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Transformation of Iranian Women’s Cultural Identity

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# CONTENTS

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Section</th>
<th>Page</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>INTRODUCTION</td>
<td>3</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>CHAPTER 1. THE INFLUENTIAL FACTORS IN CONSTRUCTING IRANIAN WOMEN'S CULTURAL IDENTITY</td>
<td>14</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>1.1. The concept of cultural identity in the cultural and philosophical aspects</td>
<td>14</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>1.2. A comparative analysis of Judith Butler’s views on identity and Anthony Giddens’ structuration theory</td>
<td>46</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>1.3. The role of Islam in constructing Iranian women's cultural identity</td>
<td>57</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>1.4. Historical changes of social and cultural aspects of Iranian women's life</td>
<td>79</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Chapter 1: Findings</td>
<td>99</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>CHAPTER 2. MANIFESTATION OF TRADITIONAL AND MODERN CULTURAL IDENTITY OF IRANIAN WOMEN</td>
<td>103</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>2.1. Iranian Women's Cultural Identity Represented in their Bodies</td>
<td>103</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>2.2. Veiling and Iranian Women's Cultural Identity</td>
<td>137</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>2.3. Iranian women's cultural identity in relation to their work and leisure time</td>
<td>172</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Chapter 2: Findings</td>
<td>203</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>CONCLUSIONS</td>
<td>205</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>BIBLIOGRAPHY</td>
<td>216</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>
INTRODUCTION

Research relevance. In the modern world, women play an increasingly important role in society: they actively participate in the social, economic, political and cultural life of their communities shaping the new image of their country. The issue of change in western women's role and identity during and after industrialization (referred to as one of the defining properties of modernity by A. Giddens)\(^1\), is examined by many scholars throughout the history. It is explored in countless historical books, scientific researches, literary works, movies, etc. However, in contrast to the widespread representation of western women's challenges to question the contexts constructing women's identities, Iranian women's social role is usually veiled by those who, under the influence of western culture and politics, attempt to keep a one-sided perspective of Iranian women as restricted by boundaries of contextual traditions. Contrary to this popular misconception, the role of Iranian women in society has significantly changed in recent decades, which has subsequently caused alterations in their cultural identity. The inevitable influence of western culture (Internet, cinema, satellite TV, social media) provides for the construction of new cultural identity of the consumers of this culture. That includes changes in the life style, the perception of social and gender roles and creation of new social institutions.

The early 20\(^{th}\) century, along with the movement of constitutionalism in Iran, is a distinctive point in Iranian history when the country experienced notable changes in various areas of economy, politics and culture. Cultural changes included new forms of art, literature, lifestyle and women's dressing. Amid the oppositions of traditional and modern culture, Iranian women, who till then were confined to

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\(^1\)We should see capitalism and industrialism as two distinct...dimensions involved in the institutions of modernity". Giddens A. The Consequences of Modernity. US: Wiley, 2013. p. 64.
household affairs and were deprived even of education, swept the borders defined by the traditional culture and, by defying the conventions, started to construct identities beyond the gender roles ascribed to them through the ages. Thus, in line with western women's social enterprise Iranian women's exclusive wife-mother role faded and they began to participate in social affairs. A woman's identity was not handed to her by tradition, rather as a member of society she gradually started to construct her new identity as well as her society. The growing number of women with university education, their desire for social and professional self-realization, along with the preservation of specific features of the traditional Iranian culture, causes the necessity to reassess their social role in the life of the country and acknowledge their new cultural identity. This testifies to the research relevance.

**Literature Review.** Cultural identity in a variety of its aspects has been explored by a number of researchers. A. Kistova studied the social and philosophical foundations of constructing ethnic, cultural and national identity on the basis of ethnographic approach\(^2\). A. Chernoded reflects on manifestations of ethnic identity in clothing and fashion\(^3\). The role of culture in ethnic and cultural identification is represented in the works of I. Apollonov\(^4\) and Yu. Oleinikova\(^5\).

The impact of cultural identity on the process of socialization of young people is the subject matter of the monograph by K. Sergeeva\(^6\). Construction of cultural identity of students is described in the thesis of S. Voroshin\(^7\). A number of researchers (S. Turkle\(^8\), C.L. Singh\(^9\), G. Ruchkina and O. Skorodumova\(^10\) and

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\(^2\)Кистова А.В. Конструирование этнокультурной и общенациональной идентичностей на основе этнографического подхода в социальной философии: автореф. дис. ... канд. филос. наук. Красноярск, 2013.

\(^3\)Чернодед А.Б. Формирование этнической идентичности в дискурсе современной моды (XX-XXI вв.): дис. ... канд. культурологии. Саратов, 2018.

\(^4\)Аполлонов И.А. Идентичность личности в этнокультурном измерении: дис. ... докт. филос. наук, Ростов-на-Дону, 2018.

\(^5\)Олейникова Ю. В. Культурные репрезентации в структуре этнической идентификации: дис. ... канд. социол. наук. М, 2008.

\(^6\)Сергеева, К.В. Культурная идентичность как фактор социализации современной российской молодежи. М., 2012.

\(^7\)Ворошин С.Д. Формирование культурной идентичности студенчества в актуальных социокультурных практиках университетов Южного Урала: дис. ... канд. культурологии. М, 2018.

others) reflect on the impact of information technologies in constructing and reconstructing cultural identity in the age of globalization.

Among the recognized experts in the studies of identity are A. Giddens\(^\text{11}\), author of the structuration theory and J. Butler who developed the theory of gender performativity\(^\text{12}\). According to J. Butler, identity is constructed by the discourse before the arrival of subject to the scene. However, the subject enjoys agency because the sustainability of discourse depends on reiteration of its norms by the subjects. As the subject performs the imposed roles through time, the performances deviate from the originally intended norms, transforming or subverting the norms. So far, there has been no research studying the transformation of women's cultural identity from the viewpoint of performative theory. Neither is there an exploration of dialectic relationship of women and their social structure based on structuration theory, though there might be a state value amount of researches in the field of Iranian women's studies.

In an ethnographical study of Iranian women, an Iranian author, Mahsa Izadinia, depicts Iranian society as absolutely patriarchal one where women, against their dreams and desires, are marginalized and silenced with no choice to construct their true selves.\(^\text{13}\) In another work, the same author reflects on how Iranian women are oppressed and limited under harsh social and family context.\(^\text{14}\) In their turn, Gousia Mir and G.N. Khaki write about the changing image of the Iranian woman in the age of globalization\(^\text{15}\).

\(^\text{10}\)Ручкина Г.Ф., Скородумова О.Б. Национально-культурная идентичность в контексте становления информационного общества // Научный вестник Московского государственного технического университета гражданской авиации. 2011. № 166. С. 93-97.
A research, reflecting on Iranian women's identity in two phases of traditional and modern society, represents an Iranian women's individual, scientific and socio-cultural aspects of identity, attempting to resolve the challenges of opposing views and refers to the features of women illustrated in the works of contemporary female poets.16

A. Najmabadi, an Iranian professor of history and gender studies, has reviewed Iranian modern history through the perspective of gender studies and demonstrated that Iranian modern culture and political system are shaped with the focus on gender centrality. The author also considers Iranian feminism in the country's contemporary culture.17 The same author edits and contributes a book composed of four essays examining the reasons for insubstantial sum of autobiographical works by women writers. One of the earliest modern autobiographical works of a woman is also discussed and the poems of a prominent female poet are considered and analyzed as her autobiography.18

F. Milani, a professor of Persian literature and women's studies at Virginia University, concentrates on the way Iranian female writers were silenced through the ages. The author peruses the history of Iranian female writers in their social and cultural context, describes the lives of some female writers, especially those reflecting on veiling and unveiling, and depicts how many of these pioneer women writers, through being labeled as immoral, paid for their courage.19 In another book, F. Milani complains how Iranian women were like prisoners in the house, deprived of leaving their rooms, and had a strong faith in such a submission
regarding it as chastity, safety and even beauty. The author shows how finally, with the help of writers, this spell broke down during the last 160 years.\textsuperscript{20}

Janet Afary, an Iranian scholar and feminist activist in America, draws on her involvement with Iranian women and Iranian life. She establishes an overview of Iranian's ideas about sex and female gender. She depicts the changing ideas regarding gender relations since 19\textsuperscript{th} century\textsuperscript{21}.

Camron Michael Amin, a professor of history at the University of Chicago, worked on history and culture of the Middle East\textsuperscript{22}.

H. Hoodfar, a Canadian-Iranian sociocultural anthropologist and professor, worked on Western perception of Muslim women's veiling\textsuperscript{23}. H. Sedghi, an Iranian scholar at Harvard, addresses the issue of Iranian women's veiling, unveiling and re-veiling since 1900. Demonstrating the challenges of secular and religious forces in construction of women's sexuality, she presents the country's gender policies\textsuperscript{24}.

P. Paidar\textsuperscript{25} was an Iranian sociologist and feminist writer and scholar in diaspora. She underlined the possibility of combination of Islam and Feminism. She has analyzed the role of women in the political evolution of Iran. Depicting the political changes in the country, she considers the major changes in ideas about women and thereby the emergence of new discourses on women.

Although the above-mentioned works testify to the growing interest in the role of Iranian women in society, the dialectic interaction of women and the social structure in contemporary Iranian society remains beyond the scope of modern researchers.

\textsuperscript{25}P. Woman and the Political Process in Twentieth Century Iran. Cambridge University Press, 1997
The analysis of the transition period from traditional to contemporary society allows identifying a number of **contradictions** between:

- between the traditional culture opposing the penetration of new ideas and limiting the role of women to home and the new social tendencies in the Iranian society, which makes it possible for women to participate in social life;
- between perceiving the Iranian woman through the prism of western culture, defining her role within the framework of discriminating gender norms and the opposing idea believing that the Iranian woman, with her own ideals and identity, plays an independent social role;
- the attitude to obligatory veiling: some researchers consider it to be a phenomenon which limits the manifestation of women’s identity while others see it a manifestation of modesty, purity, chastity and even freedom.
- between signification of female sex in traditional discourse as veiled, secluded, nurturer and property of husband and female sex signification in modern discourse that refers to socially active, physically attractive body in fashion hijab.

These contradictions have defined the **research problem**: what are the influential factors on the change of Iranian women's identity? In its turn, the problem has led to formulating the **research topic** – “*Manifestation of traditional and modern cultural identity of Iranian women*”.

The research area corresponds to the following paragraphs of the specialty passport (24.00.01 – Theory and history of culture): 1. *Historical studies, Cultural studies*: 1.3. Historical aspects of the theory of culture, philosophical and mental aspects of the theory of culture; 1.4. History of cultural views and concepts, understanding the essence of culture; 1.6. Culture and civilization in their historical development; 1.7. Culture and religion; 1.8. Genesis of culture and evolution of culture forms; 1.9. Historical continuity in preserving and translating cultural values and meanings; 1.13. Factors of development of culture; 1.18. Culture and society; 1.21. Traditional, mass and elite culture; 1.28. Cultural

The research **object** is the position and role of the Iranian woman in society. The **subject** of the research is the traditional and modern identity of the Iranian woman and its role in building modern society.

The **aim** of the research is to explore and give scientific grounding to the factors influencing the change of Iranian women's identity in the period of transition from tradition to modernity.

**Research hypothesis.** Since constitutionalism Iranian women under the influence of Western modernized culture, have transformed the reiteration of traditional norms and exercised new performances. The new performances subvert the traditional norms, and contribute to the construction of new cultural identity. Various aspects of globalization have led to changes in Iranian women’s cultural identity and have resulted in their gaining a new interpretation of gender roles, transformation of lifestyle and perceptions, and foundation of new public institutions. In their attempt to transform the surroundings, women, considering the rules of the traditional and modern society and invoking their own capabilities and available resources, apply this new perception to their future interactions, which leads to structural changes in society. The modernized cultural identity of Iranian women, however, is not beyond the heteronormative female gender identity.

In order to address the research aim and prove the hypothesis, the following research **objectives** have been set:

- to clarify the concept “Iranian women’s cultural identity” as an interdisciplinary trend in humanitarian studies;
- to explore the specifics of Iranian traditional society as well as the place and role of Iranian women in the conventional context of Iranian traditional society;
• to identify the factors influencing the changes in traditional Iranian society and women's cultural identity and the aspects where the transformations occur;
• to reflect on Iranian women's modern cultural identity and to evaluate the position of women in modern Iranian society.

Theoretically and methodologically the research is based on the following theories and scientific ideas: Anthony Giddens’ structuration theory, Judith Butler’s gender performativity theory, the concept of ‘soft power’ suggested by Joseph Nye. The empirical and information foundation of the research rests on the findings of Iranian, British, American and Russian scholars in the fields of philosophy, cultural studies, sociology and history, the data obtained from official governmental and non-governmental sites. The research involved systemic, multidisciplinary, cultural, axiological approaches in studying the concept of identity as well as the principles of social systems functioning.

The research aim and objectives necessitated the use of the following research methods: the method of theoretical analysis was used in studying the approaches to the concept of identity in various aspects (philosophical, psychological, sociological, cultural); the method of comparative analysis was applied to studying various theories and concepts (A. Giddens, J. Nye, J. Butler); descriptive, comparative and historical methods were applied to studies of the traditional Iranian society and the role of women in it; the method of participant observation was used in exploring the role of women in modern Iranian society.

Chronological scope of the study. The research embraces the span of time from the pre-Qajar era (the early 18th century) up to the present day.

Theoretical value of the research.

The present study establishes an overlapping association between J. Butler's performativity theory and A. Giddens' structuration theory where they insist on performances of actors: it identifies a dialectic relationship of structures and agents and defines the role and place of women in Iranian society. The original application of these theories in Iranian context has produced a huge body of
knowledge in the field of Iranian women's cultural identity construction throughout a vast chronological scope, spanning the period from the pre-constitutional revolution to the present time.

**Practical value of the research.**

The regularization of female sex by traditional and modern discourses and women's agency through performances has been examined to manifest the traditional and modern cultural identity of Iranian women. The study of women's lifestyle through ages, considering the nuance performances of women contributes to understanding the materialization and signification of female sex in each era.

The research has explored and brought to the fore the role of globalization, information technologies, social and cultural processes in society as the major factors influencing the changes in traditional Iranian society and transformations in women's cultural identity in the aspects of lifestyle performances (body maintenance, veiling, work and leisure).

**Research novelty.** The thesis contributes to science

- clarifying the multi-faceted concept of “Iranian women’s cultural identity” through the prism of changes in lifestyle performances: body maintenance, veiling, work and leisure activities;
- defining specific features of Iranian society and the role of women in it since pre-constitutionalist era to the current age;
- identifying the factors influencing transformation of cultural identity of Iranian women.

**Research validity** is supported by the solid theoretical foundation, consistent methodology and choice of complimentary research methods corresponding to the research object and subject, its aim and objectives; by the representativity and authenticity of materials involved.

**Presentation and validation of research results.** Research results were presented to the academic community at the 10th and 11th RISA (Russian International Studies Association) Conventions (December 2016 – “Iranian
women’s traditional and modern gender identity”; September 2017 – “Cultural identity of Iranian women: tradition and modernity”) and at the Round Table session “Business Woman” of the 3rd MGIMO Student Conference “Youth and Society” (April 2018 – “Iranian women in the modern society”). Four articles were published in Russian refereed scientific journals.

**Statements to be defended:**

1. Cultures are subject to change, and therefore the cultural identity of the members is open to change. The roots of Iranian women’s traditional cultural identity, which have developed in socio-historical contexts shatter in the meeting point of cultures. Since the encounter of Iranian traditional culture with Western modernized culture, the Iranian women's traditional identity has undergone various changes.

2. The structuration theory of A. Giddens overlaps with the performative theory with an emphasis on actions of the actors in reproduction of norms. The actors using the available resources of the structure and within the framework of rules act reinforcing or reproducing the norms, thereby they reflexively consider construction of their identity.

3. Applying Butler's performative theory that believes in decentrality and challenges heteronormativity on Islamic society where Islam as a center gives meaning to sexes based on heteronormativity seems strange. However, the performative theory proves to be true as applied to Iranian society, considering the changes that have occurred in gender norms. At the same time, since these changes depend on the scope of agency that the subject enjoys within the country's Islamic discourse, they have not been beyond heteronormativity.

4. Construction and reconstruction of Iranian women's cultural identity is studied within the chronological scope of pre-constitutionalism, post constitutionalism and the current age. Throughout ages, traditional religious discourses and modern Westernized discourses have been competing to regularize Iranian female sex in each era.
5. In Iran, religion has played a central role throughout history in constructing women's cultural identity. Emphasizing the polarized creation of sky and earth, Islam states the binary creation of sexes: essential differences between men and women lead to different ways of identity construction between men and women; the binary of male and female sex naturally leads to heteronormative gender stereotypes. As long as the centrality of Islam holds the relationship between the signifier and the signified, the signification and regularization of sexes do not escape heteronormativity.

6. Three aspects of Iranian women's lifestyle including body maintenance, veiling, work and leisure are regarded as performances reiterating the norms imposed by regulatory discourses. Women's performances in these realms have transformed giving them a modernized identity; however, this modernized signification of female identity remains within the heteronormative gender stereotypes.

7. Under the influence of modern resources of knowledge and globalized media Iranian women consider the construction of their cultural identity reflexively in contrast to objectives of Islamic state that emphasizes religion. The soft power enjoyed by the West through depiction of gender inequality, and women's suppression in Iran is regarded as a “soft war” by the Islamic state of Iran.

**Structure of the thesis.** The thesis consists of an Introduction, two chapters, Conclusion and Bibliography.
CHAPTER 1

THE INFLUENTIAL FACTORS IN CONSTRUCTING IRANIAN WOMEN'S CULTURAL IDENTITY

The present thesis takes the chance to discuss Iranian women's transformation of identity in modern social structure. Thereby, in this section the author sets out by presenting a brief introduction to widely used term of "identity", describing different types of identity and different perspectives toward identity. Here, cultural identity is the main theme and among different aspects of cultural identity, gender identity plays the central role. Gender identity will be defined from different feminist perspectives; predominantly the poststructuralist feminist views of Judith Butler will be discussed. The structuration theory of Giddens will also be appealed to manifest the interaction of Iranian women as agents and the social structure. The analysis of the construction and transformation of Iranian women's identity based on Performative theory of Butler demands exploration of social and cultural discourses that subjected Iranian women throughout the history. The following chapter presents an overview of concept of identity, theories of performativity and structuration, as well as the examination of Iranian social and cultural discourses throughout a century.

1.1. The concept of cultural identity in the cultural and philosophical aspects

"Identity is one of those false friends. We all think we know what the word means and go on trusting it, even when it's slyly starting to say the opposite".26 Identity, though a common term used pervasively by everyone, is an ambiguous and complex concept. Many different contexts use the concept of identity for different purposes. The diversity of meanings that the term bears, all share in one

aspect of identity referring to the word's original Latin root meaning "sameness" or "being the same"\textsuperscript{27}. English dictionary defines identity as "the state or fact of remaining the same, one or ones as under varying aspects or conditions"\textsuperscript{28}.

Identity matters not only as a main issue in academic discourse, but also in social, cultural and political concerns of the contemporary world. It "gives us a location in the world and presents the link between us and the society in which we live"\textsuperscript{29}. It concerns the idea of who somebody is; nevertheless, the concept is different from personality that refers to our personal features and behaviors. "Identity makes the way in which we are the same as others who share that position, and the ways in which we are different from those who do not"\textsuperscript{30}.

Our identity is also associated with visual images. According to Alcoff, "the reality of identity comes from the fact that they are visibly marked on the body itself, guiding if not determining the way we perceive and judge others and are perceived and judged by them"\textsuperscript{31}.

Along with visible features, the behaviors, attitudes, beliefs, positions,… that are unique to an individual or group of people identify people as similar to each other and differentiate them from exterior others.

While our identity is composed of unlimited list of components influencing each other, it cannot be divided up to separate segments. They make a unity and wholeness of our identity that is different from others. Although many individuals might share attachment to each of these elements, "the same combination of them is never encountered in different people, and it is this that makes each human being unique and irreplaceable"\textsuperscript{32}.

\footnotesize
\textsuperscript{28}See at: http://www.dictionary.com/browse/identity
\textsuperscript{30}Ibid. p. 1-2.
To answer the question of "Who are you?" we have a number of possible answers, ranging from items registered in our identity card such name and nationality, or our beliefs, religion, interests, values or social roles. These multiple answers evidently imply a multifaceted identity, against which a person attempts to present a unified identity. There is a theory stating that to reconcile this apparent inconsistency, individuals "construct narratives [...] or they create personalized redefinitions of the meanings of the identity categories they occupy." Such a story is the individual's narrative identity. Narrative identity "is a person’s internalized and evolving life story, integrating the reconstructed past and imagined future to provide life with some degree of unity and purpose." It is "the internalized and evolving story of the self that a person constructs to make sense and meaning out of his or her life". The notion of narrative identity emerged in the social science with the works of McAdams. He proposed the idea that people construct narrative identities in their late adolescent years by making a narrative story of their lives. Narrative identity goes beyond the objective facts with which the person is uniquely known, such as names or fingerprints. It is composed of the salient points in one's life that become part of her identity. This first-person perspective story is one's interpretation of the facts. As a story with theme, beginning, middle and end, it reveals the identity of the character. In this narrative, "the past event is appropriated into one's inner story, and the possible future state is appropriated as a possible continuation of the story.” In constructing their subjective self-defining life stories, people draw heavily on prevailing cultural norms and consider the moral codes of their given culture. Therefore, it is "the joint product of the person him/herself and the culture wherein the person acts, strives and narrates".

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The concept of identity has been a philosophical, sociological and psychological, and cultural notion\textsuperscript{38}.

**Philosophical Notion of Identity**

Philosophical concept of identity concerns the ultimate question of "who are we" and "what does consist our existence as a person over time?" It gives an account of the essential property that makes one who she is over time and preserves it knowable through time. How an individual preserves its sameness over time is the main concern of philosophical concept of identity. According to Leibniz's law in logic "if A is identical with B, then A and B share all their properties"\textsuperscript{39}. Philosophically, sameness is considered in two aspects of numerical and qualitative. Qualitative identity concerns the same qualities of two things such as the same shape or color\textsuperscript{40}. The sameness of two billiard balls refers to their qualitative identity, that these two objects share the same qualitative features. Numerical identity, on the other hand, concerns the sameness of a thing or person through time. It is being the same physical object\textsuperscript{41}. While these two identity types might be essential in identification of a person, numerical identity comes to be more significant in philosophical account of an individual essence, and not individual type. "The question of what makes persons numerically the same over time is known to philosophers as the question of personal identity"\textsuperscript{42}.

Study of the personal identity over time is associated with diachronic aspect of identity, while different aspects of identity at a single time are referred to by the category of synchronic identity. The issue of changes in diachronic aspect of identity over time has been a philosophical problem\textsuperscript{43}. That is how an object such as Theseus's ship or an oak tree or a human being keeps its identity over time

\begin{itemize}
  \item \textsuperscript{38}Söllberger D. On identity: From a philosophical point of view. *Child and Adolescent Psychiatry and Mental Health*, No.7 (1), 2013, pp.1-10
  \item \textsuperscript{40}Perry Th. D. *Professional Philosophy: What it is and why it Matters*. Netherlands, Springer. 1986. P. 41.
\end{itemize}
against the fact that its material substance undergoes change, total or partial. With substituted molecules of the living things or the removing and substituting the damaged parts of the ship, they still preserve their numerical identity.

To explain this problem many identity theories have been established. Generally the theories are divided to two general views of complex and simple identity.

The complex view has a reductionist account, reducing the identity to necessary constituent parts of it, whether psychological or biological, material or immaterial. It "aims to provide necessary and sufficient conditions for personal identity, thereby reducing it to the holding of basic biological or psychological relations"\(^4^4\).

By contrast, the simple view of identity holds "There are no non-circular, informative necessary and sufficient conditions for personal identity: personal identity consists in nothing other than itself"\(^4^5\). Such a view is an independent account of identity. According to this non-reductionist view, bodies, brains or memories are not necessary condition for personal identity. For them "personal identity does not just consist in these continuities (physical or psychological], but it is a quite separate thing"\(^4^6\). It explicitly claims that "personal identity is one thing and the extent of similarity in matter and memory another"\(^4^7\). Some of the theorist of this approach believe that "a person is a separately existing entity, distinct from his brain and body and his various experience, […], a Cartesian Pure Ego, or spiritual substance"\(^4^8\). To sum up, there is no ground for personal identity, and the identity does not consist in anything. " An object such as a person at a time t1 is identical with an object such as a person at 2 if the very t1object and the


\(^{4^5}\)Ibid. p.4.


very t2 object in question are one and the same”\textsuperscript{49}. Persons are entities separate from their physical body or brain and cannot be reduced to facts about the brain or body.

Some known defenders of the complex view are said to include lock and Hume and defenders of simple view are George Butler and Reid\textsuperscript{50}. Complex view seeks to find the necessary and sufficient conditions of personal identity. Therefore, it reduces personal identity to its biological or psychological elements. As long as these conditions sustain, personal identity sustains\textsuperscript{51}.

One of the criterions of complex view is body theory. It maintains, "P2 at t2 is the same person as P1 at t1 if and only if p2 has the same body"\textsuperscript{52}. In this theory, the persistence of matter is central to personal identity. This theory is elaborated from Aristotle’s discussion on substance and matter. In body theory S2 at t2 has the same mater as S1 at t1, or at least, in the case of gradual replacement, the matter be obtained from S1. This is what Aristotle believed as the necessary continuation of matter for existence of substance\textsuperscript{53}.

Brain is the other element of body theory. Brain theory holds, "P2 at t2 is the same person as P1 at t1 if and only if enough of brain of P1 at t1 survives in P2 at t2 to be the brain of the living person".

John Lock, to deal with the problem of personal identity, presented the memory theory. For Locke neither body, a thinking substance nor soul can be the essential and sufficient conditions of personal identity. Rather he believes in a third term that is consciousness, between body and soul. Here, consciousness is not identified with brain, because brain as a substance of body may change, the same way that other substances might change. "Consciousness can be transferred from one soul to another [...] or from one substance to another". What matters is


continuity of consciousness. If either the soul or substance is changed, the personal identity can sustain under the conditions that consciousness remains the same. In other words, "as far as consciousness can be extended backwards to any action or thought, so far reaches the identity of that person".

In fact, Locke presents the issue of diachronic personal identity mainly to address the current matter of his day, the matter of resurrection. He seeks to give an account of how after bodily death and decay, an individual can be resurrected even in different bodies. The matter of continuation of being the same person is associated with the notion of identity. To realize the meaning of sameness of person, we must know what Locke means by the word person. He defines person as "a thinking intelligent being that has reason and reflection and can consider itself as itself". Person as a rational being receives sensory information of the environment by the mind and then reflects on them. Consciousness is the base of these two functions of perception and reflection. It is impossible for anyone to perceive without perceiving that he does perceive. At the same time, this conscious self is a forensic person who being conscious of the changes reacts to changes.

From the above definition, John Perry construes, "while the intelligent being continues to exist and to be intelligent, it must be the same person". Locke writes, "as far as any intelligent Being can repeat the Idea of any past action with the same consciousness it had of it at first, and with the same consciousness it has of any present Action; so far it is the same personal Self".

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58 Ibid. p. 211.
60 Locke J. The works of John Locke, Esq: In three volumes: The sixth edition. To which is added, the life of the author; and a collection of several of his pieces published by Mr. Desmaizeaux. London: Gale ECCO, 2010. p.148
Joseph Butler, with simple view on personal identity, criticized John Locke believing that "consciousness presupposes identity and thus cannot constitute it". Butler, in his non-reductionist simple view, objects that Lock's account of identity is circular. According to Butler, it is self-evident that "consciousness of personal identity presumes, and therefore cannot constitute personal identity". Butler believed, "present consciousness of past actions, or feelings is not necessary to our being the same person". For Butler "a thing is what it is and not another thing." Holding that persons are simply person continuants, Butler believes in no criteria of identity through time. For Butler identity is something that person feels inwardly.

However, Butler's circularity objection fails when we dig into what Locke meant by consciousness. By "consciousness" that constitutes personal identity, Locke does not mean consciousness of one's personal identity. Consciousness implies consciousness of our past thoughts or actions, and not consciousness of being the same person. In this way, consciousness does not presuppose personal identity. "X is the same person as Y if and only if X approves of some thought or action of Y." Noonan also writes that Locke would simply answer Butler's objection. Locke's notion of consciousness is a notion of knowledge, but its content is not personal identity, and its possessors are not persons, but thinking substances.

Reid, along with Butler, writes, "To say that my remembrance that I did such a thing, or my consciousness, makes me the person who did it, is an absurdity." He has a simple view, maintaining that identity is beyond the fluctuating properties of self. His perception of person is an indivisible something.

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Though the person has different changing constituents, his self to which they belong, remains permanent. Reid writes, "I am not action, I am not feeling, I am something that thinks and acts and suffers". Making a division between self and its properties, Reid insists that personal identity is far from its properties.

Reid criticizes Locke believing that his theory is internally inconsistent. He gives the example of a general who was flogged as a boy at school. The general now has memory of his actions as officer but he has forgotten been flogged, so he is not that boy, but the officer. However, there is a transitive relation in personal identity. If X is the same person as Y, and Y is the same person as Z, then X is the same person Z. (X=Y, Y=Z, X=Z). In fact, the general of the mentioned example has the potential consciousness of his boyhood thoughts and actions, that at the Day of Judgment can be restored by God.

One of the other theories that is usually categorized under non-reductionalist theories is soul theory. Defenders of it believe that person P2 at t2 is the same as P1 at t1 if and only if it shares the same soul. For Plato the base of a person is his immaterial soul. Descartes, who demonstrated the separation of body and mind, promoted the idea that mind can persist without body. To establish this idea, he uses Leibniz principle of indiscernible; that is, if two objects numerically share the same properties that are identical.

Since body and soul have different properties, they are different. While body is unconscious and changing, soul is conscious and permanent. Because the changing material cannot be the source of identity, soul is what identifies us.

The contemporary scholar, Swinburne, also believes in soul theory. According to Swinburne, the persons in addition to physical matter have immaterial stuff. The continuity of that material body is provided with immaterial

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soul that persists over time. In Islamic perspective, also soul is regarded as the sufficient condition for the persistence of identity.

**Psychological Notion of Identity**

While the notion of personal identity concerns our persistence as the same person over time, psychological notion of it aims at finding the processes through which this identity has developed and evolves.

A psychologist named E. Erikson theorized the concept of identity. For Erikson, identity is a "process and outcome of human development across the life span". The psychoanalytic theory that he proposed comprises eight stages from infancy to adulthood. The person encounters psychological crisis in each stage. The resolve of these crises or its failure has positive or negative consequences in person's developing identity. Successful completion of each stage leads to healthy identity and acquisition of virtues in each stage as prerequisites for the crises of following stages. The failure to complete a stage leads to a reduced ability to overcome next crisis, yet it can be compensated later.

Though a person challenges the crises psychologically, they are distinctly set by society. The developmental stages of identity "embrace society's influence, stating, "Individual and society are intricately woven, dynamically related in continual change".

**Sociological Notion of Identity**

Sociological notion of identity deals with the interaction of society and self, considering the way one identifies herself with same people and through this sameness differentiates herself from the others.

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Tajfel and Turner (1986) developed the concept of social identity. According to Turner, social identity refers to "those aspects of a person's self-concept based upon their group membership". Tajfel and Turner proposed a particular order in evaluating others as "us" or "them". This mental process includes three stages of "social categorization", "social identification" and "social comparison". First through social categorization, we categorize people and know our own category. In the second stage, we assume the identity of a group in order to behave properly according to the norms. In the final stage, having categorized and identified ourselves with a group, we compare our group to other groups to maintain our self-esteem. Therefore, through our group membership we identify ourselves with in-groups that discriminates us from out-groups.

Role identity is a dimension of social identity. This concept developed mainly by Styker (1980), refers to the social roles we play. "The self is seen as embracing multiple identities linked to the roles and role relationships that constitute significant elements of social structures". The way one is socially expected to behave when he or she holds a specific social position is related to her role identity.

**Cultural Notion of Identity**

While membership in a social group defines one's social identity, the particular culture that one belongs designates his or her cultural identity. The term culture is a broad concept with multiple meanings and diversified dimensions. It includes language, customs, values, beliefs, religion, traditions, art, literature, and even visible material or physical features shared by a group. It is "the sum total of the material and spiritual activities and products of a given social group which
distinguishes it from other similar groups”  

Culture is also defined as "a historically created system of meaning and significance [...], a system of beliefs and practices in terms of which a group of human beings understand, regulate and structure their individual and collective lives”  

One's differentiation from others and identification with some people is inseparable from one's culture. "Culture shapes identity through giving meaning to experiences, making it possible to opt for one mode of subjectivity among others.” To be identified with a culture, one accepts the beliefs, norms, values and social practices of the culture as a part of her self-concept.

Lustig and Koester (1999) explain cultural identity as "one’s sense of belonging to a particular culture or ethnic group”. It displays "familial and cultural dimensions of a person’s identity, and how others perceive him or her, i.e., factors that are salient to a person’s identity both as perceived by the individual and how others perceive the person’s identity”.

Cultural identity is formed in a process that results from membership in a particular culture, and it involves learning about and accepting the traditions, heritage, language, religion, ancestry, aesthetics, thinking patterns and social structures of culture.

Cultural identity is the outward expression of one's culture. Culturally structured society, or even a group of at least two people, gives meaning and significance to the lives of people who are born and grown up in that culture. The members' knowledge of their shared heritage, tradition, custom, norms and language provides them an affiliation with that cultural group with which they

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identify themselves. While the behavior of members might seem meaningless or strange for out-groups, they are significant for in-group members. Cultural identity, though, is constructed socially, influences one's personal behaviors and individual identity. One observes cultural expectations of the group because of either deep belonging sense, a biased feeling to it, or simply because of her membership in the group. The negligent members might be marked or even abjected.

Indeed, all bases of identity act in the same way to achieve identity standards. Therefore, "individuals act to control perceptions of who they are in a situation to match the feedback they receive in the situation"\(^84\). According to Hall, "identities can function as point of identification and attachment only because of their capacity to exclude, to leave out, to render outside abjected"\(^85\).

When individuals receive negative feelings, they change their act and perceptions and mainly their identity standards to reduce negative feedbacks. They change their actions so that their perceptions would match a reference. Alternatively, when the individual's identity standards correspond to feedbacks, that identity sustains. At the same time, here, we do not reject the agency of the individual to change the standard norms through violated repetition of actions.

The fact that any culture and the identity that it determines is a historical heritage doesn't imply that it is permanently stable and fixed to past. Rather it is open to change through members' intercultural communication. Myron and Koester (1993) describe intercultural communication as "a symbolic, transactional, contextual process in which people create shared meanings"\(^86\). That is, people of different cultures are engaged in communication with each other and permeating the cultural borders, they meet different cultures. The cultural interactions, conscious and unconscious, contribute to growth of cultures. Therefore, cultures


"are at least partially multicultural in their origins and constitution. Each carries a bit of the other"\(^87\).

In our highly mediatized world, intercultural communication proves to be common and indispensable. New media, having passed the wired and wireless electronic stages, provide us a digital communication. Such a drastic change of communication mode has a significant influence not only on the form and content of the communicated message, but also on the communicators' most aspects of life, mainly their perceptions, values and lifestyles. This pervasive opportunity of intercultural communication "is shaking the roots of cultural identity by weakening or strengthening the intensity of the relationship between people and community"\(^88\). In the universal cyberspace, the meeting point of different cultures, new cultural identities emerge. The new cultural identity challenges the traditional cultural identity that has its roots in one's socio-historical context. Today, the individual's sense of belonging to a culture to define her cultural identity is not necessarily confined to her historical heritage or geographical space. The shattered sense of belonging to one's socio-cultural group leads to a kind of identity crisis. The term identity crisis is defined at Collins Dictionary as "the condition of being uncertain of one's feelings about oneself, esp. with regard to character, goals, and origins, occurring esp. in adolescence as a result of growing up under disruptive, fast-changing conditions"\(^89\).

"A cultural identity crisis happens when the codes of the cultural history with which individual identified himself clash with the codes of the newly-adopted culture. When an individual, with an already collective formed identity tries to absorb metropolis culture, he confronts a lack"\(^90\). This sense

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of lack occurs at the upheaval of challenge between one's ethnic culture and the globalized culture. Ozdemir acknowledges identity as one of the prominent "causes of identity crisis". He maintains that the main reason is that globalization blurs the boundaries between "image" and "identity". While identity represents self-image, the concept of image refers to outsiders' perception of the culture and the way they represent it. As a result of media and intercultural communication image and identity mingle. When a nation receives negative images of their culture, they seek a distance from their culture to compensate the discrepancy. The more negative images the more identity clashes will be, leading to more identity crisis. Shaping new identities, they try to be detached from old identity, which is associated by negative images to be identified with positive images." Most of the time the image tends to be more negative because it is used as a material for identity formation in other cultures. Since an identity is biased towards positive cultural attributes, the negative images produce identity crisis. To overcome to these identity crisis one shapes new identity.\(^{91}\)

Formation of new cultural identity proves the flexibility of cultural identity. Cultural identity includes different intertwined categories of religion, nationality, ethnicity, gender, language, race, etc., each of which might be subject to change. Following, some of the categories of cultural identity are explained briefly.

**Religious Identity**

The name of one's religion implies her religious identity. When an individual identifies himself, for instance with Jewish, Christianity, Islam, Buddhism, he or she is identified with Jews, Christians, Muslims or Buda. This identity differentiates him from other religious groups. Religious identity concerns

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"the question of what kinds of persons and practices can and cannot be included" in that special religion.  

Any religion as an ideology provides members of the religious group with special norms, basic life principles, values, and lifestyle that are shared by the members. K. Yaprintseva stresses that it is largely religious norms that keeps modern society within the framework of a cultural model. The cultural identity induced by religion, sometimes can be visible in their behavior and lifestyle, including for instance their eating manner, dressing style, or greeting manner.  

Those who are identified by the same religious category have different commitment to the group depending on their religiousness. Religious commitment and religious involvement are two factors concerning one's affiliation to religious identity. "Involvement in religious activities such as group worship develops social bonding and feelings of belonging to the group. Religious commitment refers to one's commitment to group beliefs, rather than the group members themselves." Though the members are identified under a same religious category, they have varying level of religious involvement and commitment. Religious identity influences one's individual and collective life. The individual dimension concerns "whether the person organizes his or her life along a set of regulations, values, beliefs, and practices". Collective dimension of religious identity entails a feeling of belonging to a religious group to differentiate oneself from others.  

From a poststructuralist perspective, religion can be regarded as kind of knowledge produced by discourse. Since the domineering discourses are influential on one's perception of his or her religion, the identity that religion gives its members cannot be exempt from discourse. Depending on the influential


93 Япринцева К. Л. Феномен культурной идентичности в пространстве культуры: Дис. ... канд. культурологических наук: 24.00.01. Челябинск, 2006. URL: http://www.dissercat.com/content/fenomen-kulturnoi-identichnosti-v-prostranstve-kultury


discourses, one's religious identity might be significantly preeminent or it might be eclipsed by other aspects of identity.

**Racial Identity**

Racial identity "refers to the racial category or categories that an individual uses to name him- or herself based on factors including racial ancestry, ethnicity, physical appearance and" etc\(^{96}\). Central factors that are known to classify an individual under an especial racial identity include, "physical appearance and the culture and history of one's racial groups"\(^{97}\). Generally, there are two types of views on race: essentialism and constructivism or anti-essentialism. The first group believes in fixed and inherited nature of race. It maintains that human biological spices naturally sort themselves into different groups named as races such as red, black, white, and yellow. However, for anti-essentialists, racial classifications are not more than intellectual products, produced by a special cultural time and setting. Race is not an inherited essence, but a social imposition\(^{98}\). For Hall, racial identity is "produced within specific historical and institutional sites, within specific discursive formations and practices and by specific enunciative strategies"\(^{99}\). There are also similar classification of approaches toward understanding the concept of race: objective view of the race and ideological construction of race. According to objectivists, human beings are naturally divided to races based on their biological and physical differences. For the other group, race is an illusionary concept created "to meet an ideological need". Against the insistence of contemporary racial theories on constructed nature of race as a socio-historical product, in practice race seems to be an objective fact. "One simply is one's race"\(^{100}\).

**Ethnic Identity**


\(^{97}\) Ibid. p. 218.


\(^{100}\) Crichlow W. *Race, Identity and Representation in Education*. London and New York: Routledge, 2013. pp. 4-6
Ethnic identity, though overlapping with racial identity, is different from it in some aspects. While racial identity divides people based on biological and physical inherited characteristics, ethnic identity refers to shared cultural traditions. These cultural traits include language, religion, common history, customs or a belief in shared ancestry. "Ethnicity is a self-perceived community of people with a shared heritage. Shared heritage involves aspects such as religious practices, language use, traditions, orientation to the past, ancestry values, economics and aesthetics"\textsuperscript{101}. Ethnic identity, involving some form of kinship or family "is associated with genealogy. Therefore, all people are members of an ethnic group"\textsuperscript{102}. Ethnic identity, though seems to be given at birth as a stable identity, proves to be fluid and subject to change depending to one's contextual structure. The "significance of a given ethnic attribute can change and as such, one can be said to have some choice in the matter since one can choose the sociological and psychological significance of the given trait"\textsuperscript{103}. Ethnic identity occasionally coincides with national identity, yet it is not necessarily restricted to one's native nation. "An ethnic group only exists where members consider themselves to belong to such a group; a conscious sense of belonging is critical"\textsuperscript{104}.

The primary ethnic group that serves as a carrier of ethnic and cultural traditions is the family which is a cultural phenomenon as it is\textsuperscript{105}. It is the family that forms ethnic identity and translates to the following generations cultural and social norms, behavioral patterns typical of a certain culture\textsuperscript{106}, lays the basics of ethnic identity and allows the woman to identify herself as part of a larger – ethnic

\textsuperscript{104} Ibid. p. 309.
\textsuperscript{105} Хасанали Ш. М. Традиции обучения и воспитания в контексте современных проблем иранской семьи: Дисс. ... канд. пед. наук. Душанбе, 2010.
I. Leskova finds the ethnic aspect of cultural identity more influential and significant than individual manifestations of culture. It has been claimed that, "ethnic identity is connected with language." Language is not only a means of communication, but also it is a maker and indicator of the user's ethnic identity. It is demonstrated that societies of common language share some common cultural features. "The accent, dialect, and language variations reveal speakers' membership in particular speech communicates, social class, ethnic and national groups." At the same time language does not always constrain boundaries of identity, it can liberate identity from barriers through offering new opportunities. Therefore, the identity that a language gives cannot be fixed.

**National Identity**

National identity refers to "feelings of closeness to and pride in one's country and its symbols." It implies the country where one is born. Meanwhile it is a socially constructed identity that "entails learning about a group's defining customs, expectations and values and making them one's own." According to Anderson, nations are imagined communities, "because the members of even the smallest nation will never know most of their fellow members, or meet them or even hear of them, yet in the mind of each lives the image of their national community."
communication"115. The belief on essentiality of the concept of national identity is questioned. Wodak believes that "national identity is discursively constructed and internalized to influence our social practices"116. The dominant influential discourses, such as news and medial can play significant role in shaping people's national identity or even invoking patriotism. Patriotism "refers to the positive emotion of love for one's own people and homeland"117.

According to Stuart Hall, there are two views of cultural identity. The first attitude defines cultural identity "in terms of one shared culture… one true self hiding inside the many other, more superficial or artificially imposed selves, which people with shared history and ancestor hold in common". This view of cultural identity considers common essence of oneness or being one people in historically shared cultural codes. In the second perspective, cultural "identities are the names we give to the different ways we are positioned by, and position ourselves within the narrative of the past"118. This kind of identity that comes from outside is unstable and subject to change through the history. Therefore, for Hall, cultural identity is "a matter of becoming as well as being"119.

The challenge between the views toward identity as a matter of being or becoming is also manifested in other fields of science of humanity. The essentialists accepted a pre-given essence for everything. However, post moderns with anti-essentialist roots shattered the ideas of fixed meanings and hence, stable identity, believing in indeterminacy and discursive constructions.

Hall classifies three conceptions of identity including "Enlightenment subject", "sociological subject", and postmodern subject120.

119Ibid., p. 236.
The first group conceptualized the individual as a rational being with an inner core inherited to him that will be unfolded through life while remaining unchanged.121.

The notion of sociological subject questioned the autonomous nature of this inner core, arguing the significance of social interactions that formed and modified the inner core through cultural world of outside. Symbolic interactionist elaborated this concept of identity. "From this analytical stance, self and society are two sides of the same coin"122. Structural symbolic interactionism, developed in 20th century mainly by Herbert Blumer, shares the basic ideas with traditional symbolic interactionism developed by Mead in 19th century. "Symbolic interaction involves interpretation or ascertaining the meanings of the actions or remarks of other persons, or conveying indications to another person as to how he is to act"123. People subjectively impose meanings to the objects of the world and based on their interpretations of the symbols such as language or action they interact. Symbolic interactionism emphasizes that the individual's identity is constructed in her interactions with others. People in their interactions, invoke a set of their identities and then they "seek to have their identities verified by others by assessing others’ reactions to their behavioral outputs to see if these outputs are consistent with an identity and are acceptable to others"124. Considering the meanings attributed to one's interactions, as well as the verifications or rejections the individual shapes her identity. Therefore, identities are always subject to change. "Social actors continually participate in a process of becoming. … attach [ing] multiple meanings to themselves and to others, using identity labels"125.

Postmodernists shatter the individual's transcend centrality and his fixed and essential identity. For postmodernists, the subject is a fragmented being who

has no essential core of identity, and is to be regarded as a process in a continual state of dissolution rather than a fixed identity or self that endures unchanged over time".126 This open-ended decentered subject is "historically, not biologically defined. The subject assumes different identities at different times"127.

Michael Foucault, one of prominent postmodernists, believes that modern institutions such as hospitals, schools or prisons are authorities that keep the individual under a gaze of surveillance and the individual having internalized the norms of the discourse, are objectified and determined by power. "For Foucault, it is the discourse of truth and knowledge from which are derived our models of normal and abnormal behavior"128. In his essay, 'The Subject and Power', he attributes two meanings to the word subject: "subject to someone else by control and dependence; and tied to his own identity by a conscience or self-knowledge. Both meanings suggest a form of power which subjugates and makes subject to"129. With emphasize on the history of knowledge, Foucault believes that Subject is a not the center of knowledge, it is a form that is historically conditioned. He rejects the modern philosophical tradition based on which "the individual subject is a constant, ahistorical ground and source of human knowledge, meaning and value"130. The individuals are constantly regulating and monitoring their behavior to be identified acceptable.

Foucault's concept of "self-surveillance" is close to what Anthony Giddens states as "self-reflexivity". Reflexivity refers to "monitoring of behavior and its context"131. Giddens believing in fluid and changing identities in post traditional societies maintains that we are constantly responding and adjusting to the changing environment around us. As individuals we evolve with and within the longer

context in which we live"\textsuperscript{132}. While in pre-modern social structures fixed identities are inherited through traditions, in modern societies the individuals face unlimited choices. "What to do? How to act? Who to be? These are focal questions for everyone living in circumstances of late modernity"\textsuperscript{133}. In a fragmented modern world, where traditions are dissolving, we constantly need to react and adjust ourselves to the changing environment.

**Gender Identity**

Gender identity refers to an individual's personal sense of identity as masculine or feminine or some combination\textsuperscript{134}. It is "a person's sense of identification with either the male or female sex, as manifested in appearance, behavior, and other aspects of a person's life"\textsuperscript{135}. Gender identity directs the way we feel an internal sense of femininity or masculinity or none, and the way others judge us. To be identified as a female or male, we follow heteronormative gender behaviors and desires that reveal our gender identity.

**Gender Identity from different Feminist Perspectives**

Female gender identity, gender inequality and marginalization of women have been controversial issues both in academic level and among common people. The concept of female gender has been treated from many different feminist perspectives, each attempting to reach especial goals in order to emancipate women from the marginalized position. Although it is impossible to categorize feminist perspectives into tidy schools of thought, here some ostensibly prominent approaches, including liberal, radical, socialist, psychoanalyst, and poststructuralist feminism will be discussed.

**Exploration of Liberal Feminism**

Liberal feminism in its classic formulation began in 18th century in Mary Wollstonecraft's "A Vindication of the Rights of Women, and John Staurt Mill's "The Subjection of Women", and in 19th century by Women's suffrage movements. Liberal feminism primarily challenged for gender equality. They sought to achieve social and legal equality between women and men. It emphasized that each individual woman has power and capability to alter the society's discriminatory practices that subordinated women; therefore, they claimed equal social and educational opportunities. Staurt Mill writes, "women should be recognized as fully rational and worthy of the same civil liberties and economic opportunities as men".

Liberal feminists endeavored to provide women a gender identity free from false definitions of women as physically and intellectually less capable compared to men, rather they attempted to prove female gender as rational human beings equal to men.

For Mary Wollstonecraft, "Women's nature was rational and gender-neutral. From this point of view, femininity can be viewed as an artificial condition which subordinates women within a patriarchal culture". In her major book, she firmly demands for women's right to be educated. "Strengthen the female mind by enlarging it, and there will be an end to blind obedience". She regarded education as a way to save women from the darkness. While consenting the day's current belief at position of women as householders, she encouraged that educated and financially independent women enter society "to struggle for herself instead of eating the bitter bread of dependence".

Radical Feminism

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137 Ibid. p. 17.
140 Ibid. p. 96.
While liberal feminists concentrated on women as individual rational beings, radical feminists categorized women as a class dominated by the other class called man.

Radical Feminism "arose out of the consciousness-raising movements of the 1960s, where women, for the first time, theorized their second class status within the male dominated social world"\textsuperscript{141}. They called for radical changes in society to combat the oppressive social roles and institutions which are structured based on patriarchy and male supremacy. The aim was not social equality; rather it was to undermine patriarchy and traditional gender roles constructed by it. Women have been convinced to be secondary and dependent to men. "We cannot speak of liberating ourselves until we free ourselves from this myth and accept ourselves as primary"\textsuperscript{142}. While rejecting gender roles, they believed in a gender identity common among all women, who shared common oppressive experiences.

Radical feminists are divided to two groups of libertarian and cultural feminists. Radical libertarian feminism hold the idea that maternity and reproductive process hinders women's improvement. Thus, they welcome any reproductive technology, believing that women are not interested in child giving. Firestone, a known figure of this trend, challenges against distinctions based on "genital differences". She writes, "It has become necessary to free humanity from the tyranny of its biology"\textsuperscript{143}.

Mackinnon, another known radical feminist, mainly fights against women's sexual oppression in sexual harassment and pornography. She views pornography as reinforcement of patriachs system that objectifies women to male subjects. Subservient women turn to be body parts and as a result, lesser positions are ascribed to them. Mackinnon follows Kant's belief in monogamous and his condemnation of any sexual interaction outside marriage, which is seen as

objectification. Pornography dehumanizes women through making them objects to be used and possessed by consumers. She states that with pornography men possess women and silence them, therefore pornography "institutionalizes the sexuality of male supremacy."

While liberal radical feminists view women's reproductive capabilities oppressive, cultural radical feminism celebrates female essence as women's power. Idealizing female nature, they "effort to revalidate undervalued female attributes." Emphasizing on women's biologically inherited attributes such as being more kind, nurturing, caring and emotional, they hold that these female features would make a better world. Therefore, for radical feminists gender identity is inherited in women's unique essence of femaleness.

Mary Daly, a well-known cultural feminist, in a hermeneutic approach reinterpreted Christian script. In her first book, "The Church and the Second Sex" (1968), she criticizes the way Christianity idealizes passive, submissive women while making an illusion of equality between man and women. Daly holds that the masculine image of God in everybody's mind is one of the roots of male domination. Transcend God is the creator of nature, which is associated with woman. God is the subject /I/ Self in relation to object /it/ other. In a patriarchal society where men view women as the second sex, men take the role of I/Self opposed to women as nature/object. "Indeed, many would find it unfitting, not quite normal to refer to God as 'she'… [man as] "the image and glory of God" finds priority over women. In another book, she states, "If God is man, then the male is God". Daly proposed a new immanent God, "who is with us", who is "degendered". Daly believes in female energy flowing from women's biological

condition. Her Gyn/Ecology is the "reclaiming of life-loving female energy". All men due to their childless state realize their dependency on women and attempt to control them. Female life energy is to be released from male control by refusing values set by patriarchy. Women, rejecting both positive and negative attributes, such as nurturing and jealousy, would return to their original femaleness that is not decided by fathers.

**Socialist Feminism**

Following radical feminism arose the second wave of feminism. Socialist feminism rose in late 1960. This branch of feminism argues that women's oppression has both cultural and economic roots. Rejecting the radical feminists belief on patriarchy as the only principle source of women's oppression, they regard women's financial dependence to men as the reason of their subjection. However, they reject the Marxist idea that the end of capitalism and wealth balance would end women's oppression. Liberation of women entails struggle against any oppressive social system including class, gender, race and nationality.

Reed, a Marxist feminist, rejected the radicals view that all women are equally oppressed because of belonging to a class labeled as women. Rather, following Engels, she places the root of women's oppression in class society, founded upon private property. Women declined to be second sex when the society underwent transition from hunting to labor division, where men directed the roles, and enjoyed the out coming wealth as their private property. Consequently, marriage and family were institutionalized and owned by men. They took the control of wives, who were in charge of house.

However, along with women who became the subordinated class, the mass of men were also subjugated under the domination of master class. Reed,

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encourages a "class war against capitalism by united men and women of oppressed class"\textsuperscript{152}.

Socialist feminists reject the essential gender identity, instead, they believe that "It was with the rise of patriarchal class society that biological make up of women became the ideological pretext for keeping them in a servile status"\textsuperscript{153}.

\emph{Psychoanalytic Feminism}

The social roots of women's oppression were displaced by psychoanalytic feminists insist on the psyche as the origin of our identification as male or female. Feminist psychology criticizes the traditional psychological assumptions as male-centered theories. It regards Freud's theory of "penis envy" and "hysteria" as gendered biased contributions to build gender roles.

Nancy Chodorow, (1944), a feminist psychoanalyst, bases the roots of women's oppression in development of ego after pre-oedipal stage in nuclear patriarchal family. She used the theory of object relations, according to which mother is the most important object in baby's life. The infant must differentiate him/herself to form the ego. However, this development process differs for girls and boys. Girls identify themselves with their mothers and continue to have a stronger bond with her and therefore less individuation and more fluidity of ego than boys do\textsuperscript{154}. A Boy, to form his ego, differentiate himself from mother. "He identifies with father to avoid cultural punishment".\textsuperscript{155} Through this detachment from mother, he develops his autonomous sense of independency from mother. Since father has a less role in childcare, the boy's identification with father is qualitatively different from girl's identification and bondage with mother. The infant boy, once bisexual, is then encouraged to define his ego away from mother.

\textsuperscript{154}Eagleton M. \textit{A Concise Companion to Feminist Theory}. Wiley-Blackwell, 2008. p.120.
in order to be socialized, he learns to repress his femininity and degrade it to gain independent self. Chodorow writes, "The child knows its father from the beginning as a separate being, unless the father provides the same kind of primacy relationship and care as the mother". She suggests that the father's involvement would change the psychosexual Structures. With fathers taking roles similar to those of mothers, the infant would gain ego both in relation to others (like girls), and separated from others. Hence, the infant of this dual parenting system will not grow up according to gender roles.

Julia Kristeva, (1941), is another prominent psychoanalytic feminist. Though she rejects being a feminist, her ideas are elaborated to debate women's oppression. Kristeva places the sexual differences in the "semiotic", which is "the time of mother/child bondage, a moment of bodily eroticism, melodies and maternal rhythms, all of which precede the symbolic-the paternal zone". Symbolic is the element of meaning. It is associated with rules of language, grammar and syntax as well as with culture, while semiotics is associated with nature. Kristeva accepting two aspects of semiotic and symbolic or unconscious and conscious to the language argues that the first is gendered feminine, while the latter implies masculinity. Indeed, semiotic arises from "chora". Kristeva uses the Platonic concept of "chora" to refer to "the place where the developing thing, a child, is nurtured [...] and the mother is responding to the child's needs". In this phase, the child understands itself not separated from mother and all the objects around her, but the child identifies itself with mother. The language that the infant hear signifies no references, but it is just sound and rhythm. This relationship between mother and child in intervened by symbolic. The child experiences the separation from mother because "consciousness, the ego, and identity are all promised on the intervention of the symbolic in the mother-child relation".

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156 Ibid].p. 79-80.
159 Lechte J. Julia Kristeva. Routledge, 2012. p.130
Entering this stage (mirror stage in words of Lacan, 1936), the child begins to identify itself as a separate body. This is the phase of crossing from semiotic to symbolic "in which language points at persons and things and gives them a public meaning". Symbolic is the state of rules and signifying system and representations. However, the individual in communication meaning fluxes between two aspects of semiotic and symbolic. This oscillating between semiotic and symbolic does not only configure language, but "it is also constitutive of the subject... Kristeva refers to this unstable subject with her notion of subject in process". The individual oscillating between these two modes are open to have their own individual account of their identity. Therefore, Kristeva believes in Fluid nature of identity. The construction of one's self is neither dependent on symbolic nor to semiotics, rather it lingers on the borderline. Since there is no clear boundary between conscious and unconscious, the subject cannot be formed stably.

The fluctuation between two phases is evident in the horror of "abject", which refers to the physical flows such as urine, sweat, vomit, menstrual blood, etc... that threaten and puncture our ideologically controlled body. "To feel secure, one has to get rid of them and abject them." This is the same way that the infant abjects mother to enter the clean realm of rule and symbolic. The mother through toilet training or eating processes helps the child with codes of social behavior. The child leaves the unfilthy realm, associated with mother, to gain individuality. In the cross from the horror of abject, he not only represses the mother, but also represses "all women in general who are reduced to maternal function". However, the individual as a subject in process has the capacity to change the signification and in the case of women, their identification only with the function...
of motherhood can be changed. Rather, she returns to the maternal body at last in part to free woman from this very reduction\textsuperscript{164}. While Kristeva celebrates motherhood, she also insists, "an ideal mother has to turn away from her children to tend her own flowers, so that she too can bloom\textsuperscript{165}.

To sum up, Kristeva believes that there is no biological gender identity, rather the individual entering symbolic chooses to identify itself with mother or father, and as a result, the child will display femininity or masculinity.

\textit{Postmodern Feminism}

Postmodern feminism eschew any single reason of women's oppression. Celebrating diversity and variety, "they invite each woman who reflects on their writings to b become the kind of feminist she wants to be\textsuperscript{166}. Postmodern feminists, align with all postmodernists reject phallocentric thought, the traditional male (phallus) dominated absolute ideas that believe in centrality holding the stable relation of signifier and signified.

Postmodern feminists, derive their ideas from psychology or from existentialist thoughts or from post structuralism. Helen Cixous, along with French feminists like Kristeva and Irigaray draws on the theories of Jacques Lacan, whose works were both a ground for analysis and criticism. Laugh of Medusa is a feminist essay that "seeks to empower women while denouncing their ageless oppression under patriarchal social structure\textsuperscript{167}. Cixous believes that gender identity is constructed inside language\textsuperscript{168}. Cixous locates the feminine writing in the pre-oedipal or imaginary stage, where the binary opposites of phallocentric and male domination are not yet constructed, rather it is the phase associated with mother's body. She argues that such female writing practice can deconstruct the


phallocentric culture that has inscribed meanings to women's bodies. Language arising from absence is a chain of endless substitutions that remove us from the truth. There is the danger that the pre-existent language will speak for us. Cixous asks women to express their desires and identities in their writings, which are free from phallocentric base. "Woman must write herself: must write about women and bring women to writing"

Simone de Beauvoir is another known figure of postmodern feminism. Her well-known statement, "one is not born, but rather becomes a woman", proves her idea that neither biology, nor psychology makes femininity. Social structures and upbringings shape woman as the second sex. She asserts that throughout history women had to construct their identity in dependence to men. Being regarded as man's other, a woman can't enjoy an autonomous existence. In marginalized position, women have only fulfilled men's desires. While men have been self/subjects, women have been regarded as other/object to this transcendental, obsolete and essential subject. While she doesn't design a clear emancipatory path, she generally believes that "All women must make themselves completely independent of men through work". Women must refused to be confined to any dependent and marginalized position to men. " let her have her independent existence and she will continue none the less to exist for him also, mutually recognizing each other as subject, each will yet remain for the other another". Beauvoir, believing in natural differences between men and women claims for the reciprocal relations between women and men. By mutual recognition, Beauvoir means "put oneself in the other's place. As subject in a given

experience or situation and then to be able to retreat again as an object facing the other.”

One of the current notable poststructuralist feminists is Judith Butler (1956), an American gender theorist. She is eminent for her deconstruction of conventional gender norms mainly in her "Gender Trouble: Feminism and Subversion of Identity", and the book that followed it under the title of "Bodies That Matter: On the Discursive Limits of Sex". In these two works she has introduced the theory of performativity, that will be the framework of the present thesis. To discuss the theory in details, the following section is particularly allotted to Judith Butler's performatory theory and her poststructuralist ideas on gender identity.

1.2. A comparative analysis of Judith Butler’s views on identity and Anthony Giddens’ structurarion theory

Judith Butler, a poststructuralist feminist, believes in the fluidity of constructed identities. She deconstructs the known binaries, which are not more than naturalized illusions. Her "Gender Trouble" is an attempt to trouble and collapse the accepted and idealized understandings of gender, especially heterosexuality. Heterosexual scheme of body represents the desire of bodies with especial anatomy to the bodies with opposite anatomic configuration. Butler argues, "Social and linguistic implications follow from this ostensibly irreducible fact".

Butler denounces the earlier understanding of women as category, considering that categorization overpasses the cultural, class, racial, ethnic, etc…differences. Categorizing bodies based on sex imposes binary dualities on them and defines bodies as heterosexual "in order to maintain reproductive

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sexuality as a compulsory order. Repeated over time, categorization fixes, bounds and stabilizes what counts as a properly sexed body”\textsuperscript{176}.

She deconstructs the binary of sex/gender, rejecting Beauvoir's definition of sex and gender. Sex is not a natural category, neither is it the origin of gender as a cultural one; rather both sex and gender are cultural constructs with no originality. Body is not regarded as a natural “mute facticity”\textsuperscript{177}. Body like gender is shaped by discourse, so it fails to precede discursive inscriptions that shape it. The idea rejecting the preexistence of natural body before the cultural norms blurs the sex/gender distinction.

Body is not associated with gender before signification; rather it is materialized socially, culturally, and historically. Materiality is "an effect of power, as power’s most productive effect"\textsuperscript{178}. It refers "how particular ideas about the body come to have life, how they begin to order reality…It does through discourse". Body, as a "matter" cannot be separated from discourse and is produced by that process of signification. Materialization of body defines the intelligibility of bodies. "To materialize is to become meaningful; it is to fit within a particular frame of intelligibility, in this case heteronormativity”\textsuperscript{179}.

For Butler "The category of "sex" is, from the start, normative; it is what Foucault has called a "regulatory ideal …sex produces the bodies it governs”\textsuperscript{180}. Sex is a normative frame or cultural regulatory norm that leads to the way our body appears through life. Indeed, through time regulatory processes are imposed on subjects to materialize sex and create idealized norms and expectations. In cultural contexts, gender roles represent biologically given anatomy, the sex. Body, materialized as an effect of sex," is always already determined within this regulatory frame, and the subject has a limited number of “costumes” from which

\textsuperscript{176}Lloyd M. Judith Butler: From Norms to Politics. UK: Polity, 2007. p. 73.
\textsuperscript{179}Lloyd M. Judith Butler: From Norms to Politics. UK: Polity, 2007. p. 73
to make a constrained choice of gender style\textsuperscript{181}. The limited possibilities for existence of sex confines the construction of bodies as the heterosexuals. Sex determines the qualification of bodies and confines the viable subjects. In fact, sex regulates "which bodies matter"\textsuperscript{182} and excludes the abjects, who "fail to count as bodies"\textsuperscript{183}.

The heterosexual matrix allows certain identifications and forecloses others and produces "a domain of abject beings those who are not yet ‘subjects’, but who form the constitutive outside to the domain of the subject. The abject designates here precisely those ‘unlivable’ and ‘uninhabitable’ zones of social life which are nevertheless densely populated by those who do not enjoy the status of the subject, but whose living under the sign of the ‘unlivable’ is required to circumscribe the domain of the subject"\textsuperscript{184}.

Definitely, Butler means that through assuming sex, through being subjectified we gain identity, whether as socially viable or abjected subjects. Sex" is, thus, not simply what one has, or a static description of what one is: it will be one of the norms by which the "one" becomes viable at all, that which qualifies a body for life within the domain of cultural intelligibility\textsuperscript{185}.

Body as a matter is a site where power is exercised, at the same time that the power forms the subjects, it is sustained by the performances of that subject. “for power to act, there must be a subject”\textsuperscript{186}. "if conditions of power are to persist, they must be reiterated; the subject is precisely the site of such reiteration”\textsuperscript{187}.

The subject is not an individual. "It is a linguistic category, a placeholder, as structure in formation. Individuals come to occupy the site of the subject (the

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\textsuperscript{183}Ibid. p.15.
\textsuperscript{184}Ibid. p. 3.
\textsuperscript{185}Ibid. p. 4
\textsuperscript{187}Ibid. p. 16.
subject simultaneously emerges as a ‘site’) … The subject is the linguistic occasion for the individual to achieve and reproduce intelligibility, the linguistic condition of its existence and agency. No individual becomes a subject without first becoming subjected or undergoing "subjectivation". In this sense subjection allows the individual to be recognized in sociocultural field. Subjection to gender norms promises one's identity. "Yet because anatomically sexed bodies do not provide a permanent foundation of gender, this process of self-understanding and self-representation must recur constantly.

Butler argues that gender is product of performative actions, yet it does not refer to performing a single action. “Gender is the repeated stylization of the body, a set of repeated acts within a hugely rigid regulatory frame that congeal over time to produce the appearance of substance, of a natural sort of being.”

Butler denies the existence of any actor behind action or any performer behind performance. "gender is always a doing, though not a doing by a subject who might be said to pre-exist the deed." This view refers to poststructuralist idea that there is no identity outside of language in the sense that not only one's identity does not originate from her essence in pre linguistic stage, but also the discourse produces the identities, which it names as intelligible representing the very discourse. In Butler's words the consequence is that "bodies are produced which signify that law on and through the body.” The subject as the effect of discourse is constituted by gender acts that are inseparable from the body. These acts seem so natural and essential to the body that their imitative nature is not thought. Nevertheless, drawing a distinction between gender acts and the body of the performer one might suspect the naturalness of these acts. With the example of 'drag queen", Butler displays how the artificial and imposed genders that we wear in surface, look as our natural identity. While drag queen is a man, he wear

188. Ibid. Pp10-11.
191. Ibid. p. 25.
women's cloth and performs the imposed practices. The biological male body embodies femininity through well-rehearsed performance and imitation. “In imitating gender, drag implicitly reveals the imitative structure of gender itself—as well as its contingency”\(^\text{193}\). Unlike performances of drag queen, who imitates a pre-written act, the subjects imitate gender acts, which are themselves, copy aiming to maintain the culture and the survival of the subject within it.

By "performances", Butler means, "reenactments of prior performances which are socially recognizable and normatively re-enforced with a culture"\(^\text{194}\). More precisely, performativity is "re-erative and citational practice by which discourse produces the effects that it names"\(^\text{195}\).

Butler, in order to clarify the role of "citational politics", gives the example of midwife crying, "It's a girl". Through this "performative statement", the midwife assigns girling and femininity to the newborn and produces that which she names\(^\text{196}\), and curtails the production of any other genders.

Butler derives "performative citationality" from Derrida's notion of iterability. By iterability, Derrida means that "any form of words used in performative utterance (e.g., I pronounce you man and wife) can be used in more than one, indeed in innumerable situations… [hence], iterability is a fundamental feature of performative"\(^\text{197}\). In this same way, Butler believes that the categories of gender identity are constantly recited in boundless social situations to remain normative. The recitation of gendered categories in performative utterance across contexts values the normativity of those identities. "In reporting on the words and images of others in evaluative utterances normative identity categories and cultural value discourses are recited or resisted"\(^\text{198}\). The citation of certain cultural codes in

\(^{193}\)Ibid. p. 137.


\(^{196}\). Ibid. p. 7


everyday performances produces a subject in certain gender identity. The subject is not confined to stable identity imposed by authoritative discourse. Being constructed as an effect of citationality, the subject has the potential of alteration through different recitations giving different signification to gendered identity that disturbs the current signification. The construction of gender is in the process of repetition. "It is inevitable that each subsequent citation will diverge slightly from the previous one and it is this which makes gender transformation possible"\textsuperscript{199}.

Subjects' citation of gendered identity in daily socializations conveys the signification of gender through the discourse. "The meaning of genders change over time because no repetition of the signs that convey gender meaning can remain identical to a previous repetition"\textsuperscript{200}.

"Subversion does not happen automatically and its effects cannot be predicted in advance…any… practice of subversion, must target the coherence of sex/gender desire and undermine the very internal/external distinction of sex/gender\textsuperscript{201}.

Reiterations are capable of rematerializing the imposed regulations. Thus, she emphasizes on the necessity of "reiteration" of materialization to avoid questioning of the hegemonic domain- according to Butler, the hegemony of heterosexuality. The same way that recitations establish authoritative norms, they have potential of subverting the established norms.

Butler writes, "The one who acts, acts precisely to the extent that he or she is constituted as an actor, and hence, operating within a linguistic field of enabling constraints from the outset"\textsuperscript{202}. This seemingly paradoxical statement about the "enabling constraints" is the basis of Butler's views on agency. The subject gains subjectivity through being addressed, hailed and recited by others. The subject produced by discourse is enabled by that very discourse when the discourse

addresses her as a social actor and she acquires social existence within the relations of power. She is able to use that speech against its original purposes,” therefore reconfiguring the “chain of resignification whose origin and end remain unfixed and unfixable”203.

"The subject is itself a site of …ambivalence in which the subject emerges both as the effect of a prior power and as the condition of possibility for a radically conditioned form of agency”204. The subject in the process of subordination is conditioned by the potentials of agency. The subject as the site of prior power refers to before, at the same time the subject as the effect of power refers to unpredictable future. In this break of before and after, there remains no presence. In fact, the signification of subject that is gained through reiteration might differ from that intended by power. "Since discourse is not original, it will always escape the complete control of the intentional, speaking subject”205.

"Because there is no guarantee that each new speaking of woman, for example, will re-inscribe past significations, because a new speaking of woman inhibits a new space and time and new context; agency is possible”206. In this indeterminacy of chain of significations, the subject enjoys agency to take the risk of reinterpreting the term of women; a re-signification that is neither the prior meanings attributed to the term, nor does it convey the future expectations. "Heteronormativity will be subverted- the norm will be gradually weakened, undermined, eroded from within- whenever the presumption of heterosexuality no longer holds”207.

However, “Construction is not opposed to agency; it is the necessary scene of agency”208, the subject, constituted within the discourse enjoys agency to

subvert these gender norms. For Butler, the "task is… how to repeat, or, indeed to
repeat and, through a radical proliferation of gender, to displace the very gender
norms that enable the repetition itself"\textsuperscript{209}. The extent to which the subject has
agency to alter the norms is not clearly defined by Butler. Salih in reviewing
\textit{Gender Trouble} writes, "at times it sounds as though the subject she describes is in
fact trapped within a discourse it has no power to evade or to alter. In which case,
"how to repeat" will already be determined in advance, and what looks like agency
is merely yet another effect of the law disguised as something different"\textsuperscript{210}.

By parody of "drag", Butler demands subversion of binaries of sex/gender or
interior/exterior. Drag challenges any internal structure of heteronormative ideas
ascribing determined meanings to genders. As long as heteronormativity has the
centrality, the relation between the term "woman" as a signifier will be guaranteed
with fixed meanings, therefore the significations cannot be undermined. "There is
neither a single nor a guaranteed way of contesting heteronormativity"\textsuperscript{211}. The
fixed significations assigned to genders as their normal and original meanings, in
different times and spaces should be identified to be re-signified and subverted.

The same way that Butler undermines the binaries of culture/nature, and
sex/gender, in her book "The Psychic life of Power", she undermines the borders
between the conscious and unconscious, inner and outer, the norms and desires as
well as the subject and agency. While social norms imply outside, psyche refers to
inside "self-affection, seemingly consonant with the subject resistant to
alienation"\textsuperscript{212}. Psyche is not reduced to social, but stays in the mid-way between
society and unconscious. "Power is never merely a condition external or prior to
the subject, nor can it be exclusively identified with the subject"\textsuperscript{213}. The subject as
the site of this ambivalence sustains power through reiteration.

\textsuperscript{209} Ibid. p.148.
Butler in response to Foucault's internalization and Althusser's interpellation holds that "passionate attachment" sets the process of subjection and it is a point of desire. The child's attachment to its major caregiver is essential condition of its survival. "If the child is to persist in a psychic and social sense, there must be dependency and the formation of attachment: there is no possibility of not loving, where love is bound up with the requirements for life\textsuperscript{214}. She maintains, “no subject emerges without a 'passionate attachment’ to those on whom he or she is fundamentally dependent (even if that passion is ‘negative’ in the psychoanalytic sense)”. Attachment that is essential for persistence entails individual's alienation from one's own desires. "The desire to persist in one's own being requires submitting to a world of others that is fundamentally not one's own”\textsuperscript{215}. This dependency provides the aspect of the subject related to subjugation.

In this same way, we shape a passionate attachment to norms that promise social recognition and identification. These attachments guarantee the survival of social norm, at the heart of which lies heteronormativity.

Though the dependency to the world of others guarantees the subject's survival, the individual desires to return back to that attachment which is foreclosed. She has to break from this attachment to be accepted socially, while always desiring it. Actually, Butler is producing not binary worlds, but dialectics of alienated world saturated with norms and desired world. In fact, norms produce our desires. The foreclosed norms are desired more. The subject's desire for attachment, while sustains him as a subordinate subject, triggers his desires for unaccepted norms. "To the extent that norms operate as psychic phenomena, restricting and producing desire, they also govern the formation of the subject and circumscribe the domain of the livable sociality”\textsuperscript{216}.

\textsuperscript{214} Ibid. p.8.
\textsuperscript{215} Ibid. p.28.
To desire the condition of one’s own subordination is thus required to persist as oneself”.217 While, subjugation enters psyche, the desire to that passionate attachment opposes the norms. Therefore, psyche remains a point of tension between subjection and agency. The norms, being psychic, are vulnerable because of the desire to escape alienation and return to the individual's own being which is not populated by other's thoughts. At the same time the norms have to be followed because they promise the subject's identity. Subjection "allows subjects to be recognized; and provides them with an entry to, and a narrational trajectory within, the wider sociocultural field”218.

"The subject is preoccupied with what is behind it, the subject draws its content from this capacity to turn back, by which it is led to make its own the law which is imposed on it from without”219. The subject, while under subjugation, reflexively claims his own dependency.

Butler's views on the interaction of agent with the discursive structure seem to be associated with Anthony Giddens' structuration theory. The affinity between Giddens' structuration and Butler's performativity is mainly evident in their emphasis on the interaction of agents and the structures, and on the repeated practices of agents, as well as on the fluidity of both the social structures and the identity of human agents.

The dualistic relationship of structure and agency is established in Giddens' theory of structuration. It will be used as a supportive theoretical framework through the present thesis. Structuration theory "is concisely defined as the reconciliation of actions and collectivities”220. It is a bridge reconciling the traditional split between agent and structure. Neither the subjects are determined by objective social structure, nor is the structure the product of human agents' subjective interpretations. Rather, there is a mutual interaction between them.

217. Ibid. p.9.
Both Butler and Giddens share the idea that the subject being produced by the discourse has agency to transform that very discourse. Both theorists emphasize the role of the subjects' action in reproduction of new norms and thereby new social system. According to Giddens, "A social practice plays a part in reproduction of a wider social system"\(^{221}\). Parallel to Giddens who maintains, "The production of a society is a skilled performance"\(^{222}\), Butler emphasizes on the significance of "performance" in subversion of the prevailing norms. As a subject within the net of power relations, they enjoy the agency to change the existing norms.

According to Giddens, agent is "an active subject situated in time and place. Such a conception of agency links it to social structure"\(^{223}\). "Structures shape social interactions by providing the rules and resources that allow agents to act". Rules provide the agents a potential of what to do and how to do. Resources are "the capacities that human agents may be able to use for achieving their purposes of social interaction"\(^{224}\). Although according to Giddens, the subject's action is defined by the rules and resources of the structure, he believes in "two-way" power relations. Based on Giddens' conceptualization of "two-way" power relations, the actor though in subordinate position is in power relations. "The very fact of involvement in that relationship gives him or her a certain amount of power over the other"\(^{225}\).

Agents use the rules and resources of structure and in repeating these actions reinforce the structure. Giddens holds that structure "consists in the persistence or repetition of behaviors" of the actors. These actions reproduce the structure. The essential feature of the agent is reflexivity. That is, the actors routinely monitor the


flow of their activities and expect others to do the same for their own. They also
monitor aspects of the context.\textsuperscript{226} The reflexivity of the knowledgeable agents
leads to actions that are transformed and therefore the structure is transformed as
well, proving the fluidity of structure and identity of subjects.

1.3. The role of Islam in constructing Iranian women’s cultural identity

In Iran, religion has played a central role throughout history and mainly in
current Islamic Republic of Iran. It pervades the cultural and political structures
and constitutes the framework of ideas. Since religious institutions and authorities
influence social and political arenas of contemporary Iran, it is certainly bound up
with relations of power. Therefore, religion is one of the boundary marker sources
that identifies in-groups and out-groups, the accepted normal subjects from defiant
objects. The role of religion, as a dominant logos in constituting the meanings and
consequently in constructing the identities cannot be underestimated. Here, it is
explored how Iranian Islamic discourse defined women and their place in society.
To illuminate the issue, Quranic statements are referred to demonstrate the original
view of Islam on women. Then, different discursively produced interpretations of
Quran about the issue of women are examined. The author categorizes these
interpretations under four groups and seeks to establish their views on women. So
that it can be revealed how the centrality of religion plays a role in making a sense
of "womanhood" and thereby defines the identity of contemporary Iranian women.

Quran on women’s social and cultural activities and identities

According to the Holy Quran, the sanctified religious text of Muslims, the
difference between men and women is not primarily talked about; rather their
fundamental commonality, that is their humanity, has been highlighted, and the

same verdict has been made with respect to their identical creation\textsuperscript{227}. O men! Fear your Lord Who created you from a single being and out of it created its mate; and out of the two spread many men and women.\textsuperscript{1} Fear Allah, in Whose name you plead for rights, and heed the ties of kinship). In addition, considering fundamental human values, both righteous men and women are addressed the same. Whosoever acts righteously - whether a man or a woman - and embraces belief, We will surely grant him a good life; and will surely grant such persons their reward according to the best of their deeds.\textsuperscript{228} With respect to their creation, the origin of both men and women is considered to be the same substance. (It is He - Allah -Who created you from a single being, and out of it He made its mate, that he may find comfort in her\textsuperscript{229}. It is explicitly stated: “And Allah has made for you from yourselves mates.”\textsuperscript{230}. The above Quranic verses imply that, when the human identity is involved, there is no difference or discrimination in human missions and religious obligations, and so the human spirit and religious values are not restricted to women or men\textsuperscript{231}. Nevertheless, in addition to the human identity, the human creation, and even the whole divine creation, involves a polarization. It began with the creation of the sky and the Earth in pairs, and this variety in the creation has been considered as an indication of Divine Prudence\textsuperscript{232}. And the polarization extended to the creation of other beings, including humans, such that the Quran says: “And of all things We created two mates”\textsuperscript{233}. Thus, the natural difference between men and women has entered the religious literature without any prejudice. They are considered as complementing each other, despite their psychological, physical and other differences\textsuperscript{234}.

\textsuperscript{227} Holy Quran, sura al-Nisa’: 1.  
\textsuperscript{228} Holy Quran, sura al-Nahl: 97.  
\textsuperscript{229} Holy Quran, sura al-A’raf: 189.  
\textsuperscript{230} Holy Quran, sura al-Nahl: 72.  
\textsuperscript{232} Holy Quran, sura Anbiya’: 20.  
\textsuperscript{233} Holy Quran, sura al-Dhariyat: 49.  
\textsuperscript{234} Holy Quran, sura al-Baqara: 187.
As pointed out, the principle of the equality of men and women, with respect to their human missions and religious obligations has been accepted in Quran, but they are not considered to be legally similar given their biological, psychological, and emotional distinctions\textsuperscript{235}. The original Islamic texts did not directly account for the factors that give rise to gender roles and the legal proportionality between women and men in scholarly terms. However, with a reflection on religious rulings and recommendations as well as their assumptions, presuppositions, and implications, we can point to factors that give rise to gender roles and we can show that Islam has a positive view of such differences. In addition to obvious anatomical differences between women and men, religious propositions clearly refer to certain differences to which we will return in what follows, including a host of biological, psychological, and social factors. The natural difference between women and men, who according to a number of Quranic verses, were created as mates\textsuperscript{236}, was not without a Divine Wisdom. The differences show themselves in the instinctive attraction of women and men to each other resulting in reproduction and the survival of human generations. Quranic verses analogize the relation of women to the human community, with respect to the need for the human survival, to “grounds of cultivation”\textsuperscript{237}. The survival of the human species is owed to women.\textsuperscript{238} Thus, any homosexual relationship between women or men has been prohibited in Islam\textsuperscript{239} and the reproduction is said to lie in the nature of the creation of women.

However, Quran does not have a deterministic view of how such a difference affects the formation of gender roles. It doesn't reject the possibility that the natural distinctions of women with respect to their pregnancy, as well as

\textsuperscript{235} عطارزاده مجتبی, بررسی تطبیقی مفهوم جنسیت در ایلام و غرب, مطالعات راهبردی زنان, ش 21, 2008, ص 29-78.

\textsuperscript{236} Holy Quran, sura al-Dhariyat: 47.

\textsuperscript{237} Holy Quran, sura al-Baqara, 223.

\textsuperscript{238} علامه طباطبایی سید محمد حسین, تفسیرالمیزان, قم: موسسه مطبوعاتی اسامعیلان, 1393 ق., ج 2, ص 212-213.

\textsuperscript{239} حضرت امام موسی چقی, الامامت, قم: موسسه مطبوعاتی اسامعیلان, 1410 ق., ج 2, ص 121-129.
giving birth to, and breastfeeding the baby inevitably leads them to more limited activities that do not require much motion and makes them depend on the support of men. The evidence for this claim is a host of doctrines referring to volitional and optional aspects of gender distinctions and the motherly role, such as the admiration of breastfeeding\textsuperscript{240}, and their works at home as being non-compulsory, and their right to ask for a wage in exchange for their domestic works in the Islamic \textit{fiqh} (jurisprudence)\textsuperscript{241}.

The psychological difference referred to in certain religious doctrines is the dominance of reasoning in men and the dominance of emotions in women\textsuperscript{242} that is considered as a gender difference by some people. However, such religious propositions are not usually explicit and credible enough, and even if we could rely on such propositions, such effects should be considered as undeterministic, that is, women and men should be taken as merely having different natural dispositions with respect to emotions and rational understanding, while the way the dispositions are actualized depends, to a large extent, on social circumstances. If external factors are not involved, the dispositions will be actualized, leading at least to slight differences between women and men, but if there is a meddling or change in the pattern of the development of the characters of girls and boys, they might grow against the directions of their natural dispositions, although in evaluative terms, such an attitude is rejected in Islam (Hosayn Bostan, ‘Baznegari-ye Nazariye-haye Naqsh-e Jensiyati’\textsuperscript{243}).
Based on the traditional interpretation of Quran, the main social difference and gender role referred to in Islamic doctrines is the supervision of men over women as pointed out in the Quran\textsuperscript{244}. Traditional scholars of the religion have referred to it as an undisputable supervision, and some exegetes of the Quran have justified the verse as referring to support, protection, and caretaking. In any case, regardless of any account offered in this case, the verse refers to a gender difference from the standpoint of the Quran, the religious text of the Muslims. Against this classical account, some religious open-minded intellectuals, such as Mohsen Kadivar, maintain that the supervision is introduced in the Quran because of men’s economical responsibilities, but such a supervision automatically goes away when women engage in economic responsibilities and have incomes, since they are not then economically dependent on men, because when the cause—that is, men’s economic responsibility towards women—is gone, the effect is gone too, thus women will no longer be under the supervision of men\textsuperscript{245}.

Given the above alleged distinctions, if they are true, it is not correct to take them to give rise to deterministic gender roles as a result of which women go under permanent restrictions and men are evaluatively speaking considered to be superior. In a number of Quranic verses, the only criterion of the superiority for women and men is said to be their “piety” (or righteousness) and being pure from individual and social sins. God says: “Indeed, the most noble of you in the sight of Allah is the most righteous of you”\textsuperscript{246}.

Now if restrictions against women have appeared in the cultural and historical course of Islamic countries, that is because of the old and extreme patriarchal culture in these communities as well as self-interested interpretations of religious doctrines and justifications of their conducts in terms of

\begin{footnotesize}
\begin{itemize}
\item \textsuperscript{244} Holy Quran, sura al-Nisa’: 34.
\item \textsuperscript{245} کدیور محسن، بازخوانی حقوق زنان در اسلام، وب سایت رسمی محسن کدیور، 11 مهرماه 1390.
\item \textsuperscript{246} میحانی، اسلامی حق کار، بیستم ciò در اسلام، وب سایت رسمی محسن کدیور، 11 مهرماه 1390.
\end{itemize}
\end{footnotesize}
such doctrines, although the doctrines are not really confirmed by the religion. On the contrary, there are Quranic verses that go, in highlighting the high position of women, as far as introducing some women as role-models for all human beings, including men\textsuperscript{247}. Therefore, in the religious view, natural differences between women and men are merely tied to different tasks of women and men in different aspects of the human life. They cannot be taken in evaluative terms in the religion.

Islamic Feminists, also, sought to develop their feminist perspectives based on their egalitarian interpretation of Quran. This approach began in 1990s by some scholars writing about Muslim women. Some Muslim women advocated for "a Quran mandated gender equality and social justice. Others describe it as women centered rereading of the Quran and other religious texts"\textsuperscript{248}. In general, Islamic feminism promotes the egalitarian message of Islam. It celebrates equal gender rights in sharia, which have been neglected by patriarchal cultures.

Badran differentiates between secular or western feminism and Islamic feminism\textsuperscript{249}. He (2009) argues that patriarchy does not originate form Quran that preaches for justice and gender equality. Secular feminists aim at private and gender equality, which is exactly what Islam demands. Muslim feminists are "rereading the Qur’an and other religious texts, bringing to bear their own experiences and new critical methodologies to enact readings that are more meaningful to modern women"\textsuperscript{250}.

Leila Ahmed, an Egyptian American writer in the fields of Islam and Islamic feminism, explores the social, historical, and religious discourses that have shaped Muslim women. She considers the political and cultural forces that influenced Mediterranean and Mesopotamian regions. Ahmed discusses how Muslim societies under the hegemony of dominant patriarchy misinterpreted

\begin{itemize}
\item \textsuperscript{247} Holy Quran, sura al-Tahrim: 4.
\item \textsuperscript{249} Ibid. p. 2.
\item \textsuperscript{250} Ibid. p. 21.
\end{itemize}
Quran and neglecting the essentially egalitarian message of Quran insisted on patriarchy as the natural way to run the world.

The author of the present thesis, along with ideas of Butler, considers the views of Holy Quran and some Shia religious texts on gendered identity in order to study Iranian women's identity. Following, different approaches of contemporary Iranian Shiite jurisprudence toward the identity and practice of women is elaborated. It seeks to clarify the fluidity and discursive nature of religion as a knowledge and therefore the certain influence of its interpretations on transformation of Iranian women's identity.

**Religion approaches to contemporary Iranian women**

From a religious point of view, different views have been proposed about the cultural and social identity and activities of women in the contemporary history of Iran until today. The views can be considered as being influenced by political, social and cultural developments of the last century in Iran.

**The Traditional Fundamentalist Approach**

This view can be taken to be the oldest approach to women’s identity in the contemporary history of Iran in the last 100 years. Fundamental traditionalists are a group of Muslim jurisprudents (fuqahā) in Iran who have based their religious and jurisprudential understanding on hadiths transmitted from Shiite Imams and the views of their jurisprudential predecessors. When these jurisprudents talk about the identity of a Muslim woman, they seek it only in the early period of the formation of Islam in the city-state of Medina (Madīna or the city of the Prophet). There was a predominance of narrow-mindedness about women in the ignorant (jāhilī) community of the time though it was in the process of transition to a primitive civility and there were attempts by the newly emerging religious doctrines to moderate such narrow-mindedness. The fundamentalist Muslim
jurisprudents remain totally loyal to common practices of the city-state of Medina, confirming all the norms of that period without any changes, including women’s hijab, polygamy, the right for divorce, and men’s religious, political, social, and judicial authority\textsuperscript{251}.

After the entrance of modern thoughts into Iran in the early 20th century and from the period of the Constitutional Movement, this approach was revived against modernist and moderate intellectual, cultural and social currents, and has resisted any new way of thinking.

The standard methods employed by these jurisprudents to make inferences about women issues include: appealing to common practices and traditions in the period of the Prophet of Islam, excessive reliance on hadiths without discursive and theological (kalāmī) analyses, as well as mixing past traditions with the Islamic jurisprudence instead of distinguishing the two. Accordingly, Islamic jurisprudential rulings (or Sharia Laws) concerning women are construed only as meeting women’s individual needs. They are historical, constant, obligation-based, past-based, and anti-eclecticism\textsuperscript{252}.

Fundamentalist jurisprudents reject an independent identity for women and firmly believe in women’s mental and physical incompetence for recognizing their personal and social interests, and thus, they oppose women’s participation in social, political and cultural affairs. They prohibit women from such positions by superficial conceptions based on their personal preferences (or “istiḥsān”) and by appealing to certain hadiths. According to their jurisprudential views, women are forbidden from judgeship, religious authority, any religious-social position, custody of their children, the right for divorce, the control of their reproduction,


and incompliance to the commands of their husbands except in few cases. In exchange for these prohibitions, their husbands should financially support them as “nafaqa” and should pay their mahr (mandatory payment promised to the woman by her would-be husband before marriage) at the time of divorce. Also, women are taken to differ from men in mental and physical respects, and as a result, they differ from men in performing certain jurisprudential obligations, such as prayers, hajj, inheritance, and judicial and criminal affairs.

Mollā Amīn Estarābādī, a traditional fundamentalist jurisprudent, says that it is indeed God’s blessing for men that they can consult with women and then act contrary to their views, because the truth always lies in the views of men.

Mīrzā Qummī, a prominent radical traditionalist jurisprudent, explicitly defines the identity of women as marginalized in relation to the domineering centrality of men. "When God created the human being, He crowned one human person with dignity and appointed him as His successor or analogue on the Earth, and that is the man, and put a rope of abjection around the neck of another human being and made it a servant for men, and that is the woman. A woman shall not disobey men, and men shall not be ungrateful to their blessing and so they shall not oppress their underlings, that is, women”.

In the second parliament (1911) after the submission of Bill of Elections, Ayatollah Sayyed Hasan Modarres, a jurisprudent and politician after the Constitutional Movement, rejected women’s qualification for participating in Iranian parliamentary elections. He said, “the argument is that as far as we reflect today, we see that God has not given them [i.e. women] the competence for having the right to vote. The minds of the impoverished women lack the competency.

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Moreover, in fact, women in Islam are considered to be under men’s protection, ‘men are protectors of women’ and our official religion is Islam, so women are under protection. They never have the right to vote. Others should protect the rights of women, as God says in the Qur’an that women are under protection and so they have no right to elect, neither in religious matter, nor in this-worldly matters. This is an issue that I have briefly presented.  

Consequently, fundamentalist jurisprudents and high-ranking religious officials in contemporary Iran have reduced women’s identity to the second sex who is isolated, having no social and cultural communications in the society. They take any cultural and social activities of women to be in conflict with religious doctrines and detrimental to the place of the family in Islam.

The Approach of Moderate Traditionalists

In 1960s, cultural and social developments began in Iran. In this period, the movement against the monarchical rule was initiated by religious clergy under the leadership of Ayatollah Khomeini with the participation of women and men in the social and political sphere of Iran. As time went by, extremist religious views as well as liberal feminist activities were moderated, so, we see a moderate religious approach that not only stopped opposing women’s cultural and social activities, but gave priority to such activities. Thus, since this decade, the Iranian society witnessed a widespread presence of Muslim women in the process of the formation, the continuation, and the victory of the Islamic Revolution of Iran in 1979.  

256 جعفریان رسول، پیشینه حق رأی زنان در مجلس شورای ملی، "گذرستان" تشریحی که انتخاباتی بکار می‌رود، تاریخ ۷ ماه ماه ماه ماه. 257 مصطفی نسرین، نقش زنان در انقلاب اسلامی، پایگاه اطلاع‌رسانی حوزه، 2۹/۸/۵/۱۳۸۵/۲۱۷.  


In this period, the entitlement theory of justice was developed with a theoretical and theological account in order to demonstrate and reaffirm the social and cultural position of women. General features of this approach are as follows:

They defended the human identity of women and its equality to the identity of men in accordance with Quranic interpretations and discursive accounts. They believed in differences between women and men only in physical and mental terms, and they had theological account of jurisprudential and legal differences between women and men. They also defended women’s cultural and social participation and emphasis on its preference.258

Unlike earlier jurisprudents, Ayatollah Khomeini had a positive view of Iranian women’s social and cultural identity and role. He considered women’s role to lead to the sublimation of societies and nations259, supporting women’s cultural roles. He recommended women to learn various sciences and practice piety, because in his view, knowledge and piety are not exclusive to men.260

A prominent scholar who promoted this approach was Ayatollah Motahhari. In his view, women and men are equal with respect to their human identity and perfections, but because of their different creations and gender roles explicitly assigned to them in Islam, they have legal differences with men with regard to the right for divorce, custody of children, and the like. He explicitly says, “the quantitative value of the rights of men and women are equal, and I can even prove that the quantitative value of women’s right is greater than that of men, but this is not so qualitatively. Women and men have different obligations in some cases. Their punishments are also qualitatively different. The equality of the rights of women and men should not be confused with the similarity of the rights of women and men”261.
Thus, on this view, men and women are taken to be different, and yet, equal. The view claims that in the difference between women and men, the balance is fairly and justly in favor of both genders. For example, in case of monogamy, men are permitted only on the condition of their ability to observe justice towards women. In return all expenses of a woman’s life are compulsorily undertaken by men, and a woman can ask for a wage in exchange for taking care of household chores as well as training and taking care of children at home.

Therefore, these jurisprudents draw a distinction between equality and similarity, taking the former to be egalitarianism and the latter to be uniformity. On this account, they seek to show the harmony between the legislative system of Islam and the system of creation in which women and men have their natural differences.

Ayatollah Khamenei, the present religious leader of the Islamic Republic of Iran, agrees with this approach: “it by no means counts as a value for women to be similar to men. Either of them has a role, either has a place and nature, and their specific conditions in the wise creation of God were because of a certain goal that should be realized; this issue is important.”

According to Ayatollah Khamenei, from an Islamic jurisprudential standpoint and in terms of the traditional methods of ijtihad, it is possible to make changes in the direction of women’s cultural and social rights and positions. But he rejects any extremist feminist views: “those active in women issues who think and see shortcomings should seek the cure in modifying the Islamic jurisprudential rulings. No! Islamic jurisprudential rulings are fully correct and in agreement with [public] interests as long as they are inferred with research and in accordance with


Ayatollah Khamenei, Statements in a meeting with thousands of elite women and those active in different domains. The website of the Supreme Leader of Iran. 04.07.2007. — Mode of access: http://www.leader.ir/fa/speech/3063
Islamic principles. We should not modify our thoughts and our own jurisprudence with our short-sighted views mixed with intimidation, just because such and such world assembly [or] such and such international gathering has decided something, or a so-called world convention is created\textsuperscript{264}.

After the Islamic Revolution of Iran in 1979 and, consequently, the predominance of the views of moderate Islamists, their views about women’s cultural and social identity and activities appeared first in the Iranian Constitution and then in high-level documents of the Islamic Republic of Iran with different degrees of strength.

In the Constitution of the Islamic Republic of Iran, women are taken to be equal to men, regardless of their gender roles. Here are some instances:
- equal rights in all political, cultural, and social respects in compliance with Islamic rules (Articles 19 and 20);
- social security (Article 29);
- free educations through the high school (Articles 3 and 30);
- the right for litigation and having a lawyer (Articles 34 and 35), the undisputable right for citizenship (Article 41);
- the provision of the grounds for job and education (Article 43), the right to elect and to be elected (Articles 3, 62-91 and 100);
- financial independence and private ownership (Article 47);
- occupation of the judicial position (Article 162 and 157);
- serving as the head of the national radio and TV (Article 176);
- membership in the Assembly of the Discernment of the Exigencies (Article 112);
- freedom for participation in non-governmental parties and organizations, such as parties, syndicates, guild associations, and the like (Article 26).

\textsuperscript{264} Ibid.
In addition to these cases, the Constitution of the Islamic Republic of Iran has obliged the government to determine special rights for women (Article 21), including:

- paving the grounds for the growth of women’s character and the revival of their material and spiritual rights;
- supporting mothers, especially during pregnancy and taking the custody of their children, and supporting children without custodians;
- establishing competent courts to protect and sustain families;
- establishing special insurances for widows, old women, and unprotected women;
- giving the custody of children to competent mothers for their interest (ghibṭa) when the jurisprudentially recognized guardian or custodian is absent.\(^{265}\)

There is a positive view on the part of moderate traditionalist scholars and jurisprudents, explicit principles mentioned in the Constitution against gender discriminations, and the increase of women’s abilities in social and cultural activities. Nonetheless women’s activities are still hindered because of their historical deprivations, on the one hand, and narrow-minded views about their identity and activities, particularly in small, less developed cities and the predominance of traditional and radical religious views, on the other hand.

There have so far been six terms of the “Plan for the Economic, Social and Cultural Development” as the high-level document for development in the Islamic Republic of Iran. After the Islamic Revolution and the start of Iran-Iraq War, all development plans of the country were practically shut down, but when the war ended, the first development plan in Iran (1989-1993) was launched. A review of this plan shows that women were not in its focus. This period is characterized by a high degree of illiteracy in villages and educational restrictions of women in high levels of education. Priorities of this plan include the establishment of a Center for

\(^{265}\) بهرام فاطمه و آریا مهدي، جایگاه زن در قانون اساسی ج. را بانوان شیعه، ش 71، 1387، ص123-145.
Women Affairs in the Presidential Institution and family planning policies (including the population control)\textsuperscript{266}.

In the second Development Plan (1995-1999), issues such as physical training, leisure times, incentives for marriage, participation in social and cultural affairs, and the protection of the dignity of families and women. Gender issues and the social and cultural empowerment of women as well as increasing financial supports for such plans began to be the focus of attentions in the third plan (1999-2003). This plan emphasized the facilitation of women’s participation in the country’s development, the reinforcement of the foundation of family, the identification of women’s educational, cultural and athletic needs, the proposal of necessary bills regarding women’s job opportunities as well as their job promotions, the facilitation of legal and judicial affairs, and the support of women’s non-governmental organizations (NGOs). The fourth plan has focused, in addition to the above cases, on the necessity of women’s social and cultural participation, the reinforcement of their social and cultural roles, and their social inequalities. According to a research, this plan exhibits a relatively growing performance with regard to women’s cultural and social activities\textsuperscript{267}. In addition to women-related agenda in its prior plans, the fifth Development Plan focused on empowering elite women and women administrators, the development of women’s international interactions, the revision and reform of women’s laws and their organizational structures, organizing women’s jobs, and preventing their social harms\textsuperscript{268}. In the Sixth Plan, the


\textsuperscript{268}The Law of the Sixth five-year Program of Economic, Social and Cultural Development of the Islamic Republic of Iran (2017-2021) — Mode of access: http://www.rrk.ir/Files/Laws/%D9%82%D8%A7%D9%86%D9%88%D9%86%20%D8%A8%D8%B1%D9%86%
implementation of which has begun since 2016, there is a more comprehensive consideration of women’s social and cultural position. In addition to the agenda of earlier development plans, it involved the following objectives:

- the establishment of a comprehensive and efficient system of women’s statistics and information in the government;
- the implementation of the national plan for the empowerment of women in the management of the consumption of resources and energy;
- the implementation of internship plans for educated girls;
- the reinforcement of rehabilitation and empowerment centers for vulnerable women;
- the expansion of women’s presence in international communities as well as various domestic economic, social and cultural environments;
- the promotion of women’s management positions in plans for the reform of the country’s administrative system;
- the adoption of required solutions for the reinforcement and promotion of women’s share in parliamentary representation, city and village councils, as well as civil and guild organizations and parties.\(^{269}\)

A brief consideration of the six plans for Iran’s economic, social and cultural development regarding women issues reveals that, despite the current deficiencies, the focus on women’s social and cultural activities had an uptrend from minimal to maximal requirements. As these plans show, women’s conditions have improved throughout the years. Women have had a remarkable boost, along with men, in their education, and in particular in higher and graduate educations.\(^{270}\)


However, in other various social, political and cultural domains, their situation did not improve along with men, and gender-biased views may as well be still propagated by some religious and political officials although in more moderate terms.

**The Approach of Traditional Reformists**

When the reformist government of Sayyed Mohammad Khatami took over the power in Iran in 1997, reforms took place in certain cultural, social and political issues. The importance of women’s political, social and cultural participations was more than ever before. Moreover, the government allocated more budget for the empowerment of women in social and cultural respects. Along with these developments, some religious scholars and jurisprudents widely proposed new and reformist views regarding women’s cultural and social identity and activities—views that might as well have been offered in the past too.

The religious approach of traditionalist reformists is based on the rules of the standard traditional Islamic jurisprudence and ijtihad, a renewed study of religious sources in accordance with the demands of time and place, and the distinction between temporary and permanent jurisprudential rulings. These people remain loyal to the letter of religious texts and yet respect women’s identity, and thus, they take women to be equal to men in their essence, their human capabilities and talents, and their human nature. Thus, they seek to create a balance between the tradition and modernity. These jurisprudents maintain that a renewed reading of religious sources can help us achieve new jurisprudential mechanisms that yield rulings that are agreeable to the human nature and...
rationality—rulings that empower women’s identity and are responsive to their social and cultural needs. Despite oppositions by other jurisprudents, they offer innovative jurisprudential views. This has led many social and cultural activists, who uphold religious views, to increasingly refer to this group of jurisprudents.

Ayatollah Jannāṭī is a pioneer in reforming traditional methods of ijtihad in different domains, including women issues. He relies on traditional methods of ijtihad to show that women are permitted to have positions and be active in various cultural, social, artistic, and political affairs provided that they observe religious requirements. Unlike the majority of traditionalist jurisprudents, he believes that women can occupy the position of judgeship as they can issue fatwas and practice ijtihad. He permits women’s free presence in different social and cultural domains without taking their gender roles into account.

Another reformist jurisprudent, Ayatollah Sane’i, believes that, in general, there is no gender discrimination in Islam and in the Shiite jurisprudence, and if religious doctrines are not consistent with well-established rationality, then they should be fundamentally revised with a renewed reading. He defends full-fledged activities by women and recommends them to “propose and defend issues concerned with women’s rights in the society—[to] try as much as possible and be hopeful”. He thinks that gender segregation is pointless, taking it not to be defensible in jurisprudential terms. He argues for this position by appealing to the fact that there is no sex segregation in the circumambulation (tawāf) around the Ka’ba, which is a ritual of hajj.

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Jurisprudential innovations by Ayatollah Sanei regarding women issues include:

- rejection of the requirement of manhood for the occupation of the position of religious authority,
- rejection of the requirement of manhood in the occupation of all governmental positions including the president, and all judicial positions.

His jurisprudence claims the equality between women and men in much of criminal law, as well as the penal law in issues such as diya (blood money) and qisāṣ (retribution for murder). He also believes that abortion is not forbidden if there is an intolerable hardship for women. According to his view, though it is the man who has the right to divorce, when the woman forgives her mahr and asks for a divorce, the man is jurisprudentially obliged to divorce the woman.

Ayatollah Mousavi Bojnordi is also a reformist in the Shiite jurisprudence. He accepts women’s identity from an Islamic point of view and rejects any gender-biased view by appealing to jurisprudential reasoning. He believes that any gender segregation in the Islamic society is an insult to the humanity and the place of women. According to Ayatollah Bojnordi, those who take women to be of the second sex are unaware of the Islamic Sharia—in fact, he takes them to be religious fanatics. From a religious standpoint, he holds, women’s freedom is, like men’s freedom, an existential (as opposed to legislative) endowment given by God in agreement with the human nature and the pure intellect.
Ayatollah Mousavi Bojnordi’s interviews and jurisprudential views regarding women issues involve the following ideas:

women’s economic independence, no obligation to obtain their husbands’ permission with respect to jobs in which their social dignity is preserved\(^\text{284}\), the jurisprudential priority of women’s cultural and social activities, jurisprudential permissibility of women’s service as heads and managers, such as presidency, judicial positions, and the like, and the preference of women’s involvement in different academic and scientific domains\(^\text{285}\).

The secular Muslim Modernist Approach

Unlike all the above approaches that are generally loyal to the letter of the Sharia and the traditional ijtihad and jurisprudence (despite all their differences), the secular Muslim modernist approach denies the permanence of religious rulings. It takes them to be temporal in nature, gives privilege to rights and moralities as opposed to the traditional jurisprudence’s emphasis on obligations, and believes in pluralism and religious relativism. According to this approach, the current problems about women’s identity and their social and cultural activities cannot be solved by the rules of ijtihad and traditional jurisprudence, because the traditional jurisprudence cannot solve these problems in a modern world. We must, instead, employ a theoretical mechanism to solve the conflict between religiosity and modernity at first, and then impose the conclusions to the religious thought. It is in
this way that conflicts about women’s issues can be dissolved. Quranic verses imply the scientific laws and hadiths imply scientific theories and hypotheses286.

Mohammad Mojtahed Shabestari is a secular Muslim modernist who casts doubts over the naturalness of the differences between women and men, which is accepted, to one or another extent, by various traditionalist approaches. According to Shabestari, we should not talk about existential differences between the identities of women and men; rather we should adopt a historical view of social systems, including the problem of women. In this view, any differences between women and men should be set aside in favor of justice and equality. In defending the equality between women and men, he obtains that their differences should not be taken to lead to legal differences, because they are irrelevant to the creation—all human beings are created as equal, and the differences between them are only historically formed. This is why all these differences are subject to changes as historical conditions change. Therefore, from a religious viewpoint, we cannot present a cogent argument to show that a chain of natural systems—political, economic, and cultural—exist in this world. Instead, we should acknowledge that all these systems are commonsensical and historical.

With a historical view of justice, Mojtahed Shabestari believes that after the emergence of the Prophet of Islam, certain unjust and unfair laws and regulations of the time regarding women were abolished or modified. The Prophet of Islam recognized women’s right to ownership, restricted the unlimited form of polygamy, modified the laws of inheritance in favor of women, and in short, he changed severe gender inequalities of the time in proportion to the understanding of “justice” at the time, moving towards his own time’s justice. If we go forward with such an understanding, it will mean that the changes he made at the time were not the ultimate possible changes. The main point of his changes is that other inequalities were also imposed on women throughout the history that should be
eliminated today and steps should be taken towards justice. The present obligation of religious thinkers with respect to the problem of women is to recognize inequalities and theorization about the elimination of these inequalities to move towards more justice. Mostafa Malekian, another secular Muslim modernist, believes that from biological and psychological differences between women and men, one cannot conclude that there is an evaluative difference too or that men are superior to women, or vice versa. The family system and the problem of women are merely commonsensical and human issues. Such a system was approved by the Prophet of Islam 1400 years ago, but this does not mean that it should be considered as perpetual. Just like Mojtahegh Shabestari, he believes that the Qur’an and religious doctrines should be viewed with historical lenses. In his own time with specific historical, social and cultural circumstances, the Prophet of Islam made changes in the condition of women via the Qur’an and religious doctrines which were considered at the time as procedures to revive the independent identity of women. However, Islamists precluded the course of improvements by merely religious justifications.

Mohsen Kadivar, a secular Muslim modernist researcher, believes that jurisprudential rulings in the Qur’an and the Sunna (the Prophet’s Tradition) which were considered by Muslims, at the time of their issuance, to be fair, moral, rational, and preferable, are valid as long as they meet these criteria. If by certainty or by a strong conviction we come to see that a ruling is no longer fair, moral, rational and preferable, then it means that it is no longer valid. In fact, the ruling will thereby prove to have been temporary from the very beginning.

References:


Kadivar believes that all Quranic verses and hadiths that imply a sort of legal discrimination against women are *ipso facto* known to be relative to specific temporal and spatial circumstances. They do not, therefore, refer to a reality in the nature and essence of men and women in all temporal and spatial circumstances—they at most represent a second and temporary nature of women in a specific period of time. Moreover, they are temporary, time-relative rulings, rather than permanent and constant. Thus, rulings that imply any inequality between women and men are considered as being abrogated given the expiration of their validity.

He recommends that measures should be taken within the system of the traditional Islamic jurisprudence to avoid some blatant injustices towards women²⁹⁰.

### 1.4. Historical changes of social and cultural aspects of Iranian women's life

Different views have been proposed with respect to the period in which the history of contemporary developments, and in particular, cultural developments of women, began in Iran.

In principle, the contemporary history of any country begins when the foundation of its basic developments is established. Thus, those who have talked about cultural, social, and political developments in the contemporary history of Iran have considered different periods of time as turning points of the country’s developments. These views can be divided into the following three categories:

People such as John Foran²⁹¹, Rasoul Jafarian,²⁹² and Najaf Lakzaee²⁹³ maintain that the contemporary history of Iran begins at the outset of the Safavid
period when the independence of Iran and the Shiite denomination were officially recognized, because, according to these researchers, this remarkable event had a role to play in subsequent developments in Iran until this day.

Some people, such as Ali Asghar Shamim, take the beginning of the contemporary developments of Iran to be the outset of the Qajar monarchy when the French Revolution in 1789. But in the present research, the beginning of the cultural developments of women is taken to coincide with the Constitutional Movement of Iran in 1906 when tangible and effective fronts were formed in defense of the tradition or modernity, although earlier periods of time are also taken into account in order to obtain a better understanding of these developments.

With respect to the condition of women before the Constitutional Movement, it should be admitted that because of social shortsightedness and certain illogical biases, there was a restrictive approach to women in a variety of cultural, political, and social domains. In addition, lack of systematicity in the society, lack of security, and the absence of supportive laws, institutions and organizations in the Qajar period paved the path for more restrictions of women and, consequently, their absence in cultural and social domains.

The Constitutional Movement in 1906 can be considered as a turning point of the contemporary history of Iran, in which people from all classes and


Habibollah Ismaeili. An Introduction to the Contemporary History of Iran; a Lecture by Hojjat-ol-Isam Rasoul Jafarian, Institute for the Studies of the Contemporary History of Iran. [Electronic resource]. — Mode of access: http://www.iichs.org/index.asp?id=1942&doc_cat=1


categories participated, including women, and since the movement was beyond genders, women came to experience public and observable presence in social and cultural domains for the first time. In the past, women’s activities were limited to religious ceremonies, and their main role in the Iranian society was limited to cooking, cleaning the house, taking care of household chores, taking care of the children, and sometimes helping their husbands in agricultural tasks and animal husbandry.

In line with the goals of the Constitutional Movement and modernism, many secret and half-secret societies were formed in Iran. In this period, women societies were covertly formed. These societies participated in the Constitutional Movement, and later in the years after the establishment of the parliamentary (or Majlis) and World War I, organizations were founded that were active in securing women’s rights and their social and cultural position in the society.

There is not much information about women’s social and cultural activities in the early years of the Constitutional Movement, because the activities of women organizations were intertwined with nationalistic campaigns, and the majority of societies acted secretly. However, the relative freedom of speech and political activities in Iran in the years after World War I, and international developments in women's rights as well as their social and cultural position can be considered as factors contributing in women’s social and cultural activities in the subsequent years.

Women of other parts of the world have been experiencing social and cultural promotions. Women’s Suffrage in the United States and Britain, the victory of Communists in the Soviet Union, the positions of Marx and Lenin about women, and women movements in Egypt and other Middle Eastern countries have been changing the face of the world.

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297 Ibid.
In Iran, in the years following Constitutional revolution and World War I, there were founded independent women's societies. They aimed at promotion of women's social and cultural place and played a fruitful role in these respects:

- *Anjoman-e Azadi-e Zanan* (1907)
- *Ettehadie-e Geibi-e Nesvan* (1907)
- *Anjoman-e Mokhaddarat-e Vatan* (1910)
- *Anjoman-e Nesvan-e Iran* (1910)
- *Anjoman-e Nesvan-e Vatan* (1910)
- *Sherkat-e Kheirie-e Khavatin-e Iran* (1910)
- *Ettehadie-e Nesvan* (1911)
- *Anjoman-e Hemmat-e Khavatin* (1911)
- *Shorae-e Heiat-e Khavatin-e Markazi* (1911).

In these years, female social and cultural activists in line with modernization goals of constitutional revolution, founded modern Western-like schools for girls. Elementary schools of Dushizegan (maidens), Namoos (honor), girls' schools of Efatiye (Chastity) and Taragi (Progress)²⁹⁹. They also established women's magazines. In 1910 the first women's magazine under the title of Danesh was published. The magazines of that time include Danesh by Mrs. Kahhal, Shokoufe by Maryam Amid, Zaban-e Zanan by Sedige Dulatabadi, Sadat-e Nesvan by Roshanak Nodust, Nm-e Bnvan by Shahnaz Azad, Alame-e Nesvan, and Nesvan-e Vatankhah by Mohtaram Eskandari, Dokhtaran-e Iran by Zandokht Shirazi³⁰⁰.

Females who embarked on the construction of modern schools include Seddiqeh Dowlatabadi, Shams al-Moluk Javaher Kalam, Bibi Vazirof, Tuba Azmudeh, Dorrat-o15-Ma’ali, Mahrokh Gowharshenas, Safiyyeh Yazdi, Bibi Khanom Estarabadi, and Rowshanak Now'dust. They faced considerable oppositions from traditionalists in the construction and preservation of their girl schools. Thus, in this historical period, it was a difficult task to establish such schools³⁰¹.

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²⁹⁹ زنجانیزاده حمید، با اغادار دنگشا علی، سیر شکل‌گیری مدارس زنان در دوره مشروطه، جامعه شناسی آموزش و پرورش، شماره 5، 1392، صص 91-110.

³⁰⁰ رنجبر عمرانی، جمیع، شکل‌گیری جمعیت زنان ایران در دوره قاجار پس از مشروطه، مؤسسه مطالعات تاریخ معاصر ایران.

³⁰¹ ترابی فارسی، سهیلا، روند آموزش زنان از آغاز نوگراپی تا پایان عصر رضا شاه، دانشگاه، شماره 3، 1387، صص 89-101.
Such organizations, societies, publications, and schools were founded by women cultural and social activists who belonged in the upper middle class of Tehran and other big cities, (such as Tabriz, Isfahan, Rasht, and Shiraz) and were educated.

The course of the Constitutional Movement faced major disagreements among its traditionalist and open-minded Westernized leaders and, consequently, the rise of chaos and insecurity in the wake of World War I and the military occupation of Iran, as well as the formation of decentralized political and separatist groups, and eventually the discovery of oil in Iran. All these led to the establishment of the absolute, semi-modern Pahlavi government by Reza Khan who was a military, authoritarian person in 1925. As a result, women’s cultural and social activities underwent certain changes as influenced by semi-modernist conceptions which were prevalent in this period. The official policy in this period was that Iranian women had to comply with women’s culture in the West with regard to their education, clothing, and cultural and social activities under the supervision of the absolute government of Reza Shah.

Until 1932, all independent cultural and social organizations of women as well as independent and critical periodicals were closed, and such organizations came to be supervised by the Ministry of Culture and other cultural organizations affiliated with the government or pro-governmental political parties, such Kanun-e Banovan (Center for Women) under the supervision of Reza Shah Pahlavi.

The open cultural and social sea-changes of the period were mainly in line with women's education. They approved the ban on hijab in 1936, the ban on the traditional education of women by religious clergies and realized Western models

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of education and culture. There were a great number of governmental schools, women’s entrance to the university since the establishment of the modern university in Tehran and Tabriz as well as other cities, and the limited deployment of women in governmental bureaucracies and economics.

In spite of attempts at Western-style modernization of cultural and social activities in the period of Pahlavi I between 1921 and 1941, the changes included a small number of women in the society, and the prevalent social and cultural approach was the traditional one in terms of women’s roles as wives and mothers. According to the first census in Iran in 1956, only 8 percent of women were literate at the time. The census may as well be extend to other cultural and social conditions of women at the time.

When the absolute government of Reza Shah was toppled down in 1925 and the rise of a certain extent of freedom in the society, government-independent organizations and cultural and social societies of women began to be formed again, such as the National Society of Women in 1926 and the Iranian Women League in 1928.

In 1932, the Women’s League joined the International Federation of Women, opening branches in all main cities of the country. Safiyyeh Firuz established the first Human Supporting Organization in Iran.

Despite widespread oppositions by clergies and traditionalists, women received the rights to vote and to be elected as representatives in the parliament and appointed as members of the cabinet.


For instance, until 1975, there were 18 female representatives in the parliament, 2 women senators, 2 women deputy ministers, and 28 women lawyers in Iran. In 1978, there were hundreds of women among 5000 members of local councils. 5 women served in the administrative board of the largest party in Iran, that is, Resurgence Party, and two women served in the political administration of the party.

Significant cultural and social changes in this period include: legal age for marriage for girls at 15 years old in 1968, and then in 1976 at 18 years old, the facilitation of girls’ education, their entrance to the universities, and their dispatch to universities abroad. In 1979 coincident with the victory of the Islamic Revolution of Iran, about 38 percent of students in Iranian universities and almost half of the 50,000 students who studied abroad were women.\textsuperscript{306}

After the Islamic Revolution in 1979 in Iran, women’s social and cultural activities underwent certain changes. Women who followed the Western model of cultural and social activities were dismissed in this period. On the contrary, women who sought to revive religious values became more active, forming establishments

\textsuperscript{306}Ibid.
such as the Society for Women of the Islamic Revolution and the Muslim Women Movement.

The newly emerged revolutionary government in Iran sought to provide a construal of a modern Islam which could protect Iran against the cultural invasion of the West, and in particular, the cultural imperialism of the US. Thus, a Shiite interpretation of modernity was formed as against the Western modernity. This model opposed the Western model of women activities, but its proponents, such as Ayatollah Motahhari, maintained that serious revision should also be made in the traditional condition of women and the identity and position of Muslim women in the Iranian society should be reconstructed.\textsuperscript{307}

In addition to Islamist women activists, many social, political and cultural women groups were formed within the few first months after the victory of the Islamic Revolution. They were influenced by Western democratic thoughts or they mainly associated with Communist organizations. These societies include as following:

Women Awakening Association, associated with the Union of Iranian Communists, the Association of Fighting Women associated with the Communist Party of Workers and Peasants, the Association of Women Liberty associated with the Organization of the Communist Union, the National Women Union associated with the Organization of Iranian People’s Feda’ian (Marxist-Leninist), and finally, the Commission of Women in the Democratic Front associated with the National Democratic Front. On the other hand, there were some ethnic societies in different regions of the country as well, such as the Association of Kurdish Women or the Center for Turkeman Women, or the Fighting Women of Saqqez.\textsuperscript{308}

As time went by and after the Iraqi invasion on Iran and the increasing prevalence of social and cultural religious thoughts, Westernized and Communist


thoughts were limited, on the one hand. And with the approval of the compulsory Islamic hijab by the Majlis of the Islamic Council (the parliament) in 1981, the majority of female social and cultural activists in Iran who leaned towards the Western cultural thoughts or were associated with Communist thoughts put an end to their activities.

During the Iran-Iraq war (1981-1989) and then the period of the economic, social and political reconstructions in Iran, women’s cultural and social activities in Iran were not seriously considered. However, after the election of Seyyed Mohammad Khatami as the president in 1997 and the rise of the reformist and civil society discourse in Iran, which was followed by Iran joining the Convention on the Elimination of all Forms of Discrimination against Women (CEDAW), women’s cultural and social activities came under the spotlight again. Along these lines, the “Center for the Participation of Women Affairs” was founded at the decree of the president, and one of its main tasks was to introduce women’s issues and gender contents into the Fourth Development Plan in Iran.

On December 7, 1998, Mohammad Khatami announced in Sharif University of Technology that 51 percent of people who were admitted to university through the entrance exam for governmental universities were women and girls. So, perhaps women’s influence on social and political developments of Iran was taken into account then. In the first nation-wide elections of the councils of cities and villages after the Islamic revolution, which were held in 1998, women could obtain one-third of the main positions of city councils. In all the centers of provinces, except for Ilam, Sanandaj, and Yasuj, women were elected as main members of city councils. After the elections, in 109 cities, 114 women were elected for city councils as first or second winners. In 176 cities, at least one woman, in 48 cities.


two women, in 8 cities three women, and in one city four women were the main members of councils elected by people. In a village around Kahnuj in Kerman Province, all main and substitutive members of the village council were women.

According to a survey, the political administration of women at a middle level was promoted, their cultural and social activities expanded, governmental and non-governmental organizations devoted to women’s social and cultural activities were reinforced, and gender contents were introduced into the Fourth Development Plan of the Islamic Republic of Iran. However, against all these attempts women’s cultural and social activities were still limited in comparison to men’s—women could not independently take over their own activities yet.

During the second term of president Ahmadinejad, in a remarkable change in comparison to his first term, great attempts were made to change the approach to women. The attempts to permit women’s presence in sports stadiums, lenience with respect to the enforcement of the hijab law, and the introduction of a women minister were some of the provocative and noisy actions of the head of the 9th and the 10th governments. In his first term, he emphasized on the presence of women at home to the extent that he proposed the decrease of women’s working hours to highlight their role at home, but in his second term as president, he remarkably changed his outlook by introducing woman ministers to the parliament.

This action was followed by critical responses on the part of religious institutions and great Shiite scholars. However, of the three women he introduced to the parliament, only Marziyeh Vahid Dastjerdi could be approved by representatives because of her positive and successful executive experiences, so she became part of an otherwise fully male cabinet.
In this period, the “National Campaign for Woman and Family” was founded for the purpose of preventing the collapse of families, decrease and control of harms, and decrease of the consequences of divorce in the country. The Center for Women Affairs approved bills such as insurance for mahr, women’s work from home, extension of women’s birth-giving leave from three months to nine months, and the employment of two women for the same position as part-time employees with half of the salary and other advantages. Other bills that were seriously considered in this center included the policies regarding the population increase and proposals to motivate more pregnancies. Also, for every child, one year was added to female employee’s total years of work.

People in charge of this center also approved a bill according to which female students who gave birth to a baby could be given three years of leave from the university. The center’s bill for “the decrease of female employees’ working hours from 44 hours to 36 hours per week” was approved by the board of ministers.

In this period, we see a remarkable growth in the number of senior female administrators in the Islamic Republic of Iran. They include Fatemeh Bodaghi, the member of the board of the supervisors of the enforcement of the Constitution; Nasrin Soltankhah, the Science and Technology Deputy of the President; Minu Kiyani Rad, the Currency Deputy of the Central Bank of Iran; Azadeh Kiyani, the head of the Iranian National Museum; Farahnaz Torkestani, the head of the Organization of the Youth Affairs for a short time; Maryam Mojtahedzadeh, the head of the Center of Women Affairs in the government of Mahmoud Ahmadinejad.313

In their assessment of the measures taken by Ahmadinejad’s government to change the condition of women, some women activists believe that the majority of
such actions were in line with the populist policies of his government. They believed that these measures led to considerable gender discriminations, such as the promotion of plans for women to work from home, their early retirement, the increase of their leaves, the decrease of their working hours, giving priority to their roles as wives and mothers, and new policies of family planning. To undo such actions is time-consuming and has, in fact, made it harder for activists for women rights to realize gender equalities.

With the government of Hassan Rouhani, populist mottos faded, and only some senior management roles were assigned to women. During his first term as president, no considerable action was made to bring cultural and social changes for women, and only the previous procedures were implemented. In the second term, the most important promise made by the 11th government in the cultural and social domain was the fight against gender inequalities. In his campaigns during the elections for the second term, Rouhani emphasized on the significant position of women, proposing the establishment of the “Ministry of Women” to realize his promises. However, two years after this proposal, there is hint of the actualization of this promise in the cabinet, and we still see the absence of women in important domains of decision-making.

According to the Deputy of the President in Women and Family Affairs, since the victory of the Islamic Revolution until 2016, 18 political, social and cultural organizations of women were granted official permissions, including:

“Society of the Women of Islamic Revolution of Iran” with Azam Taleqani as its secretary general: She was the daughter of an intellectual and social leader of Iran during the Islamic Revolution. With respect to organizational activities, this is regarded as one of the few organizations that has survived since its foundation in 1979 until the present day to continue its limited activities.


See: RUL: http://www.irma.ir/ru/News/82364421
“Society of Women of the Islamic Republic” with the presence of Zahra Mostafavi Khomeini, the daughter of the founder of Islamic Republic of Iran: this female organization was founded and opened in 1984 by a group of women who participated in social and political activities before and after the Islamic Revolution. Most members of this society were educated or held governmental and academic positions, such as Zahra Mostafavi, Marziyeh Hadidchi (Dabbagh), Rubabeh Rafiee Tari (Fayyazbakhsh), Fatemeh Iranmanesh, Seddiqeh Moqaddasi, Qodsiyeh Firuzan, and Sohayla Jelodarzadeh.

“The Society of Zaynab (s)” with the presence of Marziyeh Vahid Dastjerdi, the first female minister in the Islamic Republic of Iran under the government of Mahmoud Ahmadinejad: the society was founded in 1986 during the Iran-Iraq War. It primarily aimed to help the families of martyrs and warriors. Its formation at the same time as the formation of the Society of Women of the Islamic Republic indicates the active presence of women in the society in mid-1980s in the midst of the war. Maryam Behruzi, the general secretary of this Society of Zaynab says about its formation: “the Society of Zaynab (s) is the largest women party with over quarter a century of political, cultural, ideological, and social background in the Islamic Republic of Iran. Marziyeh Vahid Dastjerdi, the first woman minister in the Islamic Republic of Iran was a main member of the Society of Zaynab”.

“Islamic Assembly of Women” with the presence of Fatemeh Karroubi, the wife of the former parliament speaker of Iran and a well-known social and cultural activist in Iran: it was founded after receiving permission from the Interior Ministry on December 27, 1998. Fatemeh Karroubi has been the general secretary of the party since its formation. She served as the representative of the fifth Majlis of the Islamic Council as well. The activities of this organization include educational activities, political campaigns, and roles in elections.

“Society for Supporting Women’s Human Rights” with Shahindokht Mowlaverdi as its general secretary: she was the Deputy of the President in Women and Family Affairs in the first term of Hassan Rouhani’s presidency. The
society was established in 2000 and it aims at the identification, introduction, elaboration and illustration of human rights and women’s duties in accordance with the principle of justice from an Islamic viewpoint. It also attempts at the promotion of women’s human position in the family, and aims at the conscious, expertly and influential participation of Iranian women in international assemblies and events. It also aims at helping protect all the human rights for women, assisting them to have intellectual, cultural and political progress, and the elimination of all forms of discrimination, injustice, and violence against women.

“Society of Muslim Forward-Thinking Women”: according to Azar Mansouri, a member of its central council, the society began its work since 1997. This social and cultural organization was founded in order to institutionalize the all-inclusive participation of women in social affairs. It also aimed at the facilitation of their presence within the government, preparations for the promotion of the position of women in the family and the society, and the critique of available laws regarding women rights in order to improve their condition and help them achieve their true rights in Islam.

“Party of the Women of the Islamic Republic”: its title is similar to a woman organization which was established immediately after the Islamic Revolution in Iran. It was founded in 2006 by Fatemeh Aliya as its secretary general. She was a representative in the Majlis of the Islamic Council. This is a social organization and a conservative (rightist) political party focused on women and family with an emphasis on their awareness and cultural insightfulness.

“Assembly of Reformist Women” chaired by Zahra Shojae, the head of the Center for the Participation of Women in the reformist government of Mohammad Khatami: it began its work informally about 10 years before by a group of women who were former administrators and representatives of Majlis. In 2016, it received its permission to be registered as the last women organization until 2016. Zahra Shojae takes the organization to be non-profit and non-governmental which aims
at the expansion of women’s political participation in the framework of the laws with a reformist approach, believing in the general fate of the society. She emphasizes that reformist women who are members of this society do not believe in isolation or individual activity; they believe that if the fate of the society is left to righteous people, it will enjoy blessings.

There are other social and cultural organizations whose secretary generals are women and are focused on women and family affairs with the aim of making effects on the currents course of events in the society. They include Society of Women of the Islamic Revolution, Islamic Society of Women, Society of Women Following the Path of Lady Zahra (s), and Center of the Information Exchange of Women, Islamic Society of Women in Isfahan, Society of Messenger Women, Society of Muslim Women, and Society of Women Following Lady Zaynab (s) 315.

As pointed out before, all these cultural and social organizations accept the laws of the Islamic Republic of Iran and act in a peaceful way and in some limited cases, they act with slight tensions which are compatible with culturally and socially accepted values in lines with their cultural and social, and in particular, gender-related, goals.

Some women in the Islamic Republic of Iran had remarkable activities without being in a particular organization and only through the press and newspapers 316. Zan (woman) newspaper was a pioneer in this regard, which was founded by Faezeh Hashemi, the daughter of Ali Akbar Hashemi Rafsanjani, an outstanding politician and religious scholar who was close to the founder of the Islamic Republic of Iran. The newspaper was published from July 8, 1998 until April 6, 1999. It exhibited a feminist and reformist approach and aimed at defending women’s social and cultural activities. However, it was shut down first in February 1999 for two weeks and then permanently on April 6 because of its

315 See: http://www.irna.ir/fa/News/82364421

criticism of the Islamic hijab, its support for feminism, publishing a cartoon against women’s *diya* (blood money), and a piece of news about Farah Pahlavi the wife of the last Shah of Iran.

*Zanan*, the monthly magazine which was first published in February 1992 and lasted until January 2008, (totally 152 issues), was founded by Shahla Sherkat as its responsible director. She was active in informing women in reformist and open-minded ways. Its certificate was revoked with an appeal to the 24th principle of the Constitution and the act 6 of the Press Laws and the approval of the 298 meeting of the Higher Council of the National Security of Iran on November 19, 1997 according to the votes of the members of the supervising board of the press.\(^{317}\)

After the shutdown of *Zanan* monthly magazine and the victory of Hassan Rouhani in the presidential elections, Shahla Sherkat received permission for *Zanan-e Emruz* monthly magazine in June 2014. According to the website of the magazine, *Zanan-e Emruz* is a specialized and independent periodical regarding women issues, having no association with any political party. It is active in social, cultural, scientific, literary, and artistic domains in order to inform women in these fields. After a short 6-month suspension on April 27, 2015, the magazine continues to be released until the present day.\(^{318}\)

In addition to these, there are many scientific, specialized and academic periodicals which are published in Iran by institutes and universities, such as *Pazhu hesname-ye Zanan, Zan va Jame’eh, Motale’at-e Zan va Khanevadeh, Zan dar Tows e’eh va Siyasat, Zan dar Farhang va Honar, Motale’at-e Rahbordi-ye Zanan, Zan va Motale’at-e Khanevadeh, Motale’at-e Zanan-e Iran, Pazhu hesname-ye Eslami-ye Zanan va Khanevadeh*, and the like.\(^{319}\)

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\(^{317}\) See: [http://zananemrooz.com/](http://zananemrooz.com/)

\(^{318}\) See: [https://rppc.msrt.ir/file/download/download/1512883528-96.pdf](https://rppc.msrt.ir/file/download/download/1512883528-96.pdf)
In addition to paper publications, there are various online contents regarding cultural and social issues of women, such as the biweekly *Zanestan*, *Kanun-e Zanan-e Irani* and *Dokht-e Iran*.

The biweekly, *Zanestan*, began its work in 2005 as the first online magazine regarding specialized issues of women. So far, 33 issues of the magazine have been published, but in November 2007, it received a warning from the court of the internet chamber of the Ministry of Culture and Guidance because of problems in its legal registration, and so it was closed until further notice\(^{320}\).

The Center for Iranian Women, with Jila Bani Yaqub as its editor in chief, is another online magazine which defends human rights in general, and women rights in particular. Its editor in chief won the “courage in journalism award” in 2009 by the International Foundation of the Media of World Women. This website was also blocked at the order of judicial officials because of problems in its legal registration, and on March 30, 2007, its contents were completely deleted\(^{321}\). The online monthly magazine, *Dokht-e Iran*, began its activities on March 5, 2008 and released its 64\(^{th}\) issue on March 24, 2015, but it was shut down by its publishers for unknown reasons\(^{322}\).

It seems that there are still legal problems for publishing contents online and the registration of internet websites for cultural and social activities of women in Iran, and there is no obvious prospect for its future.

With an examination of the historical course of cultural developments of Iranian women, it is now known that in the periods before the Qajar era and international relationships, Iranian women were vastly uninformed and faced many social obstacles for social and cultural contributions. However, in the Qajar era, coincident with the French Revolution, the challenge between the tradition and modernity began sparkling women's cultural and social developments. The spread


\(^{321}\)See: [http://webna.ir/3935/%d8%b3%d8%a7%db%8c%d8%aa-%da%a9%d8%a7%d9%86%d9%88%d9%86-%d8%b2%d9%86%d8%a7%d9%86-%d8%b1%d8%a7%d9%86%db%8c-%d9%87%da%a9-%d8%b4%d8%af](http://webna.ir/3935/%d8%b3%d8%a7%db%8c%d8%aa-%da%a9%d8%a7%d9%86%d9%88%d9%86-%d8%b2%d9%86%d8%a7%d9%86-%d8%b1%d8%a7%d9%86%db%8c-%d9%87%da%a9-%d8%b4%d8%af)

\(^{322}\)See: [http://www.dokhtiran.com/archive/?page=all](http://www.dokhtiran.com/archive/?page=all)
of the press and organizations concerning women and the return of people who had studied abroad as well as the Constitutional Movement of Iran led to more and more changes in the condition of Iranian women and their increasing acquisition of social positions. After the occurrence of World War I and as a result of it, the prevalence of chaos and insecurity in Iran led to the formation of the absolute and semi-modern government of Pahlavis that undertook women's education, the compulsory change of the hijab, and cultural and social activities under the government's supervision. With a change in the Pahlavi government in 1941, significant changes began to be made in facilitating women's education and activities. However, as researchers admit, despite all these changes, the majority of women were culturally and socially impoverished and were denied of their social and cultural rights and positions. After the Islamic Revolution of Iran in 1979 and the increasing establishment of the Islamic ideology, cultural and social organizations that were in agreement with religious values were reinforced, and women's social and cultural activities based on Western culture or Communism began to be marginalized, and the process continues until the present day with relative force or lenience. In the last three decades, although women in the Iranian society have witnessed remarkable changes and developments in social and cultural domains, and are above the global human development index, they do not, nonetheless, play roles in political, social and cultural structures, in proportion with such developments. Although their social positions have been improved on a daily basis, they could not, because of their gender, achieve considerable success in significant and influential domains as well as in large-scale levels of social, political, and cultural decision-making. With respect to the gender, in many of these domains, they are not still much influential and may well be ineffective. In general, they are absent from significant and influential positions, such as judgeship, jurisprudence and ijtihad, headship of the three branches of the government, the Guardian Council of the Constitution, the Assembly of Experts of Leadership, Expediency Discernment Council, and ministers of the governmental
cabinet. It seems that all the following obstacles that have existed in all historical periods (discussed in this research) are still there:

- The historical background and the social common sense regarding differences and, in some cases, conflicts between the presence of men and women in social and cultural activities.

- Lack of gender equality or justice in accordance with biased beliefs against women in education, employment, social and citizenship rights, and so on, and the institutionalization of such discriminations since a very long time.

- Although the official reading of Shiism in Iran does not restrict women's social, political and cultural presence in the society if jurisprudential conditions are met, but in many cases, statements are released against the activities of women with appeals to religious evidence and justifications, and with cultural and ideological exaggerations, their social presence is taken to lead to corruptions.

- The old patriarchal tradition and culture governing the Iranian society which, in the past, reduced women to the gender roles of motherhood and wifehood, is still generally believed by the Iranian society.

- It should be admitted that while at present, after such a long time, Iranian women are employed for many jobs in governmental and private organizations along with men, their administrative ideas and their power of reasoning are not taken seriously in group works. Thus, women are still absent from influential positions.

- The low level of women's education and general information as well as their lower levels of reading in the past has obstructed their progress and their ability to achieve higher social positions.

The religious discourses discussed in the preceding section had influenced the construction of women's identity while being influenced by women's actions. The religious approach that dominated in pre-constitutional Iranian society was fundamentalism. Since constitutionalism, the introduction of secularized modern
culture to Iranian society threatened the stability of fundamental religious discourse. However, it maintained its authority in the traditional discourse. Confronting the modernized reforms of Reza shah, fundamentalists encouraged seclusion of traditional and religious women who included the majority. Women's participation in Islamic revolution empowered them to act as agents. This manifestation of women's potential and their desire for new identity though had been structured by society, influenced changes in religious structures of society. In fact, the dualist interaction of women as agents and social structures contributed to creation of a new approach. The reproduced approach, moderate traditionalists that valued religious women's social participation became the dominant discourse.

The post-revolutionary discourse that encouraged, women's presence in social and educational arenas produced women who were different from their mothers. This new generation equipped with resources of knowledge and academic education sought new definition of female identity. The presidency of Khatami with reformist mottos, valued the social involvement of women with modernized ideas, appearance and dressing. Therefore, the reformist approach dominated culture institutes.

Globalization and the growing prevalence of media subjected women to modernized Western more than ever. To answer women's attempt for globalized and modernized identity, some religious elites offered the Islamic Modernist approach. However, since the Islamic state and the majority of religious institutes are traditional, this approach not being supported by the dominant power is marginalized.

All three approaches, though propose different significations of female sex according to their interpretations of Islam, they agree on heteronormativity that Islam insists on it. Yet, the approach of modernists deconstructs heteronormativity as it removes the centrality of Islam. Since, in this approach, Islam is no more
holding the tie between the signifier (female sex), and the signified (femininity), the meanings attributed to female sex are not necessarily within heteronormativity.

Chapter 1: Findings

Since the major purpose of the thesis is to demonstrate Iranian women's traditional and modern cultural identity, this chapter presented an elaboration of concept of identity in its philosophical, social and cultural aspects. Planning to study Iranian women's identity, the author outlined gender identity definitions through the lens of different feminist perspectives, mainly Judith Butler's theory of Performativity as the basic theoretical framework. Structuration theory of Giddens was also discussed as the supportive theory used to analyze the identity issue of Iranian women. An overlapping point between these two theories is established where both theories emphasize the role of performances in the agency of actors. Both Giddens and Butler address the dialectic relationship of agents and the structure in reproduction of new identities.

Applying Judith Butler's performative theory on Islamic society of Iran seems strange. While Butler, as a poststructuralist believes in decentrality, Islam has been a center holding together the orders of language and reality. Islamic perspective constrains the meanings that one can attribute to concepts such as femininity. Besides, what Butler mainly challenges is to trouble hetronormativity which is the base of Islamic teachings. While Butler deconstructs any binary, Islam emphasizes binaries such as sky/earth or women/men. The final and a main point is that while Islam as a religion relys on essentiality, Butler believes in the constructed nature of both sex and gender.

To apply these two opposite perspectives on Iranian society, the author reflects on Butler's emphasize on recitionality and performativity from one hand and the centrality of Islam in Iranian society on the other. Performative theory proves to be true considering the changes that has occurred in gender norms. However, these changes depend on the scope of agency that the subject enjoys
within the country's discourse. The challenge between the way that Islamic discourse determines the significations of female sex before the arrival of these subjects to the scene, and the agency of women to transform these meanings is examined. Women's agency is studied in performance of three aspects of their lifestyle: body maintenance, veiling, work and leisure.

Islam as a center, holds the relationship between signifier and signified, here, sex/gender, or female/woman. The subjects' sexed bodies perform and recite the meanings attributed to them, hence proving themselves as viable subjects in the society. Being named as a female, the sexed bodies are materialized in a way that Islamic culture defines female body within a particular frame. Consequently, they perform the defined womanhood exercises. These recitations of meanings, while promising them social identity as Muslim Iranian women, establish and sustain the norms of the country. The bodies as cites of power, are also imposed by other discourses competing with Islam.

The subjects, under the impact of new discourses, reveal their agency in reciting the imposed gender norms in difference with the originally intended meanings. Globalization and media have been major forces to regulate Iranian women's identity in variation from the intended traditional meanings. The encounter between traditional and modern meanings of female sex is not limited to current Iran. Since the arrival of enlightened ideas during the last century, Iranian women endeavored to modify the traditionally discursively determined meanings of womanhood. The body of female sex has been the very cite of power challenge between the traditional Islamic culture and claims for modernizations. Both have attempted to impose regulatory norms on female sex to give meaning to the concept of womanhood. Nevertheless, women have their agency in altering most of the meanings attributed to their gender and establishing the new meanings as norms.

The author, considering the authoritative significance of Islam in the society, examined different interpretations of Islam in different discourses to
demonstrate how each interpretation marked the border of their accepted female identity and out-group identity. The traditional fundamentalist approach defines women as essentially incompetent both mentally and physically. While women's role is limited to household chores and motherhood, their social presence will identify them as abjects. This approach resists any modern cultural and social modifications and adheres to traditional interpretations of Islamic instructions. Development of traditional moderates' approaches coincides with sociocultural transformations of 1960s. Believing in the equal nature of male and female identity, they had a positive view on women's social and cultural activities. Nevertheless, they insisted on physical, mental and psychological difference of men and women. Late 1990s faced a reformist social changes that influenced religious authorities view on women. These traditional reformists, while still invoking to Islamic texts, sought to reform Shiite perception of women's identity and social activities. Valuing the identity of women, they acknowledge the equal nature and capability of men and women. Reinterpreting the Islamic texts, they emphasize the reinforcement of women's social and culture activities. Modernist approach also believes in difference between men and women, however, this difference does not cause any social or cultural inequality. Emphasizing the fact that Islamic jurisprudence is bound to its social and historical context, they maintain that our current society needs elites to figure out current social changes. So that in the same way that Prophet Muhammad reformed his current age, we can reform our age with moral instructions align with egalitarianism.

It can be said that any religious interpretations of Islamic texts are under the influence of social and cultural discourses. Any religious knowledge produced by its current discourse, at the same time influences the very society from which it originates. Exploration of historical changes of social and cultural aspects of Iranian women's life reveals that both the transformational course of religion and society reflect each other. The fundamental religion marked the in-group identifications as veiled women, in contrast to socially and culturally active female
identity defined by moderate religious perspective. This moderate religious view that has been the ideological base of Iranian revolution, therefore it still survives. The Reformist approach, which has emerged recently, produces female identities that are equal with men in respect to their social rights, with the least difference between men and women. Though this approach remains marginalized, women show more tendency to them. The Modern approach to women with its western-based ideology has not been able to have an especial place in traditional Iranian society which is in transition to modernity. Since this approach is not defined in the country's official ideological framework, those following it are identified as defiant abject or out-groups.

Throughout Iranian history, inequality of men and women and its internalization in social common sense, as well as the long lasting patriarchal cultural tradition of Iran and their official excuses invoking to religious readings, and women's low level of social knowledge and their less social presence has confirmed marginalized identity of women.
CHAPTER 2
MANIFESTATION OF TRADITIONAL AND MODERN CULTURAL
IDENTITY OF IRANIAN WOMEN

2.1. Iranian Women's Cultural Identity Represented in their Bodies

Iranian Women's Cultural Identity Represented in their Bodies during the Era of Pre-Constitutionalism

Body as a natural and biological entity seems to have no association with culture, in regard to the contrasting binaries that nature and culture occupy in a binary structure. Whereas, the very naming of that natural body as male or female burdens it with the society's expectations of a viable male or female. While a baby with no understanding of its gender fails to be identified, his or her body will be engendered to have an identity. Therefore, body represents a society's definitions of viable identities. Here, Iranian female body is studied not in its physical and biological sense but in its representative signification of social construction. The analysis is from the perspective of Butler's ideas on materiality of body and performative theory. In this part, the author is reflecting on the way that different discourses of pre and post constitutionalism as well as the current domineering discourses have given meanings to female body. The transformation of Iranian women's cultural identity is associated with the way the regulations imposed on female body by different discourses to formulate her gender. The accepted gender identity in each discourse identifies her with that particular discourse, thereby defining her cultural identity.

According to poststructuralist ideas of Judith Butler, body is regulated by the discourses that influence the individual's performances such as bodywork, and
formulates her identity. Gender is "an identity instituted through the stylization of the body and, hence, [...] bodily gestures, movements, and enactments of various kinds constitute the illusion of an abiding gendered self". Therefore, body fails to be a natural entity rather it is discursively shaped. Physical body being materialized by the discourse, has the agency to maintain the persistence of the discourse or subvert its norms through performances.

Iran's encounter with Western ideology as well as its science and technology, during Qajar dynasty, challenged its conventional ideology to give rise to modernization. The westernized modernization was "determined to closely imitate Western model in creating a new state and economic structure". This imitation, which was a secularization project from the early stages, involved Iranian women's question who had been controlled by Sharia. The conflict between the traditional religious institution and secularized modernization represents itself in different aspects of people's life. Here, the way that these two discourses competed to formulate female body is discussed. Female body as the bearer of signals that represents the society's hegemonic culture might represent and repeat the established norms or defy them through different performances.

The seclusion of women in pre-Qajar era "continued and strengthened under this dynasty". A woman's body as privacy of husband was kept away from the view of stranger men. "Iranian women were hidden physically behind walls and veils, their bodies and voices associated with enclosure". Women were excluded and secluded form "the public domain". The high walls surrounding the house were not sufficient. Inside the house, they were kept in an interior section called

"andaruni", that depending on the wealth of the owner was separated by a "simple
curtain, a courtyard, or a very beautiful garden\textsuperscript{327}.

The bodies sexed as female were silenced and controlled by male
guardianships. Arranged marriages by families in early childhood of girls were
void of any romantic love. Marriage was primarily for the purpose of procreation
and hence, the husband would never lose any opportunity to enjoy the arms of
temporary wives (\textit{sigeh}). Legally a man, depending on social status and financial
capacities, could have limitless temporary wives for some hours or years. These
wives served them sexually and brought them children, or they served in the
master's house as a maid\textsuperscript{328}. The harems of the royal court witnessed abundant of
permanent or temporary wives, slaves or even boys.

Women "exercised little control over their body". They significantly knew
that they have to offer their virgin bodies to the husband, who on the other hand
would protect these incapable bodies. They had "learned that their sexuality and
reproductivness were their only assets"\textsuperscript{329}. Female body's prominent role was
fertility. The birth of a child contributed to the preservation of marriage bond and
mainly to the "perpetuation of line of decent". "With birth of her first child,
especially if it was a son, a bride began her ascent from the lower end of family
position"\textsuperscript{330}. The houses without child were called \textit{khana-kur} (blind house) or
\textit{ojaq-kur} (blind hearth), implying that there is no light in the house, as there is no
child\textsuperscript{331}. However, the jubilant celebration of birth of a boy usually turned to be a
gloomy fate for the mother of girls, who would be punished by the husband, or his
families or her own father. "In some families, it was traditionally a \textit{nang} (social

\begin{thebibliography}{99}
p.27.
\item Joseph S., Najmabadi A. \textit{Encyclopedia of Women and Islamic Culture: Family, Law and Politics}. Leiden-Boston,
\item [This S. \textit{Qajar Dynasty xiii. Children's upbringing in the Qajar Period}. \textit{Encyclopedia Iranica}. [Electronic
resource]. — Mode of access: \url{http://www.iranicaonline.org/articles/qajar-13-children-upbringing}]
\end{thebibliography}
disgrace) to give birth to girls”\textsuperscript{332}. Since female body gained its identity in maternity, her infertility caused her exclusion and the husband gained permission for second marriage.

The obedient women as the object of sex, procreation and household services had to be socially invisible to have the "right as a citizen". Women disappeared to have identity, which was bound to their role as wife and mother. Not only were they deprived of any rights to own a property, they did not own their children in case of divorce\textsuperscript{333}. Scheiwiller acknowledges that women were regarded as "objects of desire", passive bodies of penetrating erotic excitement rather than active agents of political excitement\textsuperscript{334}. Dependence of women's identity to men rarely left any agency for them. Not only they were physically barred, they were mentally deprived of education, reading and writing abilities. The bodies being called as female were regulated to be objects to satisfy male desire.

As subjects to males, the female bodies directed their physical body care to satisfying husband's desire. Female body regarded as "ritually unclean, required strict observation, bathing, and seclusion during menstruation". "A woman's body was almost always associated with impurity because of her sexual and menstrual secretions"\textsuperscript{335}. Women used various natural ways to have an acceptable body. Hair dying was a process span in two days. The first night, while mixed with rosewater, henna was applied and rinsed with oil before daybreak. The following evening the color was applied. Long hair was another female characteristic that gendered a body as female. With longer hair, a body enjoyed of more femininity. In the case of insufficient hair, silk was used to weave the hair into braids. They also tattooed

temporary and permanent beauty marks on their faces or bodies. The facial hair
was waxed or threaded by a threader known as wizard of love and luck."

Against their veiled appearance outside the house, married women
conventionally put up makeups. The cosmetics were typically composed of 7
items: Surmeh, which is "smoked carbon powder mixed with oil and applied to
women's eyelids and eyelashes. Sefidab was a powder used to whiten the face, and
a kind of it was used in bath as exfoliator of face and whole body. Henna was used
to dye the hair and nails, indigo or woad (wasme) was used to dye hair and
eyebrows, gold spangles (zarak), and sorkhab to color the cheeks. These cosmetics
had a natural material with health benefits on the body. Number seven in Iranian
culture refers to completion and all these seven items were applied to bride to
complete her beauty to deserve the groom. Generally, body maintenance and
beauty standards were different from the current practices. In contrast to slimness
ideal of this age, fat women were beauty standards. A woman's fat body meant that
she had an affluent male supporter.

Fig. 2. Anis el Doleh, Wife of Nasereddin shah

336 Joseph S., Afsaneh Najmabadi A. Encyclopedia of Women and Islamic Cultures: Family, Law and Politics
Iranian Women's cultural identity represented in their body after Constitutionalism

Women's seclusion behind the curtains was penetrated by the initial sparks of constitutional revolution. Paidar argues that the constitutional movement created a particular vision of modern Iran. This particular version of modernization of Iran "created conceptual link between national independence and progress, and women's emancipation". The revolution inspired from one hand by those who struggled to confront the absolute monarchy, and on the other hand by elites who were influenced by western modernization. Preliminary, women were "mobilized by ulama, and they took part in anti-government strikes". The discursive interpretations of religion once demanded that female body be surrounded and secluded by house walls, later it required their active presence. Under the name of religion or under the influence of western modernization, they broke the confining walls. Achieving their revolutionary goals, "later they incorporated some independent demands, including the recognition of their anjomans (societies), the launching of girls' schools and suffrage rights". In fact, women displayed their agencies when they stopped performing the role of seclusion. Modified recitation of norms challenged the stability of traditional Islamic discourse.

The schools founded in a modern sense undermined the authority of the traditional religious schools (maktab). The religion that had inspired women's collaboration in revolution against absolutism, abstained from helping women "form schools and associations" arguing that "women needed only a limited education to prepare them for their domestic chores". Consequently, the number of maktabs surpassed the limited number of modern schools.

American missionary schools, established in 1895 in Iran, presented a course called "Household Arts". Scientific domesticity empowered women by

emphasizing the nurturing qualities of mothers and their role in children's education. Early students confronted this curriculum of domestic science. They belonged to most prominent and affluent families who left domesticity to servants. Nevertheless, reformers and Iranian elites embraced science of domesticity and childcare. They held that mothers, as the trainer and guide of kids must be properly educated. Following a nationalist thought, they believed that modern Iran needed educated mothers to train the children and appropriately cultured wives who deserve the educated modern men.  

Whereas, both traditional and modern institutions emphasized the domestic female gender roles, the former confined women inside the house, discarding her from any social status and the second one encouraged a socially active women who performed her domestic roles even better. In fact, a body named as female, was a site where the struggling powers were imposed on. The religious institutes in their traditional perspective on women as "zai'feh or the weak sex and status as moti'eh or those obedient to men's will" emphasized the subjectivity of female body who needed to be controlled by men. This marginalized class had been enthused by religious institutes as auxiliary force in cases such as tobacco movement so that the clerics would achieve their own goals. However, these participations "propelled women's movements in Iran forward" and "as the movement grew women's democratic institutions grew with it". Their social participation revealed that the "weak sex" have latent underestimated potentials.

In midst of constitutional revolution, the encounter with European culture was increasing through western founded schools, travels to Europe and the penetration of European goods, diplomats and thereby their ideas and lifestyle. "Many educated men and women were awakened to the repressive conditions of Iranian women and led them to view these conditions as problematic and in need of

change”\textsuperscript{343}. Women, entering society stopped performing the previous role of femininity as invisible subjects struggling to be visible agents.

Still, the modernized elites who addressed women's oppression and promoted their education and social participation, failed to define female bodies released from domesticity. They promised that women's social participation would not interfere with society's expectation of women… women would remain dutiful daughters, faithful wives, and self-sacrificing mothers even as they assumed a more public role in society". The body, recited as female was still defined in procreation, and satisfying husband and children's desire, though she had passed the confining borders.

Women's organizations and their monthly or weekly-published magazines along with advocating education for girls, freedom of women from seclusion and the abolition of polygamy"\textsuperscript{344}, also highlighted women's long-established gender roles. These new institutions underscored household chores, child upbringing and caring for the desires of the husband to define a female gender. Women's organizations spread knowledge of literature and history among women, but they also "trained women in hygiene, child care, housekeeping, and needle work". The first women's magazine in Iran, called \textit{Danesh} (Knowledge), "sought to educate women for successful marriage and motherhood"\textsuperscript{345}. The magazine to introduce itself, stated, "This is a moral press to teach women the science of house keeping, child rearing, and husband caring. With no political concerns, it is advantageous for women"\textsuperscript{346}. The writings reveal a belief in the essential differences between female and male body, and consequently their different gender roles stemming from natural body differences. Female body performed the roles ascribed to her body as if they were natural outcome of their body.
Valuing female gender roles, the modernized elites also attributed the features to female body that categorizes the whole women of both pre and post constitutionalism under the class of female gender. Alike to the traditional women, they sustained their domestic cares, and even reinforced them in a proper manner. However, their social presence identified them as modernized women who overcame the submissive subjectivity and revealed their agencies. The women, who founded schools, established organizations, published their own press, lectured at conferences, or collaborated in revolutionary affairs were no more called "zai'feh" (weak).

Social presence led to showcasing of female body. Modernized women typically became unveiled or at least they removed their facial veil (negab), or they dressed in European style but covering their hair. The bodies that until then were entirely packed in black chadors became visible. This visibility that assured them social identity, at the same time impacted women's physical appearance of body. It sparked Concerns with body image. Claiming to be the bearers of modern culture, they formed their appearance in western styles. Dreaming to be identified as modernized they chose the western beauty style.

"The importation of western beauty culture happened in Iran at about the same time as this culture was emerging in America". Pahlavi states in attempt to redefine the particulars of female gender roles facilitated tendencies to the modern culture of beauty. The imported health and beauty products provided women an emancipatory road and promised social expression. "The pages of Iranian press advertised and discussed health and beauty products and fashions in a manner similar to the American press". The press, as an influential institution especially among educated women, idealized figures of thin women, with heavy makeup and elaborated hair. Monobrows gave way to thin eyebrows, overweighted bodies were replaced by relatively thin bodies, and the natural beautifying materials were

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substituted by imported cosmetics\textsuperscript{348}. Modernization required that natural bodies be regulated more and more with unnatural materials.

\textbf{Fig. 3. Cover page of a magazine during the second Pahlavi}

While modernized discourse modified the Iranian women's fashion and culture of beauty, at the same time it regulated the definition of viable femininity as educated, patriotic, athletic, marital, socially active and economically productive. Her objectification in the domestic arena expanded to social objectification of women in display of their beauty. Though Iranian woman's ability in control and manipulation of her body indicates to a newly gained agency, her body, as the landscape of western discourse again failed to be hers.

In fact, modernization, with its assertion to address women's issues, sustained and highlighted the heteronormative social structure based on which segregation of binary genders determines the features and roles of each gender. Sustaining old notions of female gender, it expanded engendering of the bodies. Camron Amin argues, "The constitutional period was an ill-fated egalitarian gesture that paradoxically advanced the cause of women's progress while limiting

\textsuperscript{348}Poorna Bell. How Iranian Beauty Has Changed Over 100 Years From Monobrows To Half-Covered Hair. The Huffington Post UK, 20.02.2015 [Electronic resource]. — Mode of access: https://www.huffingtonpost.co.uk/2015/02/20/how-iranian-beauty-has-changed--n_6719284.html
or denying it\textsuperscript{349}. It had" preserved the essential gender hierarchy that granted special privilege to all male\textsuperscript{350}.

Gender binary, as Najmabadi in her "Women with Mustaches and Men without Beard", maintains, was formulated after Iranian modernity. In nineteenth century Iran, the border between erotic desires, especially at court, was blurry and not strictly defined. The "adjectives that today are more likely to evoke feminine beauty, in nineteenth century were equally applicable for men and women". In pre-modern and early modern Iran the beardless boys (called amrade) were the objects of desire as long as beard grew visibly, who would turn to be the desiring object\textsuperscript{351}. It can be concluded that the imprisonment of women behind curtains and veils had directed the erotic tendency toward young boys who were visible and accessible. The tacit acceptance of erotic desire to young boys is mainly associated with the fact that "females were segregated and tightly controlled "\textsuperscript{352}. Homoeroticism in pre-modern Iran was "situational", because of publicly invisible female. As the sexes were allowed to mingle freely, homo sexual relations would disappear\textsuperscript{353}. Constitutional revolution re-sexualized the state with more heteronormative and patriarchal structures. The masculine gendered court would take the control of women and the state\textsuperscript{354}.

Transcendence of traditional era opened a new world structured on heteronormativity. The overt visibility of female sex among male sex entailed a more systematic gendered definition of each sex. No more in art and literature men were describe with feminized adjectives. Tendency to young boys (called amrades)

gradually faded away, when women were visible in public. Women cared about their body and physical appearance. Female sex emancipated from seclusion and subordination, was gendered as devoted mothers, wives and daughters, educated and socially active, and fashionable. Such a definition emphasizes heteronormativity.

With the rise of Reza Shah in 1925 women's organizations lost its independence since the state "adopted forceful and centralist approach and created state-sponsored women's organization to lead the way on women's emancipation". Both Pahlavi states emphasized the civic aspects of women's roles as opposed to familial ones. They opposed women's independence both inside and outside the family. This unwillingness to define female gender as socially and domestically empowered and independent "strengthened the clergy's ideological hold over the matter". The Islamic campaign of women rejecting westernized sexual objectification of female body, promised equality, freedom and independence to women. Those women seeking emancipation identified themselves with Islamic institution and joined revolutionary practices. Here female body was identified as revolutionary mother. Again, as in the constitutional revolution, the centrality of Islamic discourse inspired women to find new identities that promised to define an egalitarian view of female body franchised from gender inequalities.

After revolution, female body represented the regulations of Islamic discourse. Preserving her traditional gender domestic gender roles, Iranian woman improved their social presence. Confronting the globalization, female body sought to emancipate herself from regulatory forces of traditional Islamic discourse to give new meanings to her body. These new performances are directed to identify the Iranian woman with Iranian version of modernization.

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Current Iranian Women's Cultural Identity Represented in their Bodies

The following section discusses construction of current Iranian women's cultural identity in relation to their body. It reflects on the ways that current women through different performances define and redefine their cultural identity. Underlining the discursive nature of body construction, here it is sought to illuminate the discourses that have influenced the materialization of Iranian women's bodies and qualified the viable identities. Iranian woman's body is regarded as a site where globalized western culture and traditional Islamic Iranian culture are challenging to regulate and form women's identity. This section aims to manifest the transformation of their identities and the new meanings that these performances give to female body.

Traditionally female body in Iranian culture signified maternity and devotion to family. The country's Islamic structure has celebrated purity and piety as female beauty norms, and devotion and scarification of her body and desires to the service of family are regarded as features of a normal female cultural identity.

The female body that performs these norms is materialized by the traditional discourse. Those who fail to be identified as normal female subjects are excluded from traditional structure as abjects. For instance, infertile women were called by scornful nicknames and were rejected by family.

In fact, women's recitation of the artificial performance of limiting their bodies inside the houses, were not natural results of their female sex. Rather, their very performances had produced the meaning of female and sustained the regulative discourse of traditional Iran. As it is clarified by Judith Butler, "gender is a kind of imitation for which there is no original [...] sex and gender achieve their supposed naturalness through social performance".

Women seeking to be identified with globalized modernity are in attempt to defy the conventional norms. They change their traditional gendered performances. The stability of the traditional discourse that depended to these performances is traumatized.

With entrance of women to society, their bodies are shaped as a female gender not only by the discourse of family, but also by regulative forces of society. Although the society is controlled by traditional Islamic culture, it is inevitably exposed to global ideals. Today, the country's traditional Islamic culture is not the only determinative factor in the ways women manage their bodies. There are boundless available resources that one can invoke to define or redefine her identity, among which there are resources that are unaccepted by domineering authoritative Islamic discourse of the country. Globalization, which is "integration of the political, economic, and cultural activities of geographically and/or nationally separated peoples"\textsuperscript{358}, has transcended any boundaries to permeate the remotest points of the world. Obviously, Iran has not been an exception\textsuperscript{359}. Globalization in Iran is usually associated with western culture, that "despite being officially banned, is gradually seeping into bones of Iranian society"\textsuperscript{360}.

Globalization has influenced any sociocultural realms including beauty standards and practices, which are no longer bounded to historical and geographical borders. Indeed, the homogenization of culture involves homogenization of beauty standards.

The concept of beauty has undergone various implications throughout the history. For Plato physical beauty is a ladder that leads up the individual to spiritual beauty. Aristotle ignoring metaphysical beauty admired the beauty in proportionality in mathematics and science. For Aquinas beauty was God's


attribution. Secularization of beauty began in Renaissance and enhanced in industrial revolution, when beauty was no more transcendental, but physical.

The traditional objective and absolute perception toward beauty turned to be a subjective and relative approach. Beauty, that once reflected the absolute beauty of God, now is "in the eyes of culture and beholder". David Hume proposed that beauty "is no quality in things themselves; it exists merely in the mind that contemplates them; and each mind perceives a different beauty".

The phenomenon of media industry's concentration on women's beauty and body shape is not limited to western countries; rather it is global in nature. "Globalization of beauty and appearance ideals is becoming more prevalent across Asian cultures as American media content permeates societies and cultures on a worldwide basis". The standards of beauty are infused through globalized media. The globally mediatized ideal appearance defines the norms and idealizes what it means as beauty.

Against the Iranian Islamic culture's emphasis on cleanliness and health protection, bodywork has not been a matter of beauty or a demonstrating factor of one's identity. Following body standards to gain the desired body image is a recent issue in Iran and one of the certain consequences of globalization. Islamic teachings strongly recommend body care. Nevertheless, from a religious perspective the two-dimensional human being embodies body and soul. The human soul as entity that sustains personal identity is eternal and entails more care. According to holy Quran, the Satan was rejected by God because he perceived human being in a material sense as created from soil. It implies that regarding human beings only in their material body is a satanic deed. Exaggerated bodywork

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that neglects promotion of soul to achieve spiritual goals is not valued in Islam. Iranian tradition culture has deemed spiritual considerations more than body cares\textsuperscript{365}. Body as a mortal entity enjoys less importance in defining the individual's identity. However, giving meaning to material body, through spirituality and religious beliefs, or social roles such as motherhood, diverts the centrality of body as the main force in determining our identification. It is demonstrated that people with more religious commitment have less body managements. Certainly, the possibility of healthy lifestyle or bodywork in this group is not denied. Many Iranian researches have shown the relationship between watching satellite TVs, religious commitment, and body management. It is manifested that religious people have less body management and are less exposed to Satellite channels. The more people watch these TVs, the more they care body management, while their religious ideas fade away\textsuperscript{366}.

Globalized culture values women's beauty and attractiveness. "Fashion magazines hint that women everywhere in the world share a single common concern and are united by an inescapable bond of beauty"\textsuperscript{367}. In a culture where physical appearance are valued, the individuals seek to meet the cultural demands to be valued. In America, the growing number of cosmetic surgery shows people's "rational response to prevailing cultural values that reward those considered more attractive"\textsuperscript{368}. Therefore, Iranian women to be identified as modernized invest on their bodyworks.

Globalized media as one of dominant discourses defines the norm of physical appearance. Media communicates appearance norms throughout the world, in western or Islamic culture. The reality constructed by media is


\textsuperscript{368} Ibid. p. 28.
internalized and fantasized. The individuals follow these standards to wear a new identity that identifies them as globalized and modernized. "The resulting social body bears the imprint of the more powerful elements of its cultural context"\textsuperscript{369}. Bodies reveal the mechanics of dominant discourses of society. The bodies that are formed in similar way demonstrate the influence of a particular discourse, thereby they are identified under the same sociocultural category.

Therefore, today the meanings given to body and the way one attempts to achieve the idealized meanings are not contextually confined. Although they are influenced by sources, such as parents, partners or important people around, it is said that "the mass media are the most potent and pervasive communicators of sociocultural standards"\textsuperscript{370}. More than 90 percent of Iranians are exposed by TV shows, soap operas and advertisements on beauty services or commercial products including cosmetics and cosmetic surgeries or fitness food advertised in satellite TVs. However, this is not the end. "Fashion newness […] is now a permanent present, a situation the internet has fed off and sustained". The boundless fashion blogs and daily updated sites replicate new fashion products to replace the old-fashioned styles\textsuperscript{371}. The globalized media especially internet with its power of immediacy rules the bodies, representing them new fashions and promising new identities to be constructed in accordance with these fashions. Statics of three years ago show that about 74 percent of Iranians use internet. The natural representation of beauty models is provided by modern technology that depicts such a realistic picture that blurs the illusive nature of them covered by photographic techniques. To these, we can add the magazines published inside the country that advertising beauty salons and clinics, cosmetic products, or cosmetic surgeons, laser therapy

\textsuperscript{371}Folker Hanusch F. \textit{Lifestyle Journalism}. Routledge, 2014.p. 96.
centers, slimness centers, dermatologists, professional make-up centers, ... indirectly catalyze idealization of global fashion.

These beauty models influence the body image of the audience. Body image refers to an individual's perceptions, feelings, and thoughts of his or her physical body. It can be defined as the "picture an individual forms in his/her mind that constitutes beliefs, feelings, sensations, behaviors and self-perception concerning the own body". It "includes your visual picture of your appearance, your conception of the workings and state of your body, and your feelings about your looks, your health, and other aspects of your physical condition". The individual's perception of his/her body is influenced by other people's judgments about them but also mainly by the images of idealized bodies. Considering the limited number of occupation of Iranian women, it can be concluded that they enjoy more free time to be obsessed with body images. They compare their bodies to the bodies valued as ideal and standard which leaves her in body dissatisfaction and consequently she desires to obtain an ideal beauty. Women in any social class feel obliged to work on their visual physics to be identified as modern. This manipulation of appearance suggests, "They are being exposed as victims of oppressive, idealized standards of beauty".

The exposure to the bombardments of beauty models, fashions and images of idealized body is associated to body dissatisfaction among the receivers of these messages. Studies show a positive correlation between increased exposures to media and enhanced desire to obtain the promoted body characteristics and facial

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372 Office of advertisements for newspapers, under the license of Ministry of Culture and Islamic Guidance. See: URL: http://www.ruznameha.com/index/mag-roozhayezendegi/mag-roozhayezendegi.htm
attractiveness. In contrast to traditional structures where there were limited bodywork choices, and body sustained its natural form, today, physical beauty of body is an adventitious matter, not an inherited and fixed essence. Body changes are not limited to the natural changes that biologically occur to our physical body. Rather, with the development of medical science, body is transformed to be an artifact formed by scientific technology within the culturally determined molds. As a result of cultural manipulation of natural body, the binary of culture and nature is blurred. The possibility of shaping and transforming the physical body enables the subject to shape their natural bodies according to a culture. Modern time demands reordering of nature in order to civilize it with culture. "Nature, including the body, has become something to be commanded and disciplined". A "body is both physical and a symbolic artifact, forged by nature and by culture at a particular moment in history". Those Iranian women who are forging their bodies in agreement to globalized western culture are resisting the country's traditional Islamic culture. Iranian women having been silenced through the history, today, with their bodies, they are expressing the desires to be seen and heard. Their western style bodyworks are compensating for old ages of silence.

In social interactions, body displays women to the social environment and it can suggest the particular kind of a person that she is. Bodywork influences the individual's visible identity. It masks the inner self, representing the way she has chosen among others to define herself. Therefore, through bodywork one can identify herself with the discourse that qualifies that especial body.

Women's public presence or social roles involve several interpersonal contacts. Enhanced physical beauty and attractiveness are regarded as opportunities contributing to one's social status and giving them self-confidence. A survey among 543123 women in Tabriz, one of big Iranian cities, manifested that

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bodywork among occupied women is higher than unemployed women who gave less importance to their body and physical attractiveness. It can be inferred that while women with social status enjoy more agency to control their body, at the same time, their bodies are a place where power is imposed. Their bodies represent the society's norms and its expectations. The same research compares body control between women who are employed at official state institutes and those working in informal organization. The results reveal the higher care to bodyworks among those employed at informal organization. Such a discrepancy shows the domineering norms at state-run institutes, which has centrality of Islam, while the private organizations tend to be more modern, and as globalized cultures, they expect attractive women. Another research among women of the same city shows that women's physical attractiveness and beauty were determining factors in finding jobs in private organizations.

Cosmetics and cosmetic surgery are ways that Iranian women specially unmarried women invoke to be seen socially. The interviewee of research among women of a small Iranian city claim that the society values women's physical beauty, believing that female body is turned to an object for pleasure of men. Most of them felt body dissatisfaction under the influence of satellite TV channels especially GEM TV. A research proves a positive relevance between a women's bodyworks and the hours and the type of programs that she watches on satellite TVs. The randomly selected interviewee women state that they follow the beauty fashions represented at satellite TVs. Comparing their physical appearance with


these images, they feel a dissatisfied body image and enterprise to control their body. Attending gyms, dieting or eating disorders, cosmetic surgeries or wearing makeup are some ways that they appeal to gain their imagined body.

The 27 female interviewees of an Iranian town are all satisfied with opportunities brought to their lives, whether in mating or social promotion, via cosmetic surgery. The researcher states that in current Iranian society women are valued according to their physical beauty, hence fulfillment of their desires demands attaining the required values.\(^{382}\)

Physical appearance has also played a central role in girls' marriage both in traditional and modern structures of the country, with differing valued norms in each structure. Girls are under a social pressure that expects them to be physically attractive, naturally or artificially. Males are expected to be most sexually attracted to female with flawless skin which is the most universally desired beauty.\(^{383}\) Today with technological possibilities to enhance beauty, an unmarried girl takes the opportunity to gain a husband. A research proves that unmarried girls more than married wives are concerned with body control.\(^{384}\) Another research reveals girls' enhanced success at mating and marriage after they had taken control of their body.\(^{385}\) However, a boy would almost never undergo a cosmetic surgery to enjoy a successful mating. It indicates that female sex, regulated to be attractive in male dominated society, is victimized to the heteronormative values.
A global study among 4100 respondent women from 13 different countries revealed that for women physical attractiveness and beauty are socially rewarded and mandated. Sixty-three percent of respondents believed "Women today are expected to be more physically attractive than their mother’s generation was". It is agreed that "Body image dissatisfaction is more prevalent among women than men". A survey among 3,706 undergraduate students at seven English universities showed that women are concerned with body image more than men are. A research among male and female recipients in Shiraz, a big city in Iran, also revealed that women are more obsessed with their body image and have more desire to have cosmetic surgery than men have. The researchers blame the norms and values of capitalist societies that reward women's beauty and consequently objectifies women. The heteronormative structure of societies encourage men and women to manage their bodies differently so that the heteronormative structure will sustain. An Iranian survey shows that because of sociocultural Iranian context, the rate of body control among women is higher than that of men. The survey also reveals that religious women with traditional lifestyle care less to their body. However, as the lifestyle becomes more mediated and consequently more subject to modern lifestyle, women care about body control more. Birth giving is another reason why women more than men concern their body shape. To regain their pre pregnancy size, women care about their body and undergo diets, exercises or cosmetic surgeries.

390 خواجه نوری بیژن؛ روحانی علی؛ هاشمی سمیه، رابطه سیب زندگی و تصور بدن؛ مطالعه موردی: زنان شهر شیراز. تحقیقات فرهنگی ایران، شماره 1، بهار 1390، صفحه 113-134.
A research among a sample of 1841 women in Tehran who typically attend gyms suggests that the dominant reason of body management among these women is to gain self-satisfaction. Another research shows that women undergo cosmetic surgeries to gain self-confidence. It shows that a sense of body dissatisfaction has been created among women that motivates them to follow various body projects.

The secularized and eroticized notion of beauty, represented in globalized media, is transforming the traditional beauty values. Traditionally Iranian beauty standards idealized round faced, and over-weighted women. Women with mustaches was more valued based on a belief that mustached women give birth to strong boys. Curly hair and black eyes were also the admired features of Iranian women. Since 1959, the idealized female images have decreased in size and were presented as thinner, while the idealized male figure has remained almost constant. Today the globally idealized beauty features constitute "high eyebrows, large eyes, high cheekbones, a small nose, and a narrow face".

Today, "confronted with all the media images, Iranian women have been propelled to abandon their culturally determined ideas about beauty and they strive for a global, western ideal". A quantitative research among 600 Iranian women showed that there is a high positive relevance between the globalized media and the women's perception of their own beauty.
exposure and bodywork. The confidence interval of more than 99 percent proves that globalized media represents new images of physical beauty and encourages the audience, mainly women to follow these ideals. It suggests that the globalized media overloaded by consumerist and individualistic messages infuses the receivers an idea of body dissatisfaction and introduces ways to overcome it. The consumption of beauty products fulfills the desire of producers while it adds to the greed of the consumers to desire for the illusionary beauty manifested by various beauty images.

Most watched Satellite TV channels in Iran include "Manoto", Gem TV, and Farsi 1. It is assumed that, these channels are principally seeking to value and promote secularized lifestyle, which rarely concerns spirituality and religion. The secularized lifestyle that gives priority to material life and worldliness with less or no religious or spiritual concerns, obviously focuses on the material body. However, body is not a permanent matter and inevitably faces oldness and death. To struggle against the biological aging, people invoke to technologies to maintain body and its physical beauty. Health enhancement practices such as healthy eating style, attending gyms, doing yoga and meditation, managing stress or having enough sleeping are ways that surely contribute to hide the physical aging. Western people are "choosing their lifestyles through a third age to escape or opt out of the imposition of culturally determined age stages and signs of aging."


However, principally current Iranian women's body management is much directed toward gaining beauty standards and body attractiveness rather than maintaining their body health. A member of health ministry has recently stated that the condition of Iranian women's physical health is worrying. He maintains that this improper condition is related to their lifestyle. Based on different statistics on Iranian women's health, it can be claimed that the majority of modern bodywork projects fail to sustain healthy natural body. Rather they artificially mask the body with society's desired beauty.

Iranian women rank as the seventh cosmetic users in the world, but the mostly imported cosmetics fail to have the country's health standard. Whereas in recent years make up wearing in unmarried girls was regarded a taboo, today, the age of cosmetic users has reduced to 13. The taboo is subverted by girls who are performing what was once a valued norm. However, today the girls who are caring about their physical beauty are more valued. Detachment from natural body and civilizing it in a body project feature a globalized society so that the girls would be identified as members of modern globalized world.

The health status of Iranian women is alarming. ISNA News Agency. — Mode of access: https://www.isna.ir/news/97032913839/.

Fig. 4. An Iranian woman under a heavy mask of makeup

With the help of facial–work, women are representing any mask that is appropriate as their social face. Erving Goffman in late 1960s conceptualized the term "face". He defines face as the "positive social value a person effectively claims for himself […]. Face is an image of self-delineated in terms of approved social attributes\(^ {404}\). Face mirrors self and impressions, social values and situation of that particular interaction, as well as the way we want to be perceived. Based on the defined norms of especial society, we can shape the physical appearance of our face. Milani, argues, "makeup in today Iran […] is a way that women use to express their individuality, defy authorities, display ideological identities, and invoke political coalitions\(^ {405}\)."

Another prevalent way of body management among Iranian women is cosmetic surgeries. The holistic view of body as a whole is reduced by cosmetic surgeries, that break down women's bodies and faces to parts. As a "machine composed of various parts", each part must gain the culturally defined standards and then be assembled\(^ {406}\). The number of Iranians' cosmetic surgeries exceeds seven times more than Europeans' cosmetic surgeries\(^ {407}\). Common cosmetic surgery among Iranian women is nose job, in addition, other cosmetic surgeries are also done including fat reductions, breast enhancement or reduction, body lifts, face and neck lifts, vaginal rejuvenation, etc. "Each year 25-30 thousand cosmetic surgeries are done in the country"\(^ {408}\). These unnecessary surgeries are done as the patients desire to modify and enhance their physical attractiveness. As a surgery,

\(^{406}\) Ibid.
\(^{407}\) آمار جراحی زیبایی در ایران 7 برابر اروپاست. سلامت نیوز. 1393. صص 109-171.
\(^{408}\) کیادریاند سری علي؛ خانی افشاتی نسرین، پرونده ویره؛ مدیریت بدن، پاویل سیبک زندگی، شماره 3، مدادیان، صص 109-171.
the cosmetic surgeries also have their potential side effects\textsuperscript{409}. Women who undergo them evidently risk the associated side effects and choose physical beauty.

On the other hand gyms and workouts enjoy a minor role in Iranian women's body management. According to Minister of Sports and Youth, more than eighty percent of women don't exercise\textsuperscript{410}. In return, 64 percent of them suffer from extra weight\textsuperscript{411}.

Traditionally Iranian women defined their identity in submission of their physical body to the patriarchal and pronatalist norms of society. With no permission to be seen socially, they devoted their bodies to the family. Today, their body control is a clue to their power to resist the confining culture, and to take control of their bodies to establish autonomy and independency. The agency to take control of physical bodies manifests their success to change the physical bodies as submissive to patriarchal and pronatalist norms to reclaim an autonomous individual status with social position. Marriage and maternity are not the only identity sources; rather their social presence is an opportunity to define their identity. However, this new identity is not shaped beyond discourse; rather it is discursively constructed. Now under the influence of globalized culture, the Iranian women are copying the globalized beauty fashion. The new performances have constructed new identities, new bodies that reveal the process of globalization. Their bodies as cite of power, once reflected the country's traditional submissive patriarchal social norms while today it reveals globalized bodies in search of globalized beauty standards.

Davis argues that the issue of cosmetic surgery "should be treated in general with caution", considering the real motivations behind the desires to undergo such

\textsuperscript{409}Women's Cosmetic Surgery from Nose job to Labioplasty. 29.12.2015. — Mode of access: http://www.pirastefar.ir/?p=4805


\textsuperscript{411}رفیعی زهرا، 64 نردد زنان از چاقی رنج می‌برند. همشهری آنلاین. 22 مهرماه 1396. Rafee Z. 64% of women suffer from obesity. The online version of the Iranian daily Hamshahri. 13.10.2017. [Electronic resource]. — Mode of access: http://hamshahrionline.ir/details/384972/Lifeskills/healthsubpage
risky, expensive operations. He defends cosmetic surgeries to some extent in the case of the individuals who suffer from being abnormal and decide to have surgery to be normal. According to Davis such a decision to overcome the unendurable suffrage reveals women's agency to manage their life and define their identity.

Noami Wolf discusses that now that women are released from domesticity, today the ideology of feminine beauty is the "modern version" of social control. These images of female beauty [are] a political weapon against women’s advancement. She believes that the infused "notion of beauty" poisons the freedom of socially successful women, leaving them in a "dark vein of self-hatred, physical obsessions, terror of aging". She calls this situation a new form of male dominance.

Women, who involved in social participation, stopped reciting the signification of female body as only a caregiver to kids and husband, transformed the social norms. They take control of their body and this new performances have produced new significance of female body as socially attractive bodies. The recitations in traditional culture reveal the influence of traditional Islamic culture and the way their bodies have been constructed by it. The modern recitations manifest the influence of globalized culture that celebrates attractive feminine body. The consistency of body care among Iranian women contributes to the persistence of globalized culture in the country.

Iranian women's resistance against the prevailing traditional norms, imprinted in their bodies as submissive subjects, has transformed their identities to agents who take control of their bodies. Through their performances such as body works, Iranian women change what a woman signified traditionally. Once as a

domestic mother, now she has agency to control her body and gain modern identity through her physical appearance.

The high rank of women's bodywork in comparison to men's, as well as the elevation of their social status via physical appearance and beauty manifest the norms elaborated in modern Iranian society. The norms that align with globalized culture value physical beauty formulate Iranian women's gender identity. Too much attention to physical appearance and beauty are turned to be some of the acts that dress and engender the body as female. The continuous bodywork performances are creating the illusion that women have a common essence and a natural tendency toward beautifying their body. According to an Iranian research, since the representation of idealized western body image, the modern Iranian society also has based the social acceptability of women on physical appearance. Hence, Iranian women in order to be seen and accepted, they follow these beauty ideals. One of the interviewees states, today society judges you based on your appearance, so women prefer difficult projects of bodywork to be welcomed by society. Proving their proper performances of modern society's idealized actions, they are identified as a member of modern society.

Women subjected to social norms that value physical appearance, are in other words objectified by heteronormative structure of society. This structure, in order to sustain the female/male binary infuses the norms to define each gender. "Women's attractiveness is defined as attractive-to-men. […]It is] directed to phallic goals" cosmetic surgeries give women a sense of self-identity as they chose, and senses of self-esteem and self-fulfillment. It gives them social and economic promotion. Idealized feminine beauty as a norm regulates bodies as female. It can be regarded as a reduction of bodies to objects of beauty that implies


a secondary view of bodies cited as female. Women who seek to be identified as modernized, though reveal some aspect of agency, they still fail to be released from patriarchal heteronormative society. This structure defining a border between gender stereotypes has regulated the norms for each gender. Femaleness means to be physically attractive to be accepted by male dominated society.

Maternity has been another factor that signifies female body. Since maternity was traditionally the only source of identification for women, today most women resist giving birth to more than one or two children in order not to be identified as fogyish traditional women. Fleeing from maternity, women can protect their physical beauty as well as their social position. According to a research, child giving in Iranian modern culture is seen both as an economic risk and as a risk that jeopardizes the mothers' physical appearance and mental health, as well as her social position. Women are sometimes reluctant to experience pregnancy or child nurturing to maintain their physical beauty and consequently their loved position as a wife. Losing physical beauty means losing the husband's interest. Most interviewees believe that mothers' preoccupation with child nurturing distracts their attention from caring to husband who in that case might be bored with them and transfer his love to other companionships. Women's body are subjugated to patriarchal norms that has an objective view of female body. As objects of beauty, they are expected to fulfill the desires of the husband.

During the last three decades, childbirth has had a substantial declining rate. While in 1986 the child-giving rate was 6.3 for a woman, it declined to 2.6 in 1996 and in 2006 it dropped to 1.7. It reveals that women stopped performing only the
act of motherhood and as agents took the control of their body and sought for other sources of identity. However, considering some of the reasons encouraging them to maintain and enhance their physical beauty, it can be deduced that, against their agency to transform the norms, their body is trapped in another regulative force. Once the bodies were formulated to be submissive nurturing mothers, today they are subjected to globalized beauty ideals.

Even though fertility tendencies are declining, it is rarely zero in potential spouses. Only 9 percent of spouses, who live in capital of Iran, are disinclined to have babies, mainly due to economic reasons. In other cases, female body has sustained her signification as a mother. While women are able to define their identities in society, their maternal identity is still valued. A recent survey among 400 infertile Iranian women shows that "34.7 percent of them experience domestic violence due to their infertility." Another survey reveals that infertile women suffer from "social exclusion… or they are disregarded by family members and relatives." Female body as a nurturer has also sustained its significance. A survey among employed women of Tehran proves that 69.7 percent of employed mothers breastfeed their babies for 6 month and 57.9 percent of them breastfeed for a year. It proves that unlike their effort to detach from the traditional values, women in their struggle to be identified as modernized still preserve their maternity. The centrality of heteronormative religious belief determines that women's body have essential and natural tendency toward maternity. This basic centrality that fixes together the relation of female body to its signifier of maternity

Eshaghi M., Mohebi SF., Papynezhad Sh., Jahandar Z. Childbearing Challenges for Working women: a Qualitative Study. Woman development and politics, 12, 2014. 111-134.


avoids circulation of meaning in the chain of signifiers. As long as the essential belief in binary creation of female/male exists, Iranian women won't be alienated from their maternal identity. In fact, resistance to the idea of female body as a potential mother means shaking the bases of religious belief in the essence gifted in human beings. Holly Book of Muslims affirms heteronormative structure of creation oh human beings. "And Allah created you from dust, then from a sperm-drop; then He made you mates. [Fa'tir 11] Even the heterosexual desires are clearly confirmed. "He has created mates for you from your own kind that you may find peace in them[29], and He has set between you love and mercy [Al Rum, verse 21]. People's belief on basic structures of religion has excluded the meanings that stem beyond heteronormativity. Sustaining the belief in gendered binary and the natural desire of opposite genders to each other, they will not question the meaning of child giving or breastfeeding attributed to female body. The taboo of imagining beyond heteronormativity, avoids the deference of meaning of female body as mother. While the other regulative meanings, such as seclusion of female body inside house or seeking different types of idealized beauty, are subject to change. Because the center that holds together signifier (body) and signified (femininity) is no ultimate and leaves the signified in an unending chain of circulation. Although these meanings might also have their origin in heteronormative structure of society that separates genders in binary, they are transformed in different power structures and under different discourses.

However, women's full devotion to the family has diminished in some way, while their individualistic desires and social presence have risen. The growing amount of infidelity among women with modern identity reveals that women are emancipating themselves from regulations of traditional Islamic discourse. While traditionally male infidelity could be consented under some excuse, female...
infidelity was an unspeakable taboo. Women in attempt to be identified as modernized, are changing the long-established stereotypes of female gender, disturbing the determinative gender stereotypes. Yet with all transformations manifested in Iranian women's modernized identity, they are still involved in their femaleness, though in a different manner. The transformed identities of women are also generated in heteronormative society.

The country's traditional culture admires motherhood. Coincidence of the country's Mother's Day with birthday of the daughter of the prophet Muhammad implies to the ideological perception toward motherhood. However, the imported culture values individuality and women's physical beauty and body shape that can be threatened by pregnancy, breastfeeding or devotion of mother's body to nurturing and caring for family. While since 1981 Iranian state was advertising "less children and Better life", it has altered its policy since 2012 when Iranian leader stated that, "it was a mistaken policy that must be counterbalanced today". Today, the national policy is reinforcing on child giving and motherhood, which is in contrast to culture advocated in satellite TVs.

Iranian authority advocating centrality of Islamic traditions, finds cultural globalization a threat to its national religious culture. "Resistance to western cultural invasion was central to the Islamic discourse of the pioneers of the 1979 Revolution". The current leader of Iran, Ayatollah Khameneye, used the term "soft war" to warn the nation of the gradual danger of exposure to western culture. Since 2009, Iranian state broadcasting media has used the term as a "euphemism for the spread of foreign ideas, culture, and influences through information communication technology. The target of soft war, according to this usage, was
Iranian culture and national identity. According to Monroe Price, Western soft power to attract Iranians is regarded as soft war from the perspective of Iranian government who is the receiver of this "strategic communication". For Iranian state, Western soft power is nonmilitary means that "focuses on the society’s values and beliefs, and on its identity, targeting of “the different intellectual, mental and spiritual layers of the society,” weakening public trust at each step". Iranian state to control the spread of western culture limits the communicative media. Filtered twitter or Facebook, low internet speed or prohibition of satellite dishes are some instances of these limitations. On the other hand, foreign governments "sometimes working with nongovernmental organizations and others, similarly use law, technology, and subsidy to seek to break the cartel—to find space for their own favored entities to be able to reach Iranian audiences".

According to a member of Iranian Psychologists Association, more than 90 percent of Iranians watch satellite TVs. The latest statics on the access of Iranians to internet that belongs to three years ago shows that 73.94 percent of them are using internet. The number is evidently has ascended by now. This high exposure to globalized information is threatening the receivers' cultural identity. While the Iranian authority emphasize on the centrality of traditions and religion, the globalized culture challenges them, leaving the nation in the transition of their cultural identity.

The inner aspiration of human being toward beauty is irrefutable. This general tendency, nevertheless, is gendered when society values an attractive female body. Women consequently pay too much attention to beautifying affairs to

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429 Bيش از 90 درصد ایرانیان ماهواره دارند/ شکستن قحبیه با پخش سریال‌های اونجه، خبرگزاری دانشجویان ایران "ایسنا"، 13 خرداد 1394

430 چند درصد ایرانی‌ها اینترنت دارند؟ پایگاه خبری تحلیلی انتخاب، 23 مرداد 1394
be identified as viable subjects. Female sex regulates women's bodies in a way to qualify them to the regulatory discourse. Traditional Iranian discourse defines female body as a caregiver to the family. With the centrality of traditional discourse, femaleness signifies purity, piety and devotion. The reiteration of these norms by women sustains the traditional discourse that has materialized female bodies as caregivers with natural beauty.

However, female subjects being produced within these power relations show agency in performing the norms in different ways. Iranian women since constitutional revolution have revealed their agency to change the traditional norms. After constitutionalism, they subverted the norm of public seclusion of women. While they practiced new performances such as claim for education or occupation, they preserved their domestic gendered roles.

Iranian women's entrance to globalized arena demands they comply with this culture. The society under the influence of globalized media idealizes physical beauty and attractiveness. Female body as the effect of regulatory force of globalized culture are rematerialized to signify beauty and attractiveness. To be qualified as intelligible subjects, women, depending on their financial capabilities, seek to achieve the appearance that identifies them as viable subjects of modern globalized discourse. Caring for beauty is a new performance that engendered Iranian women in search of modernized identity. The signification of female body transformed from an absolute birth giver and caregiver to socially active bodies that care about their physical beauty or health. However, the belief in heteronormativity and essential gender differences has sustained the signification of female body as mother.

2.2. Veiling and Iranian Women's Cultural Identity

Since the ancient times Iranian women, used to cover themselves in public. With the advent of Islam to the country, veiling emerged as a social and cultural norm, though it was not a governmental obligation. Safavi dynasty (1501-1722)
undertaking the establishment of a religious country of Shia sect imposed strict heteronormative laws including women's veiling, even facial veiling. Thus, traditional religious culture of the state veiled Iranian women but in 1936, the government of Reza Shah forcefully unveiled them. Then in 1983, the Islamic government re-veiled them. This impose, withdraw and re-impose of veiling metaphorically stands for the ideological and political power of different eras. “From the early twentieth-century to the present time various forms of veiling draw attention to the continuing quest for the political power between the state and religion”. It indicates the tension between two discourses of traditional religion and its opposing discourse that in attempt to be modernized struggles against traditions. Today, the Islamic discourse of the country has institutionalized veiling as the Islamic dressing code for women.

Veiling that is a religious practice among Muslims, have been attributed various contradictory meanings. It might refer to modesty, repression of the wearer, sexualization of her hair, liberation of her from strangers' eyes, enveloping one's identity or giving her cultural identity, et al. The meaning of this phenomenon depends on the way these images are constructed in the minds.

Muslim women, according to Sharia, have to veil in presence of stranger men. They are allowed to remove their veils only before those with whom "it is permanently forbidden for her to marry because of blood ties, breastfeeding or marriage ties". Islamic dressing code or hijab is a part of Islamic teachings and emphasize on modesty and decency in interactions of opposite sexes. It is stated twice in holy Quran. The first vers is in Chapter 24 known as an-Nur (the Light), in verse 30:

"Say to the believing men that: they should cast down their glances and guard their private parts (by being chaste). Say to the believing

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432 Elsaie A. Concept of Mahram and Na Mahram in Islam. [Electronic resource]. — Mode of access: http://www.usislam.org/islam/Concept_Of_Mahram_And_NaMahram_In_Islam.htm
women that: they should cast down their glances and guard their private parts...and not display their beauty except what is apparent, and they should place their khumur over their bosoms…"
The second verse on hijab is in Chapter 33 known as al-Ahzab, verse 59:
"O Prophet! Say to your wives, your daughters, and the women of the believers that: they should let down upon themselves their jalabib.”

Since Quranic teachings are general, there are diverse and sometimes conflicting interpretations of these verses.

In case of Islamic hijab, the assessments range from belief in facial veiling, or only covering the hair or the beliefs of some Islamic Feminists such as Leila Ahmed. She asserts that veiling was the duty and practice of the prophet's wives, and then as a sign of decency spread among other Muslim women. Since the analysis of these contradictory debates are beyond our major consideration, we only mention that veiling here refers to any external covering over women’s dress that cloaks them in public or in presence of stranger men called "na mahram". It includes either chador, usually in black color, that covers the whole body but face, that might have an additional facial veil too, or a type of coat-like dress called manto worn with scarf or shawl.

Today veil is an especially known dressing code for Muslim women; therefore, it displays the wearer's religious identity. Meanwhile, as an exclusive attire of female sex, veiling reinforces heterosociality. Practice of veiling identifies an individual as female and segregates the binary pole of male and female gender identity. Veiling, performed by Muslim women reminds one the drag metaphor used by Judith Butler to refer to performances that produce one’s gender identity. Veiling as the cultural label of Muslim societies produces Muslim female identity.

Therefore, veiling seems a proper case whereby we can examine gender and religious identity of Iranian women.

This section seeks to bring to light the meanings that veiling has symbolized in different eras. It represents the alteration of Iranian women’s dressing code and its association with transformation of their cultural identity. It applies the performative theory of Judith Butler to the issue of veiling, which is regarded as a gendered action. The structuration theory of Giddens, which is some levels similar to butler's ideas, is also invoked to discuss the dynamic relationship of the discursive structures and women's agency.

Iranian Women’s Dressing Code before Constitutionalism

Traditionally, Iranian men protected their wives and daughters believing that protecting and controlling women is protecting their honor and reputation and property. They would not let any stranger encroach the borders. To fulfill their responsibility, they secluded women inside houses or assigned women with strict veiling codes in case of women's necessary presence outside the house.

A three-piece dress packed all Iranian women at public. It consisted of a “chador that covered them from head to toe, a ruband a short veil that masked the face, and the chaqchur (very loose trousers)”\textsuperscript{434}. All women uniformly appeared in public in this three-piece veiling dress that was common among all social classes. The veiling gave them a common gender and religious identity.

Fig. 5. Veiled Iranian Women of Qajar Dynasty

The packing dress produced intelligible female gender in public, and each layer of the cloaking dress signified the portable walls of their isolated world. The word *chador* in Persian language refers to a dress wrapping the female body, as well as to tent those shelters and protects individuals in conditions that there is no house wall. Chador played a tent-like role in isolating women. Veils walled women's bodies, sealed their mouth and mind as well. Being shaped in a male dominated discourse, the mind of female sex accepted to be a submissive subject and her mouth was silenced in case of resistance. The veils worn uniformly by all women identified them not as individuals, but as the group of secondary sex to be omitted from the social world of dominant male sex. Veils represented the controlling force that obstructed the way to gaining knowledge. Ignorant female sex, walled away from social arena had neither a body, nor words to express. Her potential words and bodies were veiled so that the male domineering discourse could continue\(^\text{435}\).

The long established performance of veiling had naturalized the norm of veiling as a part of women's gender identity. As the products of religious and traditional regulatory discourse, women in order to have an intelligible gender identity, had to be veiled and secluded. Referring to Butler, we can compare the practice of veiling to "sustained set of acts" that our gendered body produces as a result our internal essence of gender. She writes, "what we take to be an “internal” feature of ourselves is one that we anticipate and produce through certain bodily acts, at an extreme, an hallucinatory effect of naturalized gestures"\(^\text{436}\).

Invoking to the ideas of Giddens, we can say that women who were deprived of any resources such as knowledge failed any reflexive consideration of the construction of their identity, and continued the pre-given traditions provided


by the precedent generation. Their particular place and time of birth offered them a very limited choice among the traditions that were already existed. Veiling was "ritualized and handed to them by the long-established traditions. According to Giddens, "In such cultures things stayed more or less the same from generation to generation, […] and] the changed identity was clearly staked out"\(^{437}\).

For ages the patriarchal rules had put forward the idea that veil would curtail women's mobility in order to restore the domestic-bonded sphere of women. Women were taught that a woman to observe Islamic rules must be veiled, believing that the veil enveloping them would restrict their mobility. Therefore, they remained secluded. Indeed, veil did not chain women within houses depriving them of education and social place. Harsh patriarchal convictions had defined female gender as veiled, packed and secluded to dominate the society as the primary sex. Otherwise, Islamic rules never promote women's seclusion; rather they encourage both men and women to gain knowledge. The elites' cry for education of women that coincides with unveiling of women was in fact a cry against patriarchal traditions that restricts and deprives women, not only against veiling\(^{438}\).

The oppression of women in Muslim societies has always been politically associated with Islam, regarding Islam as the main cause of women's oppression. However, Ahmed, while assuming the oppression of women in these societies, places the origin of this idea in the patriarchal colonists' inaccurate understanding of Muslim society. According to this Arab-American researcher, emancipation of Muslim women from chain of androcentric subjugations does not equal with abandoning their native culture and adopting western culture. She insists on "reforms pursued in a native idiom and not in terms of other cultures\(^{439}\). Iranian


women remained veiled and uneducated and this oppressed female identity lingered stable with mere transformation almost to the early phase of women's awakening during the constitutional revolution.

**Veiling and Iranian Women's Cultural Identity after Constitutionalism**

Transformation of Iranian women's dressing style and the establishment of unveiling coincides with the rise of constitutionalism. While, at that time Western countries, especially Britain and Russia, economically and politically had established a predominant status over Iran, they would strive to impose the supremacy of their cultural ideologies and values on Iranians as well. Along with the advancement of Western diplomats, visitors, and goods to the country, their lifestyle such as dressing, and European restaurants and cafes, entered the country. Besides, the expansion of press as well as the Western journeys of some elite Iranians, public officials and the king familiarized them with western culture and society. Encountering the progress of Western countries, Iran was inspired to be modernized as well. Being impressed by Western countries, they equalized modernization with Westernization. Iranian elites impressed by Western progress regarded all cultural differences as signs of advancement and modernization. Among these signs, European women's dressing fashion was noticeably eye captivating. It conspicuously varied from Iranian women's style that was coded by traditions and Islamic culture. Both the reformer elites and the state were enthused to include policies concerning Iranian women's dressing style. Naser-al-din shah, in his trip to Russia in the last decades of the nineteenth century, was impressed by Russian ballet dancers' skirts and immediately after his arrival to the country, the length of court women's skirt decreased in that style and gradually this style
permeated beyond the court (see Fig. 6). To adopt a modernized and European cultural identity, some women embraced those modern styles\textsuperscript{440}.

![Fig. 6. Iranian court women wearing short skirts in the late 19th century](image)

Unveiling among Iranian women was initiated by Tahira Quratulain, a female poet, (1815-1851) in a meeting in Qazvin city. However, this abnormal action shocked men and provoked their anger\textsuperscript{441}. According to Milani, Quratulain "publically unveiled herself, as she unveiled her voice in her poetry". Milani appreciates the poet's transgress from social, cultural and religious norms, believing that this distinctive woman challenged the social absence of female body and female voice\textsuperscript{442}. Unlike her attempts to criticize the society's cultural standards in order to enfranchise women's social status, she failed to gain a noticeable legislation among women. It is assumed that her conversion from Islam to Babism disgraced her in the eyes of women who were generally Muslims. Considering the traditional social discourse of the time, when there was no cultural communication between Iranians and the modern Western world, her unveiling seems to be associated more with her Babi religion. She failed to impress Muslim women to

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follow her in opposing the veiling\textsuperscript{443}. Her body and words were silenced and today very few pieces of her poetry remain.

However, when unveiling as a norm was introduced by a regulatory discourse such as the modernizing discourse, it developed more effectively because those who wanted to be identified with that discourse had to follow that norm. The king Reza Shah to establish an immediate modernized country attempted to erode any visible symbol of tradition, including women's veil and men's native attire and replaced them with westernized dressing code\textsuperscript{444}. "In 1936, at a graduation ceremony at the Women's Teachers' Training College in Tehran, Shah announced unveiling". Women's dressing code conducted immediately by the state involved European style hats, coats, and gloves in public and private mixed gatherings. It removed the traditional chador or facial veil worn by some, leaving the neck, parts of legs and hair uncovered\textsuperscript{445}.

Fig. 7. Unveiled Iranian women during Reza Shah Dynasty

Veiling represented backwardness and as a religious convention, it had no place in westernized modernity. Leila Ahmed argues that since the establishment of colonization, European governments, as the colonial powers in Muslim societies constructed an "inferior" "humiliating" image of veil that signified "backwardness" of uncivilized colonized people. The dominance of Western discourse infused its exposures that veiling was a hamper impeding their way toward civilization. Consequently, the dominant Western hegemony sought unveiling of women and replacing it with the idealized Victorian women's dressing style that assured them civilized and westernized identity. Ahmed noticeably informs that androcentric colonial establishments constructed the idea that the progress of women's status demands unveiling. Hoodfar also asserts that Veiling had emerged in western societies as an emblem of backwardness. Iranian elite reformers of the time to emulate the image of backwardness from the western minds pressed for unveiling.

Although, literally the reason behind the state's forceful decree of unveiling was to emancipate women from the traditions, it imposed the substitute chain of mandatory unveiled dressing code. Female sex was a site where competing discourses exercised power on. The disciplinary practices imposed on female sex determined dressing code of Iranian woman, subordinating her to male dominated society. As the bearers of the country's cultural and political emblems, they were once subjugated to religious and traditional discourse of the country and now they are unpacked to represent its modernization. It can be claimed that since the unveiling decree, veiling, a religious and moral code, turned to be politicized.

The struggle between secularized state and religious authorities represented itself in women's veil. The strict measures taken against veiling during Reza Shah, reveals the way women were manipulated by the dominant authority that deprived

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them of control over their dressing. Like the British administrators in Egypt, the Western-backed regime in Iran felt that it knew what was best for women and used force and police to unveil women\textsuperscript{a448}. The king in attempt to modernize and westernize the face of country, ordered strict confrontation of policies against this group. The officials were dismissed or fined in case of their wives' veiled appearance in public. The police stopped veiled women to pull off and tear their scarf. They would break into private houses in search of chadors and arresting veiled women. They would attack the veiled women in stinging disdain to tear the obstructs of civilization. Veiled women were prevented from public places such as restaurants and cinemas, even public baths, in times that people rarely had bath in their house. To burden a negative meaning to veil, prostitutes were banned from unveiling\textsuperscript{a449}. The veil that identified a woman as a prostitute is not supposed to have a meaning associated with moral codes.

It can be claimed that the state's unveiling act or its support from women's right had been mainly motivated by the king's modernization desires. Amin states that the new laws legislated in favor of women such as marriage law, "did provide modern Iranian womanhood with the beginnings of the alliance it craved with the state. It also provided the Pahlavi state with a claim on the loyalties of modern Iranian womanhood\textsuperscript{a450}. Though women benefited from reforms mainly in realms of education or marriage and divorce, many of their issues remained unresolved. Male dominant culture was still prevalent in society. The law withdrew the issues of polygamy or male guardianship\textsuperscript{a451}. Women's financial activities and public affairs were fortified; however, women's public attendance and activities, as a main challenge of the state in movement toward modernity, were under control. Amin uses the metaphor of "Father Reza Shah" to illuminate the degree of

\textsuperscript{a449} Sedghi H. Women and Politics in Iran: Veiling, Unveiling, and Reveiling. Cambridge University Press, 2007.p87
patriarchal control of the state. Women's dressing code was determined by the state. Their organizations were supposed to be state controlled with very limited political activities. Reza Shah believing that any democracy would "hinder the rapid modernization", closed most of women's organizations.

A semi-governmental women's center, founded by the king's daughter, Ashraf Pahlavi, and as its central task, had arranged unveiling campaigns to promote abandonment of the veil. The organization had also programs of encouraging women for education as well as increasing their knowledge in the fields of housekeeping and child rearing. The organization was partially successful in promotion of unveiling, yet most women, especially lower classes indoctrinated with the notion that to lift veil is a woman's worst sin and disgrace.

Transformation of women's dressing was not a one-way relation imposed by the state on women. Rather, the agency of people was likewise remarkable. "Sedigeh Dowlatabadi was the first woman to pioneer the public abandonment of the veil before the legal ban in 1936". Resisting the disapprovals of traditional class, she insisted on her unveiling policy that was supported by the state. Unveiling conforming to modernity was not in conflict with the state's new discourse of modernizing the country. The king had set some secret agents to protect Sedigeh and her unveiled followers from the possible dangers from the side of conservatives. As the founder of first girls' school, and women's society, as well as founder of the first women gazette, and the representative of Iranian women at tenth congress of "International Alliance for Women's Suffrage", and the ministerial supervisor of women's education, Dowlatabadi revealed to be an active agent in promoting modernization among Iranian women.

Fig. 8. Sedige Dolatabadi, a pioneering figure of women's movements

Education at French University of Sorbonne had provided her with opportunities to have a knowledge of Western modernization. In Iranian society, she invokes the rules and resources of the country's social structure to reproduce the structure. The dual relation of agents such as Dowlatabadi and the social structure proves the validity of structuration theory of Giddens, wherein "social structures are both constituted by human agency, and yet at the same time are the very medium of this constitution".\textsuperscript{457}

As an agent, she uses both the material resources such as education, and her authoritative resources to promote education and unveiling among women. While the rules of the structure that direct her actions approve unveiling, the rules of the traditional structure confine her. With her actions, she seeks to reproduce the traditional structure in a subverted form. The modern discourse, at the same time needs to gain its stability from the continuous actions of the agents who using the resources of modernized structure, act according to the rules of it. Hence, the gap between the two structures of tradition and modern revealed to get more visible. The generated gap is still more noticeable in current Iranian society, where women of traditional and modern identity appear in different dressing styles. The produced binary of veiled and unveiled in this era explains how each poles are privileged in

traditional and modern discourse. The viability of a subject in a structure is based on her difference from the other regarded as the lower pole.

The discourses of traditional and modernized structures compete in order to dominate the society. In addition, the agents' actions, such as veiling support the traditional structure or their transformed actions of unveiling reproduce the modern structure that subverts the norms of the rivalry discourse. While in traditional structure a veiled woman gains intelligible identity, in modernized structure, veiling has no place in defining female gender identity. Education and abandonment of veil turned to be essential factors defining female gender identity.

Dowlatabadi and other unveiled pioneers troubled the prevailing norms of the traditional structure of society to replace them in subverted form. Regarding the practice of veiling as a norm that defines one's gender identity, we apply the ideas of Butler to discuss the transformation of women's identity in relation to their dressing style.

For ages, Iranian women, who were situated within the traditional structure, were practicing veiling intended by the regulatory discourse of traditional structure. This citational practice of veiling assured authority to the discourse that has produced that very action. The repetitions are as covers over the regulatory forces of discourse, and naturalize the discursively constructed norms. Therefore, the veil naturally turned to be a part of their identity, and at same time, it preserved the sustainability of the traditional structure.

The practice of veiling guaranteed the maintenance of the traditional discourse; moreover, the subjects in order to have a viable identity within the discourse performed the actions according to the regulatory norms of the discourse. The "regulatory regime" of the structure that Butler believes is similar in some way to what Giddens notes as "rules" of the structure. The subject as the effect of the discourse recites the norms such as veiling. While recitation is inevitable for preservation of the discourse, it is an opportunity for the subject to enjoy agency or freedom. Agency "is produced by the gaps opened up in the
process of self-repetition”⁴⁵⁸ and reiteration. In fact, there is distinction between the authentic act, intended by the discourse, and its citation over time. The novel recitation might differ from the original one in unforeseen ways.

Gradually, with the movement of society toward modernity, the recitation of veiling revealed to be different from the original norm. The subjects such as Dowlatabadi in their modernized dressing style repeated the norms in a way that differed from their originality. The transformed recitations threatened the dominance of the traditional clerical discourse and questioned the viability of abnormal unveiled subjects in the traditional discourse. Nevertheless, the case of some Iranian women's unveiling is someway different from "reiterative and citational practice" (BTM.P. 2). They voluntarily detached from the traditional discourse to question it. To be a subject in the modernized discourse they were performing under the "regulatory frames" of the modernized discourse. According to Judith Butler "freedom, possibility, agency do not have an abstract or pre-social status, but are always negotiated within a matrix of power". As the effects of modernized discourse, they are performing the practice of unveiling, regarded as a norm. Likewise, they gained viable identity in the modernized discourse. Abandoning the headscarf that is exclusively associated with Muslim female gender identity, these agents troubled the normative definition of religious and gender identity in Iranian society.

Veiling or not veiling was the visible sign of the created challenge between the modernized and the traditional structure. The majority of women in agreement with the religious institutes constructed their identities in repetition of traditional norms. The group that following the westernizing state welcomed unveiling included some women of "privileged backgrounds; some had resided abroad, Westernized, educated and elite women"⁴⁵⁹. Mohammad-Reza Shah writes, "The

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great success of unveiling owes to my father and valor deeds of my mother and sisters. They resisted the old conventions that were supported by the majority⁴⁶⁰.

Generally, for most Iranian women whose identity had been constructed by traditional discourse, this modern emancipation meant further seclusion. After the official unveiling decree in 1936, religious women resisted the law and restored their veiling. For them veil was "a sign of propriety and a means of protection against the menacing eyes of male strangers"⁴⁶¹. They escaped the unveiling due to their moral and religious codes regarding it as a big sin. Since their gender and religious identity had been defined by their veiling, resigning the veil meant abandoning their identity. Therefore, most of them were unready to take new and westernized identity and they resisted it. Sedgi argues that the new modernizing policy of enforced unveiling had created a break between women and society. Except for women who had abroad experiences, or educated or a few affluent women, the rest abhorred the policy. Unveiling had threatened their physical and psychological security, leaving them in a sense of nudity. They subsided to their houses and usually left it once a weak at night through dark frightening lanes to attend public baths⁴⁶². Indeed, this group of women viewed veiling not with a Westernized perception, but they had retained their traditional and religious perception of veiling.

Secularization reforms in arenas of culture, education, and jurisprudence, intensified the tension between the king and clergies who till then had enjoyed prominent roles in those spheres. Clerics recognizing the threat of secularization policies opposed the king, calling him the enemy of Islam. The official unveiling

⁴⁶⁰ شهرام نیا، امیرمسعود؛ زمانی، نجمه سادات، علل و پیامدهای شکل گیری پدیده کشف حجاب در دوران پهلوی، گنجینه اسناد سال بیست و سوم


of women and substitution of European-style hat were the basic grounds of breach between the king and the clergies.

Modern dressing code taken enthusiastically by educated women gradually resulted in a visible gap between women of modern and traditional cultural identity. Women in Western style dressing embedded an identity that physically and mentally separated them from conventionally veiled women. "However, the number of women sharing this liberation was small"\textsuperscript{463}.

People and clergies under the order of religious authorities staged demonstrations to protest against secularized policies of the king. One of these uprisings happened in the Goharshad mosque, located in a holy shrine. Disregarding the sacredness of the place, the forces shoot the unarmed crowd\textsuperscript{464}. (Today the anniversary of massacre at Goharshad is celebrated as the day of "hijab").

Unlike the king's attempts to westernize the out-ward surface of society, the ideological attitudes of most people remained unaffected\textsuperscript{465}. According to Rubin, these westernizing processes destabilized the king's regime, which was already preserved as being too influenced by western ideas\textsuperscript{466}.

With the death of Reza Shah, the law of unveiling lost its despotic center. His son, the successor, though intended to promote westernized unveiling encountered pressures from clergies to lift the ban on veils\textsuperscript{467}. Finally, in 1941 "the law of compulsory unveiling was abolished"\textsuperscript{468}. Veiled women who had resided inside the houses emerged in the public along with unveiled women. However, women who were present at universities, schools or occupation were mainly unveiled. As the modern institutes practicing under the regulatory regime

\textsuperscript{463} Nashat G. Women and Revolution in Iran. The University of California, Westview Press. 1983. p. 27.
\textsuperscript{467} Milani. A. Eminent Persians: The Men and Women who Made Modern Iran, 1941-1979: in Two Volumes, Volume 1. Syracuse University Press. 2008. p. 120.
of the state, they rarely had any place for veiled women. The modernized educational institutes such as universities that from their early foundations were associated with westernization were in contrast to the traditional discourse. Traditional families hardly permitted their daughters attend school or university. Consequently, the unveiled women were identified as modern and educated women who had a social status. In contrast, veiled women had a traditional, religious marginalized identity. Veiling as a visible signifier referred not only to gender identity but also to the cultural identity of women.

Veiling of women during this era differed from the recent black chador and facial veil. Colorful chadors revealed to be more prevalent. However, the westernizing ideals of the first Pahlavi dynasty were preserved, yet in different policies. The state invoke not to force but to cultural mediums to spread unveiling. Educational institutes, mass media such as television, cinemas, and press were required to promulgate the norm of unveiling. In 1978, a plan was passed by the state outlining the short-term and long-term measures aimed at confronting the disgraceful veiling. It comprised both practical and cultural procedures. Accordingly, all cultural institutes including press, radio and Television as well as schoolbooks were required to display chador as a cumbersome clothing. In addition, women in chador were deprived of attending schools, universities, libraries, cinemas, official organizations, or of using public transportation even the air travel. Abandonment of veil chiefly chador qualified women to be identified as viable subjects. Veiled women who were identified as religious women were downgraded by the state. The intelligible female identity was defined as unveiled socially active women. At the same time, duties of women as the mothers of the
new generation inside the house were underlined\textsuperscript{471}. The female gender ideals that Westerns had constructed also idealized in modernizing discourse of the country, and the subjects were copying this constructed copy to gain identity. While indorsing the ideas of women's emancipation and social activities, Second Pahlavi discourse emphasized on women's modesty. With the centrality of Pahlavi discourse female sex signified being unveiled but modest, as well as being socially active but devotedly wife and mother.

While Reza Shah confronted any kind of veiling, his successor mainly opposed the traditional chador. The resistance of the majority of women to perform the modern norm of unveiling had proved that the mainstream of people welcomed the religious identity. Therefore, second Pahlavi's plan of unveiling emphasized taking advantage of institute of religion. It entailed clergies' written and spoken speech of some known clergies who could distinguish hijab and chador\textsuperscript{472}. However, the plan failed due to the revolutionary actions of people.

Although family protection law and the right to vote were new opportunity, "the dictatorial character of this regime too did not leave any room for independent women's activities". Women's organization was limited to an organization that was linked to the state. However, the active agents of this organization (WOI) composed of educated middle and upper-middle class women. Women's participation in protests emanated from dissatisfactions with the regime, including gender-based dissatisfactions\textsuperscript{473}. According to Paidar women were suffering from sexual harassment at employment and university. They were regarded less knowledgeable than men were, and were absent from top jobs or study fields that were masculine. In addition, the attendance of veiled women at work or university


\textsuperscript{472}Ibid.

was prohibited because veil was "a political statement against the state-propagate image of womanhood"474.

The forced Westernization of Pahlavi regime degrading people's cultural identity and neglecting their religious identity mainly through unveiling women paved the way for their own self-destruction.

Veiling and Iranian Women's Cultural Identity During and After Islamic Revolution (the current age)

The revolutionary actions bridged the produced gap between women of modernized and traditional identity. Both veiled and unveiled women joined in revolutionary practices. "The mass demonstrations of 1978 marked the first time that women from different strata of society extensively joined the protest"475. Some educated unveiled women, such as a Western-educated poet named Tahere Saffarzade, voluntarily veiled. The veil no longer signified religious and traditional identity constraining social intercourse; instead, it became a medium of social communication. "It represented strong political and ideological connotations that challenge class privilege, sexual license, corruption, and above all rejection of Western domination". For them, veiling was not a retrogressive, but a progressive action toward a new society through revival of Islam that would save country from "cultural imperialism" of West476. According to Sullivan "The chador, forbidden by Reza Shah[…], associated with the backward and downtrodden during the Pahlavi era, was later used as an emblem of revolutionary protest by women of all castes and classes who marched against the Pahlavi regime"477.

Fig. 9. Veiled and unveiled women along with men protesting against the Shah

Therefore, women's veil in its politicized meanings expressed nationalism and anti-Westernization. Women sought a cultural identity void of western culture. Pahlavi's blind imitation of Western culture was regarded as threat to the cultural identity of Iranians. A nationalist Iranian writer, Fakhorodin shadman, believed that, reliance upon superior Western scientific knowledge had enslaved Iranians and deprived them of their cultural identity. He insisted on incorporation of Western civilization and knowledge to Iranian culture. To save the country from the cultural, economic, and political reliance on West, men and women of all groups up rose up. "The revolutionary culture became an umbrella under which various political ideologies and groups led their struggle against the regime."

However, in the post-revolutionary era Islamic discourse turned to be the regulatory frame of viable identity. With the hegemony of Islamic discourse, the subjects that were practicing Islamic norms were regarded as viable revolutionaries. Women's Westernized dressing was one of the most noticeable incompatible issues to be reformed according to Islamic norms. "Re-veiling as one of the major objectives of revolutionary leaders" was fulfilled in early post-


revolutionary days\textsuperscript{480}. In 1983, Iranian Islamic constitution made veiling mandatory for all women. The unveiled state employees were fired or were supposed to observe Islamic dressing code. However, the appropriate Islamic dress was not limited to chador. "Women could choose any attire they like so long as it covers them properly". \textsuperscript{481} It included a long scarf, dark color loose and long dress, loose pants, black socks, and flat shoes\textsuperscript{482}. The subjects as the effects of the Islamic discourse underwent performance of these gestures. The Islamic discourse defined usual female gender appearance in Islamic veiling. It policed and monitored the expected performance, and at the same time tried to internalize it, so that it would be naturalized as an inner truth about women who are essentially supposed to be covered. Veiling also included abstract meaning. It referred to maintaining segregation of male and female sex in public, or veiling women's voice includes, "decorous tone of voice, and avoidance of singing, boisterous laughter, and generally any emotional outburst in public". According to the Islamic Republic ideologies, gender segregation in public and women's veil "protects the moral values of society from corruption"\textsuperscript{483}.

Since then, female sex in Iran are required to cover their whole body except their faces and hands. The air travelers after passing the air borders are reminded to wear their headscarves in order to preserve the Islamic values. In 1996 Iranian penal code “laid out punishment for improper veiling as 74 lashes, jail sentence of up to two month or a fine of approximately 40 Euro”.

"Just as the Shah used physical force to implement his compulsory unveiling policies in 1930s, Iranian government employed an especial morality police (referred to as Komitte) to enforce compulsory veiling"\textsuperscript{484}. Once more in history,

\textsuperscript{484}Amer S. What Is Veiling? The University of California. 2017. p. 58.
Iranian women's veiling was politicized, signifying the Islamic ideologies of the state. Women as the bearers of the country's tradition, in their veiled body stabilized the legitimacy of the state. Veiling as an Islamic norm would maintain the Islamic discourse. Female subjects performing the practice of veiling gained intelligible identity in the hegemonic Islamic structure, while the others who were unveiled or improperly veiled were marginalized with no viable identity.

The bordering gap among women became transparent through the imposed veiling. Black *chador* signified religious and revolutionary women who preserving the value of veil, stabilized the Islamic ideologies of the state. They were placed at the high position of the binary pole. Those who chose the new style of veiling, so that in this veiling uniform they could be identified as a viable woman qualified to be officially employed. Some women, who found mandatory veil, strict dress code, and sexual apartheid intolerable, migrated to have freedom and an autonomous identity free from Islamic discourse of the state or even their patriarchal family norm. Others who stayed were obligated to cope with rules. Those who resisted the new rule of mandatory veiling and in different gatherings, and demonstrations proclaimed their protest. On March 8, 1979, 1000s of Iranian women marched in the streets to protest the compulsory wearing of Hijab. However, the protests were first and foremost confronted by common people who belonged the religious traditional culture.

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The centrality of religious discourse brought by Ayatollah Khomeini, the leader of Iranian Islamic revolution, deconstructed what Pahlavi regime had constructed as the female gender. The ideals of women's emancipation, social involvement and modesty that were signified by unveiled social presence of modernized women during Pahlavi regime were confronted. Pahlavi discourse's understanding of emancipation was conceptualized as enslavement of women. Social involvement of unveiled women were considered as objectification of women who in their fashion clothes and make-up served the desires of men. Pahlavi's motto of maintaining purity and modesty in unveiled body turned to mean no more than an absurd illusion that would lead women to impurity. The new religious discourse deconstructing the previous meanings defined a new female identity. Like the Pahlavi discourse, it believed in emancipation, social participation and modesty of women, yet in veiled bodies. Ayatollah Khomeini, as the central authority of this new discourse, emphasized women's equal social participations. Thus, the unveiled women who were recently valued were marginalized. The intelligible and idealized identity of unveiled woman of Pahlavi discourse turned to have an unviable identity.$^{487}$

The evolving female identity, defined by Islamic discourse fluctuated from the traditional female religious one. The clerical authorities were more than the leaders of religious institutes, instead as social and political leaders, they involved in social status of women as well. Ayatollah Khomeini in various speeches highlighted women's social participation. Addressing women, he states, "Women must participate shaping their own destiny […] Islam requires women contribute in all problems as men do. Women must participate in fundamental state matters". Veil no more represented seclusion as it did before constitutionalism, nor did it signify marginalization as it did during Pahlavi; rather it signified a religious woman who was socially active. No longer as an emblem of backwardness, veiling turned to be the norm of the hegemonic discourse and directed the wearers toward social, cultural and political arenas.

According to recent statements of Iranian science ministry, "today female students occupy 56 percent of university seats". The considerable increase in the number of women's education proves that veiling has not been a cultural hinder.

The schools as cultural manufactories of the state contributed to the construction of the students' gender and religious identity. The one-sex schools and head-covering uniforms for girls emphasized unquestionable Islamic heteronormativity and attempted to naturalize female gender identity within the Islamic discursive regulations.

Women's awakening light permeated the boundaries that recently was shielded by veils. This growing consciousness among women was the unintended consequence of Islamic republic's promotion of women's education. As Shirin Ebadi, argues, women with university degrees would no longer subside inside
houses. They would not yield to their "traditional roles, to shelve their degrees, pretending that their expectations of life were unchanged"\(^491\).

The resource of knowledge that the subjects were equipped with turned to make defiant agents rather than the submissive subjects. Ansari states, "The expansion of women's education in post-revolutionary Iran identified as an unintended consequence of the revolution has been empowering women against the IRI's misogynistic ideology"\(^492\). The reflexive identity construction resulted to deviated performances. The early changes in the color or style of dressing code initiated the deviated performances. The series of continuous deviated actions paved the way for imminent amended norms and a new social system with a varied definition of female identity.

Since Education as an opportunity and resource was no longer limited to modernized women, it generously equipped the new generation of female subject with awareness. This rising consciousness would cause new identities among women. According to Giddens, while in traditional structures identity was handed by family, class, gender, religion or any other sociocultural elements, in post traditional structures identity does no more preexist as fixed to the conventions; rather it is shaped and reshaped. He writes, "Even the small choices we make in our daily lives-what we wear, are part of ongoing process of creating and recreating our self-identity. [...] Such choices are decisions not only about how to act but who to be"\(^493\). "A girl who is attending college is less inclined to dumbly obey the instructions of her father"\(^494\). She is no more an ignorant submissive subject; instead, she reflexively decides and reconstructs her identity.

The structure providing the subjects with the resource of knowledge set forth to face new social system and deviated norms. Women as the subjects of the


Islamic discourse were inside the power relations that had constructed their identity.

The veiling norms standardized by the structure required being repeated by the subjects so that the structure would sustain. However, the subjects equipped by resources such as information, make changes in norms through different reiteration of the actions.

Referring to Giddens, we can regard the practice of veiling as "regularized type of action, [...] "ongoing series of practical activities, [...] that a person could have acted otherwise". These activities are confined and enabled by the structural rules and resources. The structure providing the actors with resources such as knowledge enables them, yet it confines them with rules such as mandatory veiling rules. Giddens argues, "Structure is both medium and outcome of the reproduction of the practices". It constitutes the "social practices" of the agents; the agents are inspired by structural resource of knowledge and following the confining structural rules, they practice a new style of veiling. The agency enhanced by resources leads to the reproduction of the structure and consequently a new social system. As Giddens upholds, the knowledgeable agents in their regularized practices use and reproduce structures and the reproduction of structural principles (rules and resources) leads to the reproduction of new social system.

Iranian women are not receiving information only through national media or educational curriculum that are overwhelmed by religious teachings including the emphasis on veiling. The information today is not geographically bordered; rather people are exposed to boundless information as the social systems are "stretched across time and space", and social interactions are disembedded arranging the

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interaction with absent people. In fact, the societies and cultures are propelled into "interconnection with one another, [and] waves of social transformation crash across virtually the whole of the earth's surface." During Iran-Iraq war, when the geographical borders of the country were invaded, the majority of Iranian women were united against the enemy to defend the country against the state. As their husbands and sons were fighting in the battleground, they were vigilant to protect the ideological Islamic discourse mainly through their veils. A common dictum stated, "Women's veil is more powerful than the blood of martyrs". When the war came to an end, Western "cultural evasion" emerged to be a more formidable and even powerful enemy. Iranian present leader, Ayatollah Khamenei, notifies against the spread of Western culture as a soft war, a cultural plunder against Iranian young generation. He "display[s] profound anxiety whenever he speaks about western cultural incursion".

Against the Islamic state's resistance against cultural globalization, "it could not remain isolated". Cultural Globalization of Iran seems to enjoy of less homogenization of culture in comparison to extend that the hegemony of "Western culture is seeping into the bones of society". The state's process of de-globalization has confronted vast number of population who are using internet or satellite TVs. As stated before, about 90 percent of Iranians watch satellite TVs.

Satellite dishes in Iran receive 18 thousand channels in Iran, among which more than 170 Farsi language channels are available for Iranians. 380 channels are


\[\text{More than 90 percent of Iranians have a satellite / death of obscenity under the influence of long running series. Iranian Students News Agency. 13.03.2015. — Mode of access: https://www.isna.ir/news/94031307607/}\]
displaying music and dance shows and 80 channels are allocated to fashion. Iranian sociologists believe that the attractive culture screened in satellite TVs responds the needs of young audience providing them the western fashion, so that they can reconstruct a modern identity. Different researches prove that women who are identified as "bad hijabi" or inappropriately veiled watch more satellite TVs and use more chat rooms such as Facebook.

"Although hijab law remains the same today, women have steadily and relentlessly pushed back the boundaries of the dress code. [...] They resist the demands by the hardliners to correct their hijab. The dressing manner of new generation is not the intended ideal style set in 1980 by the Islamic government. Mini transparent shiny scarves, tight short jackets, fashionable hair arrangement, accessories, made-over faces and tattooed eyebrows identify modern Iranian women.


Fig. 11. Iranian women in fashion hijab

Even the young generation who chose black chador, voluntarily or forced by conservative families, are not performing this practice similar to their mothers. Today, many various models of black chador have emerged. These new fashions of back "chadors" are in response to the needs of the younger Iranian women. This generation being provided with resources of globalized media, or academic education would no longer continue the traditions, as did their conservative mothers. While sustaining their religious identity, they perform the action of veiling in a manner that identifies them different from traditional women. These black chadors, though under the names such as "student chador", "national chador", or "Arabic chador", embody the religious identity of the wearer or her family who might force her to wear chador.

The available resources have inspired reflexivity about dressing. Considering the confining rule of mandatory hijab, women invoke to Fashion hijab. This fashion hijab used by most urban women is not fundamentally different from the dressing style of women in public after Reza Shah's unveiling decree. Both have "adoption of a western style coat and a partial covering of the head, showing more hair, neck and body shape". However, while this dressing code in 1930s was imposed by the state, today it is chosen by the agents as a deviated citation of the standard norm of veiling imposed by the state. At the same time that the Islamic discourse attempts to construct identities of its subjects, women being the subjects within these relations of power enjoy agency to "articulate [their] opposition". They are enabled by these norms to resist them. They perform the action of veiling in order to be viable subject. This is the "acquisition of being through citing of power". This performativity of regulatory norms is a "theatrical" recitation, or "rearticulatory practice" that enables the subject to resist the power

by "reformulation of performativity." The "bad hijabi" style is widespread in Iran despite great efforts by the police to eliminate it…This clothing revolution is an epitome of the contemporary form of resistance in Iran. Fashion hijab as the recitation of Islamic hijab troubles the Islamic discourse. The subject "takes up or cites that very term as the discursive basis for an opposition". The fashion hijab, as the common product of Islamic and Western discourses, is colorful weapon against the traditional and Islamic ideologies of the state. In fact, veiling has been politicized again. This veiling evolution is called as "clothing revolution of Iran, non-verbal form of protest, the epitome of the contemporary form of resistance in Iran; if you cannot uncover, why not cover “badly”.

The outcome of this phase of women's awakening by academic education and globalized media is not limited to their fashion hijab or bad hijabi, as the inappropriate reiteration of the norm of veiling. Some have launched to subvert the norm and to stop the law. A media campaign set up on the Facebook page of an Iranian journalist and activist in London. Masih Alinejad posting her unveiled photo in London and in her hometown in Iran encouraged Iranian women to follow her. Soon the page had 760,000 followers. To this point, hundreds of Iranian women submitted their unveiled photos in public places in Iran. This page called "My Stealthy Freedom" also inspired solo singing for women through videos under the name of "My Forbidden Song". Some women dare to challenge the compulsory hijab in crowded streets of Tehran even if they might risk arrest. On a campaign, called white Wednesdays here and there a woman is standing unveiled at the top of a cement block while waving her scarf side to side. This scarf hanging from a stick is similar to a flag voicing the silent protest against the mandatory law

of veiling. Some veiled women, who willfully wear the veil but oppose the compulsory veil, have also joined the campaign of protesting to state that they want veil for themselves not to impose it on others514.

Some women in fashion hijab wear white scarves on Wednesdays, to voice their resistance.

![Fig. 12. Iranian girls in white scarves on White Wednesdays](image)

Women's digital uprising through media such as Facebook or their symbolic protests demonstrates the long-established tension between the Islamic traditional discourse and secularized and modern discourse of West. Each discourse seeking subsistence subjugates women, so that women will perform in the regulatory frame of that discourse, contributing to the continuity of that very discourse.

The literature on veiling by Western authors or Iranian authors in diaspora rarely depicts a satisfying image of veiling. Western discourses, whether electronic or printed media, such as movies, newspapers, historical books, or literature in defying Islamic traditions, represent veiling as the most obvious symbol of Muslim women's oppression. Ridouani writes, "in Western media Muslims are seen as one and unique entity of anti-rational barbaric, anti-democratic, bloodthirsty people". In regard to veiling, he believes that the facts are distorted and "Muslim women,

hidden behind their scarf and veil are equated to masqueraded terrorists and evil doers. Dabashi, an Iranian writer in diaspora depicts current Iranian women as "bodiless faces". Their bodies are "forcefully denied the physical exercise of social presence". He believes that "these bodies produces faces that are hesitant, halting and ashamed for no evident reason". However, the Islamic discourse in a strict belief in heteronormativity considers the practice of veiling as a medium that guarantees public morality, social peace and security. Islamic discourses such as the national films or the published literature depict veiled women among whom the wearers of chador are usually appreciated and identified as traditional women but are appreciated with positive features.

Veiled female gender identity as the visible symbol of heteronormativity preserves sexual binaries of man and woman and consequently their gendered stereotypes as well as gendered identities.

Iranian soft power is mainly centered by the state's Shia ideology influencing countries such as Lebanon, Syria, or Iraq, and at some levels, the country "invokes common historical, cultural, ethnic and linguistic ties with neighboring states". However, inside the country the state confronts a generation that embraces Western, particularly American culture and values. Farsi media targeted at Iranians by Western governments and Iranians in the diaspora, mainly via satellite Television ...make US sources of soft power easier for Iranian audiences to absorb and threatens to divert them from regime programming. Western cultural soft power invokes the ideas such as democracy, gender equality, and liberty, demonstrating that Iranian state has deprived the people from their natural right of liberty. Western cultural products attract Iranians by depicting an

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517 Shoamanesh S. Soft Power is A Key to Iran's Success. HUFFPOST. 06.12.2017. [Electronic resource]. — Mode of access: https://www.huffingtonpost.com/sam-sasan-shoamanesh/soft-power-is-key-to-iran_b_11965208.html
aggressive image of Islamic republic that struggles to gain nuclear weapon and
denies social and political liberty of people.\textsuperscript{519} In attempt to win the mind and
hearts of Iranian women, mandatory veiling is addressed as an emblem
representing the oppression of women and abolition of their right and freedom.
"The veil has become an easy visual equivalence for cultural backwardness, a form
of shorthand to represent Europe's enlightened cultural standing"\textsuperscript{520}. The repressive
meanings that Western media attributes to veil as depriving women of right to
choose their own attire is contrasted to the liberty that their own Western culture
provides women. "The media portrayal of Iran […] depicts the veil as oppressive
and Islamic law as barbaric"\textsuperscript{521}. Those Iranian women attracted by Western media
struggle to reconstruct their identities in accordance to Western culture. According
to Joseph Nye, "Seduction is always more effective than coercion, and many
values like democracy, human rights, and individual opportunities are deeply
seductive"\textsuperscript{522}.

Iranian state refers to this infused Western soft power as soft war. Recently,
the political ideological assistant of Iranian armed forces warned that the enemy
being frustrated from hard wars against Iran invokes soft war against Islamic
culture.\textsuperscript{523} According to all authorities of the Islamic discourse, women's veiling
is one of the main objectives of the soft war. The Islamic discourse insists on hijab
as a social behavior that preserves the society from corruption, contributes to
endurance of family relations and guarantees women's protected social presence.
However, the enemy aims at hijab to not only to destroy the country's cultural

\textsuperscript{519} Basiri. M. Soft War Against Iran. Motaleat e Godrat e Narm, 5, 2012, pp. 151-177.
\textsuperscript{520} Jones p. Postcolonial Representations of Women: Critical Issues for Education. Springer Science & Business
Media, 2011. p. 137
\textsuperscript{521} Women and the Islamic Veil: Deconstructing implications of orientalism, state, and feminism through an
understanding of performativity, cultivation of piety and identity, and fashion. pp. 1-77. [Electronic resource]. —
\textsuperscript{523} The enemy, disappointing of hard War, has turned to the soft war against the Islamic Republic of Iran. Farsi News
Smart Site. 03.01.2018. — Mode of access: https://khabarfarsi.com/u/49409976#back

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ideologies but also the social security of the country\textsuperscript{524}. The regulatory regime of the Islamic discourse that constructs a veiled female gender identity entails that the subjects perform the norm of veiling, so that the discourse will be preserved. Women's deviated performance of this norm threatens the sustainability of Islamic discourse.

Satellite TVs, especially Farsi channels, disparage Iranian veiling culture while celebrating Western culture where unveiled attractive women are free from religious and traditional tangles. TV series appreciate the secularized and modern identity of female characters in contrast to traditional and veiled women who are depicted as mean and backward\textsuperscript{525}.

Today, Western societies do not need Reza Shah to coarsely unveil women, rather globalized media and internet are more available and powerful tools to unveil women gradually and silently.

The section reflected on construction of Iranian women's cultural identity in relation to their public dressing style since the traditional era to current age. Iranian women's veiling, unveiling and re-veiling signify the hegemonic regulatory discourses that throughout the history attempted to shape normal female gender identity. The repetition of different veiling practices imposed by the discourses guaranteed the sustainability of each discourse; at the same time, it gave agency to subjects who through deviated performances engendered transformed female identity.

Veiling, as a symbol of traditional religion, has always been challenged by those in desire for modernization. The traditional veiling associated with women's


\textsuperscript{525} Moradkhani H. Discursive Roots of Regulating Women's Dressing Style After Islamic Revolution. \textit{Motaleat-e jame-e shenakht}, No. 1, 2018, pp. 171-203.

seclusion and backwardness was opposed by modernization after the constitutionalism. Reza Shah's modernizing state regarded unveiled female identity as the norm. During the revolutionary acts of 1975, veiling signified opposition to the regime. After the establishment of Islamic republic, the Veil imposed by Islamic state was no more equal to seclusion of women. Women equipped by resource of education as well as the globalized media reflexively consider the construction of their identity. Their deviated repetition of the practice of veiling has produced a new female identity and the prevalent norm of fashion hijab. Stylized veiling reveals to be the epitome of modernization and resistance against the imposed rule of veiling. In contrast to the colorful scarves, the wearers of black chador signify royalty to Islamic discourse. Resisting Western "cultural invasion", they preserve their religious identity. Although the produced gap between the modernized and tradition female identity is visible in their veiling style, at social or cultural arenas, such as universities or occupation, they are together, revealing that veiling has not been a hinder on their social participation, though it is regarded as an obstruct on the women's liberty of dressing choice.

2.3. Iranian women's cultural identity in relation to their work and leisure time

Work, like food is essential part of an adult life. It not only produces goods, but also, it helps produce people. That is work gives identity to people. Watson defines work as "the carrying out the tasks which enable people to make a living within the social and economic context in which they are located". It is a task "associated with people making living". In gathering and hunting societies "a gender-based division of labor" dominated. Neither interest nor aptitude, but the "ascribed characteristics" of being male or female determined the type of the job. Hunting that entailed strength and

mobility had cultivated the belief in stable biological differences that left no place for acquired competence for a job.\textsuperscript{528}

"As with race and ethnicity, gender continues to be a powerful influence on work, particularly in regard to occupational differentiation ". The "different ways that boys and girls are socialized" results to gender-based segregation of jobs\textsuperscript{529}.

Housework or nursery though can be an employment for house cleaners and baby sitters are generally and routinely taken place by wives and mothers with no expectation for payment or any other material reward. The unlimited labor that each edge of this triangle of husband, kids, and household demands are very natural of female sex and has become invisible work.

Housework as an unpaid work, which has limited association with social activity fails to have a role in one's social position. However, Brown believes, "Without the enormous and unremitting cycle of domestic labor the formal economy of jobs and pay packets would cease to function"\textsuperscript{530}.

Leisure refers to "what people plan and do when they believe themselves to be free"\textsuperscript{531}. Eliciting senses of calm and pleasure, "it is secret of healthy mind and body"\textsuperscript{532}. "Leisure exists when people perceive themselves as freely choosing an activity that is simultaneously enjoyable and intrinsically motivated. It is a nonobligatory activity chosen freely and done at free time. As the action chosen freely in free time, it is associated with freedom that naturally varies in meaning in different cultures. The individual can do whatever she likes in her free time as long as her choices are in agreement with her competence as a subject of a particular discourse. In fact, the rules and available resources define the spheres of the individual's leisure activity. "Leisure time and space are continually made and remade by actions of people in their social worlds"\textsuperscript{533}.

\textsuperscript{529}Ibid. p. 277
\textsuperscript{532}Ibid. P. 2.
\textsuperscript{533}Ibid. P. 11.
Rojec calls "leisure as the focal point of identity" (p.104) since it is the realm of cultural representations. As chosen freely, and at the same time bounded to social and cultural norms, any leisure activity identifies the individual with the regulatory discourse that shapes her.

Some researchers believe that the term leisure has been thrust on non-Western cultures. However, "the relative freedom that people expect in their leisure and the potential for enjoyment exist in all cultural contexts". Some researchers believe that the term leisure has been thrust on non-Western cultures. However, "the relative freedom that people expect in their leisure and the potential for enjoyment exist in all cultural contexts". Some researchers believe that the term leisure has been thrust on non-Western cultures. However, "the relative freedom that people expect in their leisure and the potential for enjoyment exist in all cultural contexts".

Stebbins, working on theories of leisure for 35 years has classified three types of leisure: serious leisure, casual or non-serious leisure, and project-based leisure. Serious leisure is "systematic pursuit of an amateur, hobbyist, or volunteer core activity that is highly substantial, interesting, and fulfilling and where, in the typical case, participants find a career in acquiring and expressing a combination of its special skills, knowledge, and experience". Casual leisure is "immediately, intrinsically rewarding, relatively short-lived pleasurable activity, requiring little or no special training to enjoy it". Project-based leisure is a new term. It refers to "a short-term, moderately complicated, either one-shot or occasional, though infrequent, creative undertaking carried out in free time". It needs some effort, knowledge and skill or a background preparation, but unlike serious leisure, it cannot be turned to a career.

The following section applying performative theory of Butler and structuration of Giddens, examines Iranian women's cultural identity in association with their work and leisure. By work, it refers to women's paid social works, while concerning their domestic works. Leisure includes spare time when women are not working. Work and leisure activities are regarded as performances that contribute

534 Ibid. P. 11.
535 Ibid. P. 12.
538 بنكی پورفرد امیرحسین؛ رباني اصفهاني حوریه، سبک گذران اوقات فراغت از دیدگاه اندیشمندان علوم اجتماعي و آموزه هاي اسلامي، پژوهش هاي اجتماعي اسلامي، شماره 100، 1393، صص 103-122.
construction of women's identity. To study transformation of women's identity, the author explores the deferred effects of performances and the way the deviated performances establish new norms and new intelligible identities.

**Iranian Women's Cultural Identity in relation to their Work and Leisure before Constitutionalism**

Urban aristocrat Iranian women rarely did any housework or any social or economic activities. Disgracing labor, they employed maids and baby sitters for their household drudgery.

The lower classes and countryside women, however, performed household labor as well as economic activities. Urban women who participated in economic activities belonged to lower classes. Their works were contribution to family income. These women as the labor force inside the houses practiced the works regarded as womanly. Women certainty had no place in major works belonging to male domain. The works that were largely practiced within the houses included works such as spinning, carpet weaving, embroidery, textile weaving, needlepointing, sewing, traditional midwifery, and teaching recitation of Quran for kids. Peasantry women, however, after completing household works, left their houses and worked at farms or at forestry works. In general, lower class women's place at occupational positions was marginalized though financially it was profitable. Working did not guarantee them a social identity. They were any way doomed to be submissive wives and daughters, with no right to enjoy their income.
In addition to works that were artistic craft productions or agricultural products, sex working was also included as a job and the prostitutes as the workers had to pay taxes. The practice of using female body for pleasure of men, though degraded, had turned to be a market place. Even the religious Safavi Dynasty did not oppose brothels due to the high taxes they imported to the court. The prostitutes were also occupied at dancing, singing and playing music. The scandalous suggestion of whoriness tainted female dancing and singing since then. A European traveler describes the indecency of dancing at East, writing that Iranian men never dance. Only trollops dance\textsuperscript{541}.

High-class women and women of court (harem) owned their properties. They usually endowed their assets for building mosques, inns, or seminaries or any building of public benefits. Although endowment was in hope of eternal rewards, it executed the endower from taxes and saved the property from the possible confiscation\textsuperscript{542}. Court women, though had overcame the class subordination, usually doomed to gender subordination. The high amount of endowments vividly indicate their incapability of owning or dealing their properties.

Since the main purpose of the life of female sex was to get married at the proper age, she did not need any especial skill or education. They did not look for careers; they worked inside the houses only at times of necessity. Women's works required no outstanding skill or education.

Women not owning their income failed to develop an independent identity for themselves through their works. Womanly works inside the houses were performances satisfying gender expectations of society. Their works seem to be another form of domestic responsibilities added to their household drudgery that fulfills the family needs without being paid. They were suffering from both class

\textsuperscript{541}  حمیدی گسمونی فاطم، وضعیت اقتصادی زنان در عهد صفویه از منظر سفرنامه نویسندگان خارجی، فرهنگ پژوهش، شماره 15، 2935، صص 223-251.


\textsuperscript{542}  حیدریان زهرا، زنان واقف در عصر صفوی، وقف میراث جاودان، شماره 33، 2988، صص 28-53.

subordination and gender subordination. Performing lower jobs at gender discriminated spheres reinforced their female gender identity. The discursively constructed gender stereotypes condemned women for works that agree to their essentially called female nature. Women sorting themselves to feminine works performed the norms and preserved the stable female gender identity. Williams hold that women are described as "more sensual, caring, neat, patient, and respectful for others". These features has established norms about womanly jobs and a marginalized place for working women. Women both in their housework and in economic participations repeated the performances that constructed traditional female identity. The subjects' repetitions guaranteed the reproduction of the traditional culture and gave them a viable identity in that discourse. Women's works were reification of seclusionary gender norms constructing a subordinated and isolated female identity. The traditional discourse give rise to the performances that are conventionally called womanly. As long as they performed the predetermined roles, they had the stable intelligible traditional identity.

Aristocratic women, disgracing work, enjoyed a 24-houre leisure time, while lower class women were charged with household duties as well as the works to help the family financially. However, this class of women also had times to be away from work. Though leisure in its modern sense seems incompatible for traditional cultures, there were ways that women filled their spare time. They might have been unconscious of the relieving effects of leisure on their mind and soul; they managed leisure times as amusements either to fill their free times or to distance from life toils. In their tedious and dull life, they experienced no excitement or emotions. The upper class women did "nothing, but sleep and eat and wonder what to eat for the next meal", and the lower class women were living a misery.

Women's leisure time activities were located both inside and outside the houses. Observing special norms and conditions, they were permitted to appear

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outside the house. Their facial veil supplemented to their head- to-toe chadors guarded them inside their portable walls and let them stroll in alleys and streets. They could leave the houses not individually, but accompanied with other women, and were expected to return before darkness.544 Their emergence outside the houses was mainly for shopping, going to public bath, visiting relations and friends, pilgrimage to holy shrines and graves, or attending religious ceremonies.

Women enjoyed only-women gatherings where they ate sweets, nuts, drank tea and smoked Kalyans. Gossiping was the main feature of the gathering, during which younger women were expected to be silent and listen. Their incessant idle chatters were about marriage, children, or husbands545.

Women frequently left the houses for bazars. Women in groups, while enveloped in chadors, moved through narrow lanes of bazars, chattering together and dropping in many shops and bargaining. According to the accounts of European travelogues, wandering at bazars was not mainly for shopping; it satisfied their need for socialization.546

Colliver Rice, an English travelogue writer, reports, "Visits to hammam or public baths are among the most exciting happenings in the lives of Persian women of all classes". Taking a bath was not only for the purpose of cleansing; as an opportunity to meet friends and gossip, it seemed pleasant to fill the dull lives. They also visited public baths at especial occasions, such as betrothals, weddings or preparation for the New Year festivals.547

The most active and exciting part of a woman's life was attending at Muharram ceremonies. It took for two months during which they wore only black

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and attended at places that held mourning services. Women, cloaked in chadors, were segregated from men to be placed at places allocated for them. Competition over the best sitting place was a common happening. Along with loud weeping for the martyrdom of Imam Hussein, they went on gossiping. Drinking tea and coffee or smoking kalyan, before the beginning of the elegy ceremony was also prevalent. Gertrud Bell, a travelogue writer, compares these women in black chadors and white veils to "shapeless black and white parcels set in rows [...] looking for all the world. Their rocking themselves to and fro in agony of grief was the burst of latent emotions. The most enthusiastic part was the miracles performing the life of the Imam. These plays might remind a Christian the miracles or mystery plays performed during middle Ages in Europe. Even Rice confirms that against the dramatic defects of this theater, "attraction it certainly has".

Fig. 13. Veiled women at the campus of Muharram ceremony
At these theatres, held at compounds, women were seated together in especial places at the campus or in the rooms, where some curtained windows were reserved for upper class women. These curtains reminded "the position of those who always look on life through a veil"\textsuperscript{550}.

Leaving the town to spend at gardens or fields was another amusement of Iranian women. Having permission of husbands a group of women with their children could spend a day at someone's garden, believing that garden is nearer to paradise\textsuperscript{551}. In fact, leisure activities were intertwined with their religious beliefs. In the traditional religious culture, there was limited place for pursuit of sensual and material pleasures.

Imbalanced opportunities offered to genders and gender separation at leisure seem to be an obvious problem in the traditional culture. Women identified by their female gender were not permitted to leisure spaces allocated for men. Restaurants (called \textit{kebab pazi}), coffee houses (called \textit{gahveh khaneh}), or gyms (called \textit{zurkhaneh}) were allotted for men\textsuperscript{552}. They had been built by men for men, who had no concern of female leisure.

Traditional discourse regulated leisure time of female sex within the heteronormative structure. Women spent their spare time with other women who had accepted the discriminatory practices as natural. Women in their leisure activities dramatized the conventional norms and performed what the traditional and religious culture expected them. The leisure performances practiced by women classified them under female gender and reinforced their traditional gender identity. Female sex was the only determining factor of one's way of life, according to which she constructed her identity. The identification as female was equal to a life void of variety. All women, regardless of their age, social class,

\begin{footnotes}
\item[550] Rice Colliver C. \textit{Persian women and their ways}. USA: Seeley, Service & co. limited.1923. p.234
\item[551] Ibid. p. 203.
\item[552] شهری جعفر، تاريخ اجتماعی تهران در قرن سیزدهم: زندگی، کسب و کار، جلد 4، نشر رسا. 1369. شمار صفحات 823
\end{footnotes}
personal desires, marital status, ethnicity, etc., were classified under the same group and were expected to have common leisure activities.

**Iranian Women's Work and Leisure after Constitutionalism**

The post-constitutional era did not meet a considerable revolution of women's occupational status. Under the domination of traditional culture, the female sex was given the works ascribed to their female nature. The identity of the majority of women was constructed based on the belief on seclusion of women. Therefore, in the patriarchal society of traditional society, the prevailing norm was disgrace of working for women. As in recent era, the overall female work force included women of low social class who continued working at lower jobs inside the houses\(^{553}\). Still the patriarchal traditional culture, being attributed to Islam, maintained its domination and deprived women of occupational positions. Against Islam's recognition of women's right to own their property, the majority of working women suffered from financial dependence to their male supporter\(^{554}\).

However, the constitutional revolution had awakening effects on small number of women who were touched by it. The establishment of women's journals, societies and girl schools had opened the doors for new social opportunities for women. Women worked as school principals, teachers, authors or editors of journals and newspapers, however, with lower payment compared to men\(^{555}\). This limited number of women who belonged to elites were challenging to deconstruct the traditional norm that viewed working of women in contrast to women's modesty\(^{556}\). The most eminent cleric of the Tehran, Sheikh Fazlloah

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\(^{553}\) Panahi F. The Influence of Qajar The judicial system on Women is Right in Iran. *Tarikh Padguhi*, No. 64, 2015, pp. 91-108.


Nuri, believed that women's social involvements "would lead to prostitution, thereby undermining what he saw as the very foundation of Islam". While the religious constitutionalists insisted on seclusion of women, the secularized elites, especially some women such as Dolatabadi insisted on education and financial independence of women. The traditional and modern discourses in competition attempted to regulate the subjects' performances based on their own regulatory script. The socially involved woman who was abjected in the traditional discourse was aspired by the renewalists.

Social involvement became representative of non-traditional female identity. For this group of women working was a way to prove women's underestimated competence. They demanded the right for equal social opportunities so that they could demonstrate an independent identity. The few elite women desperately struggled to convince the parliament for women's social and economic rights. The prevalent ideas about women's essential weakness and physical incapability confined women's social involvement. Besides, being deprived of education, women failed to have required knowledge and skill for occupations. Therefore, a generation time would bring educated and consequently more powerful women to occupational chances. With the majority of traditional thinking, still occupied women enjoyed no intelligibility. "In Butler's terms, for a subject to reach intelligibility identification with the abject of the regulatory ideal has to be persistently disavowed". Working and social participation were performances deviated from traditional script. The continuous reiteration of these deviated performances would promise a location for the resistant agent.

During Pahlavi period, women's incessant struggles to resist the traditional discourse was more ignited and facilitated by the authoritative state that forcefully

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opposed the traditional discourse. For Giddens, structure is simply made up of people's practices as these occur over time". But, people make society through "resources and materials". Women as subjects, equipped by resources of knowledge and state support, display their agency performing actions that in terms of Butler, troubled the established conventions.

The first Pahlavi dynasty revealed to be a transformative era in the history of Iranian women's movement toward taking occupational chances. The establishment of European-like bureaucracy in 1922 gave opportunity for women to be employed officially for the first time in Iranian history. To build a modern westernized state, the king, attempted to break the seclusionary walls surrounding women. "Women's participation in the workforce, particularly in the bureaucracy, in teaching and in factories was supposed to help build the Iranian state". While the traditional discursive structure still insisted on seclusion of women, the newfound discourse believed on the essentiality of women's social participation. Female sex was the site of power for both discourses competing to produce and regulate a female identity according to their own normative constrains. Women's identity as traditional or modern could be represented in their seclusion or occupation. Iranian women to be identified as modern "would be gainfully employed and would enjoy a greater civic presence".

The state's attempts to modernize the country through bringing women to social arenas did not neglect women's main role as mothers, wives and housekeepers. The emphasis on women's education was not primarily for equipping women with skill and knowledge to be socially involved; rather, they were supposed to learn science of domesticity for appropriate house managing. One of the elites of the era, Kasravi, writes, "Women's natural work is

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housekeeping and child-rearing". He believes in some especial cases, such as particular professions, and in the case of necessity, that women can work. Women doing the actions of caregivers are, in terms of Butler, dramatically performing the actions "that has been going on before one arrived on the scene". Through such rehearsal of acts, they are reassuring both the stability of the heteronormative gender roles and their intelligibility of identity. The cultural identity of modern Iranian woman was redefined as socially involved, "educated mothers", and "submissive wives". The coexistence of traditional and modern cultural identity created a modernization specific to Iran. Women's education and emancipation from the seclusionary houses was to ensure the "well-being of the future generation". Women gained identity as "bearers and nurturers of the nation's children".

Women's works outside the houses were not discharged of the shadow of their female sex. The regime of Reza Shah "encouraged women to enter "suitable" professions such as teaching, nursing and office work". However, in the final years of Reza Shah, "the Women's Awakening was unleashed with a barrage of press propaganda". A torrent of images of modern Iranian womanhood routinely appeared in Iranian press.

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The images, such Iranian athlete women or women trained as pilots, released Iranian woman's identity from the overflow of impeding gendered expectations. It paved the way for involvement of Iranian women in professions that recently were in the realm of men. Women's entrance to society of mixed sexes entailed ensuring security for women. The prevalent underscore of morality among elite women expanded the range of male guardianship" from inside the houses to the society of co-workers, teachers and the whole state”568.

Women breaking the barriers set by male sex conquered the male dominated arenas and moved to write a new female identity. When in November 7, 1939 the first commercial calling for applicants to register for pilot training courses appeared, women along with men enrolled in it. Three women received licenses

and experienced independent flies assuring identities liberated from their gender.\textsuperscript{569}

Women also occupied the positions as judges, deputies of the parliament, and members of the cabinet, and many other professions viewed as manly. Here some of the first professions that Iranian women pioneered are mentioned: Brigadier-general (Arfaee), attorney general (Najafzade), architect (Ohanjaniyan), archeologist (Barzin), judge (Bani mahd), pilot (Tejartchi), ambassador in Denmark (Dolatshahi), Bus driver (Soltan), prosecutor (Choobak). However, the number was very limited.\textsuperscript{570} Though they were limited in number, they pioneered performing the actions according to the modern discourse. These performances identified them with modern cultural identity that was in contrast to the traditional passive subordinate secluded and marginalized female identity.

Fig. 15. Imperial naval officers

\textsuperscript{569}See: The first women pilots in Iran. Portal " NCRI Women's Committee" — Mode of access: https://women.ncr-iran.org/famous-women/1831-the-first-women-pilots-in-iran

\textsuperscript{570}محجوب نیکی، ۱۰۰ زن نخست ایران در حوزه‌های مختلف، بی‌بی‌سی فارسی، ۲۱ مهر ۱۳۹۲. Mahjoob N. 100 Pioneer Iranian Women in Different Areas. BBC NEWS. 13.10.2013. — Mode of access: http://www.bbc.com/persian/iran/2013/10/131010_100women_first_nm
Enthusiastic women aspiring for professions realized that they could not handle housework and social professions simultaneously. They demanded a change of family structure, and an equitable distribution of responsibilities inside the family. Believing that women are human beings just like men are, they stated that women are not superwomen "Women should not be asked either to do both jobs or to give up life outside the house". Women proceeded in making amendments in constitution supporting women's social roles, but revisions failed to involve women's domestic responsibilities. Though in respect to women's social professions the gender stereotypes were disturbed in a limited range, their signification as nurturers remained due to the heteronormative socialization of gender identity.

Constitutionalism failed to transform the traditional pattern of Iranian women's life in general. The pre-industrial society opened no especial place for women's leisure. According to Martin, "There was no organization of leisure hour activity". However, "the enjoyment of leisure was inextricably interwoven with other purposes". For instance, the institutions of religion, family, or traditional festivals served still leisure spaces for Iranian women. Leisure mingled with life was under the same traditionally established norms, such as gender segregation and gender roles that dominated the life.

Women's education as well as the establishment of women's organizations and publications, nevertheless, innovated new choices for women. Elite women attended these organizations, or poetry reading meetings, or gatherings to play music. Still this new area of women's activities were not beyond challenge in the view of conservatives. The performances that identified women as modern were not a cultural norm identifying a viable female identity in the traditional discourse.

However, the renewalists encouraging women's social interactions paved the way for more public social spaces for women. A year after the establishment of cinemas, a cinema owner, Khan Baba Khan Motazedi, opened his cinema for women twice a week. Women enthusiastically welcomed attending the cinema and they had their own cinema a year later in 1296573.

Pahlavi state's attempts to introduce modernization to different arenas of society, including culture, certainly touched leisure activities. Modernization of society that had pushed educated women to official occupation, established a division of work and leisure.

The advent of new media, radio and television, remodeled leisure times. They replaced some of the traditional leisure activities. At the same time, the new media influenced other aspects of women's lifestyle. Movies acquainted them with Western modern and secular way of life that went in contrast to the traditional Islamic culture. According to Arasteh, "movies greatly altered the attitudes of many urban young people towards marriage and family life by introducing them to the idea of romantic life"574. New media, filling the leisure time of some women, contributed to the construction of modern female identity.

Women's sports, mainly in mixed environments, was one of the Westernization agenda of Reza Shah Pahlavi. The pictures of female athletes on journal covers and newspapers encouraged women to be involved in physical training.
In 1958, Iranian women athletes competed at the Asian Games. However, at this stage sport was not a national concern and belonged to elites, as did education. "Yet, gradually, an ever-increasing number of women belonging to the non-devout upper and middle classes became involved in a diverse range of sports". Sports identified women with modernity, and anti-traditional culture. The traditional culture, associated with religion, regarded women's unveiled attendance at heterosocial environments as violating the Islamic culture.

It is evident that since Pahlavi dynasty, leisure activities disengaged from traditions and got more involved with sensuous pleasures. Women, as the agents, performing modern leisure activities gain modern identities. The agents, who in Butler's words are the effects of power, at the same time, ensure the sustainability of the modern discourse.

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575 See: Off the Beaten Track: Women's Sport in Iran. — Mode of access: https://smallmedia.org.uk/old/pdf/offthebeatentrack.pdf
Iranian women's Cultural Identity in relation to their Work and Leisure at the Current Age

The number of occupied women in 1976 was 2050.4. It dropped to 1319 after Islamic revolution. It indicates that the ideological screening, particularly the imposed compulsory veiling, had filtered out women identified as unviable in the Islamic discourse. Besides, the accepted religious and veiled women, brought up in traditional families were not prepared for occupation. However, the rate of literate women grew from 28.9 percent in 1976 to 40.5 percent in 1986. Shirin Ebadi, the founder of defenders of human right center in Iran, writes, "There was no pretext left for the patriarchs to keep their daughters out of school". While illiteracy was a reason impeding women from occupation, the educated female generation had overcome this blocking, and in 2003, the number of officially occupied women reached 3540.1.

Iranian constitution acknowledges women's right to have occupations (article 21). Some researchers believe that the present protective laws for occupied women, however, seem to be more theoretical, failing to improve women's occupational status. However, since almost all the university courses are presented for women, it can be concluded that the professions are attainable as well. Today many Iranian women have entered unconventional and male dominated professions.

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Female taxi drivers, bus drivers, truck drivers, pilots, firefighter, or mining executive are the jobs known as manly throughout the world. Dr. Sorough states, "Women's presence in society is now as natural and logical as their absence once was." women have overcome heteronormativity through breaking the gender boundaries at occupations. Going beyond the boundaries of established gendered

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professions women subvert the norm of binary division of professions as manly and womanly.

According to jahnbegloo, night shift female taxi drivers, still in their veils seem paradoxical to Iran's traditional Islamic discourse. He believes that it is a simplistic view of the phenomena as the credit to the blessings of Westernizations and weakening of Islamizations”. The Islamic process in Iran has combined anti-Westernization with industrialization, and urbanization. Iranian modernization flows against the homogenous globalized modernization. While maintaining its traditional and religious culture, it drives the state toward modernization. Women's entrance to the occupational positions is associated with the state's attempts for progress of the country580.

However, still women's social participation is limited. According to a quantitative research in 2017, only 15 percent of Iranian women are socially occupied. Only at some provinces it extents to 30 percent581. While quantitatively the number of female graduates exceeds men's, at occupational states men appear more. The limited range of occupation among women can be associated not principally with attainable occupational fortunes, but with heteronormative gendered culture. The gender stereotypes imposed by the traditional culture since the infancy can be considered as one of the main factors impeding women from social participation. It is revealed that the attribution of gender roles to sexes are so naturalized that the individuals rarely think beyond them. A research proves how gender stereotypes construct the gender identity of Iranian kids. The researcher presents the parents' prevalent phrases, the cartoons, storybooks, and school curriculums that contribute construction of gender identity. Kids are mainly introduced with female figures as mothers who are cooking, taking care of kids,

while men are fathers who are socially active\textsuperscript{582}. The images shaped as male or female in the mind of each, naturally drive them to find their future in society or inside the house. The gendered expectations created in the Iranian society expects a young boy to find an appropriate occupation because he will be the protector of his future family. In contrast, young girls are exonerated from necessarily having a profession. Though high educations of females is admired, their occupation is not always accepted. Occupation that brings financial independence for women as well as a social identity unravels women from the authority of men as the protectors of the family. The overthrow of expected submissive female identity is not always desirable in current Iranian culture. Though the male dominant views are not as strict as in traditional Iranian culture, it still survives. The independent female identity troubles the assumed hierarchies within the family and shatters the stability of the family\textsuperscript{583}. Women’s occupations has turned to be one of the reasons of divorce. Besides the established gender roles expects female sex to fulfill primarily the household drudgery and child rearing. A research proves how Iranian men believe that women are definitely in charge of housework drudgery. While women state that men disgracefully viewing housework, feel no responsibility toward it\textsuperscript{584}. In fact, the bulk of unpaid house drudgery, which women are in charge, hinders their social improvement. The traditional culture of loading women with domestic works is associated with women’s nature in a way that men consider their participation as extra work and a favor to women. However, domestic labor is regarded not as a work for women, but a duty. The subjects are induced to view the gendered culture as the essential female nature and not as the established


Women’s house labor has not experienced any radical departure from what they used to do traditionally. Except for the use of modern device, they carry out the same duties and responsibilities as they did before. The heteronormative division of gender roles has still fixed the signification of nurturer to the female sex.

Recently Iranian vice president, Mrs. Molaverdi, stated that women manacled by traditional gender roles are restricted in their social and political participation. It leaves the majority of high social and political positions for men, who have been the powerful authorities of families and society. She believes that the features such as passiveness and being indifferent to serious social matters attributed to women have marginalized them\(^{585}\). However, this male dominated culture ascribes the disgracefully considered housework to women who are working unpaid and nonstop in domestic realm. A variety of empirical studies has proved that throughout the world "women consistently undertake more work than men, whether they are employed outside or not". The work level increases in case of socially employed women\(^{586}\).

Unlike the household drudgery, Iranian women generally welcome social professions. This paradoxical embracement of too much work seems comprehensible considering the independency given by an occupation. The financial independency unshackling women from reliance to men contributes construction of independent identity. Iranian women's identity that has been traditionally defined in relation to their domestic roles as mothers and wives can meet a new independent aspect. Active social participation enables women to construct social identity free from their gender. Occupied women cope with overloading works not only for financial reasons, but also for the independent social identity construction.

\(^{585}\) مولاوردی، مایه خانم خانم‌ها و مراقبت از فرزندان، مانع مشارکت تأثیرگذار سیاسی و اجتماعی زنان است، پایگاه تحلیلی خبری خانواده و زنان، 18 بهمن ماه 1395.

identity that the profession assures. A quantitative research demonstrates that eight percent of occupied women believe in the independent female identity guaranteed by their jobs. Unlike their complaining about the extra work that they carry out, none would stand shrinking from their professions in behalf of child rearing or house maintaining. Embracing the high pressures, they limit time for their personal affairs to carry out their professional careers and responsibilities as mothers, and wives. Women sacrifice their own personal affairs to their greater dream, which is gaining an independent identity. Professions have been one of the ways that fulfill their desires.

Women organizing their life and time for comfort of others inside the house are working outside the house mainly for their own sake. The combination of work inside and outside the house leaves them rarely a time for leisure. A woman who leaves her job every afternoon returns her home, which is another workplace for her. It is the same for non-occupied women for whom also there is no difference between leisure place and workplace. In fact, women's domestic works are prerequisites for preparing a house, which is a leisure place for other family members. Langhamer, on her book about English women's leisure writes, "The pleasure which husband and children find in such comfort that the house provides, is denied to her, who may be too exhausted to enjoy them". A look through an Iranian woman's life, or may be in the life of most women around the world, reveals that the borders of their work and leisure is usually blurred, leaving a leisure which is ambiguous in nature.

Women as the care providers certainly cannot enjoy a leisure equality as men do. According to a research, Iranian women allocate less time for leisure time in comparison to men. Best argues, "A central concept in constraint of women's leisure is the notion of ethics of care". This notion means that women are

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"socialized into caring for the needs of others at the expense of their own fulfilment and happiness". A woman in order to leave the house for a leisure activity feels that she must be assured that the household task is done and needs of each member are fulfilled. Even women's weekend activities are not significantly different from their weekdays. Some feminists believe that the difficulties that women face to make time for leisure or pursue a leisure activity make the concept of leisure seem inappropriate for women. However, the changes to apartment living, Labor saving equipments, ghost restaurants, schools and nurseries that keep children away from home have lessening the burden of the Iranian women, influencing the amount of their leisure time.

The gendered culture, identifying women as caretakers limit Iranian women's most leisure spaces within the houses. Besides, there are social filters operating against Iranian women's participation at some leisure activities. A quantitative research among Iranian women also proves that most women choose house as their leisure place. Their leisure activities inside the houses are not detached from their gender identity as female. Watching TV, listening to music, sewing, knitting, bakery, preparations for women gatherings, include some of the leisure activities of women inside the house. Another research manifests that Iranian women show high tendency to spend their leisure time with family members, relatives and friends, throwing parties and inviting families and friends. Reading absorbs only 7.48 percent of women's leisure time.

594 Ka'ani H. Examination of Study Rate of Occupied and Nonoccupied Women of Shiraz City. Ketabdari va etel'a resani, Vol. 13, No. 133, pp. 133-150.
House as a leisure space for women, today, offers abundance of leisure varieties through being equipped to internet connections. According to Mr. Azari Jahromi, Women's counselor at Ministry of communication and information, housewives are the most users of internet in Iran. They mainly use internet as a hobby to fill their leisure time. With the mushrooming number of users, it seems that virtual leisure spaces has been an enticing substitute for the traditional leisure spaces. Providing a vast unlimited public realm of communication, virtual spaces can replace the traditional form of spending with friends and families to share interests, ideas and lifestyle. A quantitative research among a group of Iranian women shows that women use internet as a convenient medium for socialization, access to virtual communities to expand their communicational range, for being upgraded and improved through gaining information, for learning new ways of housekeeping and child rearing. They all believed that internet as a simple and fast way has helped them to be involved in the globalized way of life. Therefore, virtual world connecting women to the global culture detaches them from their traditional identity.

88.2 percent of Iranian women spend their leisure time at home. 73.7 percent of this time is spent socializing with family members or friends. Only 6.3 percent of women are satisfied with the ways that they spend their leisure time. Generally speaking, we can claim that Iranian women's leisure mainly circulates in the domain of stereotypes attributed by the traditional heteronormative roles that marginalize women.

Shifting from the domestic and private leisure space, as the most favored leisure space for both occupied and non-occupied women, we can find public leisure spaces. These spaces reinforcing heteronormativity are sometimes specialized for women or men. Those spaces that women can attend as veiled are

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595 See: https://www.borna.news/
free for both sexes. Restaurant, cinemas, theaters, concerts, circus, parks, museums, historical buildings, libraries, exhibitions are some of the spaces that women along with men spend their leisure times.

The spaces that are allocated only for men include traditional coffee house, Zurkhaneh, a place for the traditional wrestling gym for men and in ancient times for warriors, wrestling stadiums, and football stadiums. To overcome the ban on attending Azadi stadium recently some girls disguised as men and entered the stadium⁵⁹⁸.

![Fig. 19. Girls disguised at Azadi Stadium-2018](image)

They have proved how gender identity can be simply troubled by a disguise. In the recent world cup match between Iran and Spain, held in Russia, the bans lifted and women entered the stadium to watch the screened match. After the match, the Spanish Capitan tweeted about these women, "They are the ones who won tonight. Hopefully the first of many"⁵⁹⁹.

⁵⁹⁸Disguised women sneak into Iranian football match, BBC NEWS, 01.05.2018. — Mode of access: https://www.bbc.com/news/world-middle-east-43964178
Iranian women also enjoy only-women public leisure spaces. Gyms, various fields of sport, swimming pools and aqua parks are among the most welcomed spaces for women. Gender segregation in sport areas has left no place for the resistance of even the most conservative families who send their girls or wives to participate at different sports. The number of women attending at championship sports is increasing significantly. In 2015, the number was 899921 with 11 percent of annual growth. However, according to a statistical research, sports as leisure activity still stand at the seventh level of women's leisure interests. Of those women who do workouts only 19.8 percent attend gyms, the others exercise at their home. Swimming pools are also more than a place for exercise. Today, the free time pools and aqua parks, usually equipped with music or DJ, have replaced...
the traditional public bathes where women spend their spare time. Recently riding bikes has also become prevalent among the new female generation.

![Fig. 21. Iranian women cycling in Main Street](image)

Apart from cycling in parks as a leisure activity, groups of female riders in their headscarves appear every Tuesdays in the streets to defy the fatwa banning them from cycling in public\(^{602}\). Such resistance to the norms established by the hegemonic power reveal the agency of the subject. With reference to Butler, though the subject is produced by the power and reiterates the power to gain identity, her agency produced by power exceeds that power\(^{603}\). The reiterations of the norms are pregnant with new norms, though in a long term.

A statistical research about women's sport, affirmed that body dissatisfaction and desire to lose weight among Iranian women is their main reason of tendency to sports\(^{604}\). The researcher also maintains that cultural traditions are the foremost deterrent factors, implying that since traditional women are rarely concerned with

\(^{602}\) Revesz R. Iranian women get on their bikes to defy cycling fatwa. INDEPENDENT. Tuesday 13 June 2017. — Mode of access: https://www.independent.co.uk/news/world/iran-women-defy-cycling-fatwa-tehran-religious-prohibitions-rights-traffic-a7787876.html


\(^{604}\) قادرزاده امید ؛ حسینی سیده چیمن. ورزش زنان و دلال تهای معنایی آن. زن در توسعه و سیاست، دورة ۱۳، شماره ۳، پاییز ۱۳۹۴. صص ۳۳۳-۳۰۹

body dissatisfaction matter, their tendency toward workouts rates less in comparison to the other group.

Personal grooming fills a considerable amount of Iranian women's leisure time. Iranian women's considerable use of make-up is referred to as "escape from the mundane realities of everyday life to the aesthetics of make-up as an immediate and accessible form of refuge". Female interviewees of a research viewed cosmetic wearing as an entertainment and leisure activity.

Strolling at shopping malls is the most favored outdoor leisure activity for women. A quantitative research proves that female satellite TV audience are more attracted to shopping malls looking for materials that would identify them as modern women. Fascinated to advertisements, they pursue the lifestyle of consumerism. "Advertisements all share a common message. They are selling the joys of buying, promoting the idea that purchasing things is in itself a pleasurable activity." In this sense, shopping fulfils the psychological need of the consumer. Shopping is "not satisfying a basic physical demand, but instead used to satisfy desires". Preoccupied by charming lifestyles displayed in TV Shows or persuasive goods advertised they value a lifestyle that enjoys the experience of shopping. Considering the large number of Iranian women spending time and money for shopping, consumerism can be regarded as another example of the subjugation to established models. Consumerism has turned to be a way for women to escape from traditional non-secular culture that advises for simple non-materialistic world.


606 طالبی معصومه، اکبری حسین. رسانه و مصرف گرایی. مطالعات بین رشته ای در رسانه و فرهنگ (رسانه و فرهنگ) : پاییز و زمستان. 1393. دوره 4. شماره 2: از صفحه 123 تا صفحه 150.


Traditional and religious leisure activities are not died out. Some, such as Muharam ceremonies have not lost their glamorous centrality, though in modernized lifestyle, they have become shorter in time. While tradition women of old generation might spend two months, modern women of younger generation might spend one or two especial days a year attending the ceremonies. Pilgrimage to shrines or attending religious ceremonies still survive, yet these activities seem more common among traditional families.

Regardless of financial capabilities, globalized media inspiring modern lifestyle influence substantially on women's leisure activities. Different researches have illustrated the impact of satellite TVs and e-groups on women's leisure activities. A research has showed that the users of globalized media, especially satellite TVs have more tendency to spend their leisure time at malls, mixed parties, beauty salons, along with watching satellite TV channels. However, the other group spends more at religious ceremonies or scientific and literary gatherings.

Leisure activities of women in the current age are transformed under the influence of globalized media. These activities, which are material and sensual in nature, are associated with modernity and identify Iranian women as non-traditional or modern. However, the modern leisure of Iranian women mainly, such as strolling at malls or personal grooming are usually under the classification of Stebbins casual leisure. It seems that the issue of women's leisure in Iran demands more consideration.

The traditional culture materialized female sex as secluded subjects. The delayed or deferred effects of their performances through social participations have subverted the seclusionary conventions. Their social involvements have guaranteed them modern and independent identity, yet the dress of caregiving still signifies intelligible female identity. Under the traditional heteronormative

division of gender roles, Iranian women both in traditional and current culture are loaded with household responsibilities. Whether occupied or non-occupied they are domestic workers. Their world of work and leisure is combined, making the home as both a leisure space and work place. The amendments in their leisure has made it more sensual and secular, in contrast to the traditional leisure that was intertwined with religion. These modernized leisure activities identify women with modernity. However, their leisure is also charged with traditional heteronormative gender stereotypes.

Chapter 2: Findings

The section studied three aspects of Iranian women's lifestyle including body maintenance, veiling, work and leisure. Within the framework of Butler's performative theory, these aspects are regarded as performances reiterating the norms imposed by regulatory discourses. Iranian women's body as a cite of imposing power have been materialized by competitive traditional or modernized discourses through ages. The discourses depend on the recitation of norms by women as the subjects, who through reiteration have gained agency to change the norms.

Traditional signification of female body as the secluded property of husband was undermined by women's new performances. After constitutionalism, under the influence of Western culture their entrance to social arenas subverted the norm of public seclusion of women. Social presence led to showcasing of female body. Women to gain a modern identity were obsessed with physical beauty valued by modern culture. Veiling, which traditionally had sheltered women in public, was questioned by unveiling performance of women who wanted to be identified as modern. The traditional veiling associated with women's seclusion and backwardness was opposed by modernization after the constitutionalism. Reza Shah's modernizing state attempted to normalize the unveiled female identity. Islamic republic regularized veiled female identity. Women, under the influence of
globalized Western culture, perform fashion hijab to be identified as modern. In the realm of work and leisure, Iranian women subverted the traditional signification of female sex as secluded through performing social roles. While they have overcome the borders of gendered work, they are loaded with domestic chores that entangle both their leisure and social work. Their leisure activities, though bound to heteronormative gender stereotypes, changed to be more secular and sensual identifying them as modern women. The transformation of Iranian women's identity generally suspends within the heteronormative gender stereotypes.

Throughout ages, traditional religious discourses and modern Westernized discourses have been competing to regularize Iranian female sex in each era. Iranian women were not silent subjects to regulatory normative discourses; rather they have revealed their agency to transform the norms. Since being equipped with resource of knowledge, they have reflexively considered construction of their identity, though within the framework of existing rules. Islamic republic of Iran insisting women's knowledge and social participation have unintentionally risked the sustainability of traditional norms that it accentuates. The resource of globalized media provides more knowledge to the agents empowering them to act reflexively transforming the current social system. Therefore, Iranian state, today, confronts the pervasion of Western cultural products that generally depict Iranian culture void of gender equality suppressing depriving women from liberty. The soft power against Iran is regarded as a “soft war” that absorbing Iran women diverts them from the norms promoted by the Islamic republic. Women's violated reiteration of actions threatens the stability of traditions, yet guarantees them a modern identity.
CONCLUSION

This study is an attempt to signal how Judith Butler's performative theory provides a novel perspective in the context of Iranian women's identity. Based on this theory identity is the product of discourse, while the agency of subject is not denied. The reiteration of norms of femininity via women as the subjects guarantees the stability of the discourse that has produced the norms. At the same time that the reiteration of the norms gives the subject a viable identity in the discourse, it gives her agency to transform her identity and subvert the norms. In the course of reiteration, the bound of signifier (woman) and signified (femininity) is destabilized through the performances that deviate from the significations intended originally by the discourse. These deviated performances construct new significations. To demonstrate the dualistic interaction of structure and agent, the structuration theory of Giddens has also been applied as a supportive theory.

Three aspects of contemporary Iranian women's life are studied to illuminate the way that discourse constructs their identities and the way that their performances generate new meanings. The research claims that, in Iran the centrality of Islamic culture has prevented the escape of signified meanings in the reiteration beyond the realm of heteronormativity. Though significations of female sex has been subject to change, it circulates within the heteronormativity.

Research Findings and Contribution to Knowledge

The research innovatively explores the correspondence of Butler's performativity and Giddens' structuration theory. The two theories overlap in their emphasize on the dualistic interaction of discourse and the agent as well as on the way that subjects gain agency through their actions and performances.
Since Islam, as the major religion of the country, has played a significant role in country, different approaches of Islam toward women are examined. It is found that generally four approaches have been materializing female sex in Iranian society. Fundamentalist traditional jurisprudents reject women’s independent identity and appeal to their jurisprudential evidence to prohibit women from any cultural and social activity. But moderate jurisprudents and Islamic scholars encourage women to engage in cultural and social activities in contemporary Iran, taking women’s identity to be different from men’s because of the system of creation—they believe that there is a fair balance in favor of both genders in the religion. Reformist jurisprudents respect women’s identity and give priority to their cultural and social activities, and thus, they seek a renewed reading of religious sources in order to empower women’s identity and make the religion responsive to their social and cultural needs. However, secular Muslim modernists maintain that the rules of the traditional ijtihad cannot help solve the dispute over the problem of women. Therefore, women’s identity and their intellectual, cultural and social activities can be reinforced by solving the conflict between the tradition and modernity, taking jurisprudential disagreements to be temporary and relative to certain historical periods, and employing the human rationality and experience.

Fundamentalists dominated pre-constitutional Iranian society. Although the encounter with modernity during constitutionalism shattered its roots, it sustained its stability. Women’s social presence in Islamic revolution revealed their latent potentials. Although they were constructed by discourses, as agents women influenced changes in religious structures of society. The dualistic interaction of women and the structure contributed to creation of a new approach as moderate traditionalists that valued religious women's social participation became the dominant discourse. The post-revolutionary structure provided women with resources of knowledge and academic education. Knowledgeable women sought identification with modern culture. At the same time, the presidency of Khatami, valued the social involvement of women with modernized ideas, appearance,
contributing to domination of reformist approach. The expansion of globalization and media exposed women to Western modernized culture. Some secular Muslim modernists answering the demands of women for modern identity elaborated modernist approach. This approach that gives meaning to female sex not based on religion and Islam, deconstructs heteronormative gender stereotypes. Since interpretations of modernist approach is out of the context of Islamic instructions, the meanings they attribute to female sex is not confined to heteronormativity. However, all three approaches that enjoy the centrality of Islam agree on heteronormativity, though they offer various meanings of female sex.

Traditionally Iranian female sex was materialized with oppressive heteronormative meanings. Secluded from the society, female body was devoted to maternity and nurturing. As the property of the husband, female sex was expected to be attractive. In addition to the physical standards of beauty that seem abnormal in contrast to current values, the significance of female fertility as well as purity and piety was remarkable. Her seclusion was also represented in her veiling that enveloped her totally and was regarded as hampering her social involvements. The financial work of indigent women inside the houses failed to promise them an independent social identity. Their leisure activities were also bound to traditional heteronormative expectations steeped with religion. Both their indoor and outdoor leisure were only for women. These meanings attributed fixed identities to traditional meaning who deprived from the resources such as knowledge and education failed reflexive consideration of their performances. These performances guaranteed the stability of traditional religious discourse.

During the constitutional revolution, women mainly under the influence of religious authorities entered the society to oppose the state. The religion that had inspired them, however, demanded that women return to their houses. Unlike the majority of traditional women, those under Western discourse resisted and claimed for education, knowledge and social involvement.
The elite women breaking the walls of seclusion defined new signification for female sex as socially active and economically productive. The visibility of body concerned them with body image. Women practiced Western fashion and culture of beauty to be identified as modern. The modern culture of beauty invoked the imported health and beauty products that provided women an emancipatory road for social expression. However, the signification of female body as mothers and caregivers was more reinforced.

Traditionally female body signified seclusion, maternity and caregiving, as well as being attractive for the husband. Elite women under the westernized discourse subverted the norm of seclusion, yet the signification of maternity and nurturing was highlighted. They also transformed the ideal of authority of husband over the physical beauty of wife; however, the range of expectations of female physical beauty expanded to whole society.

Elite women as the effects of Westernized modern discourse released themselves from the traditional veil, even before the mandatory unveiling. Being exposed to Western discourse, elite women regarded veiling as a hamper impeding their way toward civilization. Veiling that signified backwardness among elites and the state, was a norm identifying religious and traditional women. Unveiling decree, politicizing the veil produced a transparent gap between traditional and modern identity. Female body was the cite for the competition of powers.

The subversion of norm of veiling, though escapes from traditional heteronormativity, it fails to blur the visible gender identity between men and women. Since women were expected to appear in hats and dresses designed for women, there was no place for an identity beyond heteronormativity. This new dressing code defined a new female identity.

In the realm of work and leisure, only elite women entered social professions and mixed leisure spaces. Though in the initial phases the professions allocated to them were womanly jobs, gradually they broke the borders and entered all sorts of professions. These performances constructed a female identity released from
traditional heteronormative gender stereotypes and reproduced an independent active female identity.

Social participation was a new signification that subverting traditional norm of seclusion of women, defined female sex beyond the traditional heteronormative norms. However, the signification of female body as a mother, nurturer and an attractive sex still carried the traditional heteronormativity, though in transformed modes. Elite women's performances under the influence of Western discourse produced a new definition of female sex that was emancipated from traditional norms. The traditional norms of seclusion, veiling, and being attractive for the husband were subverted. However, these new definitions, being produced by phallogocentric culture failed to unshackle women from the heteronormative significations of femininity. Being involved in social arenas, the unveiled female body was more concerned with her body image, and attempted to look more feminine in her dressing style and makeup. Modern signification of female sex maintained heteronormative definition of femininity both at work and leisure spaces as well as at home. This modern female signification was challenged by clerical traditional authorities, who abjected this modern female identity.

The gap created between women identified as modern and traditional was reconciled by the bridge of revolution, where people of any ideology participated. Veiling that once represented traditional identity turned to be a symbol of revolutionary protest when some educated unveiled women voluntarily veiled. No more an emblem of seclusion and backwardness, veiling signified social participation and a medium toward progress.

After the Islamic revolution, Islamic discourse celebrated the traditional signification of female body as a mother and nurturer devoted to her family. Female beauty no more acknowledged only as a physical attractiveness, rather purity and piety of female body was honored more. However, this revival of traditional norms eschewed the norm of seclusion of female body inside the houses. Veils and not walls covered female body and promoted their social
participations. However, the amount of women's social participation at professions dropped. The state's ideological screening of women, particularly the imposed compulsory veiling, had filtered out women identified as unviable in the Islamic discourse. Besides, the accepted religious and veiled women, brought up in traditional families were not prepared for occupation. Yet, the rate of literate and educated women began to grow because the fathers had no excuse to deprive girls from schools where Islamic ideology was promoted.

The state equipping women with the resource of knowledge prepared threatening ground against the stability of its discourse. Educated women would no more follow the fixed predetermined identity given by traditions. Rather they reflexively considered their identity construction and within the framework of Iranian social rules performed the actions detached from the fixed traditions. In addition to the resource of educational knowledge, the exposure to the information received through the globalized media has been another influential resource. Women under the influence of Western discourse set up performances that deviate from the original definitions in the discourse of Islamic. The authorities of Islamic culture to avoid infuse of Western culture close the doors for cultural globalization. Filtered twitter or Facebook, low internet speed or prohibition of satellite dishes are some instances of these limitations. The challenge between Western and Islamic discourse to construct Iranian women's identity is represented in the soft power of Western media in depicting an aggressive image of Islamic republic. The images of Western democracy, gender equality, and liberty are contrasted with the repressive and barbaric illustrations of Islamic culture that deprives women of their natural and social rights. The authorities of Islamic state resist the infuse of Western culture and regard this soft power as a soft war.

Iranian women, however, to gain a modern identity resist the imposed traditional norms with their performances that under the influence of Western discourses deviate from the traditional Islamic discourse of the state.
The viable modern female signification celebrates the secularized and eroticized notion of beauty. Propelled by Western body images represented in globalized media, Iranian women follow these beauty ideals to construct a modern visible cultural identity. High rank use of beauty products and cosmetic surgeries prove Iranian women's attempt to be identified as modern. It was manifested that while women of modern identity care for material aspect of body than its spiritual achievements, at the same time the majority of their bodywork projects fail to sustain healthy natural body. Rather they artificially mask the body with society's desired beauty. The social or marital opportunities brought to female sex through bodywork proves that society expects women to appear physically attractive.

High involvement with bodywork shows women's agency to have authority over their body. Moreover, bodywork is a modern performance practicing which women resists and transforms the traditional norms that regarded women's body and beauty as property of the husband. The new performance of taking control of their physical body assures women with autonomous identity in contrast to their submissive bodies controlled by the husband. However, the new meanings that female sex signifies is still bound to the heteronormative gender stereotypes. Though beauty standards have been subject to change, the definition of female sex as physically attractive again charges women with chaining burdens of femininity. To be qualified as intelligible subjects, women, depending on their financial capabilities, seek to achieve the appearance that identifies them as viable subjects of modern globalized discourse.

The traditional signification of female body as nurturer mother has sustained its meaning. Modern women's materialistic and individualistic concerns with social position, financial promotion, and physical beauty have reduced the degree of their devotion to family. However, these performances have not hindered their maternity. The thesis invoking to statistics illustrated that unlike the slight decline of women's tendency for pregnancy or their devotion to the family, their performances as mothers and nurturers are repeated. The reiteration of these
significations that contributes to the stability of traditional culture has been the target of Western media. The stability of belief in feminine essence that identifies women as mothers and nurturers holds the tie between female sex and her identification as maternity. The centrality of heteronormative norms prevents the circulation of this meaning in the chain of signification.

Post-revolutionary regulatory norms defined veiled subjects as viable female identity. As the hegemonic discourse, it re-veiled women. Women's emancipation, social involvement and modesty that were idealized by Pahlavi regime was sustained. However, veiled and not unveiled women signified these ideals. Unveiled woman was regarded not emancipated, but enslaved. Social involvement of unveiled women meant objectification of women who in their makeup and display of their body served the desires of men. Purity of an unveiled woman, regarded an absurd illusion, interpreted as impurity. Deconstructing the meanings given to female sex by Pahlavi regime, the Islamic discourse attempted to produce a veiled woman who in modest veiling could freely participated in social and educational arenas.

Since veiling was not limited to chador, women could choose any attire as long as it covered their whole body. Resistance to mandatory veiling emerged since the early days of veiling decree. However, the majority of traditional women performing the norm of veiling assured stability of veiling norm. Veiling turned to be an identity cover that masking the internal attitudes and mentality, and revealing in the surface a revolutionary and religious identity that is in agreement with the ideologies of the Islamic State. Unveiling or improper veiling represented abjected and marginalized identity.

The resources of knowledge and the information infused by globalized media paved the way for transformation of their identity as represented in their veiling. In terms of Giddens, invoking to resources Iranian women could reflexively consider construction of their identity. However, this transformation occurs within the framework of Iranian Islamic rules that has banned unveiling. Improper veiling or
fashion hijab proves Iranian women's agency to resist and change the norms. The reiteration of fashion hijab as a performance deviated from the original performance intended by the Islamic discourse has transformed the norms, though the veiling law remains the same. Fashion hijab as the common product of Western and Islamic discourse is dressing revolution, a colorful weapon against the traditional and Islamic ideologies of the state. It represents the gap between modern and traditional cultural identity.

The inappropriate reiteration of the norm of veiling has developed to a phase of subverting the norm of veiling by some agents. Though unveiling identifies agents as abjected from the Islamic discourse, some even risk arrest and unveil to display their resistance. An Iranian woman in diaspora leads a campaign named White Wednesdays, when women through wearing white scarves voice their resistance against mandatory veiling. While women's deviated veiling performances threatens the stability of Islamic discourse, it assures women a modernized identity.

Veiling that identifies the gender and religion of the wearer manifests the visible identity. It also reinforces heteronormativity preserving sexual binaries and gender stereotypes.

Iranian women's participation at different social, political or economic arenas shows that veiling has not been a restriction on their social involvement. The university courses are equally attainable for both sexes and women have entered different professions including unconventional male dominated professions. Though women's social participation is the effect of post-revolutionary Islamic discourse, their presence in manly professions is the result of the reiteration of performance of working by the agents. Women's presence in different professions is the only arena that women have overcome heteronormativity. Going beyond the boundaries of established gendered professions women subvert the norm of binary division of professions as manly and womanly.

Though the rate of female graduates of high education exceeds the number of male graduates, their working rate is still remarkably low. The low rate of women's
social participation, however, refers to heteronormative socialization of genders since the infancy. The images of masculinity or femininity shaped in the minds naturally drive them to find their future in society or inside the house. The gendered expectations created in the Iranian society expects a young boy to find an appropriate occupation, while young girls are exonerated from necessarily having a profession. Besides women's social participation is hindered by the established gender norms that expect female sex to fulfill primarily the household labor and child rearing. The heteronormative loading of women with domestic works is associated with women's essential nature in a way that the unpaid domestic drudgery is regarded their duty and not a work. With the centrality of heteronormativity, female sex still signifies nurturer in charge of household drudgery. Women's house labor has not experienced any radical departure from what they used to do traditionally. The household labor as a performance derived from the traditional heteronormative script has been reiterated through time, contributing to the stability of the signification of female sex as nurturer in charge of domestic labor. Although in the realm of social profession they have subverted the norm of gender division of labor, the signification of female identity primarily as a nurturer limits the social involvement of educated women.

For women, whether occupied or non-occupied, home is both a leisure place and a workplace. Identification of female sex as the essential care provider shadows women's leisure time. Women's domestic activities serve as prerequisites for preparing leisure activities for other family members.

Indoor leisure activities of Iranian women, which are the most favored ones, are mainly repetition of the traditional cultural norms. However, use of virtual world among women as a prevalent indoor leisure activity has been an influential factor on construction of women's modern identity. Division of Outdoor leisure spaces in Iran only for men or women or both proves the circulation of heteronormative gender stereotypes. However, some women have displayed deviated reiteration of norms and attempted to enter at leisure spaces such as
stadium of football or men's coffee houses to subvert the norms. Personal grooming and strolling at shopping malls are the immediate refuges that identify women as modern. Consumerism as a way to escape from traditional non-secular culture is associated with modernity. The sensual and secular leisure activity, identifying women as modern, is in contrast to the traditional leisure that was intertwined with religion. However, these modern activities, being defined as womanly, are also charged with traditional heteronormative gender stereotypes.

The centrality of heteronormativity prevents deferred signification of female sex. Though the signification of female sex has amended through time, it is not beyond binary gendered expectations. All three aspects of Iranian women's performances, studied through the thesis, derive their meanings from heteronormative gender stereotypes.

**Implications for Further Research**

For further research, it is recommended to compare body maintenance of Western women and Iranian women. Secondly, it would be valuable to explore the image of veiling represented in Western media. Thirdly, it is recommended to study the resistance of Iranian state against the influence of Western discourse on Iranian women's identity. Finally, exploration of identity construction of Iranian women in diaspora can be a parallel study of the present thesis.
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电站 912

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