Discourse Analysis of Family Models in Contemporary Iranian Society with an emphasis on Spouse Selection

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Abstract

The present research, in an attempt to represent and interpret the family models present in Iranian society regarding spouse selection, has reviewed and classified data from in-depth interviews, which were the outcome of the interpretation of the lived experience of young female activists residing in the city of Qum. Using the discourse analysis method and theoretical framework of interpretive sociology, including David Cheal's discourse theory and social structure theory, the following five family models were represented as being family models within contemporary Iranian society: "postmodernist family," "modernist family," "transitional family," "traditional family," and "Islamic family".

According to the findings, it was concluded that each of the family models is the outcome of a diverse phenomenon, has emerged in line with the social and cultural developments within society and contains open (aligned with the political authority) and closed (opposed to the political authority) discourses. These results also showed that despite the positive aspects that are contained within the models, they also are confronted with certain negative and detrimental aspects. However, the Islamic family model has potential features and advantages that may allow it to be considered the most suitable model for society.

Keywords: Discourse analysis, family discourse, family models, spouse selection, the Islamic model

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Introduction:

Regarding the subject of the current paper, it has to be said that the significance of the family institution is such that even postmodern writers, such as Cheal, believe that the disintegration of the family is a small part of the wider process of cultural disintegration (Steel, & Kidd, 1388 SH).

Burgess (1926) states: *"The family should be studied and investigated as a permanent concern, based more on a natural unity and arising from personal interactions among its members than relying on efforts to impose family duties based on law"* (quoted by Bernardes, 1384 SH). Based on this, paying attention to the family in the form of a discourse-oriented problem has been one of the concerns of researchers in the field of the family, while noting that the emergence of different discourses and the changes occurring within the family are real contemporary phenomena.

Therefore, considering a certain shape and form to be abnormal, because it is different, is shirking from the burden of the tasks ahead (Adams, 1971 quoted by Bernardes, 1384 SH). Therefore, the existence of different discourses, even though closed and opposed to the authority and social customs prevalent in society, cannot be ignored and must be given due attention during planning and policy-making.

In this regard, family formation by the members of society can be seen as being a very influential passage and an important turning point in life. Marriage is a divine bond, it is a source of peace for the husband and wife (See: Qur'an, 30:21) and is the foundation of spiritual perfection. The marriage ceremony has great symbolic importance in society, and by validating the form and nature of marriage, society expresses a clear view of sexuality. According to Giddens, among the changes that are occurring currently, none were changing at the levels that were occurring in personal life, sexual relationships, emotional life, marriage and family (Giddens, 1387).

The changes that have taken place in the area of marriage have caused the randomization of family formation and the disappearance of the traditional model in spouse selection. In addition, family formation has become a discourse where various, competing discourses, have been formed. This phenomenon must be investigated as a social issue, a problem that can be referred to as a

new type of generation gap (horizontal generation gap). This issue, more than any other issue, can be considered as a cultural discontinuity that does not only include vertical differences between generations but, additionally, these relationships can be examined on a horizontal level, based on traditional and modern approaches (Madadpour, 1382 SH). This issue has made it so that even if the necessary facilities and conditions for marriage are provided by the government, still the problem of contradiction and conflict of discourses, as an influential factor, decreases the desire of individuals to start a family or increases their motivation to delay it.

By accepting these propositions, a description of the change in the family must first be presented and, based on those fundamental questions regarding the emergence of modern discourses, an investigation into their role in society should then be conducted. Therefore, the present research aims to present and interpret the semantics discourse of family models, focusing on their composition, rituals and spouse selection models in the contemporary era and according to the origins of their occurrence and appearance. It will then present, based on the diversity and variety in the existing discourses, a typology regarding this issue.

Thus, by identifying the most significant elements and qualities of each discourse, based on their background and origins, and how discourses organize the relationships associated with each family model, the most suitable family model for selecting a spouse has been established.

In addition, this research also attempted to answer the questions of the young female social activists regarding the social reality of the spouse selection process and how and according to what proof the issues related to it are explained and structured within the various discourses. Similarly, their questions concerning how meaning is achieved and what are the possible consequences and harms that may result from this approach were also answered.

The study of the sociology of the family indicates extensive global changes in this field during the last half-century. These changes have occurred as a result of many factors and, at the same time, have had numerous consequences for various societies. One of these changes is the emergence of different attitudes and models towards spouse selection. Research conducted by Irfanmanesh (1391 SH) titled, "Conditional and discourse

analysis of social hypotheses concerning the ideal family model in Iran," discussed two family models, namely the modernist and the Islamic-Iranian models, which are usually the two models that are offered in social studies that focus on Iranian families.

According to the findings of this research, despite the identified positive features of the modernist model, the Islamic-Iranian family model has greater advantages. Similarly, the results of the research conducted by Ali Aḥmadi (1389 SH) on the changes in the family showed that "structural type", "decrease in the supporting role of relatives", "narcissistic tendency towards marriage", "increase in the duration of premarital relationships", "rise in the status and authority of women within family relationships", "decrease in family orientation discussions", "increase in family abuses and breakdowns," "increase of sexual relationships outside of marriage," "decrease in family activities" and the "reduction in the importance towards unwanted pregnancy" have all been raised as growing trends among families living in Tehran, Iran.

Similarly, Azad Armaki, Zand and Khaza'i (1379 SH), after examining the extent and direction of changes in the Iranian family during the past three generations, believe that changes have occurred within the family of those living in Tehran. The attitudes of the family members have changed towards major issues such as marriage, premarital relationships between boys and girls, dowry (*Mahriyyah)* and the marriage gift *(Jahiziyyah)*, wedding ceremonies, divorce, etc. At the same time, the family is still considered an important social entity and efforts are being made to preserve and sustain it among the people in Tehran. Likewise, this new generation, along with other generations, is trying to conform these changes that have occurred within the family with the new socio-cultural conditions that have become prevalent in Iran and the world at large.

In addition, Sami'i (1393 SH) in a book titled *"Khānuvadeh dar Buḥrān, Keshakesh olguhā ye Sunnat wa Nawgerayi" (The Family in Crisis; Caught Between Traditional and Modern Models)* has stated that in the spectrum of tradition and modernity, there is a new phenomenon called "late modernity", which has created a crisis in the family. According to him, families in the West are in crisis and decline because of three main reasons: the

neoliberal capitalist system, the radical feminist movement and extreme narcissism. He concluded that Iranian society has not been through the ups and downs that have historically existed in the West, but it has reached a crisis point only because of imitating and following the West. In his opinion, Iranian society consists of two different layers, i.e., the apparent and the hidden. These two layers occasionally interact and occasionally encounter conflict. He then points out how the family has been victimized in these interactions and conflicts.

Thornton and Lin (1994) have also investigated the transformation of family and marriage patterns in light of the industrialization and modernization movements. They concluded that the changes resulting from these movements were the main factor in reducing the parents' authority and increasing children's independence in the matter of spouse selection; a process that eventually leads to the reduction of arranged marriages, including consanguinity. Similarly, the changes in the educational status of women are another factor that causes them to reject the traditional model (Iran Mahbub and Mukhtari, 1375 SH).

The present research uses the discourse analysis method, which was applied to the results gathered from the lived experience of female social activists. In addition to identifying and comparing the five family models with each other, it also introduced the best model from among them. Furthermore, in order to enrich the findings, we have used the combined discourse analysis methods of Fairclough, Laclua, Mouffe, and James Paul Gee's discourse theories. This point can be considered to be among the innovative aspects of this research.

Theoretical Framework

The first necessary condition for discourse analysis is to determine the theoretical framework (Tajik, 1378 SH). The main approach of this research is to understand the meaning of family in the thoughts, expressions, perspectives and lived experiences of young bachelorettes, who are at the stage of marriage. It is based on the interpretive sociology framework and incorporates the discourse and social formation theories of David Cheal. Interpretive sociology is a study that focuses on the meanings that people construct during agency in the ever-evolving structure of

their daily lives. In this sense, humans are also symbolic creatures. People, by manipulating signs and symbols present in their culture, are in search of the definition of what is going on around them. This is often done through the use of language, which itself is symbolic.

Humans are active beings; by controlling their actions, they have what is called agency. Humans are the product of culture, but they also play an active role in it. The definition of each of the social conditions, including that of the family, is the product of the common meanings of people who interact with each other (Steel and Kidd, 1388).

Discourse is the common form of speech or language which, by its nature, preserves and supports, to a greater extent, a set of certain and specific ideologies over others (Bernardes, 1384 SH). Discourse is a special way to talk about the world and understand it (Jorgensen & Louis, 1389 SH). The starting point of discourse analysis is the claim of structuralist and poststructuralist linguistic philosophy; that is, human access to reality is always through language. With the help of language, humans create representations of reality that are not a reflection of pre-existing reality. In fact, language plays a role in creating reality. Therefore, attributing meaning to phenomena in the framework of discourses creates and changes the world (Ibid, 1389 SH).

Schutz, Winch, Douglas, Rex and Giddens agree on the importance and reason behind producing technical language from a common language, i.e., in order to penetrate a certain form of life from a hermeneutical point of view, a social scientist must first understand conventional concepts and, thereafter, social theories must be built based on everyday concepts (Blaikie, 1391 SH). Discourse is made from language, but it has a meta-linguistic effect. Language seeks to create order and change on all social levels (Van Dijk, 1382 SH). Thus, discourse is both constructed and constructive. The general idea of discourse theory is that social phenomena are never perfect nor complete (Jorgensen & Louis, 1389 SH).

So, in order to find meaning and understand the structure, functions and internal relationships of the family, from the perspectives of bachelorettes who are about to get married, David Cheal's theory on the "social structure of the family" has been

used. This social structure has a non-neutral, vague and non-static character, i.e., people create its meaning during the process of their daily life and conversations within the context of family.

According to Cheal, family is something that people continuously define in their daily and constant social interactions. Hence, such a definition corresponds to that which the social activists form from their everyday lives and also to the definition that is stated by scholars of social sciences in their discussions related to family life. Therefore, if a family is viewed as a social structure, it will require that consideration be given to how people talk about the family and how they organize their social relationships. People consider family as being a social unit and, with the meanings that they create for it, influence the existing definitions that are present in the field of family (Cheal, 1388 SH). According to Cheal, a family cannot be discussed, but what can be is family. This phenomenon is related to the current dynamic nature of the family; because in the postmodern world, nothing is fixed and definite (Steel and Kidd, 1388 SH).

Cheal's perspective on family is accompanied by the acceptance of diversity, plurality and, especially, cultural variations. By comparing the family in Islamic countries with those in the Western world, he emphasized their different views and believed that the specific values of Islamic societies have a deep influence on the family structure of these countries (Labibi, 1393 SH). According to Bernardes, family life is a product of lived reality and it is not fixed and static; it is not possible to think about the family as a single phenomenon and structure; rather, we should talk about the "functions of the family"; because the only real issue concerning the family is that the family contains people who interact with each other (Steel and Kidd, 1388).

Implementation of the Research Method

Research Methodology

This research has relied on qualitative study and is based on an interpretive paradigm. In terms of its depth, purpose and scope of application, it is a form of applied research. For data collection, the exploratory interview was used, while the discourse analysis method was used for the analysis and interpretation of the qualitative data attained. By using in-depth interviews, it was

possible to penetrate the inner world of the participants and provide definitions, semantics and perceived variations in the composition and conditions related to spouse selection.

Norman Fairclough believes that in order to have a comprehensive analysis of the discourse, one must apply analytical-descriptive, interpretive and explanatory levels to the discourse. In the descriptive stage, the concepts which are required are explained. Concepts are ideas that are expressed as words or as symbols. Concepts have the role of creating connections with the social world. The interpretive level deals with the analysis of meaning. It does so to try to comprehend the significance of speech and to uncover the concealed essence that lies within it.

Finally, the level of explanation requires some kind of meta-textual analysis, and the explanation is aimed at examining the reciprocal influence between social structures and speech (Blaikie, 1391 SH). In this research, the analysis of family models has been done based on the discourse analysis of James Paul Gee and Norman Fairclough, and the discourse literature of Ernesto Laclau and Chantal Mouffe.

Table No. 1: The stages of descriptive, interpretive and explanatory discourse analysis (Methodology table)

Extracting family patterns from the text of the interviews		
Descriptive analysis of discourse	Qualitative coding	Summarization
		Extracting basic and key concepts
		Categorization
Interpretive analysis of discourse	Primary interpretation	Discourse background
	Secondary interpretation	Articulation
		Central foci (nodes)
		Dimension and Dimensions
		Naming
		Equivalence
Explanatory analysis of discourse		Introduction of institutions and structures influencing the discourse

Sample Size and Demographics

The process of participant selection for the interviews was goal-oriented and aimed at maximum diversity in terms of the type of attitudes held concerning the family. The sample size was selected based on the principle of theoretical saturation. In order to limit the scope of the research, fifty eligible bachelorettes, aged between 18 and 28, living in the city of Qom, Iran, in 2015, who were on the cusp of getting married, were selected. Due to the nature of the research, the generalities of the family were the basis of the analysis. Further, a regional study was avoided because, in the analytical framework of this research, there is no need to study a particular region to identify different discourses, as the model of different discourses in the field of the family can be found in all regions. The unit of analysis in this type of study is beyond just words, rather, the unit of analysis in the current research was the "expressions" used in the interviews.

Research Findings

Descriptive Analysis

Descriptive Analysis of the Discourse of Five Family Models: Qualitative Coding Process

To analyze the descriptive discourse of the five family models, the qualitative coding technique, consisting of three stages namely, summarization, extraction of the key concepts and categorization was used. For this purpose, first, the views were summarized by extracting key terms from the texts of the interviews.

According to the attitudes towards the goal of family formation and the styles of spouse selection, five family models of "postmodernist," "modernist," "transitional," "traditional," and "Islamic" were presented. Then, in this stage, the terms used to define spouse selection were reviewed and then used to describe the models.

Table No. 2: Extraction of Key Concepts Related to the Family Models

Components of the model	Central Expressions of Family Models				
	Postmodernist family	Modernist family	Transitional family	Traditional family	Islamic family
Features of a Successful Family	Feminism, hedonism, deviance, freedom, the meaninglessness of a successful family				
The desire to start a family and the objective of marriage	Lack of interest in marriage, fear of limitation and responsibility. Avoidance of the law and marriage customs, easy divorce, the meaninglessness of marriage	Reluctance to marry, prioritizing education and career, avoiding responsibility, fear of limitation, financial independence, hindering progress, mistrusting the opposite sex, not having a marriage pattern	To reach relative peace, progress, distrust, freedom from loneliness, independence, security, logical path	Survival of the species, commitment, finding a companion and a supporter, a sense of peace with the wife and child, the sexual need to be fulfilled, clarification of destiny	Prophet's order, the satisfaction of Allah, prophetic traditions, survival of the species, fate and destiny, natural dispositional need, maintaining dignity, completion of religion, and acceptance of responsibility.
Principles of marriage model	Togetherness, confusion in the model, weak women in the observance of the law, the conditional marriage of equality, free choice, free sex, communication and diverse experiences	The necessity of friendship, individual choice, extramarital affairs, the low role of parents, diversity of models, beauty and money, love and wisdom, etc.	Not traditional, not modern, but integrated, an intermediate model without a model, family or stranger, familiarity under the supervision of a conscious and consultative family.	Intra-marital affairs, common culture, young age of family selection, parents' experience, no friendship relationship, common interest	Islamic commandments, taking Imams as role models, uniformity, relatives or strangers, traditional marriage, the role and experience of parents

Dowry *(Mahriyyah)*	Marriage Ceremony	Characteristics of an Ideal Spouse	Premarital relationship between a girl and a boy
Custody of children, land and house, violation of dowry law, the humiliation of women, ridiculousness of dowry, Buying a wife, giving a dowry by both parties	Besides the beach, abroad, the presence of close friends, mixed and without family, a party away from custom and religion.	Comfortable and prosperous family, a proponent of cohabitation, no restriction, accepting of feminism, similar to myself	Free and unlimited interaction, spiritual and physical awareness, living together without marriage, acting against the law and religion
Support wife, do not believe in high amount, lack of trust in boys, right to divorce	Luxurious, stylish and modern without family, hall garden, away from the pilgrimage locations	Wealthy, accepting the independence and interests of women, independent, respect for women's privacy, same phase and companion, avoiding betrayal, fashionable, committed, the foundation of women's well-being and employment and education	the usefulness of relationships, emotional and sexual awareness, diverse interactions, relationships without family knowledge, consensual framework
Based on the agreement, it does bring happiness, according to the past conditions, no one gave and no one took, neither less nor more	Based on the culture, in the dignity of the families, not too simple, not too luxurious, ordinary, but stylish fusion marriage	Balanced, living a life away from patriarchy and feminism, reasonable income, committed to work and progress, respecting boundaries, family-oriented	Time-limited friendship to get to know each other without prejudices, family control, open-minded framework, modesty
Determined by the parents, it should be low, Based on the social customs, normal agreement	As a family, ordinary and simple, away from clutter, a memorable wedding at home	Having feelings, committed, having a job, ethical, social supportive, zeal, understanding of the emotional needs of a woman, a family man	Unpleasant interaction according to the custom, the forbidden, modesty, dishonor, harmfulness of the relationship
14 gold coins, pilgrimage forsaking the dowry, advice of the Leader, taking lessons from the lives of the Imams	Pilgrimage journey, avoiding extravagance, boasting and sin, simple spiritual marriage, based on the Leader' s[1] recommendations, culture building	Believer, co-supporter, allowed and lawful sustenance, with morals and manners, the importance of prayer, fasting and the masjid, family-oriented, honest	Islamic rulings, corruption, the role of the devil, the forbidden, hijab and Islamic covering, Lady Fatima, false love

1. The Supreme Leader of the Islamic Republic of Iran (Ed.)

The Marriage Gift *(Jahiziyyah)*	Education degree as a gift, everything is half and half	Luxurious, eye-catching, beautiful, stylish, the best	Based on the agreement, simple and useful, according to the conditions of the families, not too luxurious, not too simple	Financial ability, simple, dignified, according to custom, beautiful, necessary equipment	No extravagance, simple, based on agreement, needed materials

Categorization of the Family Models

Categorization is another stage of qualitative coding that is within the descriptive analysis stage of the discourse. The categorization of concepts was done by extracting the concepts related to each of the models and classifying them. Because qualitative coding requires limiting and revising the terms, in the categorization stage, the relationship between the key concepts of each of the specified models and the dispersion of concepts were set in the main categories. The categorization of models was done in two ways: firstly, based on the general characteristic of "the principality of the individual and the group " and secondly, based on the specific characteristics of each model.

Table No. 3: Categorization in a Postmodernist Family Model

Exclusive category	Elements within this category
Principality of the Individual	Freedom, fear of restriction, avoidance of responsibility, having a like-minded spouse, having the same language and similar to myself, organizing a party based on personal opinion, living according to passion, and a hedonistic family.
Deviance and Rebelliousness	No head covering *(hijab)*, not interested in marriage, not accepting the marital law, the need for diverse and unlimited free interactions, accepting cohabitation, the meaninglessness of marriage, sex before marriage, acting against the law and religion, marrying by the beach or abroad, mixed parties, ceremonies against customs and traditions, opposition to dowry law, ridiculousness of dowry, lack of belief in the sanctity of marriage
Matriarchy	Feminism, conditional marriage, women being considered weak in the law, acceptance of feminism by husband, acceptance of woman's thoughts, child custody as dowry, taking land and house from husband, the necessity of a woman's independence

Table No. 4: Categorization in a Modernist Family Model

Exclusive category	Elements within this category
Principality of the Individual	Welfares, priority in education and job, avoidance of responsibility, fear of restriction, personal progress, marriage hinders progress, freedom from parents, personal peace, individual choice of spouse, exogamy, reduced role of parents in choosing a spouse, individual expediency, love and wisdom, stylish and modern
Democratic relations (Equality in Affairs)	Equality of rights, the progress of both men and women, equal sharing of property, injustice of the legal system against women, financial independence of women, emotional and sexual recognition before marriage, giving freedom to women, the right to divorce for women, rejection of patriarchy, democratic family

Table No. 5: Categorization in a Transitional Family Model

Exclusive category	Elements within this category
Dispersion and conflict between the principality of the individual and of the group	Central consultation while accepting the opinion of the family, marriage to achieve relative peace and personal development and freedom from loneliness while not trusting boys, marring with consciousness and at the same time according to the collective interest, the marriage ceremony is conducted based on custom and in the dignity of the family but elegant, adopting a path between the strictness of the past and laxity of the present in the relationship between boys and girls.
Dispersion and conflict between patriarchy and matriarchy	A balance between members while maintaining male authority, cooperation between men and women while paying attention to the separation of female and male roles, the absence of feminism and patriarchy, and the desire of the wife alongside the desire of the husband.
Dispersion and conflict between tradition and modernism	Choosing a spouse is neither based on tradition nor modernism but is integrated, without a particular pattern, no difference between marrying a relative or a stranger, familiarity and interaction under the supervision of the family, transitioning from prejudices, interaction while maintaining modesty, the marriage ceremony is neither simple nor luxurious, dowry is neither small nor large, the marriage gift is neither luxurious nor simple.

Table No. 6: Categorization in a Traditional Family Model

Exclusive category	Elements within this category
Principality of the Group and Social Norms	Forgiving and compatible family, raising children, taking responsibility, desire for motherhood, marrying to get rid of loneliness, finding commitment and a partner, having a great desire to marry, having an interest in being with family, intra-group marriage, traditional marriage, choice and confirmation of marriage by family, marriage according to group expediency, the inappropriateness of interactions before marriage in social norms, family honor, marriage ceremony and dowry and gift based on social and honorable customs

Patriarchy	The conjugal life and family management skill, wise decision-making by a man, a respectable man, with masculine and great managerial qualities, feminine tenderness and masculine strength, a powerful and zealous spouse, no direct opposition of a woman to a man, better decision-making by a man, a man as the pillar of the house, appeasement of woman in life

Table No. 7: Categorization in the Islamic family model

Exclusive category	Elements within this category
Principality of both the Individual and the Group	Educated mother for the upbringing of children, raising a child while also growing personally, peace of mind for oneself and the family, marriage for the survival of the species and at the same time a natural need, avoiding false love and finding religious pleasure, no difference between marrying a relative or a stranger, traditional marriage by respecting the right to choose a spouse, the role and experience of the parents, avoiding corruption, choosing a family-oriented, well-groomed, honest, truthful and hard-working spouse, a simple marriage to promote the culture of it, an agreed upon and simple gift and the necessary household equipment, a patient and forgiving spouse, while there are equal rights
Justice-oriented	Mutual respect at home, practical family, marriage with a congruent partner, accepting each other's differences in the family, husband and wife complementing each other, choosing a spouse with the family's consent and approval of the daughter, marriage is the reason for completeness.
Religion-centered and determined	Religious family with faith, Islamic lifestyle, prayers of parents, simple living and lawful sustenance, marriage as ordered by the Prophet, seeking Allah's satisfaction in marriage, advice on marriage in prophetic traditions, marriage to complete one's religion, following the example of the Imams, observing the religious rulings concerning daughters and sons, awareness of the role of the devil in the relationship, the non-*mahram*, observing the *hijab* and Islamic covering, Taking the marriage of Lady Fatima as an example, choosing a spouse who is a believer, with morals, a person who prays and fasts, going on a pilgrimage instead of a marriage ceremony, avoiding extravagance and sin in the marriage ceremony, marriage with a spiritual dowry, the dowry of 14 gold coins based on the advice of the Leader, going for pilgrimage instead of dowry, forsaking dowry, a woman who develops human beings, religiously lawful pleasure.

Analyzing the Interpretative and Explanatory Discourse of the Five Family Models (The structure and internal relations of family models) and Discourse Background (situational context)

Primary Interpretation

According to table no. 1, interpretation includes two parts: primary interpretation and secondary interpretation. Primary interpretation is related to the reviewing of the background of the discourses. In other words, in the initial interpretation, the description and analysis of the background, social conditions of the discourse, and the context of the

situation in which the discourse is had, and given meaning, are considered by the researcher.

According to Fairclough, after completing the text description stage, which deals with the system of meanings separated from its context and social conditions, we deal with meaning exploration at the interpretive level. The goals here are to understand the meanings and discover the concealed essence within the discourse. The interpretation seeks to show the interaction between the text and the context (Fairclough, 1387 SH). This stage seeks to achieve these goals and describe the similarities and differences between the five family models.

Postmodernist Family Model

Changing the attitude towards family life is part of the formation of a new social phenomenon that Stacey referred to as the postmodern family. In his opinion, in the period when families are diverse and weak, family relations will be controversial, ambiguous and undetermined (Labibi, 1393 SH). The postmodernist family model is influenced by the postmodernist theory and the advocates of family decline. This theory begins with the comment that the people of the 20th century no longer live under the conditions of modernity but under the conditions of "postmodernity". This postmodern world has come about due to the mutual effects of four major transformations, namely: a kind of aggressive expansion phase in global capitalism; the weakening of centralized state power; life modelling through increasingly powerful and pervasive technology that controls production and promotes consumerism and the growth of libertarian social movements, especially in the form of gender movements (feminism as a global movement) and sexual orientation (Gay men's rights). Among all these developments, libertarian movements may be the most important development that the postmodern challenge has put forward to the modernist epistemology and theory (Ritzer, and Goodman, 1390 SH). In other words, postmodern thought disrupts the stability, limitation and integrity of traditional society and creates a permeable and fragmented social space based on the characteristics of "difference," "fluidity," "paradox," and "networking" (Ali Aḥmadi and Pur Reza Karimsara, 1392 SH).

Furthermore, the postmodern family model has been influenced by the interpretive and critical paradigms of feminist theorists, especially those of radical feminist theorists, particularly, gender oppression theorists. It has also been heavily influenced by Giddens' late modernity theory, which is related to the processes

of "globalization", "de-traditionalization" and "social rethinking" (Labibi, 1393 SH).

By interpreting the components related to spouse selection from the perspective of the respondents and according to their lived experiences, an attempt has been made to discover and interpret the structure and internal relationships of the family models to represent the experience of the participant, who favors the postmodernist family model, regarding the natural or social world. This group considers one of the most important indicators of family success to be "the degree of family democracy". A democratic family is formed when its structure is relatively a structure of choice (Ali Aḥmadi, 1389 SH).

In the postmodern model, there is "non-acceptance of law and social customs" in marriage. They believe that the existing laws (especially the laws related to marriage) are against women and the necessity of full freedom and equality of women and men in marriage must be taken into account. They also try to compensate for it with the desire for "conditional marriage" i.e., holding the right to divorce and obtain child custody etc. Even the majority of this group, because of "fear of being restricted," do not want to get married, as they consider "marriage to be the cause of restricting women and imposing responsibility." Some advocates of this view believe that "conditions for divorce should be made easy" so that the number of marriages increases; because they "do not believe in the sanctity of marriage and consider it an unholy and simple agreement, to the mere level of friendship." For these reasons, they demand simple and easy conditions to terminate and end a marriage.

Nowadays, due to the de-sanctification of society and religion becoming habitual, marriage, which was considered a sacred and religious act, gradually lost its sanctity and became a mere civil contract (Bustān, 1390 SH). Undoubtedly, the spouse selection model in the postmodern form, which is to some extent an informal, unconventional and non-customary model; the governance of the society and family over the individual is less, while the scope of authority and choice of the individual is greater.

The proponents of the postmodern model believe in the "plurality of marriage models" and opine that there is chaos in the styles of spouse selection in the contemporary age. With their interpretation of the current situation and changing styles of

spouse selection, they welcome the prevalence of staying together and premarital cohabitation.

Cohabitation is a joint life without formal marriage. Hence, informal cohabitation of a couple is where the legal commitment between two sexual partners is replaced by an emotional commitment (Giddens, 1386 SH).

Currently, it is an important instant of egotism, as a postmodern entity, that overshadows the family unit. From this, it is possible to point to the formation of a new type of ‘marital life’ called "concubinage". According to the evidence of many researchers, a joint life without formal marriage is an increasing trend in Tehran, and the desire for sexual interactions outside of marriage is noticed among single and married individuals. This issue has led to an increase in sexually transmitted diseases and the breach of agreements upheld in family relationships (Ali Aḥmadi, 1389 SH).

Further, the advocates of the postmodernist model explain premarital relationships between boys and girls as a matter of “free choice”. They attach great importance to the "freedom of human beings" and, in the pursuit to elucidate this meaning of marriage and human beings, consider the necessity of sexual interaction (at any level) to be of utmost importance. Āzād Armaki believes that, presently, the difference in attitude towards the relationship with the opposite sex has become one of the main causes of intergenerational conflict in urban families. The spread of premarital sex is a product of the "sexual revolution" in the late 1960s in Western societies. Fluid love is a product of late modernity and postmodern approaches in the West. This type of relationship is one of the latest relationship models in urban society. This fluid love is not characterized by a concealment model, but rather by open polygamy. Its goals include more variety, less commitment, and more freedom in relatively friendly relationships. (Labibi, 1393 SH).

From the understanding that the advocates of the postmodernist model have of the marriage ceremony; due to the fear of getting involved in customs, beliefs and public opinions about marriage, they often do not welcome such ceremonies and, even if they are going to hold one, they try to perform it in a new, diverse and different format. For example, by inviting friends but not relatives, holding a mixed party in a garden or by the beach, etc.

The dowry (*mahr*), marriage gift (*jahiziyyah*) and marriage ceremony in this model have very high fluidity and diversity, as they are determined more by the individual's attitude towards them than the social norms. Affairs such as child custody, educational degree, land and house, etc., are considered as dowry or the marriage gift, because they believe that men, no matter what, will cheat and be treacherous towards them. Hence, from the onset, one should think about divorce and the conditions that follow suit. Of course, with the influence that feminist thought has had on this model, many of them consider the custom of giving dowry to be mocking and insulting to women. They see it as if a woman is being bought. They believe that these laws and customs have led to the humiliation of women. The advocates of feminism also look at the issue of dowry through the lens of pessimistic interpretations. For example, it is considered as the price of buying a woman from her owner, i.e., her father. Therefore, sometimes we have seen some girls accepting the dowry with disgust and reluctance, as they considered it as an insult to the dignity and personality of a woman (Mutahhari, 1369 SH, cited from Bustān, 1390 SH).

Modernist Family Model

The model of the modernist family emerged from the discourse literature of the liberal civil society in Iran. This discourse of civil society is based on egotism, opportunism, rationality and pluralism. The discursive affinity of this model is also examined with the ideas of liberalism and the reevaluation of knowledge. In addition, this model is influenced by Anthony Giddens' theory on the "democracy of emotions" and the theories of feminism (especially of those feminists who believed in gender inequality).

In fact, one of the main groups that are playing a leading role in the promotion of the modern civil family are Iranian Feminists (Jalaipur, 1385 SH). Some, by focusing on the method of feminism in Iran after the Islamic Revolution, divided the course of this movement into five stages: marginal feminism (the late 50s to the early 60s), social feminism (second half of the 60s to the middle of the 70s), press feminism (early to late 70s), organizational feminism (mid-70s to early 80s) and finally network feminism (mid-80s until now). This group uses occasions

and events, such as the 8th of March (International Women's Day) and the 22nd of Khordad (12th of June) - a day when, in the year 1384 SH (2005), they gathered in front of the University of Tehran to protest the Iranian law, claiming that it was discriminatory against women - to present their claims for gender equality, freedom and to request that all discriminatory laws be removed from the constitution of the Islamic Republic of Iran. In order to further these objectives, they also make use of activities such as the launching of women's associations and non-governmental organizations, starting female-only publications, having an active presence on the internet through creating websites, blogs, etc., and producing media and cinematographic works (Shamsi & Nasiri, 1395 SH).

Based on the discourse of the civil society in Iran, the most important characteristic of the modernist family is the establishment of a relationship between men and women based on the equality of rights within the family, founded on understanding and dialogue, but the principal is the principality of the individual. According to Giddens, only one thing can be discussed in today's family and that is democracy, as, it is only through the democratization of the family that individual choice and social solidarity can be combined. Democratization in the context of the family means equality, mutual respect, independence, decision-making through interaction and freedom from violence. This will be mostly based on discussion and dialogue. According to Giddens, the modern family is a family in which there is equality between men and women, a pure relationship, trust and democratic action (Labibi, 1393 SH).

The usage of some expressions and terms belonging to the theories of the feminists and those of Giddens is obvious within the discussions that are related to the modern family model. Two such terms that can be mentioned are "equality" and "democratic relations". These terms are used in the representation and reconstruction of the modernist family model (Jalaipur, 1385 SH, quoted from Ṣādiqi Fasa'iy, and Irfanmanesh, 1391 SH). Further, Raymond's findings showed that at present, modern societies are constantly expanding towards the culture of dialogue in their family life (Labibi, 1393 SH).

The current research, by constantly focusing on the terms and the

manner of their usage within the text, is looking for the interpretation of the structures and the relationships of the modernist family model. The need to achieve equality, the progress of both men and women, intellectual and ideological uniformity, acceptance of each other's opinions, mutual and equal respect for the wishes and thoughts of the spouse and financial independence of women are among the characteristics of a successful family in this model. This shows the demand for equality and the approaches that are taken by the spouses to achieve it.

Some researchers have considered the difference between the traditional family and the family of the era of egotism to stem from the difference between two models of the family, i.e., institutional or romantic. In the institutional model, the family has a social identity, in addition to love and affection. This social identity is formed based on the spouses giving support to each other, economic cooperation, taking care of family members and raising children. However, in the romantic model, finding a companion and someone to love, and the fulfilment of the couple's emotional and sexual needs is what is important (Sami'i, 1393 SH). Due to the priority given to factors such as education and occupation, avoidance of added responsibility, seeking material prosperity, fear of being restricted, fear of having a barrier to progress, mistrust of the opposite sex, avoidance of domestic work, fear of domination by men, fear of an unsuccessful marriage and not having a marriage role model, girls of this group often do not show much interest in marriage.

The interpretation and meanings that are presented about the rules and ideals of spouse selection and marriage in the modernist family model emphatically necessitate courtship before marriage, individual selection, the family's limited role in the spouse selection process or its approval and exogamy. Perhaps, the most noticeable aspect of egotism and narcissism in modern families in contemporary society is how young people decide to get married, i.e., they choose their own spouse and continue their lives based on equal rights (Ali Aḥmadi, 1386 SH). This method is called "freedom of choice of spouse" (I'zāzī, 1382 SH). Undoubtedly, the "freedom of choice of spouse" and the "romantic love" are a manifestation of the expansion of egotism in the process of spouse selection. One of the indicators of the emergence of this and the

decline of traditional authority in the Iranian family is the changes in the manner of spouse selection (Tanhayi, & Shukr Bigi, 1387 SH). These individuals, while setting material standards, consider a marriage that is based on individual rational expediency, and founded on love and wisdom to be a wise marriage. They believe that a sensible and logical marriage is based on the primacy of emotional attachments and aims for pleasure. Today, the role of love and emotional attachments in the occurrence of marriage is of particular importance, so much so that according to Parsons and other sociologists, spouse selection based on personal interest and love is one of the main characteristics of a new nuclear family (I'zāzī, 1382 SH).

In modernist marriages, a kind of carelessness can be seen in family formation, on the one hand, the traditional mechanisms in spouse selection are disappearing, and on the other hand, without the introduction of a specific model or policy, this matter has been entrusted to the young generation, and the youth must look for a suitable spouse for themselves. Consequently, it has always been a man's privilege to choose and make a marriage proposal in Iran. So, to participate and not feel left out of this process, girls, while being all dressed up, began entering public spaces and putting themselves up for selection.

These factors have allowed for this circumstance to be abused by some. They make the girl who shows signs of wanting to get married, with a modernist model, a target for their interests. They then set having interactions with them as a condition for marriage, the quantity and quality of this interaction varies from telephone communication to sexual interaction. After some time, the boy will come up with pathetic excuses and leave her, moving on to his next target. This situation has caused much anguish in girls and they do not know how to control this tendency, i.e., not losing a chance of getting married but also not being misused and abused, as the virginity of a girl at the time of marriage has always been something that Iranian society has placed great value on.

During the process of modernity, the Iranian family, which was a collectivist and ritual-oriented family in its traditional framework, is now increasingly moving towards egotism. This attribute also exists in the context of ceremonies and gatherings. Therefore, contrary to the existence of many rituals, this type of

new Iranian family is no longer ritualistic, but egotistic and non-ritualistic (Āzād Armaki, 1386 SH).

In this model, it was also found that, based on their interpretation of marriage and kinship, they are interested in the marriage ceremony being held in the presence of friends only, i.e., without the presence of relatives and family. People in the modernist model believe that dowry, gifts and ceremonies should be enjoyable, luxurious, modern, stylish and according to the dignity of the family. Some current research suggests the adherence of the current generation to the traditional holding of marriage ceremonies. People in this model are interested in overseas trips after the wedding and for the honeymoon. They avoid having the wedding ceremony at pilgrimage locations, such as Mashhad. They consider the husband and wife to be the ones who determine the dowry, not the families. They also favor large dowries; because it is considered as a support to the woman and, in a way, represent the mistrust of the opposite sex.

Transitional Family Model

Contemporary society, as a dynamic structure, is in the transitional period from tradition to modernity, and this transition does not occur smoothly and without tension. The conflict between tradition and modernity is accompanied by a series of disturbances, pressures and disarrays (Ali Aḥmadi, and Pur Reza Karimsara, 1392 SH). Modernization and modernity, due to mediators such as education, urbanization, the level of foreign travel and new communication technologies, accept transformation in the family and, in a dialectical confrontation between tradition and modernity, the necessity of social obligations are reduced, resulting in traditional ideals and norms becoming less prevalent in society (Ali Aḥmadi, 1388 SH).

The most important source of strength in this model stems from the joint strength of men and women in society and the feminist theories on gender difference (such as cultural feminism) whose proponents are somewhat balanced and believe in the differences between men and women, which they consider to be affected by the biological structure of people. According to this theory, the position and experience of women in most situations are different from the position and experience of men in the same situation (Ritzer and Goodman, 1390 SH).

In the current research, the researchers seek to interpret the discourse of the transitional family model by focusing on the terms and the manner of its usage in the text, and it seeks to find out how the text generator (participant) of this model depicts the social or natural world and on what interpretation of the world does it rely on.

From the interpretations that were inferred from the attitude of individuals interested in marriage from this group, it can be said that, although they are interested in marriage, they are still distrustful of the opposite sex and are confused and unsure regarding the model of marriage, for it is a model that can neither be called traditional nor modern. They were referred to as the "marriage without a model" group by researchers and were said to be looking for an "intermediate method" to getting married. In this way, it welcomes marriages which are based on emotional attachments together with the participation and consultation of the family and relatives. It also restricts and frames the interactions between the boy and girl, i.e., it is limited and without freedom, isolated to certain places, constructive and ethical to maintain the safety of the girl and the commitment of the boy, away from the prejudices of the traditional society, and it limits the demands of the modernist society. It allows this so that they i.e., the boy and girl, can get to know one another better under the supervision of the family. This model recommends ethics-centered marriage consultations and a marriage that is based on values and benefits for all, but, at the same time, must be logical and heed personal preference. In their opinion, the choice should be egalitarian and based on an intermediate method which includes love and tradition; because they spoke of the risk of traditional marriage, while at the same time mentioning the harmfulness of modern marriage.

According to Āzād Armaki (1392 SH), the process of spouse selection in Iran is done by both the children and the parents. If any of them choose a spouse independently, they will face a lack of support from the other. The children may choose a spouse independently of their parents, but they would then need to request help and cooperation from their parents and other family members to finalize the marriage (quoted from Labibi, 1393 SH). Even though in the current climate, individuals have the freedom to choose a spouse, but it may still not happen because certain social conditions prevent it. Therefore, spouse selection is a social phenomenon and is

impacted by its conditions and criteria. So, although family interference has decreased and its mechanisms have become somewhat ineffective, certain social mechanisms have been formed that prevent marriages from occurring that would disrupt the order of society, of which the most important is social class (I'zāzī, 1382).

Traditional Family Model

The followers of familism represent this model. The trend of familism emphasizes the traditional view of the family and tries to prevent drastic changes within the family. In the interpretation of the traditional family, it should be noted that in the traditional atmosphere, the general understanding of the world and the universe is central and sacred. In this system, life is organized by legends and previously defined systems (Giddens, 1387 SH).

The traditional family is extremely authoritarian and the most important person in it is the father. He makes the final decision in all cases and the rest of the family is obliged to obey him. Another characteristic of the traditional family is fatalism. This means that the person feels powerless about the future and control of what may happen to him or her. Lewis believes that the reason for the spread of fatalism in traditional societies is the non-democratic structure of the family and the disregard for the opinions and beliefs of the younger members. This takes away the possibility of them attaining a higher reality and makes them subordinate to the existing circumstances (Lewis, 1960).

In the traditional view, having children, supporting them and the survival of the species were seen as values, while the desire to marry abundantly and its fulfilment were left to fate. These expressions show the collectivism and fatalism of this model. In this model, young boys and girls do not have a choice in choosing their spouse. It is the elders of the family who, according to the class, ethnic and religious considerations of the family, as well as taking into account the effect of the choice on the survival of the family and its function, that will lay the foundations for marriage between a boy and a girl. The traditional society has limited social mobility and is characterized by chronic fatalism (Guy Rocher, 1383 SH).

The use of terms such as "shame, modesty, family honor, illegitimacy, emotional dependence, courtship, abuse by boys, harming the soul and the feelings of the girl" indicates the strong

dependence of this group on traditional marriage and their rejection of any premarital relationship between a boy and a girl. This is based on social norms and family rules and, at the same time, points to a lack of trust in the young generation. Hence, trust is a very important indicator that can be directly related to the willingness or unwillingness to get married. Coleman emphasizes trust as a factor of social capital; because it is only by having trust that favorable social relations can be achieved (Coleman, 1377 SH). Āzād Armaki believes that the existence of proverbs and beliefs towards family unity and the preference for marriage to be kept within the family network, to preserve the bloodline and protect the wealth and inherited property, etc., are some of the motives for people to want to marry within their own family or group; however, these types of marriages are currently on the decline (Labibi, 1393 SH).

Traditions have always sought to give significance to marriage as an important event. The hidden philosophy in various marriage ceremonies (from courtship, engagement, marriage, wedding, celebration and joy, to religious rituals and ceremonies) has been that it is a sign of a strong bond that is being formed and formalized. The organization of a wedding ceremony is always necessary. And even though people emphasize an easy, agreeable, conventional, dignified, collectivist and cooperative marriage, these ceremonies are not always very modest, as its quality is determined by social customs and norms.

The dowry and the marriage ceremonies are determined according to the opinions of the parents and social customs. The marriage gift must also be dignified and, while beautiful, attention must be given to its practicality and functionality. Nevertheless, it is the social norms and customs that have caused the marriage gift, and its luxurious nature, to be given such special attention in the traditional family model.

Islamic Family Model

In addition to the values and ethical dimensions that are specific to each individual society concerning the family, governments also have a decisive role in the field of family management and policy-making.

By acknowledging that the political system of the Islamic

Republic of Iran has based its policy-making on a religious worldview and on supporting religious values, family policy, which is one of the pillars of this worldview, is not only given great importance but has a clear religious orientation.

In this perspective, family policy is grounded on the principle that the integrity of the family, as a whole, must be defended and protected against changes, and that the maintenance of its form and substance is necessary. Therefore, the agenda of any type of action and program that is related to the family, at every level, is key. According to social scholars, one of the main factors that resulted in the decline of the status of the family in the West and Westernized societies was the comprehensive process of secularization and the de-sanctification of society (Bustān, 1390 SH).

The proponents of the Islamic family model, while referring to the necessity of the formation of damage removal mechanisms in the various institutions and organizations of Iran's social system, believe that considering the existing problems, a large part of which has been caused by the cultural attacks and propaganda of Western civilization, there is a danger of these 'ideals' infiltrating the cultural and value layers of the society. Therefore, they stress that, to counter these threatening 'ideals' and 'values' such as egotism, humanism, capitalism, materialism, hedonism, etc., which are prevalent in Western discourses, the recreating of the Islamic-Iranian lifestyle is essential. As, according to this worldview, the entire Islamic society is founded on the institute of the family; hence, it is one of the most prominent aspects of the social reality of Islamic society (Nasr, 1384 SH).

This group, by critiquing society, are always on the lookout for disorders and concerns within it, so that a healthy and functional society can be established. In addition, they refuse to assign personal conditions for society, as those very conditions may be deteriorating, nor do they consider the needs, wants and requirements of the current society, devoid of the want and will of God, to be a legitimate condition, rather they seek the desired society through the conditions that religion has placed for it.

One of the most important strategies that is utilized by this movement to confront popular Western discourses, such as liberalism, socialism etc., is the creation and spreading of the discourse and discussion amongst the masses (Ṣādiqi Fasa'iy, and

Irfanmanesh, 1391 SH). The Islamic family model is a model arising from cultural, social, and religious values within a national framework. The proponents of this model believe that, according to the comprehensiveness of Islam, all the necessary components for social life are present within the teachings of Islam (Mutahhari, 1385 SH). Based on this model, the dynamism contained within Islam, which is derived from dynamic jurisprudence, can produce regulations that will guarantee the success of the family at all times.

The Islamic family model is connected to the Islamic-Iranian lifestyle discourse. This discourse aims to establish a progressive lifestyle that contains components which are compatible with Iranian society. Furthermore, some believe that the realization of the Islamic-Iranian family is a way towards the creation of the Islamic-Iranian civilization (Ṣādiqi Fasa'iy, and Irfanmanesh, 1391 SH). This discourse is being endorsed by political institutions and is being supported and furthered with the cooperation of the academic elites present in the Islamic seminary and universities of Iran. With the help of the national media, this discourse has gone beyond the discussions of the academic elite and the cultural and religious politicians of the country. It has managed to penetrate general society. It has done so in such a manner that many organizations and conferences were formed and held based on the statements of the Supreme Leader that were made concerning the subject of the progressive model and the Islamic-Iranian lifestyle (Ibid).

One of the key characteristics of the Islamic family model is the presence of an educated and religious mother who is responsible for the upbringing and religious education of children. Another is that the continuation of the species is one of the main goals of marriage in this model.

Verse 11 of Chapter 42 of the Glorious Qur'an (al-Shura) considers one of the reasons for the creation of humans and quadrupeds in pairs is for their reproduction, multiplication and dispersion across the vast Earth. In the model presented by Islam on this subject, family maintenance is preferred over non-family maintenance and maternal care over non-maternal care. However, these are emphasized recommendations, it is not something on the level of obligation (Bustān 1390 SH).

Religiosity, faith, morality, Islamic lifestyle, compatible marriage, being pragmatic, honoring one's elders, trying to create mental and emotional peace in the family, mercy and obtaining lawful sustenance are some of the characteristics of a successful family in the Islamic family model.

Many verses and prophetic traditions have emphasized the importance of mutual attention of spouses to one another to satisfy their emotional needs, especially those of companionship, respect and affection. Contrary to those feminists who claim that satisfying the emotional needs of the spouse has always been the right of men and the responsibility of women, Islam has stressed the importance of satisfying the emotional needs of women via their husbands. This matter can be clearly seen in numerous verses of the Glorious Qur'an and prophetic traditions (Bustān, 1390 SH). Further, Islam's emphasis on marriage directly increases social cohesion and solidarity and also reduces the consequences of egotism in society.

Another important factor that necessitates the forming of a family is the need to organize sexual interactions within society. Islam emphasizes that marriage be made simple and done at a young age. The Islamic model considers marriage to be the basis for spiritual, sexual and physical perfection and hence, the reason for the perfection of one's religion; because it confirms that God has placed marriage within the natural disposition of humans and that by, means of a proper marriage, the shortcomings and defects of both parties can be removed. Other benefits of marriage are the acceptance of responsibility, escaping from false love and maintaining honor and dignity. This group considers marriage to be a recommendation from the Noble Prophet and a means for attaining the pleasure of God and His Messenger.

In the Islamic model, marriage is considered important as per the commandments and teachings of Islam, the Glorious Qur'an and the Ahl al-Bayt; likewise, piety, religiousness, earning and using only allowed sustenance, faith, being a support system, respecting the rights of other family members, being family orientated, beliefs and ethics are some of the criteria for choosing a spouse. It is also recommended to have a marriage that is orientated around values, justice, consultation, mutual and

collective benefits and homogamy, which is a principle that Islam acknowledges in a general manner (Bustān, 1390 SH).

Proponents of the Islamic model consider the marriage of Imam Ali and Lady Fatima as the criterion for marriage. They also emphasize that the lives of the Infallible Imams, which were simple and in conformity with the living standards of their time, are the perfect paragon and an important instance from where examples of current living can be obtained.

In the field of family, Islam has not sufficed by only introducing family values, but it has also aimed to create role models by introducing ideal families. For example, in various narrations, the marriage of Imam Ali and Lady Fatima was introduced as a role model (Bustān, 1390 SH).

In the Islamic model, the act of initiating marriage by a man is considered to be a sign of respect for a woman; as the dignity and status of women have always been emphasized in Islam. Martyr Mutahhari believes that the custom of proposing to a lady by a man portrays respect for the dignity of a woman (Mutahhari, 1385 SH).

Using terms such as *non-mahram*, rules of relationships, the presence of the devil and corruption in this model shows that the relationship between boy and girl is structured on laws. Islam also prescribes and encourages premarital meetings between the boy and a girl who intends to get married, as these will allow them to become acquainted with the apparent aspects and traits of each other. In this instance, the Divine Law (Sharia) has also removed some of the restrictions regarding looking at a *non-mahram* (Bustan, 1390 SH).

In most cultures, weddings are associated with certain rituals and etiquettes, after which the new couple officially start their life together. In the Islamic model, visiting one of the sacred places, such as Mashhad, is preferred over a wedding ceremony. It also stresses that the wedding ceremony must be devoid of sin, boasting and extravagance; for a marital life must not begin with sin. In this model, it is emphasized that the marriage be spiritual and done by obeying the authority of the Supreme Leader. It should be a simple and consensual marriage, aimed at promoting its kind.

The bond of marriage in most cultures around the world involves the exchange of property and goods, of which the dowry and wedding gift are its main elements. From the perspective of this

Islamic model, it is customary to set fourteen gold coins and a pilgrimage to Mecca and Karbala as the dowry. This group see a large dowry as being a type of business transaction. Nonetheless, in many instances, the women forgive their dowry, as, in some prophetic traditions, Muslim women have been encouraged to forgive their dowry to their husbands (Bustān, 1390 SH).

In Islam, the setting of large and materialistic dowries has been prohibited (Rezaei, and Naraqi, 1389 SH). In this model, people believe that the preparation of gifts, just like the marriage ceremony, must follow the recommendations of the Noble Prophet and be simple, consensual and away from waste and extravagance.

Secondary Interpretation

According to Table No. 1, the secondary interpretation is also part of the descriptive stage of discourse analysis. After interpreting the situational context and the fields that shape the discourses, the researcher looks for the situated meaning of the text outside of its social position. Gee believes that in discourse analysis, one can seek to answer the following questions from the attained data: Which expressions or concepts does each discourse use and which expressions and concepts does it exclude (situated meanings outside its social context)? What words are combined with other words and what rule does this composition follow? From which position and situation does the discourse arise? (Ref: Ṣādiqi Fasa'iy, and Irfanmanesh, 1391 SH). Therefore, to answer the above questions, attention has been given to articulation, central foci, peripheral foci, naming, highlighting and marginalization, via secondary interpretation. In addition, clarifying the central foci, peripheral foci and articulation of the words around the central foci, as well as indicating the instances of naming and highlighting during the identification process of the terms used in each model, will allow for the combination of words and the structure of a reality to be clearly identified and make it possible for the models to be compared with each other.

Components for analysis	Postmodernist Family Model	Modernist Family Model	Transitional Family Model	Traditional Family Model	Islamic Family Model
Articulation	Around the concepts: the principality of the individual, deviance, rebelliousness and feminism	Around the concepts: the principality of the individual, democratic and egalitarian relations	Around the concepts: conflict between the principality of the individual and that of the group. Conflict between feminism and patriarchy. Conflict between tradition and modernism	Around the concepts: the principality of the group, patriarchy and male authority	Around the concepts: the principality of both the individual and group. Religion-and justice-centered
Central Foci	deviance and rebelliousness	Values and egalitarian relationship	The tug of war between tradition and modernity	male authority	Agreement based upon religious values
Naming	Gender unity	Gender equality	Gender understanding	Gender stratification	Gender justice
Highlighting and Marginalization	Highlighting the right to unlimited human freedom and the principality of the individual. Marginalizing gender equality the principality of the group and traditionalism.	Highlighting the principality of the individual and equality. Marginalizing the principality of the group, patriarchy and gender inequality.	Highlighting empathy, participation and mutual understanding. Marginalizing both feminism and patriarchy.	Highlighting the principality of the group and the legitimacy of male authority. Marginalizing the similarity of the rights of men and women.	Highlighting religion and religiosity and gender justice. The joint principality of the individual and the group. Marginalizing the independent principality of the individual and group. Valueless attitudes and acts.

Analysis and Conclusion

In this research, to interpret the attitudes and meanings found in family models concerning the issue, circumstances and manner of spouse selection, five family models that correspond to contemporary Iranian society were identified and investigated using discourse analysis. These models were the postmodernist, modernist, transitional, traditional and Islamic family models. The results were obtained by evaluating and interpreting the data obtained from interviews conducted with bachelorettes, who were on the cusp of getting married. The analytical elements of articulation, central foci, naming, highlighting and marginalization were used to examine and compare the family models.

In the comparison of the stated five models about the structure and the internal relations of the family in terms of "spouse selection", it can be said that the model of the postmodernist family in the above components is "deviance and rebelliousness" and, with the influence of feminist thought (advocates of gender oppression) and egotistic and hedonistic attitudes, protest against the status and position of women in the society and try to present an attitude and agenda contrary to the existing status, customs and norms in the field of marriage relations.

This model, by presenting a different, diverse, fluid and fluctuating model regarding the relationship between a boy and a girl, the marriage ceremony, dowry, marital gift and the spouse selection model, is always in conflict with the governing power, and is concealed within the hidden layer of the society; it does not have the power to appear officially and publicly.

The modernist family model, which is based on characteristics such as gender similarity and equality, social equality, freedom, welfare, egotism, consumerism, and rationalism. Despite having apparently positive components, this model also has many weaknesses. In this type of family model, the priority of society is presupposed over the family, and the democratic relations in the society affect the private and intimate relations of the family as well. These families consider their most important goal to be the training of children with civil societal values (Jalaipur, 1385 SH). Additionally, the individual also has priority over society and family.

Further, in the modernist interpretation of marriage, concepts such as individual decision, love, mutual decision, sexual satisfaction, socializing before marriage, emotional need, escape

from loneliness, human relations, independence, sexual experience and cohabitation can be seen in their discourses. It can therefore be concluded from this that family life is not independent of society and merely follows the conditions and states of it. Also, this model does not fully conform to the context of Iran's cultural identity and emphasizes the principality of the individual over the family. The most important issue in modern marriage is the variety of models and, in other words, the lack of a model in spouse selection. This has occurred to such an extent that, despite creating new discourses, has led to the emergence of 'new' styles in marriage and has paved the way for the occurrence of many social disorders.

The transitional family model, which is based on the power of both men and women and the impact of both the individual and the group in society, pays attention to the differences between men and women and considers it to be affected by their biological structure (just like the theories of gender differences) (Ritzer, and Goodman, 1390 SH). Nonetheless, society and family are considered to be like dynamic elements during the period of transition from tradition to modernity. This transition does not occur smoothly and without tension; indeed, the encounter between tradition and modernity will be accompanied by a series of disturbances, tensions and unpleasantness. In this way, in choosing a spouse, a person seeks to find and create an intermediate model between the traditional and modernist models; sometimes acting on the traditional model and at others on the modernist model. In addition to creating confusion among the youth, it also facilitates the ground for misuse; it also constantly places the parents and child at loggerheads, as they try to find a middle solution.

In the traditional family model, which derives its authority from the father, the choosing of a spouse follows a certain traditional model in which the individual has a minimal role. Subsequently, social customs, fate and the hand of destiny govern the individual's future. Therefore, girls are always worried about their futures and, according to the increasing visibility of modernist patterns and behaviors and its promotion in an indirect and hidden manner (e.g., through social networks), creates confusion for them; because, if they want to adhere to a traditional marriage, they are worried about their future and uncertain destiny, and if they want to act in a modernist way, they will be admonished by their family and relatives.

The Islamic family model is the model which is aligned with the current governing system, i.e., Islam in Iran, and the one which the media also tries to promote. In addition, governmental and private institutions are also trying to promote this model that originates from Islam and the Islamic lifestyle. This model contains certain positive points in the area of spouse selection that need to be actualized in society. Features such as justice-orientated, the principality of both the group and the individual, the introduction of religious models, dynamism and the possibility of adapting to current conditions, being supported and compatible with social structures, paying attention to individual desires, taking into account worldly and hereafter prosperity, family orientation, emphasis on consultation and ethics are among the characteristics of this model. Undoubtedly, if the ground for the realization of such a model in choosing a spouse is provided, it is possible to prevent the occurrence of many social issues in this matter; because conditions such as compatible spouses, deliberative selection of spouses, control of sexual relationships before marriage, simplicity and avoidance of aristocracy and elitism, emphasis on timely marriage and, finally, having and raising children, are the hallmarks of this model. Similarly, increasing trust, social cohesion and the social capital of the family will be the basis for forming a successful family. With the above explanations, the Islamic model can be introduced as a suitable model. However, it is necessary to identify the challenges in the implementation of this model within contemporary Iranian society. The Islamic model, while having its strengths, is also devoid of the weaknesses of the other models and, due to the dynamism of Islamic jurisprudence, can always be adapted to social and cultural developments. It can also organize the needs of each period, as well as the structure and relationships of the family in a way that is appropriate to those (changes), while, at the same time, preserving the principles and foundations of the Islamic family structure and maintaining its functionality.

Therefore, it is essential, both theoretically and practically, that this model not only reduces the current and detrimental consequences of family problems but also creates the capabilities needed to become a solution for the family. The postmodernist family model, which, in addition to excessive egotism and rebelliousness, does not match the structure and system of the Islamic government, nor that of the opinions of most people within Iranian society. It also does not always emerge as an

underground model. Due to the conflict between tradition and modernity and the conflict between the principality of the group and the individual, the transitional family model is a model full of tension and conflict and has not been able to reach stability yet. The traditional family model is not able to survive in this field of discourse rivalry as, due to its functional weakness and structural crisis, it does not have the means to respond to the conditions and requirements of Iran's new society. The most important differences between the Islamic and modernist family models are due to their levels of ontology, epistemology and philosophical anthropology. The modernist model is a result and import of the Western worldview, whereas the Islamic model stems from the dynamism of religion. The principality of the individual in the modernist model can aggravate some of the current problems of the family, whereas the Islamic family model, which views both the individuals and group as being principal, has achieved "social moderation". The family in Iran has always been receptive to religious teachings, and in the anthropological dimension, man is created free in Islamic thought and is autonomous in choosing the path of life (cf.: Quran 76: 3). In addition to being free, he was a creation of a transcendent Lord and his existence and behavior are governed by laws and traditions (cf. Quran 4: 59). Therefore, the Islamic model, in the field of choosing a spouse to fulfil goals such as satisfying the natural and emotional need for the opposite sex, regulating sexual behavior, creating loving relationships and having children, has a specific framework. A framework that includes the popularizing of timely marriage (cf. Majlisi, 15/166), explaining the effects of marriage on young people (cf. Quran 24: 32; Quran 30: 21), mediating and helping young people to get married (cf. Quran 24: 32), the negation of the incorrect criteria in choosing a spouse; carelessness (cf. Quran 33: 37), the social emergence of marriage, the holding of marriage rituals and ceremonies, eliminating rival models and finally, educating the youth (Hāshimi Fashāraki, 1390 SH). Therefore, referring to the goal and central question at the beginning of this research, it seems that according to the capacities of the Islamic-Iranian family model, it can be considered an ideal model. Consequently, by taking the contemporary family towards it, many detrimental issues that arise from modernity can be resolved.

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