satisfaction and happiness are linked to higher levels of civic activism. People are more socially active when they are content with their lives. This could be explained by a personal belief that they have control over their surroundings. These findings are not surprising, as people who are satisfied and happy with their lives are more likely to engage in prosocial behavior. Individuals who participate, cooperate, and join networks are found in collectivist societies according to Kaasa (2015) and Halman and Luijckx (2006).

Unsurprisingly, in the high power-distance Middle East and North Africa, higher positive attitudes toward authority are associated with lower civic activism. People are less likely to participate in civic activities when they expect the government to intervene and solve their problems. People who are more isolated and have a low sense of belonging to their society, country, and the world are more likely to engage in civic activism. This could be due to their desire to strengthen their bonds with their societies and the world around them. People's attitudes toward authority have an insignificant negative effect on levels of civic activism.

Finally, two religiosity-related variables, self-defined religiosity and frequency of prayer, have a negative impact on civic activism. However, frequency of prayers does not have a statistically significant effect on civic activism. People who are highly religious and pray frequently appear to have a lower proclivity for civic activism actions. People who attend religious services, on the other hand, tend to be more civically active. This is similar to the argument by Berggren and Bjørnskov (2011) that have commands and ethical teachings that stimulate altruistic and social behaviors. However, it should be noted that the mixed effect for religiosity might be explained by other personal factors not considered in this study. Finally, intensity of belief has a significant negative effect on civic activism. The higher importance people place on religion, the lower their civic activism is.

The coefficient of determination (R^2) indicates that the current model accounts for approximately 15% of the variance in civic activism. The correlation coefficients among predictor variables are shown in Table 7. The lack of explanatory power in the current model implies that more countries and variables that explain civic activism actions should be included in future research. The lower explanatory power of the model can be traced back to the high number of missing values in the WVS data and small number

¹ Since variables are measured on different scales, unstandardized regression coefficients are reported as well.

of countries. Additionally, levels of civic actions can be explained by other variables that were not included in the model such as gender, age, education level, and social class. It might be the case that civic activism among individuals in MENA region is influenced by individuals more than religiosity. Therefore, it is recommended that future research include more variables that might influence the tendency toward activism actions. For example, individual-level socioeconomic factors and macro-level factors such as GDP, poverty levels, and income inequality.

Table 7. Correlation Coefficients among Variables

	Democracy attitudes c	Life control attitudes	Authority attitudes	Economic attitudes	General trust	Belief intensity	Religious services	Pray	Self-religiosity	World attitudes
Belongingness attitudes	.084**	.135**	.086**	-.126**	-.004	.264**	.035**	.133**	.156**	.436**
Democracy attitudes		.065**	.050**	-.020*	.057**	.028**	.069**	.023**	.019*	-.050**
Life control attitudes			.167**	-.027**	.007	.053**	.026**	.061**	.037**	.062**
Authority attitudes				-.031**	.039**	.101**	.068**	.058**	.051**	.065**
Economic attitudes					-.048**	-.062**	-.083**	-.022**	.016*	-.130**
General trust						-.060**	.479**	-.002	.053**	-.026**
Belief intensity							.022**	.222**	.269**	.165**
Religious Services								.215**	.212**	-.049**
Pray									.346**	.020*
Self-religiosity										.071**

Notes: The table denotes correlation coefficients at both * $p < 0.05$ ** $p < 0.01$. Note: Significance level used in the regressions is 5%

CONCLUSION

Studies on the relationship between religion and social capital have been conducted at both the national (Delhey and Newton, 2005; Berggren and Bjornskov, 2011) and individual levels, with macro-level contextual variables incorporated (Van Oorschot and Arts, 2005; Lam, 2006). Due to data limitations and a few countries, individual-level data were used in the current study. As a result, the discussion presented here is limited to the MENA countries covered in the study. This is one of the first studies to look at the relationship between personal values, religiosity, and social capital in 9 MENA countries. Despite the heterogeneity of MENA countries, religiosity in 9 Muslim-majority countries was expected to have a significant impact on prosocial capital, as measured by civic trustworthiness and civic engagement.

We considered other measures that we believe capture important concepts of religiosity in the MENA region, such as intensity of belief, which is measured by the frequency with which individuals pray and attend religious services. This research provided a sociocultural overview of MENA countries to help us better understand social capital. Individual incentives, behavior, and preferences are shaped by culture, which is an important aspect of broadly defined institutions. We discussed MENA countries using Hofstede's cultural framework. As a result, in addition to religiosity variables, we used WVS items to create a set of personal values and examined their impact on civic norms and civic activism.

Using data from the WVS, 7th round, this study contributed to the limited literature on religiosity, values, and social capital in the MENA region, as well as how personal attitudes and religiosity-related variables influence civic norms. The study used different predictors to investigate the state of civic norms and ethical behavior. Generalized trust reflects adherence to civic participation values and citizenship norms, as it is the type of trust between two random citizens that matters for a country's economic performance. Unfortunately, citizens in MENA countries demonstrated a lack of social trust. Our findings revealed that when social trust is high, civic activism rises while civic norms fall. This

implies that when people lack trust in their surroundings, they are more likely to engage in social activities.

The 7th Round of WVS data in 9 countries revealed a few intriguing insights about personal values and social capital in the Middle East and North Africa, which could be investigated further. To begin with, citizens in the MENA region expect authorities to play a more active role, with qualities such as respect for authority and obedience expected. This was demonstrated by the majority of respondents who agreed that it was the role of the government to address income inequality. This can be attributed to the prevalence of inactive civic life in MENA countries, which would otherwise allow individuals to associate freely without regard to state regulations. This highlights the need for additional research to investigate these phenomena separately. However, we should not forget that social capital, which refers to social interaction and connectedness among people acting for solidarity and reciprocity, is influenced by civil society rather than the government system. For example, the government wields coercive power in order to achieve collective action, provide public goods, and manage common pool sources. It can reduce opportunism and knowledge externalities through education and legislation. As a result, governments are more efficient in societies where citizens are more engaged (Sulemana and Issifu, 2015).

This discussion leads to a discussion of the current study's limitations. To begin with, future research should include macro-level contextual variables such as national wealth, social and political stability, and income inequality. Besides individual characteristics, the national culture should be considered as a major factor shaping social capital patterns, as previously discussed. Second, the lack of data limited the study's scope to only nine MENA countries. Additionally, other country-level factors, aside from national culture, are expected to influence social capital. For example, education and life expectancy levels, urbanization levels, and economic security all have an impact on social life (Dimitrova et al., 2016). Given the political and social environment that has emerged in the aftermath of the Arab Spring, responses may not reflect freedom of expression. As a result of their personal fear of negative outcomes, respondents may respond in a specific way. Finally, social issues such as unemployment, crime, poverty, and health have been linked to civic health and social capital endowment. More research on social capital in the Middle East and North Africa is needed. Gender attitudes, work-related values, youth participation, sustainability considerations, respect for human rights, and racism may be explored in future research on the MENA region's sociocultural environment and social capital.

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APPENDIX

Table 1. WVS Items on Civic (Social) Norms

Q181 Someone accepting a bribe in the course of their duties
Q179 Stealing property
Q180 Cheating on taxes
Q177 Claiming government benefits to which you are not entitled

Table 2: WVS Items on Civic (Social) Activism

Q213 Donating to a group or campaign
Q214 Contacting government official
Q215 Encouraging others to take action about political issues
Q216 Encouraging others to vote

Table 3. Personal Attitudes through Factor Loadings and Corresponding WVS Items

	Rotated Component Matrix ^a			
	Belongingness Attitudes	Life control Attitudes	Attitudes toward the world	Attitudes toward Authority
Q256 Feel close to your district, region	.818			
Q255 Feel close to your village, town, or city	.812			
Q257 Feel close to your country	.787			
Q254 National pride	.650			
Q49 Satisfaction with your life		.802		
Q50 Satisfaction with financial situation		.729		
Q46 Feeling of happiness		.716		
Q47 State of health (subjective)		.672		
Q48 Freedom of choice and control		.561		
Q259 Feel close to the world			.895	
Q258 Feel close to your continent			.860	
Q107 Private vs state ownership of business				.727
Q106 income equality vs larger income differences				.725

Extraction Method: Principal Component Analysis. Rotation Method: Varimax with Kaiser Normalization. a. Rotation converged in 5 iterations.