

# Social Capital and Women's Attitudes towards Gender Inequalities in Shiraz, Iran

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## Abstract

The aim of this study is to investigate the relationship between social capital and the women's attitude towards gender inequalities. The attitude towards gender inequalities has been studied in six different aspects as follows: social and political participation, employment and labor market, family, civil and legal rights, and gender stereotypes. Social capital is divided into three levels: out-of-group, intra-group and communal. Pierre Bourdieu's and resources theory are theoretical framework. Social survey (using a questionnaire) is the research method in data collection and data analysis. The Sample consists of 600 women aged 20 and over, living in Shiraz. Measured attitude towards gender inequalities showed that most respondents (54.7%) had high and average gender inequalities. inequality in civil and legal rights showed the highest rate of inequality. The measurement of the social capital showed that only 17.3% of respondents had high social capital. The relationship between social capital and the attitude towards gender inequalities was positive. Findings of the study indicate that there is a significant relationship between women's education, their employment status, job type, husband's education, and the number of their children and the dependent variable (the attitude towards gender inequalities).

**Keywords:** Social Capital, Gender Inequality, Attitude, Women

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## **Introduction**

Inequality has been one of the oldest characteristics of human society from the beginning of history, and based on different individual characteristics, has taken various forms among human beings (Saroukhany, 1991). Gender is one of these characteristics; it implies a negative evaluation of some natural –biological- differences of women, and giving supremacy to some of men’s characteristics. The result is the formation of stereotypical views regarding the two genders and consequently sexism.

Throughout human history, gender has been an important factor in shaping a person's position. Each culture attributes different roles to men and women and usually the roles of women are more descending than those of men. Children enter kindergartens, schools and universities with a set of stereotypical beliefs about appropriate gender behavior and this academia often strengthens those beliefs. Society with its families creates different job expectations in the two sexes (Adhami & Roghanian, 2010).

Throughout history, women have been ignored in various forms. Patriarchy has been a dominant system in human societies, and there is no report of the existence of a society in which women are more powerful than men (Giddenz, 1994).

One of the effective factors in raising awareness among women is the development of women's networks which have created conflict between different social identities of women. Along with the basic cultural developments, structural changes particularly increased levels of education and employment which caused the expansion of social networks, the diversity of their roles in society and family, and their team affiliations, and, as a result, paved the way for the entrance of women to public spheres. In light of these factors, women have become aware of the discrimination, inequality, and their inferior position; they feel the imposed oppression, and then try to improve their position.

The absence of women in the public spheres and their lack of decision-making power in their homes have situated men and women in extremely unequal positions. In this condition, many development opportunities are out of women’s reach, and practically monopolized by men. This restriction, not only deprives women but also deprives the society from

the possibility of using an important part of its human resources which is a key factor in social development (RafatJah, 2005). The increasing importance of human resources and the role of women in basic development have attracted the attention of thinkers in recent years (Sen, 2003). Promoting the comprehensive development of a society without taking half of the population of the community into account is not possible; this field requires serious attention and prime research.

Considered as the basis of social capital, social relations make the main core of the community and facilitate individuals' interactions. Quantity and quality of social relationships as well as the amount and type of interaction and support that are exchanged during these interactions are of great importance (Rafatjah & Ghorbani, 2012).

The purpose of this paper is to study the impact of women's social capital on their attitudes towards gender inequality. For this purpose, six factors are considered: inequality in gender-based division of labor, gender stereotypes, inequality in legal and civil rights, inequality in political and social participation, inequality in power and decision-making, and employment prejudice.

### **Literature Review**

In their research done in Shiraz, Movahed, et al (2005) concluded that factors such as employment and education of women particularly mothers have a major impact on changes in social and family relationships. Moafi (2007) in a study in Kerman indicates that a negative relationship exist between anomy feeling and social capital; it means that while the women's social capital increases, the level of their anomy reduces.

Brooks and Bolzendhal (2003) have done a study considering the changes in gender attitudes in the United States. They believe that changes in gender roles are directly related to the change in attitudes, behavior, and the level of inequality in specific social institutions in America. They show that the ideological learning processes are an important mediation factor in changing generational attitudes.

Morrison and his colleagues (2005) studied feelings and experiences on gender inequality in British students. They tried to show the gender inequality in an academic and educational context. While post-feminist

opponents claim that gender prejudices have completely disappeared, these researchers were able to prove that gender inequality still exists in educational institutions.

Srinivasan (2009) in a study in India shows that employment, income, education, religion, and family structure (nuclear and expanded) have a significant impact on women's participation in making decisions. Social networks influence these decisions, so that women of expanded families participate more in making decisions.

In Australia, Arusha and Potrafke (2010) indicate that politics does not play a significant role in gender, and even dictatorial regimes do not deprive girls from education. On the other hand, culture and religion have the primary and significant role in sexual prejudice. This prejudice is more obvious in Muslim countries.

According to Bagheri Noaparast (2011), those women who have more access to educational, career, and family support in economical, intellectual, and emotional fields have a higher mental health. The results of regression procedure also suggest that family support and social capital play a pivotal role in estimating women's level of mental health.

### **Theoretical Framework**

Gender inequality is an important issue that affects the micro and macro levels of a society and can be examined from various aspects. Sociology, economics, and psychology explain inequality in certain ways. This study is conducted with an emphasis on sociological theories which will be discussed in detail in the following part.

### **Conflict Theory and Gender Inequality**

A conflict theory sees social complexes filled with struggle and tension between their components. Despite the variety of theories of conflict, all of them agree that the driving force behind social struggle and conflict is inequality. This theory emphasizes the power, resources, and the unequal access to the power. Since men are stronger than women, they have used this capability as a medium to impose pressure and also to create and maintain a system of classification based on gender (Turner ,1998).

### **Collins' Theory of Gender Classification**

Historically, Collins' theories are the first ideas presented on inequality. Discussing the importance of classification, Collins believes that classification includes all important aspects of our lives, such as wealth, politics, job, family, institutes, local societies, and life style; classification is a process which occurs in contacts among people in different areas of life. One of these areas is the contact between men and women who live in an organized family relationship.

Collins believes that family structure, like that of other institutions of power and domination, is related to the two genders; this inequality depends on cultural capital, and its permanence is a result of dialogues, rituals and traditions (Collins, 1975). Collins mentions two factors as the primary reasons of change in gender classification: 1) social institutes affecting violence; 2) Institutes that affect the condition of women and men's labor market.

### **Chafetz's Theory of Gender Classification**

Chafetz is one of the most important feminist theorists who have attempted to provide a perfectly scientific explanation for gender classification. Her classification theory is a perfect combination of stability and change, which are suffused with each other. Chafetz points out two types of forces that put fundamental and important pressure on the entire system of classification: coercive forces and voluntary forces (Turner 1998, p. 236 ). Essential elements of coercive forces are the division of labor at the micro level and the social definitions such as gender ideology, gender norms, beliefs, and gender stereotypes. Generally, these definitions result in the devaluation of women's work both inside and outside the home.

### **Exchange Theory**

Humenz formulated the basic ideas of exchange theory. He believes that the rule of equality is one based on which human beings receive rewards in exchanges with others proportionately to their investment. Investment can be hereditary such as gender and race or can be acquisitive including those that always have acquisitive value or those which are involved in transactions without a mediating factor (Cook et al. 1995, p. 263).

### **Resources Theory**

Resource theory can be considered as another version of exchange theory. This theory is based on three basic premises:

1. Everyone is trying to meet his/her needs and achieve his/her desired goals.
2. Most people's needs can be met through social interaction with other individuals or groups.
3. During these interactions, there is a continuous exchange of resources that help the person achieve the individuals' or group's effective goals.

The main idea of this approach is that a person has the resources which are necessary for another person to achieve his/her goals, needs, desires, and interests (Abbott and Wallace, 1983, p. 130). In family structure, according to Blad and Wolfe (1970), power of decision-making is on behalf of the one who has more facilities in married life.

### **Pierre Bourdieu's Theory**

Pierre Bourdieu is undoubtedly one of the most important and most influential intellectuals and scientists of the twentieth century. The concept of Habitus and Bourdieu's theory together provide a new method for class studies and evaluation, which reflects the complexity of current social world.

In Bourdieu's view, women have a very important role in converting the economic capital into symbolic capital in a family. This is possible by the cultural capital that is in the hands of women (Bourdieu, 2001).

According to Bourdieu, family serves as a field of the interaction of physical and economic power relations, and above all the symbolic power. The field, in Bourdieu's view, is the main center of creating order, and for understanding male-domination, it is necessary to study its reinforcing institutions. Family is one of these major institutions (Ashall, 2002, p. 85). In Bourdieu's viewpoint, capital is defined as the ability and skill that a person hereditarily or acquisitively can acquire and then use it for his or her own advantage in order to improve his/her position in relations with other individuals and groups in the society. He distinguishes four types of capital:

1. Economical capital: Money or material markets that can be used to produce goods and services;
2. Social capital: Opportunities and relationships in groups and social networks;
3. Cultural capital: Informal and personal skills such as habits, behaviors, verbal styles, tastes, and life styles;
4. Symbolic capital: The use of symbols to legitimize the possession of various levels of other forms of capital (Turner, 2003).

Overall, these four kinds of capital make an entire capital for every individual in a social group. In fact, each person's sharing of special forms of capital determines their sharing of other available forms of capital in society (Garrosi, 2006). The various structures of economical habitus, tastes, and symbols should not be ignored in the study and evaluation of social capital. On the other hand, in his practical research, he shows that there is a tight relationship between social positions and other factors that occupy these positions (Ritzer, 1379).

### **Social capital theory**

Social capital is one of the most influential concepts in national resources of recent years. The roots of this concept dates back to pre-1916, when it was used by Hani Fan from Western Virginia University (Woolcock, & Narayan, 1999 ). But it was absent in discussions for some decades until it was applied again by Canadian urban sociologists, Sim, Loosely and Seely in the 1950s. In 1960, it was used by an exchange theoretician named Homans who used this concept in 1961. It was used for the first time in Jane Jacob's classic work, *Death and Life of American Megacities*. In 1970, Glenn Glory benefitted from this term to describe the urban problems (Fukuyama, 2006).

Coleman's (1998) research has studied social capital on three levels: micro, macro and middle level. Trust is the keyword in his study; personal trust between two actors (in micro level), mutual trust between groups (middle level), and the system of trust in the level of institutions and social organizations which is referred to as macro-level social trust .

Coleman believes that the source of social capital is the essence of social relationship. This relationship has the following features:

1. They should be created according to the system of commitments and expectations.
2. They should have the potential capacity for quick and easy exchange of information.
3. They should be based on the shared and accepted social norms and values
4. They should have (formal and informal) effective enforcement (Vahida et al., 2004).

Coleman uses the concept of social capital to understand the role of norms and values within the family or social networks in order to strengthen the human capital in this way (Motavali, 2005). Francis Fukuyama offers a regular classification of social capital resources. He puts these resources and the ways of creating them in four groups :

1. Institutional resources that are provided by the laws and legal systems.
2. The spontaneous resources created by mutual interaction of members of a society.
3. Exogenous resources such as ideology, religion, culture, and shared historical experience of mutual interaction created by community member .
4. Natural resources which are made through a system of kinship, ethnicity and race. (Vahida et al., 2003) .

### **Theoretical Framework**

The theories which are used in this article are those of Bourdieu and the Resources theory. Bourdieu's theory considers all aspects of gender inequality, all social processes leading to gender inequality, the upper and lower classes, and all types of social, economical, and cultural capital. He starts his idea of how to shape attitudes, beliefs, and behaviors with the discussion of habitus and develops that with the discussion of the structures and social fields. Bourdieu explains the separation of public and private areas and the formation of upper and lower classes (men and women) in different social layers.

According to Bourdieu, there's a cyclic cause in gender inequality system of the societies. Social structures form the individual tastes and the



individuals based on these forms strengthen the existing social order. Talking about types of social capital, Bourdieu explains gender inequality so that the men are always the stronger group that has the most property and resources in society, while the women are held in the oppression and deprived of using these resources. Bourdieu argues that, economically, women have always been seen as less valuable and have always received less than their real wages in labor market.

The Resources theory considers inequality in two forms: receiving lower wages than deserved (women) and receiving higher wages than deserved (men). Both Bourdieu's and Resources theory believe that the unequal distribution of and access to resources between men and women is the main cause of gender inequality. Women who have greater access to social and economic resources will have more negative attitudes towards this inequality and vice versa; those women whose access to these resources is imbalanced and unequal, will have a more positive attitude towards gender inequality. Different factors affect the gender inequality. The most important of these factors are education, employment, income, membership in group networks association, etc. The more women have access to these resources, the more equitable is their relationship with men.

### **Data and Method**

This research has been conducted using a survey. In order to collect the data a self-administrated questionnaire was prepared which included some informational questions, questions measuring social capital, and attitude to gender inequality. Population of this research includes women aged 20 and over residing in Shiraz during the research. In the survey, based on Lin formula, 600 women in random were selected as the sample. Nominal validity and Chronbach's alpha have been used to verify the validity and reliability of the research. The questionnaire is presented to several professors of Shiraz University for their judgment. The results was that for social capital, measured by a 35-item scale, the Cronbach's alpha was 0.88, and for the attitude to gender inequality, measured by a 36-item scale, the Cronbach's alpha was 0.83. The collected data was processed by using the statistical package for social sciences (SPSS), at two levels of descriptive (percentage and abundance distribution) and inferential statistics (multiple regression, t-test, and variance).

The dependent variable in this study is the attitude of women towards gender inequality which is identified through their expression of agreement or disagreement on gender inequality in the society.

Six factors are considered in measuring gender inequality: inequality in gender-based division of labor (5 items), gender stereotypes (5 items), inequality in the legal and civil rights (5 items), inequality in political and social participation (5 items), inequality in power and decision-making (7 items), and inequality in employment (7 items). It has been measured in the Likert Spectrum, and considering all these aspects, the overall factor of attitudes to gender inequality (36 items) has been studied. The independent variable which is the social capital is studied in regard with three factors: intra-group (13 items), out-of-group (13 items), and communicative capital (22 items).

### **Research Hypotheses**

There is a relationship between the employment status of a woman and attitude towards gender inequality.

There is a relationship between a woman's marital status and attitude towards gender inequality.

There is a relationship between a woman's job position and attitude towards gender inequality.

There is a relationship between a woman's major of studies and attitude towards gender inequality.

There is a relationship between a woman's social-economical class and attitude towards gender inequality.

There is a relationship between a woman's age and attitudes towards gender inequality.

There is a relationship between the number of a woman's children and her attitude towards gender inequality.

There is a relationship between a women's education and her attitude towards gender inequality.

There is a relationship between a women's income and her attitude towards gender inequality

There is a relationship between the husband's income and his attitude towards gender inequality.

There is a relationship between the media and attitude towards gender inequality.

There is a relationship between social capital and attitude towards gender inequality.

## Results

The distributions of demographic and socioeconomic variables are shown in Table 1. These variables include age, education, occupation, marital status, and the number of children. The sample population consists of 600 women. Their ages range from 20 to 50 and over; 36.8 percent of them are unmarried, 59.2 percent are married, and 4 percent are widows. The majority of women are unemployed (64.4%) and 35.7 percent of them are employed. Their education ranges from illiterate to postgraduate and Ph.D. The majority of women are in postgraduate and Ph.D. category (50.8%), and only 2.5 percent of them are illiterate. 25.67 percent of women have two children, 25.13 percent have one child, and 13.24 percent of women have three children.

Table 1: Demographic and social features of respondents (%)

Age group		Marital status		Number of child		Education level		Employment status	
20-29	49.4	Unmarried	36.8	0	21.08	Illiterate	2.5	Employed	35.7
30-39	7.37	Married	59.2	1	25.13	Primary school	4.8	Unemployed	64.6
40-49	9.5	Widow	4.0	2	25.67	Guidance school & high school	11.2	Total	100
50 & higher	5.3	Total	100	3	13.24	Diploma	30.08		
<b>Total</b>	<b>100</b>			4 & higher	15.67	Undergraduate	44.8		
				<b>Total</b>	<b>100</b>	Postgraduate & Ph.D.	50.8		
						<b>Total</b>	<b>100</b>		

Table 2 represents three different aspects of social capital. As is observable, for the out-of-group social capital, 64.5% of the participants are in the low group. In other dimensions of social capital, the majority of the participants are in the medium category.

Table 2:three-dimensional distribution of women’s social capital

Social capital	Percentage		
	Low	Medium	High
Out-of-group social capital	64.5	32.5	3.0
intra-group social capital	17.0	64.2	18.8
communicational social capital	17.7	65.8	16.5

### Inferential Statistics

Table 3 shows the results of average difference in attitude towards gender inequalities based on employment status. The difference is fully significant. As is evident, the average of the employed participants' attitudes towards gender inequality is 86.91, whereas that of the unemployed women are 94.19. The acquired T is 4.6 at the significance level of 0.000. According to these results, employed women feel more negative attitude than unemployed women and housewives.

Table 3: The average differences of women’s attitudes towards gender inequality based on their employment status

Employment status	Frequency	Mean	SE	SD	T	Sig
Employed	214	86.91	1.24	18.20	4.60	0.000
Unemployed	386	94.19	0.95	18.79		

As Table 4 suggests, there is no relationship between marital status and the attitudes towards gender inequality rate of these participants. The acquired F is 1.51 at the significance level of 0.22. In fact, the variance analysis does not show any significant relationship among the means. Therefore, marital status does not have any effects on women's attitudes towards gender inequalities.

Table 4: Variance analysis of women's attitudes towards gender inequality based on their marital status

Marital status	Frequency	Mean	SE	SD	F	Sig
Unmarried	221	90.1	1.33	19.78	1.51	0.22
Married	355	92.69	0.97	18.27		
Widow	24	88.87	3.92	19.20		

The difference between attitudes towards gender inequalities based on the participants' job position is shown in Table 5. In a variance analysis,  $T = -2.373$  shows a degree of significance of above 95% ( $\text{sig} = 0.019$ ). According to these results, the highest percentage belongs to service jobs (91.6%) and the lowest percentage belongs to women in other jobs (84.73%) who have more negative attitudes towards gender inequalities

Table 5: Variance analysis of women's attitude towards gender inequality based on their job status

Job Status	Frequency	Mean	SD	T	Sig
officials and high-status jobs	154	84.73	17.917	-2.373	0.019
Service jobs	60	91.48	20.569		

In Table 6, results from the mean difference between women's attitudes towards gender inequalities based on their university majors are presented. The F value in this analysis ( $F = 15.63$ ) shows that there is a 99% chance ( $\text{sig} = 0.000$ ) that the two variables are significantly related.

Table 6: Variance analysis of women's attitude towards gender inequality based on their university majors

Majoring study	Frequency	Mean	SE	SD	F	Sig
Under diploma	118	98.75	1.65	17.96	15.63	0.000
Humanities, natural sciences, agriculture,	392	91.15	.99	19.57		
Engineering, art, medical, and paramedical	90	83.74	2.09	19.87		

As can be seen in the Table 7, there are three categories of social classes from high to low. According to the value of F (F= 1.68) and the significance level (sig= 0.169), there is no significant difference between the two variables. The Table shows that the highest average belongs to the lower class indicating that women of low classes experience the most inequalities and their attitudes towards inequality is more negative. However, according to the results, there is no remarkable difference between the classes.

Table 7: Variance analysis of women’s attitudes towards gender inequality based on their socio-economic classes

SES study	Frequency	Mean	SE	SD	F	Sig
Upper class	79	90.07	2.41	21.47	1.68	0.169
Middle class	448	91.98	1.15	18.62		
Lower class	73	95.63	2.213	91.10		

Finally, all the economical, social, and demographic dependent variables in the research were analyzed using linear regression equation. The results, as are demonstrated in Table 8, can be summarized as follows. The first hypothesis of this study is the relationship between age and attitudes towards gender inequality. Multiple regression procedure was used for this purpose. According to the results showed in Table 8, Pierson Coefficients is 0.057 which suggests a weak relationship.

Table 8: Results of multiple regression analysis: Relationship between the independent variables of the study and the dependent variable (attitudes towards gender inequality)

variables	R	R2	SE	Beta	F	Sig
Age	0.057	0.003	18.88	0.057	1.91	0.166
Number of children	0.131	0.017	19.02	0.131	6.40	0.012
Women’s education	0.212	0.045	18.48	-0.212	28.24	0.000
Women’s income	0.069	0.005	18.13	-0.069	1.03	0.311
Husbands’ income	0.091	0.008	19.43	0.091	2.79	0.095
Mass media	0.122	0.015	18.77	-0.122	9.09	0.003
Social capital	0.184	0.034	18.59	0.184	20.88	0.000

Considering R2= 0.003, we find that 3 percent of the changes of the variable attitudes towards gender inequality is determined by the changes in age variable. In addition, B coefficient shows that by increasing one

percent in age, 0.108 percent of women's attitude towards gender inequality decreases. Regarding the quantity of Beta = 0.057 and the significance level of 0.166, it can be concluded that a possible relationship between age and attitudes towards gender inequality is rejected.

The second row in Table 8 shows the results on the relationship between the number of children and inequality attitudes.  $R^2 = 0.017$  indicates that 1.7 percent of the changes in inequality attitudes is determined by the independent variable, number of children. The acquired B coefficient suggests that by increasing one percent in the number of children variable, the inequality attitudes variable will increase by 1.5 percent. Considering the quantity of Beta = 0.131 and the significance level of 0.012, the conclusion can be drawn that the independent variable of number of children has a significant relationship with gender inequality attitudes variable.

Education level is the next variable in the equation. The  $R^2$  coefficient indicates that 0.045 percent of the changes of attitudes towards gender inequality is determined by changes in women's education variable. The resultant B coefficient shows that by increasing one percent in the education variable, -3.76 percent of the attitude towards gender inequality will decrease. According to Beta quantity (-.12) and the significance level (Sig = 0.000), one can find out that there's a reverse and significant relationship between these two variables and our hypothesis is confirmed by more than 99 percent level of significance. In fact, education level has been a determining factor in women's attitudes and behavior.

The next hypothesis is about the relationship between women's attitudes towards gender inequality with the variable of income. The value of  $R^2 = 0.005$  shows that the income variable can explain % 0.5 of the variance in the dependent variable in this sample. The negative value of Pearson correlation coefficient indicates that the relationship between these two variables is a negative one, so that the increase in income leads to the decrease in attitudes towards gender inequality among women. However, considering the value of F (1.03) and the significance level (sig = 0.311), it can be referred that the relationship between the amount of income and the participants' inequality attitudes is not significant.

Next comes the relationship between husbands' income and the dependent variable as is reflected in Table 8. The Value of Pearson correlation coefficient in this hypothesis is 0.091. The value of  $R^2=0.008$  suggests that the husbands' income variable is able to explain 0.8 percent of the variance in the dependent variable. The negative coefficient means that the increase in husbands' income leads to the decrease in women's attitudes towards gender inequality. However, the amount of F (3.81) and the significance level (0.055) indicates that the relationship between the amount of husbands' income and attitudes towards gender inequality is not significant.

The next hypothesis in this study is the relationship between the use of media and gender inequality attitudes. According to the results, the value of  $R^2$  is 0.015 showing that the media variable can explain 1.5 percent of the variance in the dependent variable. The resulting B coefficient indicates that increasing one unit in the variable of media, 3.82 percent of women's attitudes towards inequality will decrease. The negative value of Beta coefficient is suggestive of a negative relationship between the variables. Therefore, as the amount of using media increases among women, their gender inequality attitudes become more and more negative and vice versa. The reason is that through the media, women can obtain more knowledge and information and so will be more aware of their rights, their roles, and their status in society.

The relationship between social capital and the dependent variable has also been reflected in Table 8. The value of Pearson correlation coefficient between social capital variable and attitudes towards gender inequality is 0.184 and the value of  $R^2$  is 0.034. This means that the variable of social capital explains 3.4 percent of the variance in the dependent variable in the population sample. The independent variable also determines 3.2 percent of the variance in the attitude variable. This will help in calculating the amount of the standard coefficient or  $R^2$  that is .032. The value of F (20.88) is a big number, and the significance level of 0.000 strongly refers to a significant relationship between the two variables. The positive Beta indicates a positive relationship between the variables. Thus, the higher the women's social capital, the stronger is their attitudes towards gender inequality. This means that individuals with higher social capital have more knowledge and information and this advantage adds to their feelings about and awareness of gender inequality in the society.



## **Discussion and Conclusion**

In this study, attitudes to gender inequality in many aspects were assessed. Related to the independent variable of social capital, demographic variables such as age of the participants, number of children, education level, income, husband's income, and socioeconomic class were also examined.

Among the independent variables, age has no significant relationship with the gender inequality attitudes. This implies that women in all age groups have equal awareness of gender inequality. Since women are improving their social connections and their educational status and also because of the increasing use of mass media, their knowledge and awareness about their rights and positions in society have greatly expanded than before.

The education level of women was another variable for which the a negative and significant relationship gender inequality attitudes was observed based on regression analysis results. According to Bourdieu, one of the cultural investments, which is convertible to economic capital, is institutionalized in the form of educational qualifications (Bourdieu, 2001). According to the Resources Theory, education is one way of empowering women and their thoughts and plays an important role in shaping their attitudes.

Another variable that has a significant relationship with the women's attitudes towards gender inequality is their employment status. In Resources Theory, the employment status of women is a major determinant of their power in family and even society because comparing to housewives, employed women's financial independence grants them more authority in making decisions. Therefore, the traditional division of labor is accepted by many housewives who are kept in the private spaces of the homes and have been deprived of participation in public places. They have adopted the gender stereotype and therefore, in their views, gender inequality is a positive attitude. Most theorists of Conflict and Resources Theories assign a specific role to women's employment. Collins (1975) mentions the women's employment as an important resource by which women are able to play a significant role in the family. This factor increases the women's power and influence and enhances

their position in society. Bourdieu also names women's employment as a kind of economic investment.

The marital status was another variable discussed in this paper. The results show that there is no difference between the attitudes of women based on their marital status. The improvement of public communications and the entrance of more women into social contexts, whether single or married, can explain this result.

One interesting result of this paper is that unlike other research in which the reader finds a significant relationship between income and the dependent variable of inequality, in this paper there is no such a relationship between the women's or their husbands' income and their socio-economic class with the attitudes to gender inequality. It seems that all classes of the society, regardless of their economical status, experience gender inequality, understand it clearly, and attempt to change it. Cultural and social structures have more effect on people's thoughts than economical factors because cultural and social structures provide women with advanced technology, social connections, and broad communicative networks and they broaden women's viewpoints.

The variable of media has been one of the independent variables that at a significance level of 0.99 have a significant relationship with attitudes to gender inequality. Mass media have an important role in making women aware of changes occurring in different areas of a society as well as their own problems. They are capable of bringing revolutionary ideas. Universally, the importance of media is more obvious since they introduce women to new cultures. Surely, mass media are more effective in shaping people's attitudes and behaviors than traditional values.

The next variable which has a significant relationship with gender attitudes is the participants' occupation. The average difference in attitudes towards gender inequalities based on the kind of job shows that among various occupations, those which are regarded as high-status ones as well as official stuff have a lower average which indicates the effect of job type on attitudes towards gender inequality. Because of their presence in the society and their high awareness of its condition, women who have high-status jobs understand the gender inequality much better and always oppose gender discrimination. According to Bourdieu, symbolic capital is a kind of capital that is usually displayed as power and social prestige. In

Bourdieu's symbolic capital theory, there is more emphasis on power as a determining factor in explaining the position of an individual within a social hierarchy (Swartz, 1996). Top jobs *شدد* empower any individual. According to the Resources Theory, an individual with more resources will also have more power in decision-making. Husbands' occupations also have a significant relationship with attitudes to gender inequality. Research findings show that women whose husbands have occupied and have top ranks in the society have a more negative attitude towards gender inequalities.

One of the important variables in this study is social capital. In general, this variable had a significant relationship with gender attitudes at the significance level of 99 percent. Women will earn financial and emotional support as well as a lot of power by applying for membership in networks and clubs. As Bourdieu states, social capital is the sum of actual and potential resources, which can be a result of partnership in durable networks of institutional relationship among individuals or simply is the result of being a member in a group. Connections of networks should be positive and reliable. In his viewpoint, social capital is a type of social product that is the result of social interaction (Bourdieu, 1989). Furthermore, social capital determines the norms and values of the society, strengthens the commitments among people and groups, confirms the social participations, and keeps the solidarity of the society in emergencies and trouble times. In other words, the networks of family, friends, neighbors, etc. raise the quality of life for women in all aspects and women with a collective power gained in this way will be able to achieve great success in changing their position and realizing their rights. Like economic capital, Bourdieu considers social capital as an important and effective tool in empowering the individuals or groups. Hence, it can be mentioned as an important factor in the analysis of inequality.

Finally, attitude towards the gender inequality has been evaluated in six areas of employment, political and social participation, gender stereotypes, the civil power, and decision-making. The lowest average in the attitude towards gender inequality is in the sphere of civil law; then comes the gender stereotypes. Other categories are, respectively, inequalities in power and decision making in the family, inequality in the division of labor based on gender, scope of work, and employment, and

the attitude towards inequality in social and political participation. These results show an increase in women's awareness of gender inequalities in the law. After that come the gender stereotypes expressing such ideas that women inherently and naturally are weaker than men and should be controlled and subjugated by men; or that women should be known as the second sex.

Due to the expansion of communications and membership in social networks and the increase of women's social capital, women no longer accept the gender stereotypes that suggest the superiority of men over women. They reject the gender prejudices that are traditionally popular and cause the subjugation of women in a culture. Regarding power and decision-making, women no longer accept men's headship in the family. The reason of the changes occurring in social and cultural structure of society, as mentioned above, is the entrance of women into public employment, labor market, and higher education institutions. They demand equal authority power in family and equal representation in making decisions. Blood and Wolf (1970) believe that the balance of power in family decisions is in the hands of that party that brings more facilities into married life. Women gradually add to their knowledge and awareness of their abilities and skills; and they will not accept gender-based division of labor in the market and homes anymore. However, they show less resistance regarding other areas, because the system of society is patriarchal and laws and rules are set based on this system.

The least frequent attitude towards inequality is on political participation. This can be due to the domination of a completely patriarchal system in which women have not yet actively and seriously entered. However, the overall patriarchal system is being challenged by the various and integral processes of globalization, electronics revolution, expansion of social networks, widespread presence of women in different public spheres, and consequently by the women's growing awareness and insights. Putting together, all these factors will increase the bargaining power of women.

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