



Multigenerational transition of fertility and family values in rural families of Iran: A life history and narrative research

Zohreh Najafi Asl^{1*}, Mahmoud Ghazi Tababtabei², Abou Ali Vedadhir³

The widespread changes in the context of globalized world have affected Iranian society in general and its' rural communities in particular. This article examines the generational changes in familial values, attitudes, and reproductive practices in rural families in Iran. Using the life history and narrative research strategy, two rural family clans in three generations (97 people overall) in HesarKhorvan village of Qazvin were studied. While changes in governmental policies and practices in rural context have crucially contributed to development of new values and reproductive practices, but the intended consequences have not followed. Regardless of the official intentions, the families adapted different familial values and made diverse decisions regarding their life in different period of their life history. Despite the official ideological and religious narratives of the government, the transition from traditional and communal values to the primacy of personal and sexual satisfaction in marriage in the third generation was quite evident. Macro socio-structural transformations including modernization, globalization and medicalization effects have surpassed all contesting ideological, religious and traditional values and practices in everyday life.

INTRODUCTION

Following widespread macro socio-economic transformations due to the modernization, considerable changes have taken place in the structure, function, familial values, and patterns of marriage and fertility and reproduction styles worldwide. The demographic changes ensuing from modernization processes have set in motion considerable structural, functional and ideational changes with important and far-reaching consequences. As Reher (2011) asserts, some of these processes involved changes in population age structure; migration; familial investments, health disparities, and consumption patterns. Some of these were played out at the societal level while others worked individually. While some had immediate consequences, for others the effects were only felt over the medium or long run (1). However, the dynamics involved in the processes that translate such structural changes into values and beliefs about family formation, marriage, child bearing practices, their intergenerational interactions and daily lives of the families at the individual level have not been investigated. More specifically, there are no studies that illustrate the trickling down effect and translation of such practices within a family unit as it evolves and expands its' roots throughout three generations. We investigated the

spiral interplay of modernization (for instance, factors like new family and marriage law; new styles and codes of dress; rural and agricultural development programs; new policies of family planning; migration-related forces; vaccination) and family formation processes and values across three generations of two rural families as they lived, expanded, and faced various challenges of rapid development and modernization attempts through past 50 years in Iran.

The interplay of modernization policies and the ensuing changes in population composition, age structure, and migration patterns have been very tumultuous and have had far-reaching consequences especially in the rural areas of Iran. In the course of the 20th century, numbers of drastic modernizing policies and efforts have been implemented under different circumstances, with various policies in different regimes, with different political and ideological priorities. For instance, echoing Mustafa Kemal Ataturk's efforts in modernizing Turkey and in an endeavor to change the Islamic and traditional code of dress and promote Western styles of dress (The removal of Hijab), Reza Shah Pahlavi (1878-1944) issued an arbitrary decree, banning all veils including various kinds of chador, veil, and headscarf abruptly, swiftly and forcefully in mid-1930s, a highly controversial policy with important consequences for desegregating women in the society (2; 3). Reducing the family size of was another policy or agenda for modernizing and socio-culturally developing Iranian society in the governance of Pahlavi dynasty from 1925 to 1979. Hence, banning polygamy in the first Pahlavi era (1925-1941) and increasing the age of marriage for sons and daughters in the first and second Pahlavi (Mohammad Reza Shah) era (1941-1979) more or less fueled to this

¹Assistant Professor, Department of Welfare and social planning Faculty of Social Sciences, University of Tehran, Tehran, Iran; ²Professor of Demography and Health Studies, Department of Demography, Faculty of Social Sciences, University of Tehran, Tehran 14117-13118, Iran, email: smghazi@ut.ac.ir; ³Associate Professor of Anthropology and Health Studies, Department of Anthropology, Faculty of Social Sciences, University of Tehran, Tehran, Iran, email: vedadha@ut.ac.ir, Tel: 00982161117833, Fax: 00982188012524, Mobile: 00989124982195.

*Corresponding Author: Assistant Professor, Department of Welfare and social planning Faculty of Social Sciences, University of Tehran, Tehran, Iran; Email: najafiasl@ut.ac.ir

policy (4). Shortly after the triumph of the Islamic Revolution in Iran (1979), the family planning program established in 1967 was suspended, and the early marriage and formation of family were promoted as basic Islamic values (5,6,7). Afterwards the revolution, a new family law was announced, veiling became obligatory, and accordingly, the status of women and women rights changed substantially. For the above reasons, having a large population was commonly considered to be "God's gift" or so to speak "don't worry, he who gives teeth will also provide bread" (5).

Likewise, in light of numerous interventions and policies such as rural development efforts of the rule of four [Asl-e-Chahar], land reform policies of Mohammad Reza Pahlavi, and Islamic Revolution, the institution of family and familial values and practices in rural communities of Iran have witnessed unprecedented cultural, socio-economic and structural transformations. These are more pronounced in the post-revolutionary era, for a while, various revolutionary and governmental organizations and groups entered into the communities in order to increase equity, meet basic rural needs and make peace in rural families. The post-revolutionary government gave priority to rural development and implemented various social and welfare programs including allocation of assistance packages to rural communities, agricultural assistance to farmers, and the distribution of livestock feed to the peasantry and nomad groups, construction of roads, the establishment of rural schools for daughters and sons and clinics and creating rural jobs and encouraging popular participation in the cultural development (8). More explicitly, 'the seven-member committees for land forgiving' [Heat-e-haft Nafareh], the agricultural effort [Jihad-e-Sazandegi] and the voluntary mobilized people for communal activities [Basiji] were amongst various organizations of the revolutionary government to manage the priority attention given to rural areas and combat rural deprivation. Regardless of the intended objectives and missions of these organizations in early 1980s, these policies and efforts have brought about long lasting, wide-ranging, multi-faceted, and unintended changes in values, attitudes and practices of rural families in Iran. For instance, the overall socio-cultural and political macro-structural shifts in the early post-revolutionary Iran together with the eight-year confrontation between Iran and Iraq significantly reformed the social roles of Iranian women (9), or as Abbassi- Shavazi et al. notes it lead to the decline of age at first marriage and thereby increased total rate of fertility (4). In the wartime, large populations were regarded by pronatalists as a source of power including military and political power, as mentioned by Roudi-Fahimi (2002). Down to the results of the 1985 census and the end of the Iran-Iraq war, the pronatalist policies of the wartime were changed into rigorous and widespread anti-natalist population policies of different sort. In a short period of time, the reproductive health and family planning program of the country was officially introduced in 1988 (10,11). The family planning programs and anti-natalist policies were followed more enthusiastically and practically than before and various discussions on the negative consequences and impact of rapid growth in a population were broadcast on the media in particular on the national radio and television (6). The new family planning program, three general goals were important: postponement of the first pregnancy; increasing pregnancy spacing, and finally limiting the number of children up to three (12). In an attempt to highlight the practical implications and actual translation of these structural changes into the dynamics of change in daily family lives, family formation patterns, and familial values of two extended families in one rural community were followed for the past 50 years, using life history and narrative research strategies.

FINDINGS

Group one (born before 1953)

Functions and significance of marriage and family formation

For this group, marriage is not only central phase or event of life; it had but also took place very soon. In this state of affairs, marriage for men of this group was something like extension of his capacity of work or recruiting new labor force. On contrast, being single for women of the group were shameful, in view of that, making their parents embarrassed.

Value and importance of children, childbearing and size of family

Stemming from the lack of adequate facilities and living opportunities in rural communities, in particular facing food and water insecurity due to the 1962 earthquake and digging deep hole by the Qazvin Project's executives and wiping subterranean, the infant mortality rate was very high in HesarKhorvan village. Moreover, due to existence of some cultural values or schemas, this idea or proverb has been widely held in rural community: 'the more children, the more honor.' For example, a mother from Family B narrated her story in this way:

"We had to have many children to do many things like bringing water and firewood, wood cutting, cooking, being a shepherd, mother crafting... So, people like me had to give birth a lot" (R-Y, age 85).

According to storytellers in the group one, entrancing people as the revolution army including the knowledge and hygiene armies to rural communities of the country after the land reform program in 1963 was not useful too as the majority of women in the group were too old to be pregnant and/or give childbirth. Moreover, ideas and advices of the revolution army could not be accepted by the villagers immediately as they were not consistent with socio-cultural values and livelihood situations of the inhabitants. For villagers in that time, sexual fullness was a masculine and man-centric agenda and for getting married and there was no huge room for romantic love and physical gorgeousness. For this group, hence, appearance and beauty of women was not worth much and they were regarded as a manufacture for making baby, child rearing and doing as labor force.

Group Two (born from 1954 to 1975)

Functions and significance of marriage and family formation

Due to occurrence of a number of key historical events and traumas including the Iran-Iraq War and accordingly martyrdom amounts of rural men, there were a lot of married people, but marriage among members of the group was not on the right track or on the regular way. This took place in HesarKhorvan village as the sex and age structure of population were damagingly changed in the wartime and suffering martyrdom of amounts of young villagers. According to the village dwellers, about 50 rural men in HesarKhorvan involved in the wartime in their capacity as veterans including military soldiers and voluntary supporters [Basiji], and out of these men eighteen had suffered martyrdom, three were missing and four had prisoned in Iraq. As a mother from Family A of the second sub-group of the second group of narrated;

"I didn't get married until 36 years old and for this reason my father was very sad. When my husband that was divorced (with one daughter) and addicted to opium came for proposing, my father immediately accepted" (S-SH, age 50).

Table 1 The scheduled list of people in Group One in Family A and Family B

Group One		Date of Birth	Sex	Education	Marital Status	Number of children
Initials of Participants						
Family A	A-SH	1938	Male	Primary level	Married at age 16	9
	M-H	1939	Female	Illiterate	Married at age about 15	9
	M-SH	1962	Male	Primary level	Married, 2 nd marriage at age 50	3
Family B	M-M	1930	Male	Illiterate	Married at age 16	7
	R-Y	1931	Female	Illiterate	Married at age 17	6
	A-R	1950	Male	Illiterate	Married at age 21	7
	K-M	1952	Female	Primary level	Married at age 18	7

Table 2 The scheduled list of people in first sub-group of Group Two in Family A and Family B

Group Two		Date of Birth	Sex	Education	Marital Status	Number of children
Initials of Participants						
Family A	M-H	1954	Male	Preschool	Married at age 24	3
	A-B	1954	Male	Primary level	Married at age 27	5
	A-Sh	1955	Male	National Diploma	Married at age 26	4
	T-Sh	1956	Female	Primary level	Married at age 19	3
	Z-Sh	1962	Female	Primary level	Married at age 19	5
	A-Sh	1963	Male	Primary level	Married at age 22	4
Family B	Z-H	1964	Female	Primary level	Married at age 17	4
	S-Sh	1966	Female	Primary level	Married at age 36	2
	Sh-Sh	1968	Male	Primary level	Married at age 25	2
	M-Kh	1969	Female	Primary level	Married at age 16	4
	D-A	1972	Male	Secondary level	Married at age 28	1

Table 3 The scheduled list of people in second sub-group of Group Two in Family A and Family B

Group Two		Date of Birth	Sex	Education	Marital Status	Number of children
Initials of The Participants						
Family A	A-M	1957	Male	Primary level	Married at age 22	5
	H-D	1958	Male	Primary level	Married at age 25	4
	S-M	1959	Female	Primary level	Married at age 24	4
	B-Sh	1963	Male	Primary level	Married at age 21	3
Family B	M-M	1964	Female	Primary level	Married at age 20	3
	Kh-Sh	1965	Female	Primary level	Married at age 14	4
	J-M	1968	Male	Primary level	Married at age 23	2
	A-M	1970	Female	National Diploma	Married at age 30	2
	K-F	1972	Male	Primary level	Married at age 28	2
	H-R	1972	Male	National Diploma	Married at age 22	2
	M-R	1972	Male	Primary level	Married at age 35	1
	A-Kh	1974	Male	Primary level	Married at age 23	3
	A-M	1974	Male	National Diploma	Married at age 32	1

Table 4 The scheduled list of people in Group Three in Family A and Family B

Group Three		Date of Birth	Sex	Education	Marital Status	Number of children
Initials of The Participants						
First sub-group of Family A (born from 1975 until 1991)	M-Sh	1975	Male	Primary level	Married at age 24	None
	R-A	1975	Male	National Diploma	Married at age 27	1
	H-Sh	1974	Male	Primary level	Divorced	None
	M-N	1977	Male	Secondary level	Married at age 24	2
	D-H	1978	Male	Secondary level	Married at age 26	1
	M-H	1979	Male	Primary level	Married at age 27	2
	F-D	1979	Female	Secondary level	Married at age 14	2
	H-SH	1980	Male	National Diploma	Married at age 26	None
	H-H	1980	Female	National Diploma	Married at age 20	1
	A-SH	1981	Male	Secondary level	Married at age 28	None
	F-B	1982	Female	College study	Married at age 19	2
	S-SH	1982	Female	National Diploma	Married at age 19	1
	M-SH	1982	Male	Secondary level	Married at age 27	1
	A-H	1984	Male	Secondary level	Married at age 24	None
	A-B	1984	Male	National Diploma	Single	NA
	M-SH	1984	Male	Secondary level	Married at age 27	None
	A-SH	1984	Male	National Diploma	Single	NA
	S-B	1985	Female	College study	Married at age 21	None
	R-SH	1985	Female	Secondary level	Married at age 14	None
	S-J	1985	Female	National Diploma	Married at age 20	2
M-SH	1982	Male	Primary level	Single	NA	
F-A	1988	Female	Secondary level	Married at age 17	1	
S-SH	1989	Female	National Diploma	Married at age 19	None	
Z-SH	1990	Female	National Diploma	Married at age 19	1	
Second sub-group of Family A (born from 1991 until 2005)	M-K	1991	Female	Primary level	Married at age 18	None
	A-SH	1992	Male	Secondary level	Single	NA
	M-B	1992	Male	Secondary level	Single	NA
	Z-H	1993	Female	National Diploma	Married at age 18	None
	M-SH	1994	Male	Secondary level	Single	None
	M-B	1997	Female	Secondary level	Single	NA
	A-SH	2001	Male	Primary level	Single	NA
	A-SH	2002	Male	Primary level	Single	NA
	Z-SH	2003	Female	Primary level	Single	NA
	F-SH	2005	Female	Pre-school	Single	NA
First sub-group of Family B (born from 1975 until 1991)	H-R	1975	Male	Primary level	Married at age 22	1
	M-F	1976	Female	Secondary level	Married at age 15	2
	F-B	1976	Female	Secondary level	Married at age 18	2
	M-R	1977	Male	National Diploma	Married at age 24	1
	S-M	1979	Female	Primary level	Married at age 20	1
	A-B	1977	Male	National Diploma	Married at age 24	Father-to-be
	M-A	1978	Male	Primary level	Married at age 28	1
	H-R	1978	Male	National Diploma	Married at age 25	1
	A-M	1979	Female	Bachelor of science	Married at age 27	1
	A-M	1981	Female	Secondary level	Married at age 17	1
	F-R	1981	Female	National Diploma	Married at age 16	3
	S-R	1983	Male	National Diploma	Married at age 27	Father-to-be
	A-M	1984	Female	National Diploma	Married at age 22	1
	H-D	1984	Male	Secondary level	Married at age 23	None
	F-M	1988	Female	Secondary level	Married at age 19	None
	M-D	1986	Male	National Diploma	Single	NA
	Z-R	1986	Female	National Diploma	Married at age 21	1
	A-M	1987	Female	National Diploma	Married at age 24	Mother-to-be
S-A	1987	Female	National Diploma	Married at age 18	1	
B-SH	1987	Male	National Diploma	Single	NA	
S-SH	1988	Female	National Diploma	Married at age 22	Mother-to-be	

Second sub-group of Family B (born from 1991 until 2005)	M-D	1990	Male	Secondary level	Single	NA
	M-M	1993	Male	Secondary level	Single	NA
	B-SH	1993	Male	Diploma	Single	NA
	Z-D	1994	Female	Secondary level	Single	NA
	A-SH	1994	Male	Secondary level	Single	NA
	A-M	1997	Female	Secondary level	Single	NA
	M-F	1991	Male	Primary level	Single	NA
	A-M	1992	Female	Primary level	Single	NA
	M-F	1993	Male	Secondary level	Single	NA

Another mother from Family B described her experience in this way:

"I am older than my husband about two years" (A-M, age 46).

Unlike other women of the family and the village as well, hence, she was not happy and somehow made endeavor to make up this feeling of deficiency, i.e. being two years older than her spouse by helping her other half in different ways including actively participation in economic and income-earning activities of the household.

Following improvement of economic and social situation of farmers and villagers stemmed from improving the agricultural situation (mechanization of agriculture) after carrying out the Qazvin Project, the form of family has gradually changed from the extended family to nuclear family in rural communities of Qazvin. In the second sub-group, as a result, following massification and wide currency of television and schooling in rural communities after the Islamic Revolution in 1979, promptness of the process of nuclearization of family, namely the movement from joint family system to nuclear family system has been increased (19), and many couples and families have involved in this process. A father from the second sub-group of Family B characterized the process of nuclearization with these words:

"Nowadays we are very relaxed; in the past I couldn't speak with my wife in front of my mother and brother. I couldn't watch and touch long hair of my wife. My wife all the time should wear the Hijab by covering her hair using scarf in front of my brother" (J-M, age 48).

Value and importance of children, childbearing and size of family

As mentioned earlier, stemming from carrying out and completion of the Qazvin Project, and paying attention to values that the hygiene army had advocated and endorsed, the total fertility rate (TFR) was gradually declined in the rural communities of Qazvin including HesarKhorvan village. As one of woman in this age group of the first sub-group of the Family A declared:

"Mrs. Mafi, one of key member of the hygiene army who actively served in public health sector of the village, disgraced and talk down those women in the village who had have many children. So, a good number of women were afraid of her in that time. But, now we all believe that she was very good person and all she said was correct" (Z-SH, age 54).

Overall, the majority of members in the first sub-group of Group Two in both Families A and B had claimed: the most important reason for declining TFR is the mechanization of agriculture. As shown in Table 2,

the number of children in the second sub-group of the group two in both families has evidently declined. Other than the aforementioned reasons, however, it seems that the reasons of declining fertility rate in the second sub-group of both families are different. For instance, higher responsibility of parents for providing facilities for their children and meeting their needs; higher expectations and cost of living of the children; ever-increasing importance of childrens' training and ever-increasing importance of mother's welfare and body fitness which is opposite of continual pregnancies; and the lack of interest and low participation of children in agricultural activities are amongst reasons of the fertility decline.

In this group (Group Two), due to considerable economic, agricultural and socio-cultural changes that took place in the rural communities, in particular in the second sub-group, life tastes, social roles and family schemas of women and men were slowly but differently reformed. That is, rural women were no longer just for giving birth and being mother and rural men expected the wives to give satisfaction and pleasure to their marital life. In this worldview, fitness and beauty are central to marriage of women. Most of participants from the first sub-group of the Group Two believed that changes in the social roles of women is stemmed from the new law of family, issued and implemented in 1968. They also believed that entering the knowledge corps into HesarKhorvan village in frame of the White Revolution in late 1960s had an essential influence on these developments.

While having romantic relationships between couples of this sub-group is more important than having a lot of children, there were persuaded and encouraged by their parents for having further children. This may be linked with the fact that the agricultural mechanization process didn't advance enough in the region yet, and most of family needed to have a lot of children. As one of the rural fathers from Family A expressed:

"When my wife gave birth to our fourth child, my mother told four children is not enough and a good wife should bring more than this for her husband" (A-SH, age 64).

In the second-sub group of Group Two, although the discourse of the Islamic Revolution more or less persuaded couples to have plentiful children, this kind of things doesn't take place simply and immediately as people need to have plenty of time and consider all aspects of important issues such as reproductive practice and childbearing for making decision and performing in marital life. This is not surprising as the villagers didn't replied and adhered promptly to advices and modern values which were promoted by the hygiene in 1960s in the rural communities.

Moreover, changes in cultural meanings of fertility and childbearing and increasing levels of education among the second sub-group of Group Two led them to consider fertility as a personal decision and

practice which different than the past ideas, values and aspirations of parents is no longer relevant. Unlike the predecessors, men of this sub-group preferred women with elegant and beautiful appearance rather than women with untidy appearance or physically worn-out mothers. As a father from Family B stated;

"Having two children is completely enough. I want to see my wife happy and full of energy, when I come back home. Just these things make me to work from early morning until midnight. Life is not just eating and nowadays men don't depend on women because of cooking and etc. However, we expect our wives to make and give us a warm life" (J-M, age 48).

According to the participants of this sub-group, due to the influence of media and some religious discourses in mosques and other claim-making activities, new ideas and values among women are currently on the move and spread too. In this view, hence, women should make themselves more beautiful and sexy for their husbands and their responsibility in the life is not merely giving birth and rearing child. As one of rural mothers from Family A commented:

"The level of thinking goes up and these days is not similar to past. Women don't like to be pregnant immediately after the marriage regardless of their husband's family members have started nagging" (S-Sh, age 50).

Unlike their mothers, styles of knowing and living are different in the present-day women. For instance, they don't believe that telling about love and romantic relationship in at family and relative gatherings is impudent. A woman from Family B declared it in this way;

"If we think that love should be confined inside of our hearts and is not for showing, this can make our marital life cold and unhappy." (A-M, age 50).

To sum up, nowadays, most of people in group two with a number of people in the first group with regret believe that the new generations (including the third group in this study) are more self-sufficient with better and broader opportunities in choosing their reproductive practices. According to them, if villagers particularly men had predicted better these developments in the rural community, they perhaps had not as much of children. As well, expectations and attitudes of children have generationally changed during last four decades. Hence, the value and meaning of having children have come down as children have no interest in farm works and are not useful for their families. Above all, childbearing and childrearing are very expensive, troublesome and time-consuming activities and the parents have to spend a lot of money for them.

Group Three (born from 1975 onwards)

Functions and significance of marriage and family formation

While the average of marriage age in two families in the first sub-group of this group is similar to the previous groups, in the second subgroup of the group, the average of marriage age for women has come down. It alludes that marriage is more inclined than in the past and women believed that marriage is not marriage is not contrary to or in front of

education. This happened due to the increase in the marriage age for girls in the second group. While a number of parents are aware of the relationship of their daughters with the opposite sex, they are not totally interested in limiting their daughters as they think at present this is amongst the best ways to get married at the suitable age.

They see it as right way to get married because the traditional family system that heretofore provided the good conditions for marriage their sons and daughters have lost their functions on the one hand, and the eight-year Iran-Iraq War has made happen several rural men have a martyr lost and prisoner, on the other hand. As a result, some of daughters in the village couldn't make their partners and form their family and now they have to live alone in the fourth decade of their life. Furthermore, by acceleration of the nuclearization of family in the post-revolutionary Iran, none of the rural families like to live at this time with some out of their nuclear family including their single female relatives.

Value and importance of children, childbearing and size of family

Following different aspects of changes that have took place in the rural community, having a lot of children have lost its rationality and importance. For many villagers, surprisingly, it now characterizes those uninformed people who have a lot of children without thinking about their welfare and future. As shown in Table 4, the number of children in all fresh sub-groups or generations of two families has declined. No one has more than two children and most of families have just one.

For some reasons, a number of couples in the first and second sub-groups of Group Three have remarkably decided to have no child (a kind of the voluntary childlessness), or postpone it as much as they can. According to these persons, childbearing and childrearing are by nature costly and time-consuming activities. Parents should think about the welfare and education of their children. In addition, today women need to pay attention to fitness and gorgeousness of their body. All of these have led the new generations of rural families to limit their childbearing and childrearing activities. Some of women claimed that nowadays they are unable to do what their mothers have frequently done. In our day, women are not powerful and patient enough like their mothers. A good number of these mothers shared the opinion expressed by one mother from Family A;

"Children are very expectant and the expensiveness is other reason for declining fertility" (H-H, age 35).

Another mother from Family B claimed that;

"Not only children don't help their parents, but also parents must spend a lot of money for them" (A-M, age 31).

As a mother from Family B expressed:

"I don't want to be pregnant as we live in a rentable home. Until we buy our own home, we don't like to have children" (F-M, age 27).

Most of women in the first and second sub-groups of Group Three use contraceptives. They said that although the nowadays pro-natalist policies and agendas of Iranian government, none of the couples in the existing social circumstances are not interested in having more than two children. Some of the women in this group jokingly said that they will give birth to take the basic income every month (cash transfer) which

was launched in 2010 to reform its system of price subsidies. As a mother from Family A put it:

"We typically use all money paid by the government to citizen as subsidy to eat food and kebab in restaurant" (F-B, age 34).

For members of the group, sexual functions and aspects of the marital life is more important than other aspects and functions including reproductive functions and aspects of it. This is indeed a change in cultural meanings and values of this generation. In the first sub-group of the group, participants believed that the public health services play brilliant role in meeting health needs of the rural families and teaching them to separate sexual aspects and needs from reproduction in the marital life. For them, making decision about childbearing is a personal matter and should merely be under control of the couples. Regardless of the recent population growth or pro-natalist policies and inspirations of Iranian government, and apart from expectations of significant others including older generations of their family, hence, many young adult couples have only one or two children in HesarKhorvan.

According to the new generation of rural women, the main purpose of marriage is to construct a peaceful and romantic marital life, not childbearing and childrearing. That's why many of them are very regretful to be pregnant and parent soon after marriage.

To build and establish a warm and peaceful relationship with their spouse, most of women in this group have used different ways including wearing comfortable, colorful and attractive clothes, making themselves up and sexier, impressing their love using particular romantic phrases and words, and planning a romantic dinner and watching loving movies, serials and programs on the satellite. They blamingly claimed that their mothers didn't learn and didn't know how they can make love and have a good relationship with their husbands. For them, this is stemmed from the fact that their parents did not know themselves well and also failed, as a result, to pass on to their daughters. To sum up, a good number of married people in this group don't want to have children unless they feel their life will become warmer and more peaceful by childbearing and childrearing.

DISCUSSION AND CONCLUSION

The aim of this study was to examine multigenerational transition and changes in fertility and family values and attitudes and practices occurred throughout the past half-century in rural families in Qazvin, Iran. To achieve this goal, methodologically a qualitative approach was taken and the life history method was used. The findings revealed that the process of modernization and changes in health policies and programs of government in the rural context have critically contributed to development of new beliefs, values and meanings in family formation and marriage and reproductive practices in rural families. Depending on the socio-cultural and economic circumstances, the rural families adapted different familial values and made diverse decisions regarding their life in different period of times. Nowadays, we witness the primacy of personal and sexual satisfaction and more romantic relationship in marriage in the new generations of the families. In comparison with the earlier generations, the reproductive functions of family has culturally lost its' meaning to the new generations of the rural families. Other than the endeavors of Iranian governments, both before and after the 1979 Islamic Revolution, to develop and modernize the society by way of population policies and family planning programs and reconsideration of family law, other modernization tools such as availability of mass

communications and media and satellite televisions and schooling and massification of education have created fresh desires that were previously absent in rural societies, and played important role in bring about such multigenerational transitions and changes in family beliefs, attitudes, values and reproductive practices in the rural communities in Iran. On the other hand, expectations and attitudes of the rural children have generationally changed during the past half-century. Moreover, the value and meaning of having children have decreased as children have no interest in farm works and are not useful for their families. Above all, childbearing and childrearing have become, in recent times, very expensive, troublesome and time-consuming activities and the parents have to spend a lot of money for them.

While the multi-generational transitions and changes in the family values and attitudes and reproductive practices and outcomes in the rural families during the past half-century have been examined by a number of studies in the literature (10; 12; 21; 22; 23; 24; 25; 26), but these studies have addressed the issue at macro level using quantitative methods. Different from most of these studies, this study adopted a qualitative and anthropological narrative research approach to examine the interplay of modernization attempts, structural changes, and population dynamics of the macro level as they are translated into daily lives and practices of rural families as they evolve through time. Such an approach perfectly complements the existing body of knowledge and literature by identifying and documenting the multigenerational transitions and changes in family values and attitudes and reproductive practices of rural families in Iran, as they are felt and practiced in their daily lives and practices. As asserted by S. G. Kouroutzin (2000), it indeed allows us to bring life and life events to [demographic and family] research. Moreover, life history and narrative research (LHNR) enables us to deeply understand micro-historical (individual) experiences and meanings of people with family, marriage and reproduction within a macro-historical and macro-structural context.

The limitations of this study include the small group of families (two rural families in three generations with 97 people overall) recruited from HesarKhorvan village of Qazvin Province of Iran, and the voluntary nature of people participation. It is recognized that the study may reflect a unique situation within a rural community of the province and no claims are made as to the wider generalizability of findings, considering the strongly heterogeneity of the rural communities in the province and the country as well in terms of socio-economic, demographic, ethno-religious and health criteria. In any case, this study is by nature a trans-generational narrative (life history) inquiry, and these types of inquiries are typically conducted with small samples. We know that two rural families in three generations with 97 are not much enough sample in a typical scientific inquiry, and for this reason, the study does not claim to generalize its results to all rural families in the province and the country as well.

Notwithstanding these limitations, the study findings offer valuable insight into the lived experiences and socio-culturally constructed reality of family and reproduction among rural communities in an additionally medicalized society like Iran (27). Findings of the study have potential to be of value to other thinkers and researchers in light of the recent pronatalist endeavors in the country to reconsider the population policy and family planning.

In addition, the LHNR approach used in this study seems to offer a valuable contribution to understand the process of decision-making and potential ambivalences that surround the rationalization of family formation and childbearing in rural communities. In this view, using such an approach to examine multigenerational transitions and changes

in the family values and fertility practices and outcomes of the rural families in Iran could help policy-makers of population in planning and implementing the overall population policies. That is, people including people in the rural communities are not a homogenous body and they are different in terms of life events and turning points, life trajectories, life beliefs, cultural meanings and values of family and reproductive and sexual practices. Hence, generational, inter-personal and inter-generational differences of people and couples as well as life events, courses, experiences, histories and stories of people should be considered in the population management and family planning programs of the government. This study provide some evidence to suggest that future scholars should be encouraged to consider the ability of LHNR to enrich our understanding of the ways of knowing and doing in family life and reproductive and sexual practices.

To cut a long story short, results of this LHNR in Iran revealed that regardless of the official intentions, the families adapted different familial values and made diverse decisions regarding their life in different period of their life history. Another point is that governmental health and family planning programs in a highly medicalized context like Iran can have significant and widespread impact and implications for socio-cultural daily life of people from different generations. Despite the official ideological and religious narratives of the government, the transition from traditional and communal values to the primacy of personal and sexual satisfaction in marriage in the third generation was quite evident. Modernization, globalization and medicalization effects have surpassed nearly all contesting ideological, religious and traditional values and practices.

METHODOLOGY

The study of multigenerational transition of fertility and family values and attitudes has a long history in demography and developmental studies. However, most of these researches have focused primarily on macro aspects of the issues using quantitative demographic techniques and have failed to delineate the actual translation of such values into the daily lives and family formation practices within the changing context of last 50 years. This study by taking a qualitative approach and using techniques of the narrative and life history inquiries is an attempted to highlight the dynamics and the interplay between modernization and second demographic transition with regard to family formation patterns and intergenerational transfer of familial values, as they are played out in daily lives of two families during last 50 years. That is, the study was an endeavor to address the multi- and inter-generational transition of fertility and family values and attitudes in rural families with qualitative fresh eyes.

This way of knowing and doing demography allows researcher to know how people lived their lives and to explore personal life in each course of their lives, which factors influence on personal life pathways and how people under this conditions make different decisions, as asserted by Casper and Bianchi (2002). The life course approach highlights the interplay between cultural background, social ties, human agency and timing (13). These factors intertwine such that individuals, actions and attitudes depend not only on micro-level situations and macro-level structures but also on the historical context and constructive activities of individuals (14).

Setting and Participants

Qazvin province of Iran area covers 15805 km², bounded on the north by Mazandaran and Gilan provinces, on the west by Zanjan and Hamedan province, on the south by Markazi and on the east by Alborz province. Qazvin province consists of 24 towns, 5 main cities, 19 districts, 44 suburbs and 1543 villages (Agricultural Jihad Organization of Qazvin Province 2007 p. 8). This study was carried out in village of HesarKhorvan of Mohammadiyeh district of Alborz city. Based on Iran Statistical Center's

Population and Housing Census, in 1976 population of the village were 2013 people with 364 families. Population of this village reached 3002 people with 611 families in 1986. HesarKhorvan village' population reached 3666 people with 4342 families in 1996. Population of the village reached 4342 people (1156 families) 4036 people (1245 families) respectively in 2006 and 2011. The average of household size in HesarKhorvan village reached 5.9, 5.1, 4.6, 3.8 and 3.2 people in 1976, 1986, 1996, 2006 and 2011, respectively, a sizeable decline in average size of the household from 5.9 to 3.2 from 1976 to 2011 (Statistical Center of Iran, 2015).

For decades, people of HesarKhorvan village in particular the literate ones have used several ways of birth control and contraceptives to manage their family and reproduction. As mentioned, Iranian village-based or rural community-based facilities and cares like The Revolution Army including the Literacy Corps or Knowledge Army [Sepāh-e dāneš] and the Hygiene Corps or Army [Sepah-e Behdasht], the educational programs implemented in the country in the framework of the White Revolution (1963-79) and the health houses [khanehaye-e-behdash] in the post-revolutionary Iran, devised in 1981 (WHO, 2008) have played a critical role in changing values, meanings, attitudes and practices of the villagers regarding the family planning and childbearing.

Moreover, some other macro-structural and historical changes and events came about in the country during last half of century have in some way influenced meanings, experiences, values, schemas, attitudes and practices of HesarKhorvan's villagers regarding family planning and childbearing at multiple levels. For instance, the 1979 Islamic Revolution, Iran-Iraq War and the Qazvin Project are amongst these events. More specifically, The Qazvin Project launched in the region in 1963, following The 1962 Buin Zahra earthquake occurred in the area of Buin Zahra in Qazvin Province on September 1 1962 (15). In the earthquake, more than twenty thousand Iranians died, three hundred villages were in ruins, and the network of water tunnels first dug more than twenty-seven hundred years earlier was destroyed. After the earthquake, the farmers were without essential water. Soon after well drilling in Qazvin began, Israeli water engineers, from The Tahal Group, received a positive reply from their Iranian government hosts to a proposal that they also be permitted to teach local farmers or villagers how to increase their yields while using less water in the process and to promote quality of their life. The majority of the local population in Qazvin area came into contact with the Israeli planning experts, none of whom masked their nationality or religion. This resulted in a comprehensive regional plan, and detailed plans for several villages. Israeli assistance to Iran was also proposed to reinforce bilateral relations between the countries in 1960s (16). As Hooglund (1982) declared, the project consequently mechanized agriculture and increased income of farmers and villagers in the region.

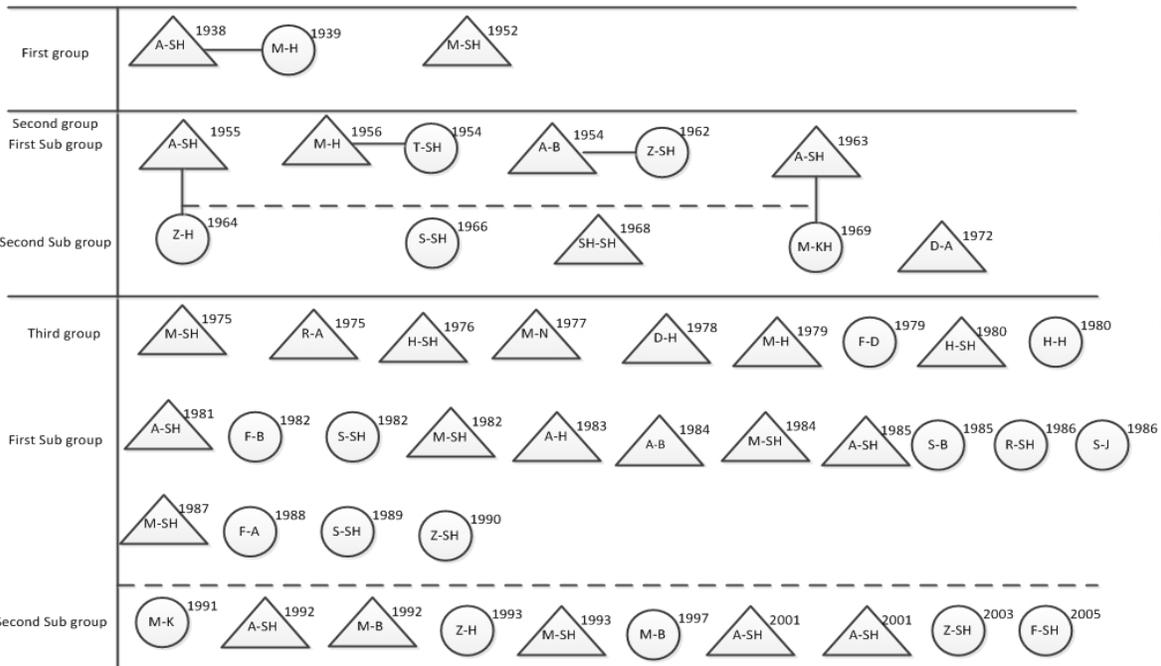
Recruitment of Participants

Two extended families with three generations members were recruited in this study. Disposition to participate in the study and tendency to response our narrative questions and having the place and local attachment in members of the families (with least immigrants in other cities and metropolises of the country) were key inclusion criterion for the families. Two families were not similar in terms of socio-economic Position (SEP) and land properties. While Family A had 30 hectares as operating's right of land [haghe-e- nasagh] in the time of the land reform program in the village (1968) and 12 hectares of small ownership [kenareh-e-kari], Family B just had 8 hectares as operating's right of land since the land reform with no small ownership land [kenareh-e-kari]. That is, both recruited families had operating's right of land in advance of practically launching the land reform program in 1968. As shown in Fig. 1 and Fig. 2, 97 members from three generations of two extended families were, in total, studied using in-depth and intensive narrative interviews.

As shown in Fig. 1, age similarity among a number of people in the second and third generations caused to generate new grouping not based on

Age group of family A: People were born before 1953 (first group)
 People were born before 1975 Until 1354 (Second group)
 First sub group : 1954-1964
 Second sub group: 1964-1975

People were born from 1975 Until now (third group)
 First sub group : From 1975 until 1991
 Second sub group: 1975 and 2001 decades

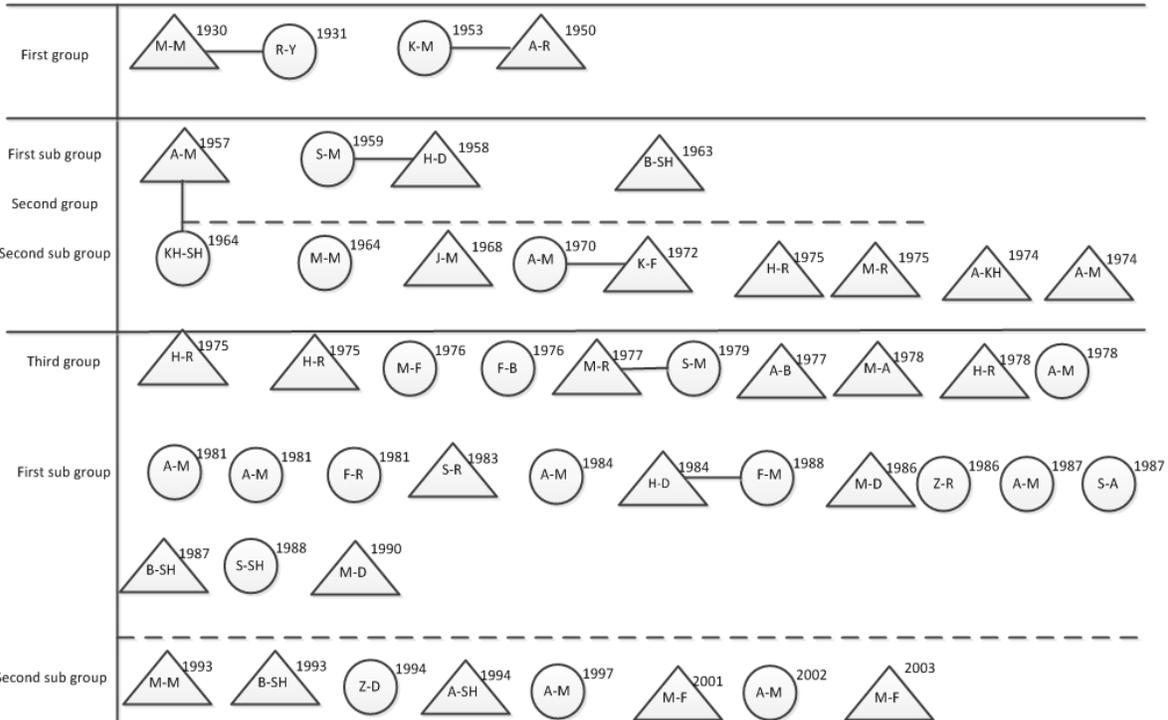


Guideline: Circles are women and triangles are men, and other relations have shown by different type of lines that have introduced at the down of each tree family.

Figure 1 Generational Family Tree for Family A

Age group of family B: People were born before 1953 (first group)
 People were born before 1954 Until 1975 (Second group)
 First sub group : 1954-1964
 Second sub group: 1964-1975

People were born from 1975 Until now (third group)
 First sub group : From 1975 until 1991
 Second sub group: 1991 and 2001 decades



Guideline: Circles are women and triangles are men, and other relations have shown by different type of lines that have introduced at the down of each tree family.

Figure 2 Generational Family Tree of Family B

the blood ties but also based on age. In the first generation we have people who were fifty years old in 1968, when the land reform program practically launched in this village. The second group are consist of people who were born from 1954 to 1975 and have experienced the Islamic Revolution in 1979, when they were 14-15 years old (as a first branch) and the eight-years Iran-Iraq War (1980-1988) at age 15 or more (as a second branch). Finally, in the third group we have people who were born from 1975 onwards. People who were born from 1975 to 1991 were considered as the first branch, and the rest (people who were born in 1990s and 2000s) were considered as the second branch.

Data Collection

To collect data from three generations of villagers in HesarKhorvan an intensive narrative interview guide including the Life History Calendar (LHC) was used. This kind of interview could be used to understand human experience and listen life stories and provoke discussion about past experiences and underlying processes that are helpful for explaining practices, values, attitudes, and emotions of people.

In this study, hence, data were collected using such interviewing with 97 people from two extended families over three generations in a rural community in Qazvin. The participants are given the possibility to narrate stories of their life from whatever stage in their lives; accordingly, the interviewer can extract noteworthy points from participants' stories and consider them in the research.

To do this, important factors or forces that have influenced on family changes in the community, were put horizontally and changed domains listed vertically. As demonstrated in Table 1, multigenerational transitions and changes in family beliefs and values and childbearing can be distinguished by comparing personal information in two families and during three generations.

Data Management and Analysis

Narrative has become a buzzword among sociologists and anthropologists in recent years. The general consensus among qualitative researchers is that stories and storytelling are common methods of sharing information. From this perspective, most things you read, hear, or see are storied (be it research reports, novels, every day conversations, or movies). Thus, the goal of qualitative analysis becomes understanding what stories convey and how (17).

As Riessman (1993) noted, a narrative can be defined along a number of dimensions. The first of these is sequence, or the order in which a story is told (what comes first in the story, what comes after, and so forth). Also, when we hear stories, for instance, we expect protagonists, inciting conditions, and culminating events. But not all narratives (or all lives) take this form. Some other genres include habitual narratives (when events happen over and over and consequent there is no peak in action), hypothetical narrative (which depict events that did not happen), and topic-centered narratives, snapshots of past events that are linked thematically (18). Narrative scholars keep a story "intact" by theorizing from the case rather from component themes (categories) across cases. Thematic analysis can be applied to stories that develop in interview conversations and group meetings, and those found in written documents. She believes that most narrative projects in the human sciences are currently based on interviews of some kind. Generating oral narrative requires substantial change in customary practices.

Ethical Approval

This study was initially approved by the Ethics Committee of the Faculty of Social Sciences at the University of Tehran (Ref. 81/279019, dated 8/12/2015) and other relevant regional authorities of HesarKhorvan village of Qazvin in February 2015. The scholars of this study obtained permission of all participants to perform and audiotape the narrative interviews, formally. It was accentuated that contribution to the study was voluntary,

and the confidentiality was completely guaranteed about the identity and personal information of all interviewees in all phases of this inquiry.

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Multi-generational transition, Fertility, Rural family, Life history, Modernization

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