Women's Reflexive Identity and Spirituality Case Study: Iranian Employed, Degree-holder Women

Jabbar Rahmani[1]* and Mehri Tayebinia[2]

[1]Institute for Social and Cultural Studies, Tehran-Iran, Pasdaran Ave, Shahid Momennejad (Golestan I), No. 124
[2]Institute for Management and Planning Studies Tehran-Iran, Niavaran Ave, Jamal abad (Mokhtar askari), No. 6

ABSTRACT

The massive entrance of Iranian women into the labour market and higher education has formed a type of women's experience of modernity in Iran, which is followed by many consequences for women who are both educated and employed. Women with traditional identities and roles, above all, were defined within the home environment and with traditional sexual roles. It was within this traditional framework that most important religious socialisation and practices of women were defined. The main subject of the present article is the consequence of women's reflexive identity on their religious and spiritual identity. For this purpose, interviews and ethnographic methods were used. The reflexive identity of Iranian women has led them to move out of traditional roles and find a combination of traditional roles (housekeeping, motherhood, and wife-hood in the traditional sense) and new roles (defined by individualism and realisation of self and reflexive identity) as a result of higher education and employment experiences. Field data indicate the shift by this group of women from traditional spirituality as the realm dominated by traditional religious institutions to modern spirituality and consequential redefinition of individual assignments and inner life accordingly. The results show that Iranian women's choice to achieve social ideals through education and employment and by following the principle to consecrate life have transformed the spiritual aspects of their lives.

Keywords: Female identity, higher education, reflexivity, spirituality

INTRODUCTION

Women, Cultural Changes, and Religious Identity

Identity is a dynamic process constructed diversely in various layers and forms and is

constantly relative and transient. Meanwhile, social identity cannot be reduced to a single fixed form because the entire socio-cultural factors can exert great impact on our identity through the processes and the ways in which various identity resources influence us. This was the concern of various investigations in contexts where cultural transformation is on the agenda. This phenomenon is more tangible in Iran where women encounter broad socio-cultural transformations due to their novel experiences in education and employment.

Religion, as an institution, shapes one of the identity's central resources and make up the religious and spiritual layers of both individual and social identity. Religious experiences are considered among the main influential elements on women's identity experiences. If we accept religious and spiritual principles as temporary and inconsistent resources, then we expect to observe diverse categories of religious acts. Religious conceptual frameworks demonstrate relative and, at times, fundamental transformations that are indicative of corresponding transformations in religious outlooks as a result of applying process-oriented conceptions of identity that emphasise the mutual impacts of structure and action.

Because transformations in various social strata could influence the individual and social dimensions of women's identity, intensity of religious and spiritual identity could crystallise the ways in which this construct could transform. In other words,

this aspect of women's identity has, in the meantime, encountered and challenged many transformations daily. Women's identity expansion and boundaries have transformed greatly and were investigated pluralistically. However, in the current study, we focus on the ways that women reflect on traditional identity and its connections to their personal reflection on this identity. On the one hand, religious identity could be reflected as a principle of social identity in analysing the ways that women's new identities are constructed. Intellectual development, inclusive of religiosity and spirituality, could influence the social transformation. Various studies have demonstrated the significant relationship between religion and identity. These studies reveal that religiosity plays a major role in diverse aspects of commitment by and determination of identity, which is more robust in modern times compared to the past (Oppong, 2013).

Social Identity: Discourse of Religion and Society

Considering diverse theories on religion, religiosity, and its various categorisation for the study on individuals and communities, there is not a universal criterion in relation to the form and extent of religiosity. Here, we evaluate women's religiosity with emphasis on Glock and Stark's (1966) theory where women's own perception of spirituality and religiosity are taken into account. Social actors experience religious identity through beliefs, rituals, religious experiences and knowledge, and

its consequences (Khodayarifard et al., 2012). This was prominent in our religious approach to the Iranian Muslim women and was investigated previously from another perspective (Rafat Jah & Rouhafza, 2012). Various studies have explored the effect of globalisation on religious identity and have observed its effects on diverse dimensions of religiosity. Components of globalisation challenge religious identity as a result of expanding people's experiences. This informs the transformation (Tajik Esmaeili & Tajik Esmaeili, 2015).

Women's view on their own religious identity is modified by social, individual, gender-based, and structural positions and situations. The structural factors and the multiple social roles are influential in eliminating gender-based discrimination. In addition, education and employment result in women's participation in socio-economic realms beyond the confines of their home. All of these have contributed to the relearning of a woman's identity (Safiri & Nematollahi, 2012, p. 29). Women's new experiences have made them aware and transformed their traditional perspectives about the ideal woman through the gaining of new ideals and values. The variety of women's social roles and the expansion of social experiences have formed a proper backdrop to reflect on women's religious and traditional roles and identities.

Higher education is one of the novel experiences that change women's perception of life. The experience of student life in university is one of the factors that contribute to the development of individuality because of independence (Dehghani et al., 2015). Over the past decades, scholars like Michele (1968-1976) have rejected the idea of stable orientations and personality characteristics. They have observed behaviours as personal expectation and explanations, with an emphasis on cognitive and social learning rather than the qualities of a fixed personality Inglehart. Other studies on the relationship of education and religious attitudes indicate that personal attitudes toward religion, in terms of traditional definitions, are decreased with the increase in education. Higher educational levels, such as undergraduate or graduate studies, generally reduce women's religious attitudes. If we accept social identity as an interactive process that is reconstructed in all spheres of life, then religious transformation is also indispensable. Every religious identity frame is also subject to culture. In such a perspective, religious identity is social and constructed.

Religion introduces a special form of ideology, which, in turn, establishes the value frames for us. All of these religion's cultural manifestations in the form of rituals are considered as part of religiosity. Religion, as a socio-cultural issue, has a significant relationship with social behaviours through the social construction. On the one hand, religion is the product of culture and, on the other hand, it is the producer of the very same culture (Hamilton, 2008). Weber's view of

religion as a semiotic system is affected by individual choices (Weber, 1970, p. 122). Accordingly, the cultural phenomena that are the outcome of lived experiences are the same incentives for an individual's acts and behaviours, where most people are voluntarily engaged. Hence, religion forms the main and most fundamental semiotic resource in people's daily lives.

Today, it is not acceptable that materialistic values are replaced by the traditional, spiritual ideologies of life. Inglehart, though, recounted three reasons for the decrease of socio-religious and gender-based traditions in modern societies. First, there is an increase in the sense of security, which lowers the need to depend on the absolute norms and people's need to make sure of the events. Furthermore, there is no need for security due to the regulation in metaphysical perspectives, because all kinds of dispersion essentially result in kinds of insecurity and anxiety. The second reason is the applicability of norms. Its firmness decreases in modern time because most socio-economic dimensions of life is spent outdoors. The educational spaces were transformed via families, and the functionality of the concepts were lost. Therefore, these transformations do not necessarily mean a change in values. People's opposition to these norms does not suggest they are bad or good as it is not a value decision. These norms could weaken for various reasons. The third reason is the cognitive similarity through which people's

ideology becomes identical with their daily experiences.

MATERIALS AND METHODS

The Ethnography of Women Who Seek Transformation

The current study is conducted with an ethnographic approach using deep interviews and participatory observations in the field. Ethnography is not only a data collection method, but a research approach comprised of social understanding and people actions in the field. It is done through its known approach of close relationships and actual participation in people's lives (Duranti, 1997). Applying an ethnographic approach and grounded theory, the current study investigates women who fulfilled multiple social roles as spouses, mothers, employees, and university students simultaneously. Deep interviews were applied as the main data collection technique, and the interviewee was selected on the basis of theoretical sampling from the city of Tehran. This article emphasises women as active and reflective subjects and acknowledges their creativity. Through targeted sampling, the experience of 35 women and their ways of religious identity construction were analysed. First, data were examined and textually categorised through comparison to reach the frequency of concepts. Then, data were codified through the process of representation. Open-ended interviews were applied to make people free in narrating

their personal life experiences. Encouraging people to talk was very crucial in this study, so the interviews were open-ended to make participants feel free to articulate their own feelings.

The subjects of the study were 30-year-old women who have fulfilled several social roles at the same time. They were randomly chosen without considering their university majors and school campus. Finally, we focused on understanding women's religious identity transformation after graduation and in response to the role system, and we reached it through the grounded theory approach with the aim of building a conceptual framework (Corbin & Strauss, 2013). To analyse the data, we used the approach of open, central codification. First, we examined the data and textually categorised them. Then, the codification and data reduction were applied (Table 1).

In the final stages of data analysis, these categories, strategies, the intervening conditions, and their consequences were modelled three-dimensionally to form the theoretical model of the research (Figure 1). Codifications of categories were represented as "women's reflexive identity in redefining spirituality". The study enjoys an analytic paradigm that helps the collection and maintenance of data to make sure the structure and process go hand in hand.

Women in this study included middle class, Iranian women living in Tehran, who grew up in a traditional women identity process, in homes and environments dominated by the Iranian traditional culture. These women also had religious parents. These women went to school and were married at the age of 17. Their marriages were arranged by their families and parents. Therefore, their main space for individual and social identity was indoors. Home was the main context for their identity construction. After doing interview, we used coding strategy to identify main codes and make the final theoretical model. This model should explain the impact of reflexive identity on women`s spiritual identity.

Multiple roles: Motherhood, employee and student

Bahareh, the 37-year-old graduate student of economics and university teacher, stated that, "My husband has never helped me in the household chores because he has his own beliefs in this regard, and he believes that the household woman should be feminine, and husbands should be masculine. I did not have a problem with this matter, as from childhood, I have seen my mother do all the tasks without any difficulty. I was raised in a religious, extended, and large family. Nothing was surprising or new to me. I only had to do my housework chores in the best possible way through my household management, for which I was empowered". The girl's identity after marriage, the identity of a woman, a wife, and a mother is constructed for her through family and the encompassing social systems. Throughout the study, the term traditional

identity refers to the traditional approach to identity construction in the home that includes female traditional roles.

These women personally decided to continue their education based on their situations. Their studies were approved and supported by their husbands originally, but later resulted in their husbands' covert discontent because the gradual engagements in education made these women fall behind in household chores and taking care of the children. These women were employed in low-ranking jobs and could gradually manage to pass graduate and PhD studies. These two experiences have taken them out of the confinements of the home and allowed them to experience modern new roles. Fariba, a 35-year-old graduate student employed in a magazine, believes that, "Maybe the working condition has tempted me not to back off, because I felt an emptiness in the working environment and I had to work hard for my personal improvement. At first, this was really difficult. My husband used to tell me that he would help me, but he did not ever help through this. First, he told me that he would support me but, practically, he did nothing to help. This was really difficult until my kid grew and I started my MA studies. At one moment, I was on the verge of quitting my studies because my husband did not cooperate with me". Such transformation from indoor spaces to university and employment outdoors is the main root of these women's identity transformation in various dimensions.

From these women's perspectives, the "primary identity" is constructed through family, friends, schooling, and experiencing the institutionalised female roles as mothers and wives. The hybrid identity is rooted in mental aspects of value, with an emphasis on collective norms, and in terms of feelings, based on family and kinship, and interaction between the roles of mother and wife, the dominant stereotypic norms.

"The secondary identity" is also the identity constructed through women's social participation in educational and working roles. It is the continuation of the primary identity and a combination of the primary identity and women's voluntarily roles, which are mentally based on a self-governed constructed identity, values and personal norms, and are sensationally in compliance with eminence and personal development.

In fact, "role" and "space", in a concurrent combination, construct the fundamentals of primary and secondary identities. Nonetheless, we do not accept the inevitable overlap of all modern and traditional identities due to the existing contradiction of women's identity segregation in a stereotypic dichotomous division of identity into traditional and modern. However, our justification of such division is that it classifies women's interaction with two roles of mother and wife in the primary identity and a social

role in the secondary one. A role border of being wife and mother in a social process is determined and simultaneously selective and voluntary. This means that within the traditional frame of identity, women consider marriage and childbearing as social imperatives and the ideal form of identity, while in the secondary identity, they continue to experience the traditional roles but in a whole new selective and voluntary process.

Women have turned their homes into the optimal form through their institutionalised roles of wife and mother and have started to create their own secondary identities from within the very same space and role. In their secondary identity, women choose a new approach to their social identity construction as creative, active, and reflective actors.

This identity transformation, especially from the home indoor space to the outdoor space through employment and university, is not suitable politics for the Islamic Republic of Iran. In terms of legislation, all women activities in the realm of employment and education should be in line with their primary objectives of motherhood, being wife, and being confined to the home. From this perspective, family is the fundamental element of the Islamic society and women are its fundamental elements. Therefore, the Islamic constitution has paid specific attention to the issue of family in the detailed negotiations of the Parliament and in the Constitution, Volume 1 (p. 440). Therefore, women's employment is not appreciated by the Constitution in the sense that women employment may harm their family integrity. The underlying philosophy is recounted in the Council of Experts under the terms of preventing family decline. Therefore, these transformations are to be regarded as enjoying the covert function and the consequence of women's unnecessary employment and education.

This transformation not only leads to the changes in the individual and social identities, but also has a significant effect on religious transformation and the redefinition of spirituality in women's mentality and practices. The housewife, within the confines of the home and household interactions, and motherhood, as the source of optimal family identity, are the female desired symbols. The experience of religiosity in such a context and the sacred roles as the construct identity has its roots in religious principles and customs where motherhood is the crucial metaphor of social identity. The cherished principles of the primary identity, which are rooted in religious rituals, are exemplified in motherhood, wifehood, the hijab, observing rituals, and contribution to family peace. Although home is always the suitable stage for this kind of identity, as stated earlier, women's ideal social expectations are in close proximity and a severe resonator of the primary identity. The simultaneous birth of the ideal socio-cultural stereotypes is formed around the existing social themes and women who have found a novel experience of modernity choose to reflect this by devising novel social approaches.

Table 1
Main ideas and issues within interviews

The Selected Categories	The Main Categories	Open Categories (Second Level)	
Women Reflexive identity in Redefinition of Spirituality	Interested in making dreams come true	Interested in education, continual activities, development, success, and understanding the joy of development; likes to prove oneself, searches for a way to turn to oneself, believes in personal capabilities	1
	Self-oriented individualism	No need for others' help, self-satisfaction, reflexive and re-thinking, individual strategies	2
	Liberal mentality	Voluntarily chooses values and norms, non-accepting of the structural imperatives, interested in innovation and deconstruction, accepting the logical affairs, critiquing the superstitions, norm violation, logical, analytical	3
	Moral-oriented	Observance of citizenship rights, human-oriented, responsible, committed, respecting, loyal, uniquely intimate	
	Faith	Spiritual beliefs, respectful to others' sacred things, social respect, welcoming the collective rituals, believes in God and the human mission, thankful to God	5
	Individual religious Experiences	Voluntarily participation in religious rituals, redefining religious rituals, intending management of religious feeling, personally prioritizing religious duties	6
	Primary identity	The primary sociability (family, school, friends and institutionalised experiences), first experiences of women roles, emphasis on obeying collective norms, relying on family and kinship feelings, obeying the stereotypic norms of mothering	7
	Secondary identity	Social participation in educational and occupational roles, self-oriented identity, construction of individual values and norms, relying on face logic, critical understanding, following goals and individual development, knowledge-oriented	8
	Primary reflection	Inevitable decisions, determining paths to social development, primary reflection, seeking transformation	9
	Realised reflection	Self-conscious selection-solving strategies, continual re-thinking, institutionalisation of reflection, realised reflection	10
	Secondary reflection	Intended acceptance of traditional aspects, synthesis of new and traditional approaches, identity independence, identity balance, relative adherence to value and normative aspects, intending end to the reflection in favour of family and society, committed to social and family stability	11

RESULTS AND DISCUSSION

Women's Religiosity and Reflexive Identity

In this part, we examine the ways religious transformation occurs and the way it is connected to women's religiosity styles and identity transformation. In other words, we will examine the consequences of religious and spiritual identity through an identity transformation process and women's experiences with modernity. University was able to direct women to the outdoor spheres through changing their position from women confined within the framework of tradition. Since popular and dominant discourses in science and employment often lead to contest and confusion, women are constantly confronted with numerous identity challenges due to the confrontation of their traditional identity roles and novel identities. Mahsa, a 38-year-old university student of psychology working in municipality believes that, "When you are both employee and student, you naturally come across many obstacles, like when the timing of the class intervenes with your working hours or you may have little time to study, or the works intervene with studies. Most of the time it is the lack of collaboration from your colleagues to take a day off". Sara, a 37-year-old student of law who works in an insurance company says, "There are lots of universities and there is an easy way to get into the university. I did not want to be humiliated by others, despite all the hardships and difficulties I endured and am satisfied." Therefore, understanding women's religious identity from the pool of multiple discourse-based identities in Iran is the important objective of the study.

We can also examine the issue completely regarding these women, too. Popular discourses reproduce women religious identity in terms of what can naturally and normally constitute a proper model of a religious woman. The spiritual identity and its social construction that women choose in terms of the simultaneous undertaking of four respective roles of spouse, mother, employee, and student, and a fragment of identity and the way these women construct their various layers of identity is the primary focus of this article. To know the religious transformation and religiosity styles of women, it is crucial to understand the two types of women's identities and the ways they are distinguished from one another. Therefore, it is necessary to demarcate them within the identity boundary.

The Experience of Modernity and Reflexivity

In this study, our first priority was to find women's new identity stimulus and their personal reflection on the traditional roles after fulfilling a) their primary female identity at the beginning of the identity transformation, and b) their reflective identity as its most optimal form. Fatemeh, a 27-year-old woman who pursues her graduate studies in information technology and works as a trade expert, says: "I cannot lock myself up at home to solely to get married and have children. I love to be in

line with society and its developments and I like to improve and live the life I desire". If we consider this phase as the first stage of reflecting in women's life, then the second step starts with motivations to freely choose their own role. These choices look minute and consciously decided on, but are, in fact, imperative. Women choose education as a way to prove themselves and to achieve social growth, but continuing their existing roles (spouse, mother, and housekeeper) would contradict employment and university study.

Roya, a 36-year-old woman studying education recounts, "I feel that women find their own identities through working and studying", although in the end, these efforts and women's problem-solving strategies lead to reflecting, or the "reflecting identity", which is constructed as part of the women's transformed identity. In other words, reflection is a kind of strategy to solve women's challenges by confronting new roles with traditional ones, a strategy through which the combination of roles and priorities are created so that women are rescued from challenging situations and identity crises. Shima, a 37-year-old student of education and school principal says, "I had many problems in the beginning, but I gradually took control and could eventually manage it". When women internalise the reflective identity as the main component of their identity, it is the time that transformation constructs a novel identity for them that is dynamic and continual.

Modernity, along with employment and education as its vital elements, has an important role in changing women's mentality and meaning structures. In fact, the social backgrounds of identity transformation in modernity and globalisation mingle with the individual life and with her (Giddens, 1999). What creates an identity balance and integrity in its most relative terms is a balance between social and individual affairs. This is the position where women's individual discrimination tends to be similar to education and employment.

The Experience of University: An Introduction to Women's Spiritual Transformation

Moulin (2013) believes that to understand the effects of education on religious identity construction, there should be a theory sensitive to the social background and context, the structural factors and to power, a theory that examines the way these elements are interpreted and enacted by individuals. In the present research, we exclusively examine the transformations that occur in the context of university and that have challenged women's primary religious identity and changed their awareness through the emphasis on individualism, the freedom of thought, equality, and humanism. Women attempt to change their condition through establishing strong wills rooted in their modern feminine experiences. Brian Hastie (2007) believes that the student years is the phase when young people's thoughts and beliefs are very vulnerable to change (Dehghani et al., 2015). One of the consequences of women's mental transformation is the combination of

awareness, reflective thinking, knowledge, and a kind of self-centred individualism; a continuum from individualism to narcissism. N.A., a 37-year-old student of social work who works in a welfare organisation, says, "I think everything changes with education and your thoughts would be logical and sanguine. You do not accept everything on the basis of their face value, and you would think about it twice before you decide. Studying makes you feel that the individual has a proper inference in life, behaviour, relationships, and everything. I have the same position regarding religious issues. I really cannot accept every superstition. I believe in things with the logic behind it, not by my feelings. I do not wear a Hijab, because I cannot find a logical reason for that, and I do not see any necessity to say my daily prayers, but I say my daily prayers and try to follow morality. All these issues are not directly related to studying and education. These are the same related to personal experiences. But, I generally believe that the behaviour of an educated person is not comparable to an illiterate."

The effect of such transformation on women's religious identity is analysable from the same perspective. Religious identity on the basis of traditional or personal religion and secularism can be categorised. People are exposed to new thought and behaviour patterns as they enter the university. Achieving a higher education can change the individual's outlook toward her surroundings. Sh. A., a 35-year-old studying fashion designing, says, "My husband told me that I am unkind to our child and not a good enough mother. He expects me to devote myself to our child and then I would be an ideal mother. I believe his way of thinking is ossified."

Our research results show that we are not faced with any motivations that are based on religious imperatives in dictating the process of realizing everything. Although, some personal ethical codes seem to stem from religious learning, such as self-constructions and the pursuit of wisdom and knowledge, the author of this study believes that these are all in line with non-religious motivations and on the basis of personal development. In fact, there is no way a religion reference could be made. Mina, a 43-year-old and graduate student of MBA, says, "Not at all, I do not like stagnancy, I like to improve like anybody else and have something to say". The aspiration to the "realisation of goals and interests" is our primary theme on the basis of Table 1 and reveals the non-religious motivations behind these women's motivations.

Consequences of Social Identity Construction for Modern Identity

The research findings revealed women's identity dimensions in four areas of mentality, feelings, actions, and interactions. Presuming the hypothesis that identity structures in these four aspects are dynamic and constantly subject to change, the identity transformation will also occur within these dimensions.

Glock and Strak have enumerated many different specifications for religiosity and have introduced an operational definition

of religiosity. On the basis of their study, the five dimensions of religious identity are religious practices (rituals, prayer), religious experiences, religious knowledge, and consequences (Khodayarifard et al., 2012). As mentioned, the components of social identity is in accordance with religious identity, just as every social identity construction might cut through religious identity in some point of its path.

Therefore, women's religious identity in the mental dimension leads to the transformation in the "religious knowledge and beliefs" dimension, and women's perceptions of knowledge and spiritual attitudes are prone to change as a result. One of the main categories of the current research is the "faith" rooted in women's found beliefs. Sima, a 32-year-old of management working in Telecommunication Company, says, "I see God as an observer of our deeds and I do not do anything against His will. I have God to rely on and I am satisfied with his will." Although women have experienced more transformations in other aspects of religiosity, they purport strong faiths, respecting others' beliefs, and value other's collective rituals, spaces, and situations.

The other women's transformation is in terms of "religious practices" and could be in line with the transformation in practices but is typically experienced in rituals. Maryam, a 39-year-old student of sociology, says, "I do not participate much in the religious rituals and I believe the way to worship God is not similar for all. I love to talk to God in my own

way". Some women determine the social behaviour in their relations with emphasis on logic and their own attitudes and respect their own independence and personal goals (Safiri & Nemaollahi, 2012). Women often expand their presence in religious rituals voluntarily towards their traditional religious identity or in compliance with the novel religious approaches in an innovative way. "Individual religious experience", in the current study, reveals the redefinition of rituals and inventing methods among women. Women usually reveal their feelings in innovative and personal ways during religious ceremonies and rituals and their prioritisation of the rituals and presence in religious spaces is defined more on the basis of their personal rather than collective priorities.

Fariba, a 32-year-orld student of computer, says, "I prefer the religious rituals where I feel at peace and I can relate to God more in this way". Here, the religious practice is decided on by women and is not dependent on the religious society. For instance, the way women relate to spiritual resources are categorised as prayer and religious worship and is not in compliance with women's spiritual relations. At times, it can take innovative and creative forms. In "religious experience" as one of the main dimension, the individual regards herself to have a higher understanding compared to others (Khodayarifard, Faghihi, Ghobari Banab, Shokoohi, & Rahiminezhad, 2012). Women understand this experience in a proper model of womanhood, which is well defined for other people and in a social

perspective. These women still believe in religious ethical principles (commitment, loyalty, and virtue), while they might experience personal development, and any religious experience could also change their religious behaviours. Elham, a 35-year-old graduate student of management, says, "I define a good woman as one who is aware and chooses the best ways for solving problems. A good woman should be a good mother, be committed to her husband, follow the path of development while presuming chastity, and always follow development, just like society follows the very same factors. Society requires women who rear good children and use all their power to protect family". Women's religious identity ideals approximate to "personal development and the interest in realisation of goals and interests" and the construction of social participation in the ethical framework accepted by society replaces sheer religious experiences. These elements are comparable to social ethics within the dimension of religious ethics.

In the "religious consequence", as another religious dimension that means the transformation of interaction where daily non-religious behaviour is supervised, interactions often sound like a religious identity, but sometimes are non-religious. Meanwhile, shared aspects of religion and society are not yet observable and this is exactly the moment when women choose personal strategies for their own objectives. Leila, a 36-year-old student of psychology, says, "I have a very good definition of myself. Although you might say this is really arrogant, I consider myself as a capable and successful woman. I could manage to perform several roles successfully and this is what makes me feel satisfied." "Being ethical" represents a consequential dimension of redefining spirituality in women's mind. Through abiding to human rights and citizenship rights, women show respect to others in social realms and remain committed to their responsibilities as the standards of humanity and spiritual prophecy to human rights through their interactions in social and individual realms. Mina, a 36-year-old student of English literature, says, "I think that everyone should be free and choose his/her own religion freely just like respecting others' privacy and rights". Likewise, Zahra, a 37-year-old student of sociology, believes that, "We have to abide by and respect values, unless society looks at us in another way. Therefore, I think that every society should be abiding to these values. Therefore, when I do not wear a hijab, while this may be a personal decision, I think it should be abided to because it is a social value and is respected. But, in personal spheres, I could not obey that. But it should not be in a way that harms the society and leads to a series of problems". Therefore, a combination of scientific understanding due to academic studies, logic resulting from higher education, and social understanding through data analysis in women's daily problems gives the new constructed identity in our study.
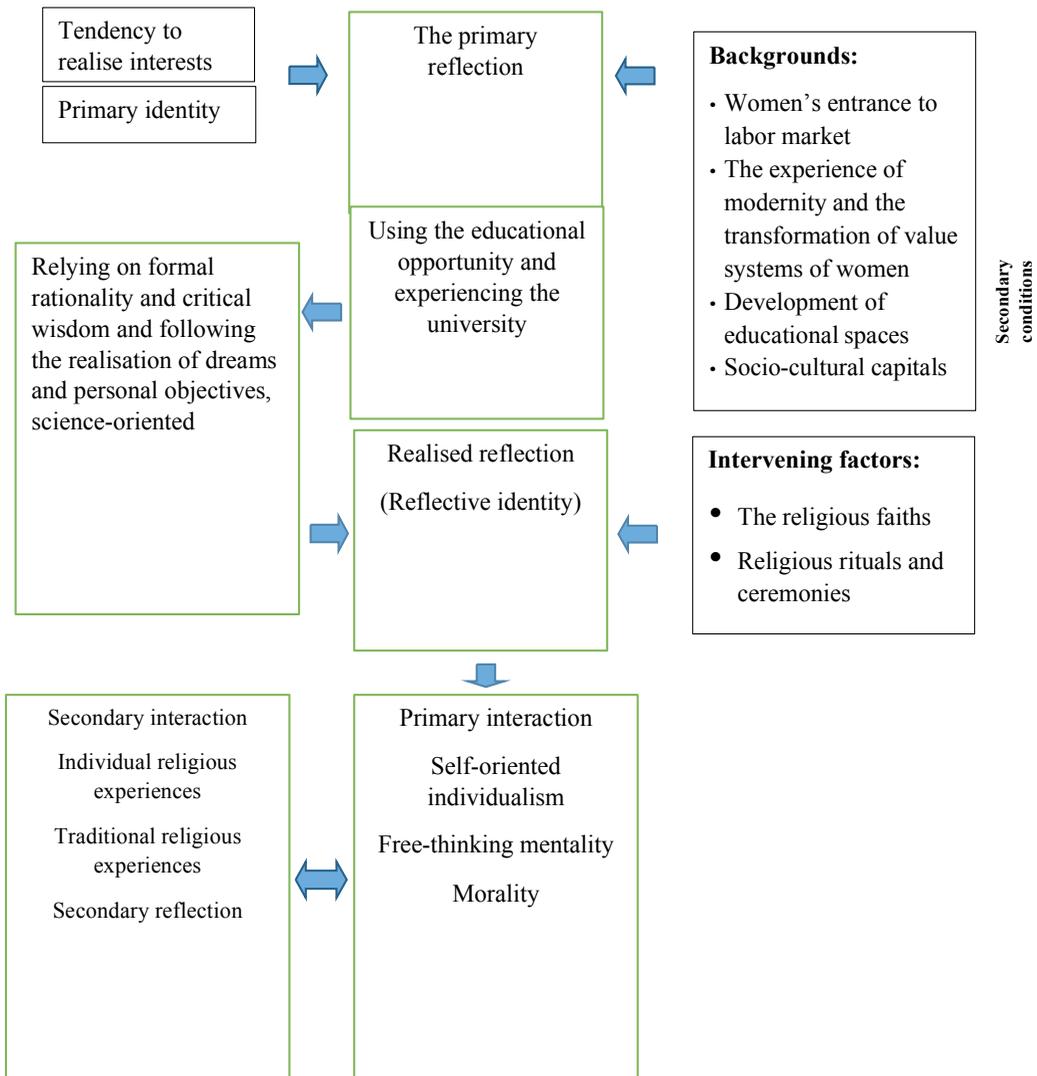
Figure 1. The model for the process of redefinition of identity in women's reflexive identity

As stated, the elements of mental transformation among women affects individual and social motivations and can alter women's awareness of their rights and duties. This, in turn, leads to self-oriented strategies that are developing among women. Throughout time, women trust these strategies through a positive self-evaluation. The trust in change and improvement of mental analysis on the traditional aspects of their duties and responsibilities make them re-think the situation. In this way,

women make self-reliant decisions without considering others' judgements (social indifference) and construct a novel identity for themselves.

Leila, a 34-year-old student of architecture, says, "Others define me as a determined and a very strong person. Although I do not care about other people's opinions, it is important that I feel satisfied with myself. When I am satisfied with my deeds, other people will have a good impression of me". As mentioned earlier in the section on religious identity, women's religious dimensions change relatively. This identity transformation of the women under investigation is called "reflexive identity", a kind of identity which is self-informative, and where it is necessary to be aware of one's surrounding social structures.

Therefore, through creativity, women change their traditional religious identity. The main theme of "free mentality" of women includes the voluntary selection of norms and values, rejection of the structural determination, the tendency to innovate and destruct the stereotypic structures, the logical acceptance of issues, the critique of popular beliefs about women in the name of "superstition", and finally, logical mentality. Somayeh, a 39-year-old student of cultural affairs and a teacher, says, "What I believe to be my personal right is being free as a person who lives securely, freely, and without any preoccupation. It is my right to have a good life, live freely, be peaceful and secure, think freely, and face no limitation in my beliefs and speeches".

CONCLUSION

Various Forms of Transformation in Women's Religiosity Patterns

Spirituality transformation has positioned women of religious and mass-oriented identity within a mutual dialectic relationship and changed them to self-centred religious women with observable changes in their behaviour.

The consequence of women's religious identity transformation is categorised into three dimensions of "traditional, combined and new". The key point is that one's inspiration toward any of these discourses is a personal choice. Even the back and forth of traditional religiosity and discourse of traditional religion is the result of their choices and the great challenge between the traditional and the modern. They sometimes increase their religious activities within and beyond these frameworks. In a "hybrid dimension", which includes the majority of Iranian cases, women consciously accept some of traditional aspects of religion and intend not to abide by some of the new approaches to religiosity. In fact, a combination of traditional religion and new approaches are the product of their religious identity transformations. This stage happens during "secondary reflection", where women reflect on their practices in order to protect their religious morality and reach the thought independently of religious matters. In this way, women reduce the challenges and harms of transformation to some extent. It seems that the identity damage is lower due to women's adherence to religious

principles and beliefs. Meanwhile, these women have tried to balance their individual and social identity through the experience of individual religious independence.

The third dimension is the new form of religious identity transformation where women reflect on their previous decisions and approach a "new personal religion". In fact, when the traditional values dominating the home are the consequence of their experience of modernity through university and employment, it leads to the commitment to individual values. These groups of women believe in the knowledge of religion and sometimes introduce it as the reason behind gender-based inequality, assuming that it prevents them from their personal rights as a free person.

The meaning of humanity is not necessarily defined through the logic of religion. It seems that being a good citizen, in their perspective, is not necessarily in line with being religious, and religiosity does not solely have a religious definition and logic and is not actualised through the performance of shared practices. They also believe that being secular does not mean a total devoid of religious thought. This is not synonymous with irreligiousness. It worth mentioning that women of these ideas experience more harm and identity crises than other women due to the pressures that used to be bearable for them in their traditional religiosity but is unjustifiable now.

Family disruption, emotional separation, and the decision to change the individual life has put these women in a contradictory path where, at times, children constitute their sole connection to the family. Women's minds are engaged in a kind of justice of the past and treatment of the dominances in (social and religious) outdoor spaces. Although, considering these individual identity crises in society are a necessity, truth is that these crises are almost due to individual difficulties in achieving a problem-solving strategy and reaching the main objectives and fundamental values. In fact, these are a potential for survival and independence that pinpoint value and norm crises. Therefore, the priority of personal benefits is not suppressed; rather, it is a safety regulator to avoid social destruction. We are not facing the social abnormality, but customary compatibility (Moeidfar, 2011). The solution these women innovate is an individualistic choice that, at times, turns to a traditional religious identity, which is a combination of religious identity or a completely new one. The shared spaces for all these various identities are the centrality of individual choices in the religious ideology construction and women's religious world.

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