

## **The Women`s Perception of Gender Roles in Rasht: A Generational Study**

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### **Abstract**

Iranian women have faced substantial socio-economic changes in the last decades, which provided opportunities to change gender beliefs and production of new generations of women. The aim of the present study is to examine the different attitudes of women towards gender roles, based on Mannheim and Giddens` theory. A survey method was used and data was gathered based on a researcher-made questionnaire. The statistical population was all women older than 18 years living in Rasht City, among them 384 were selected by the stratified and random sampling methods. According to the findings, respondents were divided into three generations: the war and revolution generation, the post-war generation, and the generation of nuclear events. The results indicate the difference between the attitudes of different generations and even by controlling the structural and demographic factors, it was found that the women of the post-war generation affected by cognitive areas, had the most modern attitudes towards gender roles. According to Mannheim`s generational approach, there is a significant relationship between the generational experience and the attitudes of generations.

**Keywords:** generation; generational differences; gender; gender role; woman.

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## INTRODUCTION

Iranian women have faced substantial socio-economic changes in the last decades, which transformed their social and economic roles and produced new generations of women in Iran. Based on the important historical events as well as fresh contacts, this process has more or less revealed its socio-cultural context in the value and perception conflicts among generations. Evidently, important historical events date back to the constitutional revolution, were effective in the transformation of women's attitudes (Mahrizi, 2005). In this period, generations of women formed and criticized and rejected some of the gender beliefs. This trend was increased with the rise of the Pahlavi regime and the impact of western development, but went toward deviant streams like the issue of hijab in Reza Shah era and the suppression of women's traditional and religious views (Abbasi & Mousavi, 2015). In the second Pahlaviera, the relative intensities of economic development and the oil revenue channel and the policies of modernization, provided new opportunities to change gender beliefs, however, these pseudo-modernist movements mostly were supported by the upper and middle classes of urban women.

With the emergence of the Islamic Revolution in 1979 and later on, the imposed Iran-Iraq war, a new generation of women was formed that defined the term of gender category according the ideologies of the «Islamic Republic». After the war, the process of economic development and globalization became more rapid (Sohrabzadeh, 2009) and along with these processes, the sedimentation and as Mannheim said, the fibrillation of the revolutionary ideologies provided further changes for the women. Today these significant changes are clear in several dimensions such as the power structure of girls (Ebadollahi et al, 2013), the fertility and reproductive behavior of women, (Razeghi & Sarai, 2015) and the economic and employment dimensions (Rafatajah, 2004).

Of course, it should be noted that the process of changing gender perspective of women in Iran was different from that of the West, for the emergence of modernity in the West was accompanied by the endogenous and epistemological divisions; but the outset modernity in the Iranian society took place in the absence of such discrepancies so that each time has coincided with controversial cultural transitions,

especially for women. As Giddens (1999) suggested the more these transfers take place, the more the emotional state of individual changes in the realm of life and relationships between the present and the past. Thus, not only did it cause many tensions in the intergenerational relations of Iranian women, but it also affected the transitional nature and redefinition of gender affairs. Therefore, Iranian society has an opportunity to nurture different generations of women. Although these transformations undermine the legitimacy of traditional attitudes, they have, on the other hand, eliminated the contrast between traditional and modern roles.

Hoping to achieve a more sophisticated mix of traditional and modern roles, in the present article, the growing trend for new roles and values among women and factors affecting it will be analyzed. Also, for the sake of accuracy in the research, a section of a generation of women in the midst of historical and social objects was chosen because the historical-social initiatives are of great importance for a better understanding of generational relations. So this study aims to grasp the following: the differences between the attitudes of women of different generations towards gender roles, how the emergence of new generations changes the attitude of women towards gender roles; which historical-social event (s) has been more prominent in changing women's opinion toward gender roles, what is the distribution pattern of these events among women in Rasht, and finally, what the role of grounded variables in different attitudes of women is.

## **LITERATURE REVIEW**

Due to the theoretical and the empirical situation of recent decades in Iran, discussions on the relationship between cultural transformation and gender have been central to sociology (Armaki, 2007) so that such discussions have been evolving since the 1980s. In this regard, most generational studies show that Iranian society is undergoing a wide range of social, economic, political and cultural changes (Mohseni, 2000), (Abdollahian, 2004). Therefore, the experience of transition acts as a movement in social roles and as a process in the re-creation of generational relationships (Zokai, 2007). Some studies investigated the various factors affecting the conflict among different generations.

For instance, (Hosseinzadeh, 2007), believe that structural contradictions in the middle class are the basis of social conflict, which has led to a kind of structural dichotomy between traditional and modern values. Some research stressed the importance of factors like education, the expansion of urbanization, (Soroush and Hosseini, 2014), the rate of media use, (Saei, 2014), the increase of young population (Pourjebeli and Abedini, 2012) the socioeconomic status (Jarollahy and Kasmayee, 2013) in differences between attitude and values of various generations.

With respect to kinship, most of the generational studies in Iran compared parents and children, (Habibi et al., 2010). Furthermore, the age variable has been the criterion of most studies in generational division. Accordingly, the statistical society is usually divided into two groups: adult and young people (Farzaneh and Cherati, 2011), (Shalchi and Ziachi, 2014). Thus, the growth of heterogeneous generations affected by the changes, leads to significant differences between parents and children. In the area of the family studies, some researches such as (Shawazi and Torabi, 2006) divided two generations of parents and children to examine the similarities and differences in values, in marriage, and the criteria in spouse selection. A few studies, like (Nasrabad and Saraie, 2015) considered a special approach to one sex which divided women into different historical generations and examined them in terms of marriage. According to the results of this research, post-revolutionary generations are more likely to seek quality of life and seem to be evasive about some of the family's values, such as the desire to marry, and consequently, childbearing.

In this area, foreign studies also distinguish generational differences in various dimensions of value (Melanie Moore, 1999), interpersonal contradictions and cultural norms about hierarchy and loyalty for children's generations (Zhang, 2007), family formation values (Axinn & Thornton, 1993), and women's roles and situations (Sheblosk & Gibbons, 1998). According to some studies, such as (Han Chang, 2010), the process of cultural transfer is not sustainable in successive generations and is influenced by the value priorities of different generations. However, different value priorities between generation have similarities and differences (Bardy and Squarts, 2001), which are based on factors such as the unique experiences of

individuals and global aspects (Squarte and Saga, 2000), education and cultural diversity (Research Group of New Strategies, 2008), which has led to different attitudes, values, demands, and needs of younger generations.

On the other hand, domestic and foreign studies, which have been conducted exclusively in the field of women, suggest a shift in value and attitudes, an expansion reflexive thought (Abdulhayan et al, 2006) and a tendency towards modernism in women's attitudes (Ambassador and colleagues, 2014). Considering this, Rafatjah (2004) in a research concluded that structural status, such as higher levels of education in comparison with personal identity has a greater impact on the redefinition and resistance of women against gender stereotypes, although there is also a kind of confusion in women`s identity; so that the majority of respondents considered motherhood as the most important role for a woman and at the next level companionship, then in education and eventually in employment. The results of ZulfAliyafam and Ghaffari`s research (2009) also show that with the development of the modernization process, traditional sources of identity gradually disappear to the extent that they gradually lose their power to define the agent`s identity. In another study, Silva, et al (1993) and Brooks and Lionel, (2008) showed that the conditions of modernity create both the opportunities and the need for social actors to take greater responsibility for their own identities, with the implication that women are now freer to fashion their identities and gender roles.

By reviewing these studies, it can be argued that most of the studies discuss changing attitudes of new generations, but most studies do this regardless of sex and gender issues. Such investigation of intragroup relationships is of great importance because gender-based attitudes guide agents on how they face and understand social reality. On the other hand, addressing social generations can be appropriate for explaining some changes of gender-based approaches. Thus, considering the points of "subject" and "method", it can be deduced that, in terms of the subject, this is a multilevel issue that show generations as the representatives of the community. Because despite the macro-affinity, the difference in the generations associated with the concept of group identity and generation is beyond the category of

age and also it is influenced by social, cultural, and historical structures.

## **THEORETICAL FRAMEWORK**

Carl Mannheim illustrates the fact that the transformations in the society affect the values of generations during the period of acculturation. Mannheim refers the concept of generation to the emergence of massive social transformations and considers it not as a biological necessity, but also as a kind of social-historical consciousness (Scott and Schumann, 1995). In his point of view, social consciousness and perspective of youth reaching maturity in a particular time and place (what he termed "generational location") is significantly influenced by the major historical events of that era (thus becoming a "generation in actuality). Therefore, generational characteristics such as shared history and shared social experiences, leads to the formation of a value and meaning system different from that of the previous generation (Rample, 1965: 56-55). In this context, Mannheim believes that in a particular point in the life cycle, that is, in the late adolescence and in the early days of youth, a "fresh contact" with the socio-political world is formed that will be rarely repeated during the next history of life (Tovakol and Ghazi Nejad , 2005). Wilhelm Dilthey (1833-1911) on the other hand, focuses on the contemporaneity of generations. The contemporaneity of generations suggests that different generations are equally affected by particular conditions. 'The non-contemporaneity of the contemporaneous' is what interests Pinder most in relation to generations. Different generations live at the same time. But since experienced time is the only real time, they must all in fact be living in qualitatively quite different subjective eras. 'Everyone lives with people of the same and of different ages, with a variety of possibilities of experience facing them all alike. But for each the "same time" is a different time-that is, it represents a different period of his self, which he can only share with people of his own age.' Every moment of time is therefore in reality more than a point like event-it is a temporal volume having more than one dimension, because it is always experienced by several generations at various stages of development. In this regard, unquestionably social phenomena such as revolutions and social

movements create special conditions through which individuals embrace a distinct generational identity and, in turn, different values will be encouraged. As an example, in Iran, some unique phenomena and experiences such as revolution and war have led to a historic breakdown and a distinction between the current society and the past one.

In this way, not only did the various strata of women gain the familiarity with new concepts, but along with Mannheim (1972), they also, found the possibility of replacing concepts for previous relationships, so that women could acquire new abilities that were previously subjugated by lower incomes and patriarchy. Such new fresh contacts are considered new events in a person's biography that firstly affect the individual's mind, and then the behavior and the decisions that they make (Mannheim, 1934). As a result of these contacts, women started a new life with new roles; they were guided to new gender roles by providing different roles in the collective action that functions under their generational identity. In order to study the values and attitudes of different generations, not only should we notice structural, national, or transnational macroeconomic factors, but we should also pay attention to the cultural and local conditions and factors below the "agency" because the identity of each generation is a strange mixture of concepts that are invented or imposed by the same generation. Of course, in Mannheim's point of view the values of the past generation, are not completely disappeared with the emergence of the new generation, but new generation redefines the dominant values and ideologies, and basically the function of the new generation is the production and innovation of different value, culture, attitudes and lifestyles (Pilcher, 1993).

Generally, Mannheim clarifies how members of a generation influenced by different events define and redefine their dimensions of life and organize them. The result of this situation is the distinction between generations of history in terms of valuation and revision in a variety of areas, such as family and gender, which in the past culminated in their transformation and redefinition in the fence of tradition.

From a structural point of view, Giddens' viewpoint in analyzing the gender attitudes of different generations of women is important because he believes that none of the changes taking place in modern

world is as important as those happening in the personal area, gender relations and emotional life and family (Giddens, 1999: 1). Although Giddens did not specifically hint at women or gender issues; he generally has focused on women and gender in the context of family transformation in modernity. Giddens suggests that gender attitudes are affected by the types of the behaviors of society members (Giddens, 1995: 175-173); but these behaviors are regulated based on the dominant attitudes and events which were of paramount importance to the field of action and thought of new generations (women) in vast parts of the world that caused the growth of various generations. Giddens attributes the growth of each generation to the years of life and considers each generation to be a gesture of human beings that places personal life in a period of group life (Armaki, 2007: 30). A noteworthy point in Giddens` analysis is that he believes that today`s young generations compared to the past generations don`t associate themselves with tradition (Giddens, 2010); as the traditional routine of roles is continuously confronted with new transformations. These changes in attitudes affecting the types of activities of women in various social and economic spheres have also had an impact on generational relationships.

According to Giddens, the origin of intergenerational transformations is in the conflict between the traditional and modern values and the contrast between authority and risk (Giddens, 1999). As a result, the roles of women have been in the [process of transformation much more than that of men. Emphasizing the volatility of society as well as a kind of dismissal from the past, Giddens suggests that a more active and modern way of choosing be possible. In general terms, women (of new generations) experience a more complete, and even more contradictory, "modernity openness," and unlike former generations, new generations have nominal opportunity to be in a wide range of different choices (Giddens, 2008), although sometimes these unseen choices do not come true. Giddens(1999) believes that with the possibility of choosing, new actors (new generations) are able to weaken the bases of authority and obvious procedures and challenge traditional norms from home to workplace and professions everywhere. Giddens calls this process "reflexive supervision" of action which means paying attention to the historical nature of the actions. Such capacity allows us to go back and



think about new alternatives (Croesly, 2005: 2). not only do this new possibility raise fundamental changes in the cultural system and generational ties (own, 2007: 71), but it also makes individuals face each other and relativize the established personal and cultural rituals.

In sum, based on the main points of Mannheim and Giddens' theories and also the empirical research done in this regard, it can be argued that different generations of women experience a quiet revolution in the way they think about themselves and interact with others. This issue in the contemporary society of Iran suggests that women, as a group whose identities were defined more often in relation to the family, have experienced a simple and psychological lived experience in the backgrounds of various historical and social processes that caused a new and different worldview about gender, and consequently new generations are no longer subject to traditions, as in the past. Therefore, during the lack of stability of both female and male "self", each role in its context is necessarily uncertain. In such a situation, the production of alternative narratives of femininity as well as masculinity increases, and we are faced with the emergence of multiple identities and multi-cultural generations. Accordingly, it is said that the life world of individuals is multiplied, so that people are interspersed in these different spaces. Thus, individuals are flowing between these different spaces and because of the choosing of lifestyle in general and gender attitudes in particular; they imagine special narratives towards others.

Of all these points, the following variables can be considered as independent variables of this research and their relations with the degree of changes in attitude towards gender roles among women of different generations. These variables can be divided into two groups: on the one hand, the variable of generational change affected by generational objects makes it possible for semantic differentiations for each generation; on the other hand, grounded variables such as family background and socio-economic status were considered as influential variables on women's attitudes toward gender roles.

## RESEARCH METHOD

The method of this research is the survey method based on a questionnaire designed by the researcher that includes social-

demographic and generational variables in terms of historical and social objects. The type of the research is the pure research method. The unit of the analysis is individual. The statistical population consist all women over 18 living in Rasht City (approximately 275329 people, according to the latest census data).

**Table 1: Age distribution of population and respondents**

Age groups	Population		Sample	
	Frequency	Percentage	Frequency	Percentage
below 20	11622	4.22	26	6.8
20-24	36206	13.15	67	17.4
25-29	40220	14.6	85	22.1
30-34	34389	12.49	30	7.8
35-39	27806	10.1	40	10.4
40-44	28474	10.34	24	6.3
45-49	25515	9.26	22	5.7
50-54	22102	8.02	31	8.1
55-59	15918	5.78	34	8.9
60-64	11047	4.01	18	4.7
65+	22030	7.99	7	1.8
Total	275329	100	384	100

Using Cochran formula, a sample of 384 people was drawn. The sampling methods include the stratified and simple random sampling techniques. Using the face validity (referring to other experts and professors) and the construct validity (factor analysis and two KMO and Bartlett tests), the validity of the research tool was evaluated. The Cronbach's alpha coefficient was used to determine the reliability of the questionnaire (see the table 2). Spss software and descriptive statistics (frequency tables and inferential statistics including F- test and regression analysis) were used to analyze the data.

**Table 2: Reliability and validity coefficients of the main variables**

dependent variables	Items	KMO	Alpha coefficient	Significance level of Bartlett test
attitude towards social gender role	11	0.735	0.82	0.000
attitude towards economic gender roles	8	0.752	0.85	0.000
Total	19	0.726	0.83	0.000

### Theoretical and operational definitions of variables

Dependent variable - Attitude towards gender roles

Gender roles are culturally defined sets of behavior that are differentiated by gender (Gibbons et. al., 1997). Such ideologies lead to attitudes stem from cliché.

In this research after an initial field study a total of 19 items (11 items for social gender roles and 9 items for economic gender roles) were used to measure the attitudes of women towards gender roles. Each item is evaluated on a 4-point Likert scale (1-4 points for replies from “not at all” to “extremely”).Also, people's attitude is divided into three categories: modern (with egalitarian attitudes), traditional and conservative (with a stereotypical and discriminatory attitude), and professional (with a moderate attitude and a separate viewpoint in some roles).

**Table 3: Attitude towards gender roles**

Attitudes towards Social gender roles	Attitudes towards economic gender roles
Women are less likely than men to make critical decisions.	Both men and women are obliged to provide family expenses.
Driving is a masculine occupation.	Labor rights should be equal between men and women.
Women do many jobs as well as men in the society	Men and women have the same abilities; therefore, there should be no restrictions on the choice of occupation.
It is not good at all that man stays at home and woman go out and work.	Since men support the family, they must be paid more.

Studying at the university increases women`s knowledge and awareness.	Jobs like teaching or sewing are more appropriate for women.
In my opinion, a successful marriage is more important than university education for women.	Women's employment is a threat to men's employment, which should be limited.
Women are prioritizing looking after their kids than building a career.	It`s not a women`s duty to support their family.
A successful marriage is much more important than a job.	Women should not compete with men in order to get masculine work.
Men make better bosses and a woman should never be in such position.	
Women should be judges like men.	
Following ethical principles for women is more important than men.	

### **Independent variable: Generation**

As Mannheim states ([1927] 1952: 306), ‘within this community of people with a common destiny there can then arise particular generation-units. These are characterized by the fact that they do not merely involve a loose participation by a number of individuals in a pattern of events shared by all alike though interpreted by the different individuals differently, but an identity of responses, a certain affinity in the way in which all move with and are formed by their common experiences.

In this study, an open-ended question was asked women about the most prominent experience of their contemporary historical and social events. Thus, women of every age or decade were named by different generations according to their unique generational experience.

### **Demographic and socio-economic status (SES) Variables**

Demographic and socio-economic variables describe the context in which a person acts. Context or background variables are variables that "contain information necessary to define homogeneous subgroups, to establish causal relations between attitudes and societal facts (Braun & Mohler, 2002: 112)

In the present study, important determinants to measure SES include educational level of respondent and her parents (highest year of education completed), household income, and occupation.

## RESEARCH FINDINGS

### Attributes of the respondents

The data implies that the age range of respondents varies from 18 to 66 and the average age is 36/04.

The distribution of the respondents by marital status shows that the single group makes up 38% of the total, married 54/9% and "widowed/divorced" 7%. (In this study, "single" refers to those who have never married and "married" denotes those who had a husband at the time of the survey. "Widowed/divorced" covers those whose husband has died or who are separated from a former husband and are currently single). In terms of family background, 73.2% had urban background and 16.8% had rural background. Also, 61.8% of women were university educated and 38.2% were high school educated or lower. 43.8% of respondents said their average socioeconomic status was moderate and 42.7% were moderate to low.

Participants were classified into above average SES (26.3%), and below average SES (42.7%).

Table 3 shows the distribution of respondents by the most important historical-social events. According to table (3) two events: The Islamic Revolution of 1979 and Iran-Iraq war were the most important events mentioned by women of generations born 1979 (92/2). Post-war events, in particular Iran's presidential election of 2009 were the most prominent incidences for women born in 1978-1989 (46.1%) and women born in 1990-1996 referred to nuclear power issue and negotiations over it as the most prominent historical events of their generation.

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**Table 4: The most important contemporary historical events**

	The Islamic Revolution of 1979 and Iran-Iraq war	Post-war events	nuclear power	Scattered events	Total
Generation born before 1997	87.3	4.4	3.8	4.5	100
Generation born in 1978-1989	26.1	47.1	22.1	4.7	100
Generation born in 1990-1996	3.5	38.9	40.7	16.8	100

Table 4 illustrates the comparison of women's attitude towards economic and social gender roles. More than 37% of women don't follow stereotypes anymore. In contrast, 33% are traditional and conservative, and 29.2% believe in gender segregation in some situations and has moderate and professional attitudes. The highest percentage of women with different and modern attitudes belongs to women of post-war generation (18.5%); finally, 28.9% of women of the generation of revolution and war have traditional and conservative attitudes.

**Table 5: attitude towards gender roles (%)**

Items	Revolution and War generation	Post-war generation	nuclear events generation	Total
Modern	3.9	18.5	15.4	37.8
Moderate	10.9	9.6	8.6	29.2
Traditional	25.8	1.8	5.5	33.1
Total	40.6	29.9	29.4	100

### **Inferential Findings**

In this section the Kolmogorov- Smirnov test was used to examine if variables are normally distributed. According to the results, the depended variable (attitude towards gender roles) with a 95% confidence interval has a normal distribution, so a parametric test

is inappropriate. To test the equality of the means of "gender role attitudes", the F-test was carried out.

One-way analysis of variance (ANOVA) shows that there is significant difference among different generations' attitudes towards the both dimensions of gender roles (F tests with significant levels of 0.30%). Considering the means, the post-war generation has a greater willingness to change their attitudes towards social and economic gender roles.

Controlling the family background variable, it can be noted that there is a significant difference between the attitudes of three generations of women towards gender roles (social gender roles= $F=21.66$  (urban) and  $F=27.6$  (rural),  $sig=0.30\%$ ) (Economic gender roles:  $F=23.43$  (urban) and  $F=34.02$  (rural)  $sig=0.000$ ).

Controlling the variable of SES, we noticed that showed that there is no significant difference between the attitudes of different generations towards social gender roles ( $F=3.01$   $sig=0.55$ ); However, the significance level in SES (below the average) was statistically significant (95% confidence interval) ( $F=29.49$   $sig=0.30$ ). Significant levels of SES (both below and above the average) are all statistically significant and show a significant difference among the attitudes of women of different generations towards the economic gender roles.

**Table 6: one-way analysis of variance (ANOVA)**

Attitudes of different generations towards social and economic gender roles					
Items	Generations	Mean	F	Significance level	Levene's test
Social gender roles	The first generation	29.22	64.69	0.000	0.015
	The second generation	23.1			
	The third generation	32.57			
Economic gender roles	The first generation	21.38	69.45	0.000	0.003
	The second generation	24.83			
	The third generation	23.73			
<b>Attitudes of different generations of urban and rural women</b>					

<b>Social gender roles</b>	<b>Urbane</b>				
	The first generation	30.38	21.66	0.000	0.013
	The second generation	33.39			
	The third generation	32.27			
	<b>Rural</b>				
	The first generation	27.96	27.6	0.000	0.218
	The second generation	31.13			
The third generation	31.38				
<b>Urbane</b>					
<b>Economic gender roles</b>	The first generation	22.3	23.43	0.000	0.000
	The second generation	24.86			
	The third generation	23.73			
	<b>Rural</b>				
	The first generation	20.39	34.04	0.000	0.04
	The second generation	24.67			
The third generation	23.77				
<b>SES (above the average)</b>					
<b>Social gender roles</b>	The first generation	28.96	29.49	0.000	0.327
	The second generation	32.44			
	The third generation	32.48			
	<b>SES (below the average)</b>				
	The first generation	31.59	3.01	0.055	0.312
	The second generation	33.41			
The third	32.97				



	generation				
	<b>SES (above the average)</b>				
Economic gender roles	The first generation	33.55	23.61	0.000	0.03
	The second generation	25.14			
	The third generation	24.32			
	<b>SES (below the average)</b>				
	The first generation	21.08	5.06	0.007	0.005
	The second generation	24.22			
The third generation	22.25				

**Multiple regression test (step by step)**

Multiple regression analysis (step by step) method was used to explain the effect of each independent variable on attitudes towards gender roles. Since the type of the independent variables of the present research is nominal and regression is used to measure ordinal and interval variables, virtual variables have been used.

**Table7: Multiple regression analysis (step by step method)**

variables	B	BETA	SIG	R	R2	F	SIG F
constant	53.91		0.000	0.686	0.461	8.056	0.000
The revolution & war G	-3.47	-0.290	0.000				
Family background 1	3.14	0.238	0.023				
SES 1	-1.18	-0.159	0.001				
Post-war G	1.75	0.135	0.005				

According to the regression model (Table 7), the variables used in this model explain 46% (R2 = 0.46) gender role attitudes, and 54% relate to other causes.

In this regard, the effect of revolution and war has the most impact on attitudes toward gender, but this is an inverse effect ( $B = -0.29$ ), i.e. one unit increase in attitudes influenced by the events of revolution and the generation of war, 0.29% decreases in traditional gender attitudes.

## CONCLUSION

The results of the present study have revealed some new gender-based gaps within Iranian women; which may be applicable to show the capacity for achieving some domains of reproductive attitudes towards gender roles. Providing a phenomenological definition of generation, women were divided into three generations: the revolution and war generation, the post war generation and the nuclear power generation. The results showed that the post-war generation has more modern attitudes towards both social and economic gender role. However, there was not a significant difference between the second and the third generations in terms of economic aspect that agrees with Zulfalifam and Ghaffari's research (2008). According to the present study, the evolution of gender attitudes not only has been based on the biological factors, but also on the historical and social conditions and new ideologies, as well, which confirms Mannheim's theoretical assumptions (1991).

The first generation in this study, the generation of Revolution and War, has the most traditional attitudes. In numerous historical times, they experienced different interpretations of gender category and most of their personal and social life was based on traditional rules. Although in Pahlavi era they experienced modern ideas in social and political spheres, the political developments during the Islamic Revolution, as a turning point in Iranian contemporary history, had a significant impact on the gender relations of women and combined the element of femininity with religious worldview. Actually, the Islamic Revolution, as a cultural revolution, was based on values such as hijab, honor, and modesty. There was no satisfaction with Pahlavi regime particular cultural affiliation with the West, and even the protesting actions of women, focused on social and cultural spheres. But the Islamic revolution did not mean full disconnect from the West. The post war transformations and exposure to the global

manifestations led to the production and reproduction of a generation of women, who considered their position less based on the traditional attitudes. The increase of women`s education and their new roles has decreased the desirability of living as a traditional woman (having merely wifely and motherly roles) and increased the resistance against gender stereotypes which also caused some difficulties in harmonizing the traditional roles with new ones, thereby, leading to the generational gap.

As Giddens (1991) argues, in contrast to traditional generations, whose individual roles and codes of behavior are considered `given` being assigned by the rules of specific culture- post traditional generations prevail under the condition of modernity in which all aspects of society including gender roles, have become increasingly subject to reflection and examination. This led to the marginalization of patriarchal interpretations and the introduction of gender issues in society. The intensity of this change in postwar generation suggests a more reflexive surveillance and a profound generational change. An important point is the effects of this change on nuclear power generation, who are exposed to global communication. And, according to some studies such as (Abbasi, 2015), (Saeed, 2014), it is moving at a high pace, and as a result, a positive attitude toward social and economic activities has been made. So post traditional generations are marked by a heightened reflexivity and become conscious of their role and construction. As Giddens states, in the past, traditions, like nature, used to be as it were, as an external framework for human activity. But now we are the one who has to decide about traditional beliefs and say which of them must be preserved and which should not be given credit.

Finally, it is obvious that different expectations come from questions which arise considering the conscious woman as to how they should be. So with the decline of traditions, gender roles have become more diverse and malleable. Although sometimes limited by vestiges of traditions- modern lives are less predictable and fixed than they were for previous generations and gender roles are more up for grabs than ever before. But this is not to say that tradition is totally absent from the contours of the modern world. Indeed, in many instances as Giddens argues (1990:38) it not only exists but actually flourishes as a direct consequence of modernity and its institutional

reflexivity. To sum up, I would argue that the study of women gender roles in different generations of Iran needs to address itself with three important issues. Firstly, the need to move beyond the *either/or* of the radical detraditionalisation debate (i.e. tradition or reflexivity) and instead look at the interactions between the (relatively) static and the reflexive in contemporary traditions. Secondly, we need to look at both the changing nature of tradition per se in the contemporary world. Finally, perhaps most importantly, the need to examine again at the empirical level—the continuing appeal of certain traditional roles for individuals and, by extension, social groups. Therefore, it is essential that, through a proper understanding of traditions and achieving a kind of harmony between tradition and modernity, in a rational and ideal way, without any crisis, we try to improve generational relations.

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