

Phenomenology of the Lived Experience of Iranians Born In the 1980s of Modernity and Its Consequences on Their Social Ethics

Jafar Zolfalifam¹, Maghsood Farasat Khahg², Amir Maleki³, Mohammad Javad Zahedi Mazandarani³

¹Ph.D. Student, Department of Social Sciences, Payame Noor University, PO Box 19395-3697, Tehran, Iran, ²Associate Professor, Institute for Research and Planning in Higher Education, Tehran, Iran, ³Associate Professor, Department of Social Sciences, Payame Noor University, PO Box 19395-3697, Tehran, Iran

Abstract

The current study attempted to find out what are the actual components of social ethics among the Iranians born in the 1980s. In addition, it sought to find what kind of evolution is taking place in the social ethics of Iranians born in the 1980s and what the nature of such evolution is. Finally, it aimed to find out what the layout of social ethics is among those people born in the 1980s. For these purposes, qualitative methodology in the form of in-depth interviews having an experimental phenomenological approach were implemented in order to gain a clear understanding of the type and manner of social ethics within the context of modernity experience among the Iranians born in the 1980s. Findings of the study concentrated around six major indicators of social ethics among those who were born in the 1980s: idealist social ethics, contingency social ethics, uncertainty social ethics, smartness social ethics, supportive social ethics, and social ethics as a reflection of power relations.

Key words: Social ethics, Iranians born in the 1980s, Experience of modernity, Lived experience, Experimental phenomenology

INTRODUCTION

Iranians who have been born in the 1980s constitute a particular generation in its society who have originated a multitude of political, social, and economic developments in the Iranian society and continue to do so. In fact, this generation is the outcome of the political and social environment created after the 1979 "Islamic Revolution" in Iran. Many of the people belonging to this generation are now in their thirties. On one hand, they experience the problems of unemployment, inflation, marriage, etc., while on the other hand, they are considered as people having the most exposure to and lived experience with the process of modernity and have faced rapid changes in values and social ethics in comparison with people from previous generations. Lack of attention to social ethics and its proper

development in the context of the experience of modernity in Iran, particularly during the last few decades, has led to a serious social issue. In this regard, three major narrative exist for the description of the current state of social ethics in Iranian society: a narrative that sees the Iranian society as undergoing the process of ethical crisis and disintegration; a narrative that sees the Iranian society as transferring from a traditional ethical system to a modern ethical system; and a narrative that sees the ethical condition of Iranian society neither as a crisis nor transfer but in the form of ordinary ups and downs and common developments. Putting emphasis on the third narrative of the condition of social ethics in the Iranian society, the current study considers the Iranian society as a continuing and changing one. Though this continuing and changing society has experienced some ethical drawbacks, it always repairs itself and ethical and unethical moments are experienced in it in a dialectical and paradoxical manner. In other words, the Iranian society has both ethical and unethical features. The current study can be classified within the realm of the sociology of ethics and attempts to reach a clear understanding of the type and manner of a small portion of the sociology of ethics (i.e., the condition of social ethics in the context of the experience of modernity among the Iranians born in the

Access this article online



www.ijss-sn.com

Month of Submission : 06-2017
Month of Peer Review : 06-2017
Month of Acceptance : 07-2017
Month of Publishing : 07-2017

***Corresponding Author:** J. zolfalifam, Ph.D Student, Department of Social Sciences, Payame Noor University, PO Box 19395-3697, Tehran, Iran. Phone: +98-9144051320. E-mail: jafar_fam@yahoo.com.

1980s) by obtaining a clear and actual image of the nature of modernity experience in the Iranian society. In so doing, qualitative methodology has been implemented in the form of experimental phenomenology. This approach is a systematic method of conducting qualitative studies and can be used for the investigation of such important phenomena as ethics.

Statement of The Problem

The purpose of sociology is studying social life in its entirety. Therefore, ethics is one of the important areas in social life and could be studied both in the form of an independent and influential variable and in the form of a variable dependent upon other social variables. Ethics is in line with responsibility and all the time, responsibility is defined against an "other". Only an "other" can make a question or have an expectation of me. Levinas calls the questioning of one's self-stimulation by the presence of an "other" as ethics (Fathizadeh, 2014, p. 9). Ethics attains meaning where "a group of human beings have a shared life with each other in the form of a group" (Durkheim, 1971, p. 51). Being ethical involves "being a part of a group; therefore, ethical is only meaningful when there is a society and people should refer to the same society in order to identify and determine values." (Durkheim, 1980, p. 426). The social condition has always been a concern for all societies (Moqaddam, 2013, p. 9). Having a look, however brief, at the place of studying ethics among classical and contemporary sociologists, it could be argued that rather than being concerned with individual ethics, sociologists pay much attention to social ethics. According to Turner, social ethics refer to "generalized cultural codes for the identification of correctness-incorrectness, goodness-badness, appropriateness-inappropriateness, the existence of strong emotional desire towards these codes, the feeling of happiness and satisfaction when a person himself/herself and other people observe these codes, feeling of despise towards people who ignore such cultural codes, and a positive and shared feeling among those who make a commitment towards such codes" (Turner, 2010, p. 125). Therefore, social ethics means "recognizing other people, paying respect to the rights of others, paying respect to oneself, and paying respect to the environment (Farasatkahh, 213, p. 57). Consequently, social ethics could be imagined in the form of "beliefs and actions that citizens acquire from social, political, and cultural institutions that they are in connection. In other words, in its positive mode, social ethos provides the citizens with living in a good and democratic society. Since corruption causes social ethics to move towards dictatorship and political and cultural corruption (Mirsepasi, 2009, pp. 36-37), social ethics "has attracted the attention of thinkers and experts within societies and as has been proven through experience, human beings always been in need of social

ethics" (Davoodi, 2004, p. 154), in a way that in the current era, some have argued on the priority of social ethics over individual ethics (Fanaii, 2015, p. 64). Hence, the importance of ethics, particularly social ethics, at times of the experience of modernity cannot be neglected by anybody. This importance is in a way that it has been the most important concern for classical sociologists, especially for Durkheim (Movahhed et al. (2008, p. 39).

Here, according to many scholars, the structure of social system in Iran has faced with rapid and sudden changes following the experience of modernity. These social developments and changes arising from the experience of modernity affect the society and various social groups according to their resources, capabilities, and capacities. For this reason, "many cases of social ethics that have attracted the attention of western sociologists relate to those historical periods when rapid social and cultural developments have occurred in countries" (Moqaddam, 2013, p. 8). Here, many societies (such as Iran) that have had a brief contact with the earlier form of modernity and try to integrate the components of such modernity within themselves, suddenly face with a newer form of modernity that affects the process of developments within them in a serious way. In such situations, recognizing and studying the society and understanding its features and particularities faces multiple complexities and problems. "In fact, modernity is a certain system of social institutions and organizations that lays the grounds for a particular lifestyle in a society and a set of factors such technology, globalization, individualism, and civil institutions play an important role in it" (Giddens, 2001, p. 4). In fact, "modernity is an intellectual process that has appeared in the West" (Yazdani, 2010, p. 107). Therefore, in the process of experience of modernity, "according to Marx, whatever is solid in it disappears" (Paya, 2018, p. 22). "Modernity affects even those who live in the most traditional settlements all over the world" (Giddens, 2006, p. 279). In this regard, Iran is one of the countries that has faced great developments arising from the expansion of the experience of modernity.

Over the past 150 years, the Iranian society has witnessed significant and deep changes in all aspects within the context of the experience of modernity. These developments have involved many aspects (e.g, cognitive, affective, and behavioral) of Iranians and the Iranian society. "the demographic structure, urbanization, literacy, civil institutions, and many other aspects of the Iranian society have changed thoroughly from 1907 to 2007" (Abrahamian, 2010, p. 23). These developments show that "in Iran, like many other places, we are faced with forms of modernity that are related to the climate, history, language, etc. it is this relation that shows how we are integrated into

the capitalist system and what kind of social discipline this has resulted. If we deal with the issue from this perspective, we will notice that we are faced with modernity with a particular accent (according to Schutz) or a particular experience of modernity (according to Berman) (Towfiq, 2012, p. 11). The inappropriate application of the term “the transitional society between tradition and modernity” for the study of Iranian society has placed the society in limbo. It seems that such limbo exists only in our mind, not in reality. The existing reality has a discipline that makes its repetition and continuity possible. If there is no opportunity to move beyond the discourse of transitional society, in fact no opportunity will be provided for us to ask questions with the intention of identifying the current situation” (ibid. p. 11). Therefore, now the Iranian society is “no more the pre-modern society of the 19th century and has been modernized and renovated by way of the experience of modernity. The type of Iranian society is of a modern but problematic and awkward society (Jalaeipour, 2009, p. 1). One of such problematic areas is the ethical condition of Iranian society, particularly the condition of social ethics in it.

In its contemporary era and within the current decades, the Iranian society has faced with a multitude of social changes such as increased rate of urbanization, formation of specialized organizations and councils, educational institutions, increased use of mass media, increased rate of literacy and education (particularly among females), increased rates of people with university degrees, increased rate of social communications and transaction, etc. together with these changes, “the introduction of newer forms of information and communication technologies such as satellite TV, the Internet, cell phones, Facebook, Twitter, and the like in addition to smaller devices as such I-pads, tablets, phablets, and various types of smart phones, Samsung Galaxies, and Android systems to our society within the past few years has had significant impacts on the viewpoints, identity, and lifestyle of the youth” (Farasatkah, 2014, p. 124). These changes are particularly evident among people born in the 1980s who are now aged between 26-35. “in the 1990s and 2000s, Iranians born in the 1980s try to respond to all the doctrines of the former modernity that were destroyed in the 1970s and before” (Abdollahiyan, 2008, p. 3). In the 1980s, no sign of modernity or development according to another style has been documented. Thus, in the 1990s and 2000s, Iranians born in the 1980s seek to find another event: “people born in the 1980s are not raised according to traditions. In that decade, many tenets of modernity and even tradition collapsed” (ibid, p. 4). Therefore, Iranians born in the 1980s try to find new values, a different lifestyle, and a distinguished social identity in the 1990s and 2000s. Hence, the gradual development and influence of the

experience of modernity in the Iranian society from the late 1980s and its continuity in the 1990s and 2000 as a result of development in technologies and new information and communication devices have had a significant impact on the communication and transfer of information between the Iranians born in the 1980s.

The experience of modernity not only provided the Iranians born in the 1980s with many different types of cultures in a gradual way, but also revolutionized their world, social references, and generally, their lived experience and made them a special generation in the Iranian society that have been the source of many social, economic, and cultural development in Iran and continue to do so. “Because of their information, communications, skills, and lifestyle, Iranians born in the 1980s have the highest rate of exposure to and lived experience with the process of modernity” (Abdi & Goodarzi, 2003, p. 11). “Iranians born in the 1970s are the last survivors of the traditional Iranian families; in fact, they are more traditional, are more loyal towards values, have less inclination towards changing their values, and finally, have little inclination towards rebellion and insurgency. However, despite the introduction of modernity into the Iranian society whose signs could be observed from the early 1980s, no sign of modernity and development towards another style has been recorded. Hence, Iranians born in the 1980s seek another event in the 1990s. These people were not raised in a traditional way and more rebellion could be seen among them. Until the 1990s, the older generations thought that they have to act according to the conditions internal to the Iranian society. Nevertheless, in the 2000s and the past few years, the newer generations have found out that they have to consider the global matters” (Abdollahiyan, 2008, p. 4). “Iranians born in the 1970s live more comfortably, have had easier marriages, and have found jobs in an easier way, while for those born in the 1980s, many problems have arisen such as unemployment, inflation, marriage, etc. “All Iranians born in the 1980s have experienced the problems related to this decade” (Shahabi, 2003, p. 5). Therefore, on one hand, “Iranians born in the 1980s are faced with problems related to unemployment, inflation, marriage, etc. together with unresolved economic and social problems, while on the other, they are considered as people who have had the most exposure to and lived experience of the process of modernity and in comparison with generations before themselves, they have faced with rapid and sudden changes in opinions, norms, values, and ethics within the society” (Nili, 2015, p. 5). An important consequence of this situation is lack of success on the part of social ethics to guide the behavior of individuals and vague state of social ethics, especially among those born in the 1980s. Therefore, neglecting social ethics and its proper development in the context of the experience

of modernity, particularly within the past few decades, has turned inappropriately into a major social issue and has shown itself as “one of major issues in the Iranian society within the majority of social transactions, both in macro and micro levels” (Jalaeipoor, 2008, p. 75). It seems that in the current Iranian society and as a result of the experience of modernity, “traditional values and norms become controversial and lose their former efficiency and importance. On the other hand, no new and efficient values and norms are introduced. This situation leads to vagueness in the condition of social ethics in the society and between social groups” (Farasatkah, 2008, p. 2). The Iranian society “within the past few decades, has been the ground for controversy between the ideologies put forward by the elite and is in a dangling condition. The traditional understanding of social ethics has been rejected and nullified. Ideological models, especially in the form of governmental projects, have not resulted in significant gains and social ethics within the context of society has not been able to recover itself and attempt to develop and reach productivity” (Farasatkah, 2013, p. 60). The current of modernity and its experience in Iran “has not moved successfully ahead in order for the social ethics to develop, too” (ibid. p. 58). Social ethics “acts like a glue for a society and by sticking the individuals “Is” together, makes a “we”. In other words, what is important for our society from an ethical point of view is the coherence through which, the existence of a society is possible” (Ghaziyan, 2008, p. 25). Nowadays, the state of social ethics in the Iranian society is frequently being investigated and discussed by thinkers, the elite, artists, researchers, and religious authorities. Regardless of the presence of some extreme judgements on the quality and weaknesses of social ethics in the current Iranian society that provide a very inappropriate evaluation of the condition, it seems that the social system in Iran faces serious problems and issues. However, such ethical erosion is not specific to the Iranian society and has led to a lot of discussions all over the world. The Iranian society is not in the process of collapsing, but is a society that suffers from problems that are multiple, occasional, field-specific, individualized, and specific to different social groups. All of these issues have to be analyzed sociological and sociologists have to deal with them from the perspective of sociology of ethics. Therefore, the most important aim of the current study is to focus on the lived experience of modernity among the Iranians born in the 1980s in order to provide a description of the type and manner of social ethics among them. Finally, the current study attempt to find out what the real components of social ethics are among the people born in the 1980s, what kind of evolution in social ethics is in the process of occurring among them and what the nature of such a process is, and what the layout of social ethics is in the mind of Iranians born in the 1980s.

Research Questions

1. How do the participants understand social ethics?
2. What are the lived experiences of the participants with regard to acting ethically?
3. How do the participants look at other people?
4. How is the mental image of the participants of themselves?
5. What are the reasons of the participants for their social behaviors?
6. What are the excuses of the participants for their social behaviors and the condition of social ethics that they have?
7. What is the layout of social ethics among the participants in the current study?

The Review of Literature

Sociologists and other thinkers in the human sciences “have frequently shown their concerns and deliberations regarding ethics in its macro sense and its relations with sociology in particular. Durkheim, Weber, Marx, Simmel, Habermas, Parsons, Merton, and Luhmann are among the sociologists who have attended to the topic of ethics (Hodgkiss, 2013, p. 436). Once ethics was considered in order not to be forgotten in the process of life, while in the era of modernity, it has been turned into a major concern of societies. “Modernity is neither an immediate product or issue not a sudden change, but it is a process that is shaped gradually by getting help from a set of experiences, policies, and developments. The social structure of modernity and its foundations have been shaped in Iran and its signs could be observed in various aspects of Iranian’s social life” (Fazeli, 2003, p. 6). Although the geographical origin of modernity has been western Europe, the social system that resulted from it has had the quality of global acceptance from the very beginning. In Iran, like many other places, we are faced with a version of modernity that is related to our climate, history, language. Etc. It is related to the manner of our assimilation into the capitalist system and the resulting social system” (Towfiq, 2012, p. 7). The Iranian society is a modern one, though a kind of modernity that has a specific accent. In other words, this is a situation where no pure matter could be regarded as the point of reference and we are faced with the same question that scholars such as Comte, Durkheim, Weber, and Giddens have been faced. “We are faced with a society that by closer examination, we have to say that it is impossible. But why such a society shows continuity? Modernity in general and the particular experiences within it are the result of a historical discontinuity. This is a kind of discontinuity that makes the continuity of the past and its governing logic impossible. However, the past does not disappear, but translates itself in the new situation; a kind of translation that inevitably follows the logic of post-discontinuity era (i.e., the logic of modernity). Discontinuity occurs in a specific historical-

cultural context that is reflected in the mechanism of translation and leads to the existence of diverse accents” (ibid. p. 7). Therefore, regarding the theoretical discussions put forward by the western and Iranian sociologists to identify the features and particularities of the experience of modernity in Iran, it seems that reaching a clear and actual understanding of issues in modern Iranian society, instead of answering the question, “Why we have not been able to be like societies moving ahead of ours?” we have to find answers for the “what” and “how” questions regarding the present time. Instead of permanent comparison, we have to describe, explain, and interpret the present condition from an immanent perspective. The inappropriate application of the term “the society in the transition between tradition and modernity” for studying the condition of Iranian society has put the society in limbo that is used for describing the present moment. Here, it will be attempted to show that the present moment has an existence and history of itself and unless we understand such history, we would not be able to identify the existing condition.

Therefore, tradition and modernity exist together in Iran. Through access to various media resources, modernity attempts to promote individual experiences. At the same time, tradition suppresses such experiences. If people are faced with long-established and hard traditions, they will experience a lot of problems. For instance, they might lose their status in the tradition, freedoms that they desire to achieve might be suppressed, and such people might not be able to find a support for themselves in the new environment. Therefore, they might be disorientated and suffer from anomie and its related problems. This could lay the grounds for the formation of social unethical behavior and consequently, the introduction of various social issues in a society. In his works conducted through the application of discussion and in-depth interview, Robert Bellah (1970) points to the ethical erosion that was increasing in the American society at that time (Ritzer, 2006, p. 567). In his book “Iranian Traits Exposed”, Mohammad Ali Jamalzadeh has analyzed the ethical conducts of Iranian people. In a part of this book, Jamalzadeh has recounted positive features of the Iranians such as bravery, faith, and self-devotion and in another part, has referred to the people’s good and bad features as recounted by other Iranian and foreign scholars. In article titled, “the state of social ethics in the Iranian society”, Hossein Ghaziyan (2008) considers the prestige of social ethics as a set of common regulations for the whole society. He believes that the legitimacy of such regulations has been questioned by nearly all the individual and group players in the society. Ali Mirsepasi (2009) in his book titled, “ethics in the public domain; deliberations on values democratic and institutions” attempts to reassert the importance of social ethics, values, and democratic institutions. In an article

titled, “good human people and good society; in a good society with a good ruling”, Farasatkah (2013) believes that the transition from tradition towards modernity has not been successful in order for the social ethics to develop in a proper way. Furthermore, Farasatkah (2016) in his book, “We Iranians; a historical and social contextualizing of Iranian ethos” attempts to study the Iranian’s ethos having a social and historical approach. By asking the question, “Are there weaknesses in the Iranians’ ethos?”, Farasatkah attempts to provide answers for it and in this regard, believes that such weaknesses include the cultural shortcomings when working in a group, formality, lack of clarity, eccentricity, predominance of emotions over intellectualism, widespread use of lying, and unexpected behaviors. Taghi Azad Armaki (2013) in an article titled, “ethical and unethical in the Iranian society” believes that the social unethical behaviors in the Iranian society is more a matter of social and cultural uncertainty. In his book titled, “the sociology of ethics; analysis of the state of social ethics in the Iranian society”, Hajiani (2014) has studied the social ethics in the Iranian society with a meta-analytical approach. The author believes that for the future, we need to design a combinatorial or multi-foundational ethical system since the Iranian society cannot continue its way based only on the traditional ethics. According to him, this requires the addition of new foundations to the ethical realm of the society.

Methodology

The current study uses a qualitative methodology. Such methodology might be “positivist, interpretive, or critical” (N. Khan, 2014, p. 289). “One of the major features of such methodology is the description of the social world from the point of view of those who are being studied” (Blaikie, 2006, p. 328). Therefore, qualitative methodology is “a naturalistic approach that attempts to investigate the phenomena within their particular context and environment in the real world” (Mohseni Tabrizi & Soleimani, 2010, p. 21). A qualitative researcher, “in an innovative way and without any bias, uncovers the meaning of an aspect of human life that has not been dealt with before” (Creswell, 2012, p. 78). “Qualitative methodology studies subjects within their original settings and tries to avoid manipulating the setting as much as possible” (Mardiha, 2008, p. 28). Therefore, qualitative methodology “can provide us with instruments to make discoveries in areas where we do not have a deep understanding” (King, 2005, p. 5). The main focus of qualitative methodology is “on the interpretation and understanding of the experiences of human beings, the world where they live, and the realities of societies, individuals, groups, and cultures” (Reeves et al., 2005, p. 631). In order to understand the subject of study, experimental phenomenology has been applied in the current research study. In this approach, “it is

attempted to describe particular phenomena according to the lived experience of a group of people. In the process of this approach, the focus is put on the description made by people in order to discover and understand new phenomena" (Spezial & Carpenter, 2007, p. 2). The main goal of experimental phenomenology is "to understand the fundamental structure of the lived experiences of human beings and to reach a deep conceptualization of the such lived experiences" (Sediq Sarvestani, 2006, p. 5). In experimental phenomenology, it is attempted to make Alfred Shultz' approach applicable to sociological research. In order for us to understand the social world and its phenomenological requirements, we need to describe it in a way that is originated within the actual mental experiences of people" (Aspers, 2009, p. 4). Thus, experimental phenomenology basically seeks to know how people make their individual and social world. "Phenomenology could be applied as a method as long as we consider meaning and mentality as the foundation of reality and attempt to discover mentality and the manner of converting it into the reality" (Yousefi et al., 2012, p. 91). Therefore, "the objective of phenomenology is to provide insights for the description of the lived experiences of people" (Reeves et al., 2008, p. 362). Thus, it could be argued that "phenomenology seeks to discover and explain the nature of human beings' lived experiences in their everyday real lives" (Troesch, 2015, p. 58). Therefore, one of the assumptions and foundations of experimental phenomenology is having experience. In the current study, such an experience is the lived experience of the participants of modernity and the manner of reflecting this experience in their narratives of their own social ethics. Inspired by the model proposed by Aspers (2009), the methodology used in the study consists of the following seven steps of stages. First, defining the issue, specifying the questions, and explaining the main goals of the study. The main goal of the current study is to provide a social phenomenology of the lived experiences of Iranians born in the 1980s of modernity and the reflection of such experience in their own social ethics. Second, planning and conducting a pilot study. In the current study, this was conducted through holding in-depth and exploratory interviews with members of the sample and reviewing their lived experiences. Third, selecting a theory and using that as a reference. In the current study, the "Iranians' experience of modernity" theory has been used as the theoretical reference. Fourth, studying the first-order structures that concerns the everyday actions of the participant and consists of the following stages: placing the theoretical framework in abeyance and in the margins, selecting participants in a purposeful way, choosing a method of interviewing, determining the topics that are to be covered in the interview, conducting a semi-structured interview, recording interviews and transcribing them from the tape into the textual form in a careful manner, extracting

and coding units of meaning related to the topics covered. Fifth, providing second-order structures. What is meant by second-order structures is "the theories that sociologists have worked with" (Craib, 2006, p. 112) and consists of conceptualization according to the experiences of the participants. Sixth, investigating the unexpected effects. The major issue at this stage was to take into account the unstable judgements of the participants with regard to their lived experiences of social ethics. Seventh, relating the evidence with the scientific literature and experimental study and relating the second-order structure with the theoretical reference. At this stage, a relation was made between the inferences gained by the phenomenology of the participants' lived experiences of modernity and the manner of reflecting these experiences in their own social ethics.

In the current study, data collection has been conducted according to the principles of in-depth interviews. For this purpose, a practical method for conducting in-depth interviews, proposed by Aspers (2009), was implemented. This technique enables researchers to focus on the meaning structures of the interviews while conducting an interview.

Because the extent of the extent of the whole population is not known beforehand, the features of the main population is not known, the sample size is not defined beforehand, and considering the fact that the repeated selection of components of the sample is possible only though the redefinition of criteria at each stage, the purposive sampling method was used in order to determine the sample of study (Flake, 2008, p. 139). This sampling technique has been designed in order "to increase the understating of individuals, groups, and the development of theories and concepts and allows the researcher to gain a through understanding related to the research questions by selecting cases that are rich in information" (Devers & Frankel, 2000, p. 81). Purposive sampling "is one of the prevalent techniques of sampling where participants are selected according to pre-specified criteria in connection to the particular questions in the study" (Collins, 2007, p. 289). Purposive sampling is conducted "according to the researcher's assumptions based on his/her theoretical and former understanding of the subject under investigation" (Robinson, 2014, p. 132). Therefore, in this sampling technique, "cases are selected with specific goals in mind by the help of an informed person" (Neuman, 2007, p. 13). Thus, in the current study, the researcher in the current study implemented purposive sampling technique and selected members of the sample from among the Iranians who were born in the 1980s (ranging between 25 to 35 years old), were settled in Tehran, had sufficient experiences regarding the phenomenon being studied, and could provide the lots of information regarding the topic

of the study. The distinguishing features of the sample members in the current study include the following: being born in the 1980s, having experience of higher education (master's degree and higher), permanent presence in the social media such as Facebook, Telegram, Viber, etc., being unemployed or having unstable job positions such as working on a contract, project work, or temporary jobs, living away from the family, being single, and having rather permanent friendships with others in the social

media and keeping these relationships. The collection of data continues until the saturation of theoretical data was achieved. Such saturation occurs when "no new information and data could be obtained in the process of interview and classification of the data has developed well with regard to quality and diversity (Corbin & Strauss, 2008, p. 212). In the end, the sample size in the size reached 15 and the sampling process ended having reached the theoretical saturation.

Table 1: Characteristics of the interviewees

Participant	Gender	Age	Education	Father's education	Mother's education	Employment status	Settlement
Code 1	Female	33	Ph.D. candidate	Bachelor degree	Bachelor degree	contract work in a research institute	Living with parents and in the dormitory
Code 2	Male	34	Ph.D. candidate	Illiterate	Illiterate	Project work in municipality	Living in the dormitory
Code 3	Male	33	Master's degree	High school Diploma	Elementary school	Hourly and seasonal work in a firm	Living in a bachelor pad
Code 4	Male	32	Master's degree	High school diploma	Elementary school	Project work in municipality	Living in a bachelor pad
Code 5	Male	29	Master's degree	Junior high school	Elementary school	Contract work in the state broadcasting company	Living in a bachelor pad
Code 6	Female	28	Master's degree	Bachelor degree	Elementary school	Contract work in a counseling institute	Living in a bachelor pad
Code 7	Female	26	Master's degree	High school diploma	Junior high school	Contract work in a travel agency	Living in a bachelor pad
Code 8	Male	32	Master's degree	Junior high school	Illiterate	Contract work in a book store	Living in a bachelor pad
Code 9	Female	27	Ph.D. candidate	Bachelor degree	Junior high school	Contract work in the social welfare office	Living in a bachelor pad
Code 10	Female	30	Master's degree	Junior high school	Junior high school	Contract work in a firm	Living in a bachelor pad
Code 11	Female	31	Master's degree	Illiterate	Illiterate	Hourly work in an addiction-treatment center	Living in a bachelor pad
Code 12	Male	26	Master's degree	High school diploma	Junior high school	Contract work in municipality	Living in a bachelor pad
Code 13	Male	28	Master's degree	Bachelor degree	High school diploma	Hourly work in a clinic	Living in a bachelor pad
Code 14	Female	35	Ph.D. candidate	Junior high school	Junior high school	Project work in municipality	Living in a dormitory
Code 15	Female	30	Master's degree	High school diploma	Junior high school	Contract work in an educational institute	Living in a bachelor pad

Data Analysis

In the current study, the seven-stage Colaizzi method was applied for the purpose of data analysis (Gershon *et al.*, 2009). This method is preferred in studied conducted according to the principles of phenomenological approaches (Aabedi, 2010, p. 216; Straubert, 2011, p. 12; Mohammadpour, 2010, p. 280). In the Colaizzi method, “the researcher first describes his/her own personal experience of the phenomenon being studied. This means that researchers start the work with a full description of their personal experiences regarding the phenomena under investigation” (Cresswell, 2013, p. 194). Hence, in the current study, according to the principles of the Colaizzi method, the contents of interviews were transcribed on paper and were reviewed several times in order to obtain a general understanding of them. Then, a brief interpretation was written for each of the texts and it was attempted to understand and extract the hidden meanings within them. Then, the researcher continued interactions with the interviewees in order to extract the major themes. As the interviews went on, the themes got clearer and more complete and sometimes new themes emerged. Then, the content of them were transcribed and reviewed in order to obtain a general understanding of the texts and their essences. Next, the basic relations between the essences and themes were perceived and in the end, the final structured descriptions were extracted. The next step involved summarizing where the outstanding discourse in each interview were determined in order to produce key data related to each interview. In the next step, the primary qualitative categories, classes, or themes that were more congruent with each other were organized and their major concepts were extracted.

Findings of the Study

Findings of the current study have been clustered round six major indicators of social ethics among Iranians born in the 1980s. These indicators include idealist, contingency, uncertain, smartness, supportive social ethics together with social ethics as a reflection of power relations.

The Idealist Social Ethics

Components of the idealist social ethics among the Iranians born in the 1980s who participated in the current study include lack of reward for acting according to the principles of social ethics, lack of internalization for the social ethics, and lack of correct education with regard to the social ethics (Diagram 1). Findings of the study showed that since observing social ethical standards does not lead to any reward, acting according to such principles is costly for the individual and causes them to be isolated in the society. Some reasons for the presence of this state in the society is the encouragement and repeated occurrence of unethical social actions and providing excuses for them in

social transactions that lead to such actions seem common and ordinary. The high costs of acting according to the principles of social ethics has created ethical dilemmas where the selection of unethical paths seem more logical and cost-effective. These people are interested in living according to ethical virtues and like to observe the criteria of social ethics in their lives. However, such an interest exists only in saying, not in action. Such people are apparently concerned with observing social ethics, though they have a feeling of inability to act according to what they believe. This results in a condition that the observance of social ethics in the society occurs just in the form of advice and mottos. However, that these people verbally admit that the observance of social ethics is useful, in practice they act in another way. These people suffer from a shared problem and only pretend to observe social ethics to the extent that they admit “the art of saying something without the guarantee of performing it in the Iranian culture” and “the difficulty of performing even one of the thousand good things that Iranians talk about in their daily lives”.

In this regard, lack of internalized social ethics in the area of social behavior and transactions, superficial beliefs in values and no internal respect for beliefs together with no education or incorrect education of observing social ethics by social institutions such as families and schools result in a condition that the social and cultural ground of the society are not value-based in practice. According to these people, being educated to ignore others, using illegal methods to attain legal goals, and the existence of a gap between the socialization system and the religious bases of the society act as social traps within the society and do not allow the observance of social ethics to be institutionalized in the society. Therefore, their main emphasis is on changing the socialization system of the society that has turned them into different human beings.

According to the Iranians born in the 1980s, acting according to social ethics is mostly a matter of “should” and they do not consider it as obligatory. For this reason, many forms of social ethical behaviors in daily transactions are meaningless for them. Social behaviors such as not throwing trash on the street, not lying, not throwing cigarette butts on the street, not betraying the environment, going to the workplace on-time, etc. do not have a specific meaning for them. The importance that the state institutions have assigned to individual ethics and lack of attention to the education of social ethics, citizenship ethics, and life ethics have resulted in the ignorance of the role and importance of others’ in social life, ignorance of others in social transactions, and lack of attention towards acting according to the principles of social ethics among the participants of the study.

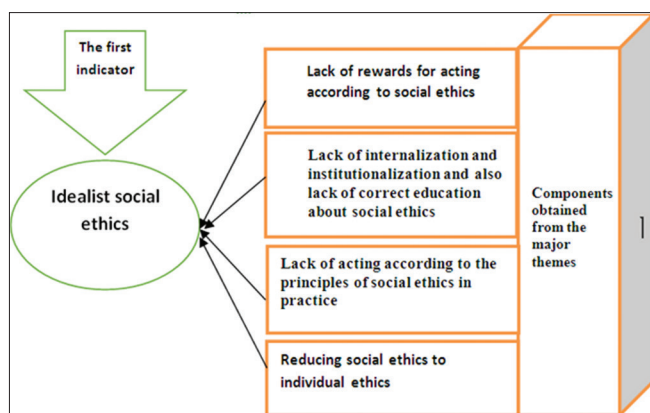


Diagram 1: Components of the first indicators of social ethics among the Iranians born in the 1980s

Contingency Social Ethics

The estimation of benefits and losses according to the logic of cost-benefit and the preference of individual benefits over the benefits of group are among the components of the contingency social ethics within the participants of the study (Diagram 2). Findings of the study showed that within the participants of the study, predominance of keeping and preferring individual benefits in everyday transaction lead to the ignorance of others' rights. Situationalism in the social life is based on individual benefits and determines the manner of transaction with others. According to the participants, they try to prioritize their own individual benefits against the benefits of the whole group because of the process of socialization and social training that they have received from their families and other social institutions. Among the results of this situation are having utilitarian purposes in interpersonal relation, ignoring social regulations because of personal benefits or the living conditions, providing excuses for such utilitarian behavior by referring to religious resources, and ignoring the regulations of social ethics and neglecting them because of the personal benefits in some social situations or being afraid of losing the benefits present in social situations. Observing the regulations and codes of social ethics in the society is accompanied by taking risks and the danger of losing benefits. According to the participants, observing social ethics in the Iranian society is only cost-effective when you are in power; unless, it is logical to ignore social ethics in order to maintain individual benefits and attain better positions in the current structure.

Smartness Social Ethics

Using methods against social ethics in order to attain proper goals, ignoring social regulations and discipline, being considered as a life skill, and the felling of social enjoyment constitute the components of smartness social ethics among the participants of the study (Diagram 3). Findings of the study showed that these people have

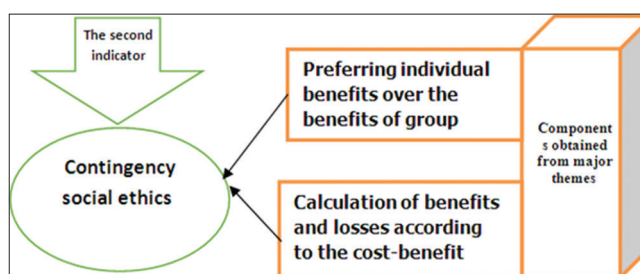


Diagram 2: Components of the second indicator of social ethics within the Iranians born in the 1980s

been raised at such a time (i.e., the 1980s) and families that because of overpopulation and lack of resources, valued ignoring the observance of social regulations and disciplines and respecting the rights of others, cheating in daily social transactions to attain what they desired, lying in job interviews, etc. and considered such things as being smart. As a result, such people prefer to ignore social principles and regulations, even by hurting other people, in order to attain their desired goals. These people consider such behavior as the sign of their audacity that have acquired from society. They believe that the society has shown them to violate social discipline and repeat that in social transactions in order to show strength in daily life. According to the participants, a person has to “keep the wolf from the door” in any way possible within this society.

For such people, being an opportunist person is not a bad feature, especially when living in Tehran. They believe that they have to act smart in the city and urban live; meaning that they can ignore the principles of social ethics for various excuses. This has led to the situation that neglecting other people's rights is an ordinary matter. For such people, acting according to the principles of social ethics is a difficult matter since they get benefits through violating social regulations and have a positive perception of opportunism.

For these people, being an opportunist is a type of life skill. They have been raised and socialized in the specific social, political, cultural, and economic condition of the 1980s and have always been under the pressure of their families to be smart in the society, “keep the wolf from the door”, not to trust anybody, have to move ahead of others, and if they do not act accordingly, they would have a miserable life. Nowadays, these people believe that being an opportunist is a necessity in their lives. Teaching to be smart and act in an opportunist way as a bonus, skill, and privilege starts from their childhood by their families and the society and later in the process of their daily lives continues. Finally, ignoring social regulations for them does not result in any penalty, but leads to some rewards. They take pleasure in cheating others and have good feelings after such occasions. In

addition, the society does not question them with regard to their behavior, but praises them for being smart and familiar with the details of transactions. According to these people, the borders of honesty and dishonesty have been mixed in our society. Having a corrupt personality, theft, duplicity, and deception have turned into the signs of smartness and such behaviors are considered as enjoyable values.

Uncertainty Social Ethics

Having a combinatorial and multiple social identity, being socially disappointed, being bewildered and perplexed, constant comparison of themselves with people born in the 1990s, suffering from feelings of social regret and being a victim, feeling charmed by the social media, and a continuing feeling of bewilderment are among the main components of uncertainty social ethics among the Iranians born in the 1980s participating in the current study (Diagram 4). According to these people, Iranians born in the 1960s and 70s had a clear path ahead of them. Social values were institutionalized among them, they had a specific individual and social identity, and had made their mind with regard to the values they desired to pursue.

On the hand, Iranians born in the 1980s that is a specific political and social period and grew up at an age of severe social and ideological pressure occurring after the Islamic Revolution and the Iran-Iraq war. Then, they faced a lot of suppressions when they entered adolescence and now, they do not have definite beliefs because social values have not been internalized in them. Many of them have an indefinite, vague, and disappointing picture of individual and social identity in their minds and suffer from a feeling of failure, uncertainty, and bewilderment in their social lives. They have borrowed and combinatorial identities, a sign of which is their attempts to copy the identity and lifestyle of the Iranians born in the 1990s. many of them practice to act like those born in the 1990s. For instance, they choose to live away from their families in bachelor pads. If the Iranians born in the 1990s live in bachelor pads, they are happy and satisfied, they are energetic and are comfortable in their relations. On the other hand, that who are born in the 1980s are faced with a lot of problems, get more and

more isolated, uncertain, and disappointed, are unhappy because they do not live together with their families, and they do not take pleasure from living in bachelor pads since it is not congruent with their principles. Although they have decided to live alone, it does not lead to their enjoyment. In fact, they try hard to change the situation but cannot succeed.

Many of such people feel ineffectual and frustrated in their social transactions. The only way to change this condition is to further their education where they have failed, too. They have continued to higher education but do not have permanent jobs and have failed the possibility of marriage and starting a family. Therefore, they have decided to live away from their families in a bachelor pad. The shared experiences of these people have caused them to suffer from a similar pain. They are very pessimistic towards the Iranian society and are in bewilderment with regard to their beliefs and values because they have not been able to adapt to the social and cultural states of the society. These people are close to their thirties and have stayed single because of not having a permanent job, a guaranteed income, and distrust towards the society. This sense of bewilderment has caused them to feel a lot of stress and pressure and be unable to imagine an acceptable and clear future for themselves.

These people have reached a section of their lives where the ethical codes and behavioral principles of those born in the 1980s are ridiculous for those who have been born in the 1990s. According to those born in the 1980s, people born in the 1990s act better in their social transactions, are more pragmatist, and deal more comfortable and easily with matters that they face. On the other hand, people born in the 1980s are a failed generation. They have the ideal of social change, while those born in the 1990s do not seek change and problem. People born in the 1990s make comments in a franker way about issues, style, and values. In fact, they have a sort of honesty in their actions and for this reason, it can be argued that they move ahead of those born in the 1980s and act according to their real tastes. Their individualism is higher than other generations and I comparison to those born in the 1980s, they have felt the pressures of social solidarity.

Iranians born in the 1980s are faced with a sort of tragic lived experience in comparison to those born in the 1990s. According to them, people born in the 1990s move ahead of all generations, have better academic experiences, are faced with more appropriate employment opportunities, enjoy the use of newer technologies, have higher self-confidence, and have better opportunities for life, marriage, and attending a university. They believe that people born in the 1990s have a better chance in everything compared to

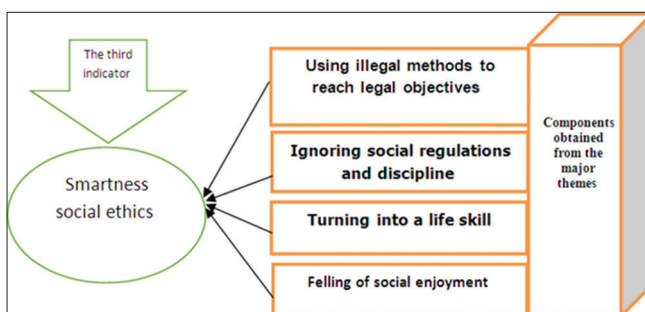


Diagram 3: Components obtained from the themes of the third indicator of social ethics among the Iranians born in the 1980s

themselves, while they have to face a lot of difficulties in the attainment of anything and have to be placed in queues for entering a university or finding a job. On the other hand, those born in the 1990s seek to attain ready-made things and do not need to make a lot of effort for them. They attain and lose their desired objectives easily. In other words, they live in the present moment. The major question that people born in the 1980s ask themselves is “why those born in the 1990s can and we cannot?” They constantly compare themselves with those born in the 1990s and have feelings of being a victim compared to other generations. They see that they have undergone trials and efforts and have not gained any benefits, while those born in the 1990s have enjoyed the benefits of such trials and errors. In many cases, those born in the 1980s resisted the toughness of their families and societies and paid the costs, while people born in the 1990s enjoyed the more open atmosphere without any sacrifice. People born in the 1980s compare the limitations that they have experienced with the freedoms that those born in the 1990s have benefitted from. Those born in the 1980s consider themselves as task-oriented since they are given a task all the time and are supposed to complete without any questioning. On the other hand, those born in the 1990 have been raised in a rights-oriented and consider themselves as rightful to have what they desire.

Finally, while the childhood of those Iranians born in the 1980s has not been simultaneous with digital products and global networks and in the school, they have experienced the minimum amount of student-teacher transactions, they have experienced an informational explosion and revolution that changed them completely. Their presence in the social networks was an instrument of psychological depletion and being disintegrated of the real life. That is because the virtual world is pleasant, while the actual world is full of unhappiness and disappointments. Lack of public space and its limitations in our society especially at the adolescence period of those born in the 1980s led to the condition that they had the highest use of the social media. It was difficult for them to meet and talk with each other since the public domain was being controlled. However, with the introduction of the virtual space they rushed into it since it was not under control. Social networks destroyed the walls that caused such people not to be active in their social transactions. This has resulted in the reduction of their social transactions in the real world and expanding such transactions in social networks. Hence, they have shared their personal experiences of love, separation, and being alone in the virtual world and have found refuge from social pressures in the virtual social networks. However, their values are mocked in this virtual world, too and their bewilderment, miseries, and uncertainties are repeated through the use of these networks, which is very annoying for them.

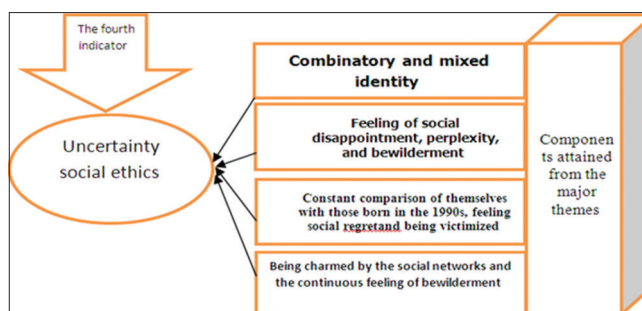


Diagram 4: Components of the fourth indicator of social ethics among the Iranians born in the 1980s

Supportive Social Ethics

Extreme respect and dependence on the families and financial or non-financial help to their families constitutes the major components of participants of the study who had supportive social ethics (Diagram 5). Findings in this regard show that the image that people born in the 1980s have in their minds of their parents is much different than the one in the minds of those born in the 1990s. People born in the 1980s are very attached to their families, they are severely dependent upon their parents and separation from their families is not as easy as it is for those born in the 1990s. They are more emotional and feel more responsible towards their families. While people born in the 1990s do not provide much help to their parents in household chores and do not show a deep respect towards their family, those born in the 1980s believe that they are always concerned with their family matters and helping with them. They believe that paying respect to their family and having no expectation of their parents together with sharing a part of the family's economic and mental problems is one of their major priorities in their lives to the extent that more than being concerned with themselves, they pay much attention to their family and satisfying its needs. These people have a strong sense of belonging towards their parents and family to the extent that they see their parents and family as sacred. This has resulted in a situation that such people have postponed their marriage and starting their own family because of mental and economic considerations that they have with regard to their family. Considering the fact that many of people with supportive social ethics have been born in highly populated families (which was the distinguishing characteristic of the 1980s and its particular situations), they have always desired to finish their education and find a job as soon as possible in order to give a sense of pride to their families and help them financially. Although some of them might not have a permanent job, they are happy because of trying to help their families financially and support them as much as they can. In fact, even though it is true that they have received little support in their lives, they like to support their family. Many of such people continue supporting and helping

their families, despite being away from them. Although they might be unemployed, lack a permanent job, or have financial problems, they all the time try to support their families financially and mentally as much as possible.

Social Ethics as A Reflection of Power Relations

Components of this indicator among the Iranians born in the 1980s include inseparability of the condition of social ethos from power relations, emphasis on structural reforms for the purpose of changing the state of social ethics, the formation of institutional distrust and feeling of social bias and injustice (Diagram 6). Findings of the study revealed that the majority of the participants emphasize the role of government and political administration on the creation of this inappropriate social and economic situation and its relations with the spread of unethical social behaviors within the society. More than any other institution, they blame the government and the ruling administration for the promotion of socially unethical behaviors and the creation of a disordered ethical state in the society. According to the participants, when the government and its affiliates do not observe socially ethical codes and regulations or are ignorant towards them and do not control their actual observance, unethical behaviors will be repeated and institutionalized in the society. Lack of clarity at all levels of the society and inability of the government to create and institutionalize a system of social ethics that is capable of teaching the observance of social ethics and its regulations to all have strengthened the emphasis put on the role of power and political system on the promotion of social unethical behaviors and lack of observance of social ethics on the part of institutions affiliated with the government. Participants in the study emphasized the political origins of the promotions of unethical behaviors and the introduction of ethical disorderliness in the society. These incorrect policies of the government in the creation of an unethical state in the society and making people vulnerable have resulted in a condition that even the most virtuous people conclude that the observance of social ethics in this society is not an easy job. According to these people, the continuing flow of unethical-oriented signals and messages from the powerful institutions has rendered the attempts to change citizens' social behavior and ethos in vain. The society

cannot be expected to observe the regulations of social ethics unless the conditions are changed and the essentials of acting ethically in a society are fulfilled. Participants in the current study emphasized on the role of ethical messages sent by the government to people and believe that the government has to make attempts in order to reform and clarify actions in the realm of social ethics and encourage people to observe the codes of social ethics. According to them, the political administration in the country has not been able to provide the essential conditions for meeting cultural, social, economic, employment, and marriage needs that the Iranians born in the 1980s have. Therefore, many of the members of this generation have moved, whether consciously or unconsciously, towards socially unethical behavior and have ignored social norms. According to these people, the wrong policies of the government and the ruling administration have acted as a force against them, causing them to attain their goals through the application of illegal or unethical instruments, resulting in the increased rates of anomie against social ethics among them. The condition will not be resolved until a reform be made on political structures and social institutions. The government has to reduce the inequalities between social classes and provide the legal conditions and instruments required by the Iranians born in the 1980s to get employed, married, and have a comfortable life. According to those born in the 1980s, the ruling system has shown a biased approach towards many things. This approach has sent unethical signals towards the society and has resulted in the disintegration of social ethics in the society. As a consequence, a feeling of distrust and lack of belonging to the society has occurred among those born in the 1980s. because of the presence of such distrust and gaps between the societies and the government, there is no sufficient ground for the observance of social regulations and social ethics. Because of the reduced trust in the government, unstable ethical authority of the officials responsible for the ethical realm and lack of respect on the part of people towards them, and reduced rates of trust in the institutes and elements whose duty is to provide grounds for the society to act ethically and observe social ethics, social regulations are not observed in the Iranian society and the institutionalization of social ethics within social groups and everyday life has failed. According to the participants, some people avoid acting according to the laws and social regulation since they access sources of power and wealth. Such people commit bigger offenses through violating the principles of social ethics and are rarely captured by the law. The biased behavior of the ruling administration with those who are affiliated to the sources of power and wealth has resulted in the creation of a feeling of injustice within the society. This unfair behavior with those who are powerful and wealthy is not a good social sign but signifies for the ordinary people that they also can neglect each other's

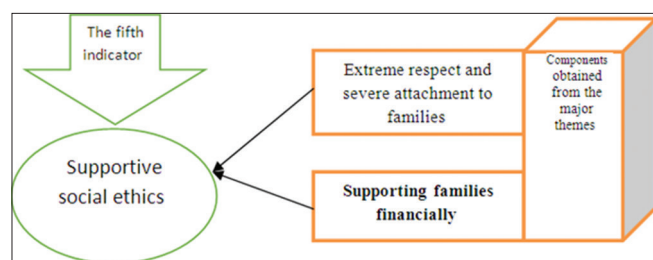


Diagram 5: Components of the fifth indicator of social ethics among the Iranians born in the 1980s

rights, ethical regulations, and social ethics. According to the participants, it is difficult to observe social ethics and social regulations since they are not performed the same for all citizens and the belief that all people are equal according to the law has been weakened. The participants in the current study believed that if one is powerful in the Iranian society, you are rightful; if not, you do not have any rights and the law is against you. According to them, assigning specific advantages for a group of people by the government has resulted in the creation of a gap between the people and government, increased rates of social inequalities, increased rates of unethical behavior and social problems, creation of the feeling of injustice, and the growth of a sort of pessimism against social ethics and government officials.

DISCUSSION

Perhaps the amount of discussion regarding social ethics and the emphasis put on ethics and major ethical virtues in Iran is unique around the world. Such emphases could be observed in areas such as literature, mysticism, philosophy, and the religious culture in this country where people are all the time advised to act according to justice, kindness, tenderness, and equality with others in social and human transactions. Many of the walls in schools, mosques, and government buildings all over the country have been embellished with such ethical advice and propositions. In addition, with the arrival of social networks such as Viber, Telegram, Instagram, Tango, etc. has led to the increased and facilitated rates of exchanging such ethical messages among people. Through the use of these social networks, social messages containing ethical codes and content are distributed that give everyday advice to people. These messages could be in the form of “act ethically” or “act according to the sayings and experiences of great men and women”. These developments show that Iranians desire to live according to an idealist social ethics. In other words, “we live in a society where ethical expectations are high but ethical hopes are low; all of us are idealist, while we know that we are not capable of acting accordingly. Therefore, we are unable to continue, develop, enrich, stabilize,

accumulate, mature, and transfer our achievements. In other words, we are idealist, though we all know that we are not capable of acting according to the principles of idealism and this is a failure” (Farasatkah, 2015, p. 7). In this regard, Bourdieu believes that “social ethics has to be based on a set of structures in order to gain efficiency; such structures have to be those which could lead people to obtain a benefit in the process of observing ethics. For a matter to appear as an ethical issue, it has to have origins in structures and get rewarded and fed by the same structures. Societies where the observance of ethics and individual benefits act against each other because of inefficient social mechanisms, acting according to ethical norms requires either human beings having great virtues and superhuman patience or ethics and ethical life will only exist in the form of advice and propositions. Nowadays, ethics has turned into an institutional and structural matter and the task of guiding the society according to the ethics is performed by social structures and mechanisms” (Malmir, 2010, p. 9). Therefore, we have a virtuous understanding of ourselves according to the idealist social ethics; we know that we should not tell any lies, though we do it. We cannot avoid our ethical conscience; thus, we have a sort of self-accusing spirit that has not turned into the at-peace spirit” (Farasatkah, 2013, p. 9). Thus, in societies where social mechanisms do not support social ethics in practice and are not able to punish those who violate social ethics, we face with a situation where the observance of social ethics in practice and in everyday life is turned into a missing virtue in that society.

According to the contingency social ethics, individual benefits are preferred over social benefits since the person does not see the benefits of him/herself and the benefits of the group he/she belongs to in one direction. Although the tendency towards making a compromise between personal and group benefits is considered as a positive trait and is in live with ethical principles, this concept is at the opposite direction of social ethics. Therefore, contingency social ethics is based on contingency and “the logic of contingency refers to what is required of the actors in an institutional environment to perform” (Farasatkah, 2016, p. 73). Hence, contingency social ethics refers to “a set of personal and social inclinations, desires, and requirements that act as the criteria of personal or social behaviors and are based only on the immediate occasion and personal benefits (Farasatkah, 2010, p. 9). In other words, “if we are to speak in economic terms, lack of resources causes us to make choices that could lead us the highest amount of benefits (Farasatkah, 2011, p. 8). Therefore, contingency social ethics could be defined as the severe desire to gain what is concrete and tangible in an exclusive way. Thus, contingency social ethics is based on benefits and could be considered as the most important, though

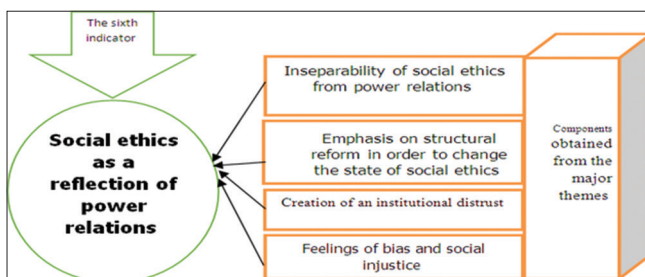
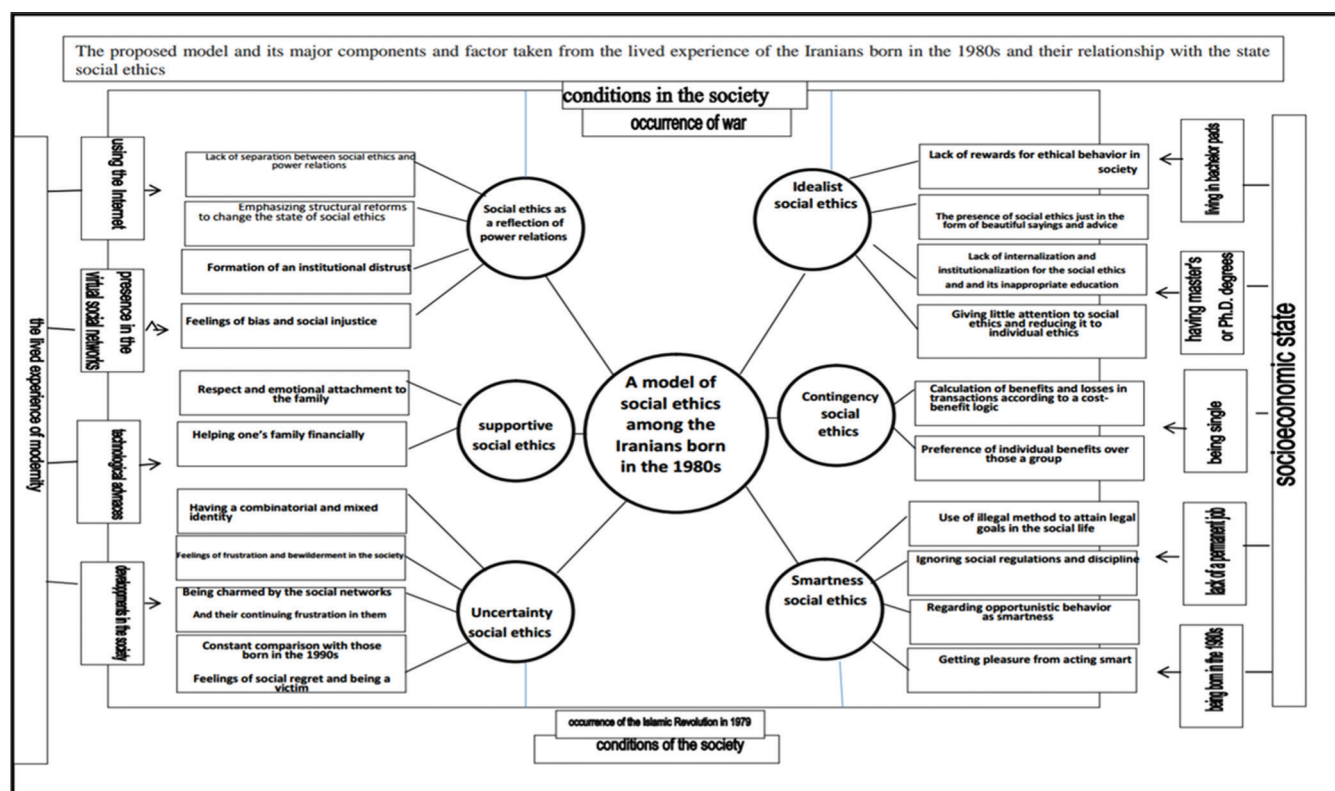


Diagram 6: Components of the sixth indicator of social ethics in the Iranians born in the 1980s

the most negative, aspect of utilitarian behavior among human beings. Benefits could be imagined in two domains: individual and social. Although there are disagreements between diverse schools of thought with regard to defining benefits, determining their instances and dividing them into good and bad benefits, and also determining the boundaries of benefits in both individual and social domains, such a disagreement is much less in the individual domain. On the other hand, as soon as benefits and their contrast with ethics are introduced into the social domain, a serious and deep conflict starts among the theorists (*ibid.* p. 9). The concept of contingency social ethics could be discussed in a wide area within the framework of more general concepts such as utilitarianism.

According to the smartness social ethics, the term “smartness” is one of the commonest terms for the Iranians being used for the description of a kind of behavior. This term is usually accompanied with some other characteristics such shrewdness, innovativeness, and intelligence. The term “smartness” is a vague and ambiguous; “on one hand, it means deference towards social commitments. Whenever we regard a student as smart, we mean the person is hard-working and clever, acts according to his/her commitments, and based on social norms, does not miss any educational opportunity. On the other hand, this term is also used for acting against the law and lack of commitment towards social responsibilities. In the case, smartness is used for the description of those behaviors where personal benefits play a major role” (Goudarzi, 2012, p. 13). In the current study, smartness social ethics is used for the description of situation where the emphasis is on personal benefits. In this interpretation, a smart person does not involve him/herself with risky situations. The person just follows his/her personal benefits and in so doing, uses a combination of verbal skills, cheating, complexity, and ambiguity. Such people have developed complex set of verbal skills and attempt to penetrate into the minds of people they are interacting with in any way possible in order to further their objectives. They are flexible and if it is required, they do not refrain from telling lies, cheating, giving bribes, etc. Such smart people are very skillful in hiding their true intentions and one cannot find out their goals easily. In everyday life and social transactions, “we usually praise smartness and consider its negative and unacceptable aspects as opportunism. It seems that being smart is not something to be ashamed of. We like to interact with smart people and desire to be like them, even to the extent that we advise our children to be smart” (*ibid.* p. 14). Thus, if people violate the law and the social regulation through paying bribes, telling lies, deceiving, and involving in nepotism, they will be considered smart people. Such people mainly follow their personal benefits and in so doing, do even refrain from hurting other people.

According to uncertainty social ethics, the lived experiences of those born in the 1980s have significant differences with those born in the 1990s and the following decades. Conditions within which Iranians born in the 1980s grew up prevented some of them from playing their strategic role in the contemporary history of Iran. This failure could be attributed to the problems and difficulties that suffered, the Iran-Iraq war and the related fears, and the consequent economic, social, cultural, etc. problems. For any Iranian, three things have the utmost importance: identity, job, and marriage. When many of these people have to deal with their primary needs in Maslow’s hierarchy of needs and their basic needs have not been met, they will not feel secure. Consequently, they are able to love and be loved; and if they do not experience love, they cannot self-actualize themselves. In other words, they are unable to act ethically and suffer from a sort of uncertainty in the observance of social ethics. In this regard, Bokharaii believes that “in Maslow’s hierarchy of needs, five types of needs could be matched with five types of social ethics. The first need is the need to live and survive; thus, fair distribution of basic requirements of life such as food, clothing, hygiene, and finding a partner have the utmost importance. This can be matched with its ethical counterpart, that is “justice”. However, the unethical dimension of the first order of needs in Maslow’s hierarchy consists of “bias” and the creation of barriers against the fulfillment of needs of life among people. In the second order of needs in Maslow’s hierarchy, the need for emotional security has been identified whose social prerequisite within the group is the presence of a healthy family, while its negative dimension could be in the form of a formal divorce or an emotional divorce. In the third order of needs, there is the need for belonging and being part of a group. This requires group dynamics and its negative side consists of preventing the formation of groups. The fourth order involves performing social roles within the society that requires being equipped with the needed instruments. The unethical side to this item is unemployment and lack of attempts to perform social duties. The last order of needs in Maslow’s hierarchy deals with the need to self-actualize and requires the presence of grounds in the society in order to expand the level of understanding. Its negative counterpart involves is to keep the society away from abstract and logical thinking” (Bokharaii, 2016, p. 4). Therefore, the uncertainty social ethics has been formed because the basic needs of such people in their lived experience have not been met successfully. Among the major signs of this kind of ethics is having a combinatorial and mixed identity, being socially frustrated, perplexity and bewilderment, feelings of social regret and being a victim, being charmed by the social network and their continuing frustration on them. In the end, power relations could be considered separate from other components of the



society. The issue of power is present everywhere; it could be found in relations and the importance of them or the verbal transactions between people, classes, or social groups and in each of these situations, appears in a unique way. Hence, social ethics could not be considered separate from power and political relations; in other words, the people charged with social ethics are those who are in the ruling administration and our social ethics has its origins in the institutions, occasions, and the institutional environment of power structures. Hence, the only way to reform the unethical condition in the Iranian society is to reform such institutions. "In words, actions have to be in the direction of changing social institution and education has to be a social education conducted through actual performance. Therefore, it could be argued that the Iranians can improve their living conditions through learning and performing. This is no more just a social advice and an unethical discussion, but the gist of the matter is that institutions are the main source of neglecting social ethics in our society" (Farasatkah, 2015, p. 7). The main discussion here is on the opportunities that have been lost in the golden years of those born in the 1980s and have made a deep impression on the social ethics of these people. Some of these golden opportunities cannot occur once more in their lives and they should not be blamed for what has happened. This generation needed economic, social, political, and cultural grounds in order to act in the society, make a better life for themselves in the future, and live according to the principles

of social ethics. The government and institutions were responsible to provide such ground whether in the public or private sector and facilitate the process of employment for them. The government cannot evade the responsibility of solving the unemployment problem for millions of Iranians born in the 1980s who suffer from other problems such late marriage. This kind of approach is a cruel one and will not be successful. The main emphasis of the participants in the study was on structural reforms to change the state of social ethics, the relatedness of social ethics and power relations, the presence of institutional distrust, and feelings of social bias and injustice. These points show that no citizen could be asked to follow two separate social ethical systems and expect them to observe social ethics and act honestly, while ignoring the dishonesty of the ruling administration.

REFERENCES

- Abdi, A., & Goodarzi, M. (2003). *Cultural developments in Iran*. Tehran: Elm.
- Abdollahian, H. (2008). Cultural changes in modern Iran: the youth phenomenon and spending free time. *Youth Studies Quarterly*, (13).
- Abedi, H., Khodadadi, S., Nazari, J., & Ahmadi, A. (2014). Identification of indicators of a successful marriage: a qualitative and exploratory study. *Quarterly of Strategic Studies in Sports and Youth*, (25), 10-23.
- Abedini, Y. (2004). A review of philosophical foundations, characteristics, and methods of qualitative research. *Quarterly of Psychology and Education*, 35(2), 159-185.
- Abrahamian, E. (2010). *A history of modern Iran* (M. Fattahi, Trans.). Tehran: Ney Publications.
- Azad Armaki, T. (2013, October). Regarding ethics and unethical behavior in the Iranian society. *Etemad* [Terhan].

- Berman, M. (2002). *The experience of modernity* (M. Farhadpour, Trans.). Terhan: Tarhe no.
- Blaikie, N. (2005). *Designing social research* (H. Chavoshiyan, Trans.). Terhan: Markaz Publication.
- Bokharaii, A. (2016, November 12). *Ethics in the Iranian society*.
- Craib, I. (2005). *Classical social theory* (S. Mosammaparast, Trans.). Terhan: Agah.
- Cresswell, J. (2012). *Qualitative inquiry and research deign* (H. Danaeefard, & H. Kazemi, Trans.). Terhan: Saffar-Eshraghi.
- Davoodi, M. (2006). Fundamental questions and approaches in ethical education. *Quarterly of Islamic Education Association*, 2(2), 153-175.
- Durkheim, E. (1981). *Philosophy and sociology* (F. Khamseyi, Trans.). Terhan: Markaz-e Irani Publications.
- Durkheim, E. (1990). *Division of labor in society* (B. Parham, Trans.). Babol: Ketabsara.
- Fanaei, A. (2005). The relation between religions and ethics. *Ethic & Psychology & education Quarterly Book Review*, 1(1), 189-220.
- Farasatkah, M. (2007, December 28). Studying social ethics in Iran with a systemic approach. *Etemad* [Tehran].
- Farasatkah, M. (2011). Hardships of religious ethics: on the separation of ethics and religious. *Religious News*.
- Farasatkah, M. (2013, April 11). Good people and good ethics: in a good society with a good ruling. *Donaye Eghtesad* [Tehran], pp. 58-60.
- Farasatkah, M. (2014, December 7). Ethical turns in Iran and intellectuals' responsibilities. *Shargh* [Tehran].
- Farasatkah, M. (2014, December 7). Ethical turns in Iran and intellectuals' responsibilities. *Shargh* [Tehran].
- Farasatkah, M. (2014). Virtual network: freeing or frightening (a deliberation on the social effects of modern technologies). *Mehrnameh*, 5(36).
- Farasatkah, M. (2015, October 20). On the ignorance of power relations. *Etemad* [Tehran].
- Farasatkah, M. (2016). *We Iranians; a historical and social contextualizing of Iranian ethos*. Terhan: Ney Publications.
- Fathzadeh, H. (2014). *Husserl, ethics, Derrida*. Terhan: Qoqnoos.
- Fazeli, N. (2011, August). Hardships of understanding modernity in Iran. *Roozegar* [Tehran].
- Flick, U. (2008). *An introduction to qualitative research* (H. Jalili, Trans.). Thran: Ney Publications.
- Ghaziyani, H. (2008). The state of social ethics in the Iranian society. *Ayin*, (13-14). Retrieved from 25-27
- Giddens, A. (2006). *Modernity and self-identity* (N. Movaffaghiyan, Trans.). Terhan: Ney Publications.
- Giddens, A. (2011). *consequences of modernity* (M. Salasi, Trans.). Terhan: Sales.
- Goodarzi, M. (2012). Smartness as a sign of erosion in social trust. *Etemad* [Tehran].
- Hajiani, A. (2004). *Sociology of ethics: a study on the state of social ethics in the Iranian society*. Terhan: Sociologists Publication.
- Hassankhani, M. (2010). The relationship between ethics and benefits in the international relations. *Political Knowledge*, 6(11), 24-25.
- Jalaeipour, H. (2009). Iran: a malformed society. *Iranian Sociological Association*.
- Malmir, M. (2010, October 7). A missing element called social ethics. *Mardomsalari* [Tehran].
- Mardiha, M. (2008). *The virtue of uncertainty in social studies*. Terhan: Trahe no.
- Mirsepasi, A. (2009). *Ethics in the public domain: deliberation on democratic values and institutions*. Terhan: Sales.
- Moghaddam, G. (2014, March 17). The missing element in our sociology. *Iran* [Tehran].
- Mohammadpour, A. (2010). Research design having mixed methods: paradigmatic principles and technical considerations. *Quarterly of Social Studies*, (48), 15-32.
- Mohseni Tabrizi, A., & Soleimani, M. (n.d.). The relation between changes in socio-cultural changes and the rates of crime: a case study in Lorestan province. *Quarterly of Social Security Studies*, (16), 13-36.
- Movahhed, S., Bagheri, K., & Salahshoori, A. (2008). A study comparing the views of Al-Ghazali and Ned Noddings with regard to ethical education. *Journal of Religious Thought - Shiraz Univeristy*, (27), 39-60.
- Nili, M. (2015, June 30). A moving narrative of the present life of the Iranians born in the 1980s. *Etemad* [Tehran].
- Paya, A. (2008). Consideration on the experience of modernity in Iran. *Wisdom and Philosophy*, 4(3), 36-89.
- Sedigh Sarvestani, H. (2006). *Social pathology: sociology of perversion*. Terhan: Aan Publications.
- Shahabi, M. (2003). Globalization of the youth: subcultures of the youth in the era of globalization. *Quarterly of the Youth Studies*, 1(5).
- Towfiq, A. (2010). *Collection of articles in the first conference on crises and possibilities for social theorizing*. Terhan.
- Towfiq, A. (2012, September). Iranian modernity has not been taken into account seriously. *Etemad* [Tehran].
- Yazdani, A. (2010). The relation between religions and modernity: contrast or compatibility. *Quarterly of Comparative Theology*, 1(3), 103-120.
- Yousefi, A., Sediq, A., Kohansal, A., & Mokrozadeh, F. (2012). An experimental phenomenology of pilgrimage to Imam Reza's shrine. *Iranian Journal of Social Studies*, 6(3-4), 180-18

How to cite this article: Zolfalifam J, Khahg MF, Maleki A, Mazandarani MJZ. Phenomenology of the Lived Experience of Iranians Born In the 1980s of Modernity and Its Consequences on Their Social Ethics. *Int J Sci Stud* 2017;5(4):678-693.

Source of Support: Nil, **Conflict of Interest:** None declared.