

Digital Identification of the Adolescent Generation and Conflict in the Social Sphere (a Framework for Analysis)

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Abstract

Adolescent identification in Iran is rapidly changing. Over the past decade, adolescents have been influenced by several significant factors, and their path of identification has undergone intense transformation compared to the past. The most important of these factors are the rapid advancements in communication technologies and the consequent expansion of social networks, increasing online information, and the emergence of excessive connectivity where adolescents can be constantly connected to each other online, creating pervasive interactions that directly impact identities. Alongside the consequences and lasting effects of economic, social, and political processes that have persisted from the past, this provides a broader perspective in understanding the cognition and identification of the new generation. The present study, with descriptive-analytical method, aimed to answer the central question: 'How has the identification of the new generation taken shape?' and 'What are the consequences of the convergence of this new identity with the societal situation?' The result indicates that the convergence of these stimuli (changes in communication technologies and the consequences of political, economic, and social trends) in the identification of the new generation suggests to policymakers that digital identification among adolescents can be a positive source for social change, creating social capital and promoting well-being if controlled and guided. Otherwise, it can play a major role in social unrest, anti-social behavior, and consequently conflict against tradition, religion, and the political system.

Keywords: Digital Identification, Generation Z, Social Sphere, Communication Technologies.

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Digital Identification of the Adolescent Generation and Conflict in the Social Sphere (A Framework for Analysis)

Introduction

The comprehensive analysis of today's Iranian society indicates that this society has different © and distinct characteristics and features compared to the past, as evidenced by the components that make up the society. One of these differences, which are evident through the typology and identification of active groups, is the presence of the new generation (Generation Z) with their new interests and desires, even contradicting existing values in various fields. These new desires, such as optional clothing, reduction of political barriers, conflict with traditional patterns, greater independence and freedom in the social sphere, on the one hand, indicate the new generation's distancing from traditional platforms of identification such as family, school, and religious institutions. On the other hand, signify the existence of a new and pervasive platform that not only shapes the mindset of the new generation but also imbues their identity with components that the current and past structures cannot accept and therefore cannot reflect. This conflict leads to generational gaps and numerous political and social consequences, making it necessary to understand this platform and its components to better identify the new generation and their future process of identification.

According to this pattern, it can be claimed that the convergence of a set of long-range and short-range components derived from internal and external factors has created a momentary situation in which, based on it, it is possible to reach the reasons for the protest presence of young people and, consequently, the new components of their identity; in other words, the reasons and motives for the protest presence of young people can be seen in their efforts to recognize their demands in the form of a "New Identification," which is evolving due to the system of issues surrounding this generation; a system of issues that is the result of the fusion of unresolved and accumulated problems in the collective memory of society, inherited from past trends to the current adolescent generation, on the one hand, and problems and characteristics resulting from contemporary conditions, which have made the current generation alienated from the existing conditions and inclined towards elements close to their beliefs and instincts, on the other hand.

Therefore, understanding the components and trends of movement towards the identification of the current and future adolescent generation requires delineating two situations: First, the situation before the digital space became pervasive and the participation in various protests, revealing unresolved issues and the burdens left behind that have been inherited by the new generation. The most crucial of these issues are:

- 1) Increasing living expenses, class gaps, inflation, unemployment, inequality, and the persistence of economic instability arising from the multiplicity and continuity of economic crises;
- 2) Increasing migration, disillusioned educated individuals, social blockage, indifference towards women's issues, and reduction of social capital regarding the increasing discrimination, injustice, as well as deficiencies in the civil sector;
- 3) Decreased sense of personal influence on one's destiny or lack of proper mechanisms for active and continuous participation, inefficiency of political factions, political bias, engineered elections, subjective decision-making, and lack of active foreign diplomacy to secure national interests, etc., all resulting from political trends;
- 4) Growing alienation from the environment and cultural space, inclination towards non-indigenous cultures, opposition or disassociation from religious values, alienation and lack of understanding of the ideals of the Islamic Revolution, etc., which stem from the disparity between slogans and actions of some executives and decision-makers, and the inability to generate national-religious cultural content.

Secondly, another vital aspect of the issues surrounding this generation in their identification is derived from contemporary characteristics such as increasing diversity-seeking, pleasure-seeking, comparativism, introversion and mental privatization, feeling alienated from society considering its behaviors, feeling estranged from the traditional educational and cultural space of the family, an increasing tendency to join informal groups such as recreational cliques, informal schools (like music schools), etc., to find peers of their own, an increasing inclination towards relationships with the opposite sex, and so on. These are due to the increasing access to the internet, virtual space, and social networks; in other words, the internet, virtual space, and social networks (the Information Age) serve as a platform that creates and shapes the desires and aspirations of the new generation's identity in a new way, which is of particular importance in constructing the identity of the new and future generations.

Digital Identification of the Adolescent Generation and Conflict in the Social Sphere (A Framework for Analysis)

Table 1: Platforms and Factors Affecting the Identification of the New Generation

Increasing living expenses, class disparities, poverty, inflation, unemployment, inequality, and the persistence of economic instability.	Economic	Historical contexts and process components	The platform and components of new generation identification
Reduced sense of efficacy over one's own destiny or lack of proper mechanisms for active and continuous participation, inefficiency of political factions, political unilateralism, engineered elections, arbitrary decisions, as well as lack of active foreign diplomacy to secure national interests, etc.	Political		
Increasing migration, disillusioned graduates, social obstruction, neglect of women's issues, and reduction of social capital due to increased discrimination and injustice, as well as lack of coordination in the civil sphere.	Social		
Increasing alienation from the environment and cultural space, inclination towards non-native cultures, opposition or lack of adherence to religious and spiritual values, alienation and lack of understanding of the ideals of the Islamic Revolution, etc.	Cultural		
Increasing diversity-seeking, pleasure-seeking, and comparison-oriented behaviors; introversion and personalization of mental space; feelings of alienation from society considering its behaviors; feelings of estrangement from traditional educational and family values; increasing inclination towards informal groups such as recreational cliques, informal academies (such as music), etc. to find like-minded peers; increased desire to connect with the opposite gender, etc.	Social Media	The new platform and its components	

In this way, the heritage passed down to the present generation has taken on various dimensions in conjunction with the space created by virtual networks. It has presented a field of diverse and numerous issues for the younger generation, which has alienated their mindset from the current state of affairs and considers the current conditions ineffective and incapable of meeting its current and future needs and desires. Furthermore, the characteristics resulting from the present situation, combined with the features of the virtual space - such as superficiality, rapid and powerful dissemination of news, intercultural comparison, the spread of violence, increased hedonism and materialism, etc. - have led to an increase in the density of unresolved problems from the past; that is, by "Loading" today's issues onto the accumulated problems of the past,

the ability of the younger generation to amplify and expand negative mindsets towards the current situation has increased and manifested itself in various ways in the online space. This convergence has also had profound social and political consequences, including, among the most important ones: deepening and escalating generational gaps, estrangement from the current state of affairs, lack of recognition, disregard for traditional social reference groups, global and transnational valuation, etc.

Accordingly, the issues of adolescents are a mixture of abandoned and accumulated desires resulting from past political, social, cultural, and economic trends, as well as technological advancements and new tools that have made it possible to project new values and norms for the younger generation. In such a way that the identity of the new generation and the future must be understood based on what is called digital or online identification.

In fact, the foundation of the identity of today's adolescents and the next generation (our current children) is derived from the nature of the digital and virtual space, which has characteristics such as rapid technological transformation, being transnational, defining in the private realm, high accessibility, community networking, etc.

Therefore, understanding the identification of today's and tomorrow's youth and its implications for the political and social spheres cannot be fully grasped unless we approach it with an epistemological perspective that recognizes the underlying factors shaping this system. In this regard, an analytical approach helps us to recognize the generational shifts and their different contexts, from past to present, and explore the progressive trends and potentialities in digital identification of the new generation on the virtual platform to assess the conflicts in the social realm and their political consequences.

1. Data Collection and Processing Method

The data collection method in the present study is library-based, document-oriented, and relies on documents and records such as books, research articles (both scholarly and non-scholarly) published in journals and media outlets, as well as other research documents including strategic reports, relevant bulletins, published official documents, and sources such as data available in virtual space and analysis of the content of speeches, opinions, and interviews. The present study aims to understand the phenomenon of diversity, so, it falls into the category of interdisciplinary research and has its own specific requirements. As for information processing, a descriptive-analytical method will be used to provide not only descriptions of relationships but also initiate analysis.

Digital Identification of the Adolescent Generation and Conflict in the Social Sphere (A Framework for Analysis)

2. Importance and Necessity of Research

Investigating new social events and the current status at a national level based on the youth axis, regarding its novelty and the consequences it will have, provides the necessity for various research in this field. In this regard, this research is also important for the following reasons.

Despite numerous analyses and investigations carried out regarding recent developments in Iranian society and their connection and coherence with internal and external influential factors, serious and profound research on the system of issues pertaining to the recent generation of adolescents and its impact on the formation and continuity of protest movements has not yet been conducted. This matter highlights the necessity of addressing the core of the protesters (adolescents) and the dimensions of their identity's susceptibility and influence on society and protest movements.

On the other hand, according to the political studies research, there is a need for precise and reality-based clarification and analysis of the influential factors on the issue of adolescents in Iran, simultaneously with the escalation of protests. The existing analyses and explanations in the academic society have failed to adequately address the role and position of protesting adolescents and have mostly defined them solely based on emotions. However, a meticulous and realistic examination indicates that the emergence and persistence of adolescent issues in action have a new nature, and from this perspective, their functions in social relations have not been properly understood and comprehended, necessitating attention to its process or project-like nature.

Another reason that highlights the need for this research is the effort to explain and analyze a specific species of gender-related characteristics. By examining the three recent generations of Iranian society, it is possible to identify the distinguishing aspects of recent generations compared to previous ones and understand their influential factors.

3. Background

Regarding the trends of identification at various levels in Iran, numerous research papers have been formulated and published. Some of the conducted studies include:

- 1) The article "The Direction of Iranian National Identity in the Future" in which the author considers social and economic structures, communication technology, and mass media as influential factors on national identity. The author believes that in the future, the direction of national identity will tend towards homogeneity and alignment with global identity.

2) The article "Futurology of Collective Identity in Iran using Cross-Analysis Matrix Method" examines the constituent elements of collective identity in Iran (national, religious, local, and modern identities) and explores their interactive relationships. The author believes that modern identity will hold significant importance in Iran's future, leading to partial changes in the nature and position of relations among different dimensions of identity.

3) Qanbari, in the article "A Look into the Future of Iranian National Identity," discusses the prediction of the national identity's state in the next twenty years. The writer has analyzed efficient authorship, distributive justice, national identity, legitimacy, revolutionary identity, and identity politics as influential drivers of national identity through scenario writing.

4) The article "Futurology of National Identity in the Iranian Education System" is also important because it focuses on schools or the younger generation's national identity in the future. In fact, the purpose of this study is to identify the influential drivers of national identity in the education system of Iran until the year 1410 (2031-2032) and examine the position of these drivers in terms of their impact on each other.

5) The article "Futurology of Opportunities and Threats of Social Networks for Youth (Using the Future Wheel Technique)" concludes that the most significant threats to the future use of social networks include identity crises, negative behavioral effects, social isolation, violation of individuals' privacy, and addiction to social networks. Also, the most crucial opportunities obtained are: globalization, specialized teamwork, business development, finding social groups, and filling leisure time.

6) The article "Examining the status of adherence to cultural identity among members of the Facebook social network (a case study of undergraduate students in humanities at the University of Tehran)" has achieved interesting results, some of which include: increased membership and participation of single women in the age group of 20 to 22 compared to men; a sense of belonging to the line and the Persian language, respect for different cultures and nationalities in notes and comments on Facebook indicating the adherence of students to cultural identity on Facebook; on the other hand, disagreement among students regarding their affiliation with religious and national norms as well as their low inclination to use religious symbols and teachings and share its principles, an interest in learning common linguistic expressions on Facebook indicating a lack of adherence by students to cultural identity; and finally, the results indicate that the cultural content of students on Facebook is subjected to evaluation, change, comparison, and selection.

Digital Identification of the Adolescent Generation and Conflict in the Social Sphere (A Framework for Analysis)

7) Another article is titled "Reflection on the Concept of Future Images as the Construction of Social Identity." In this research, the authors propose a new interpretation of identity called "Destination Identity." They believe that in the current era, where change is its constant characteristic and generational transformations continually impact society, both in terms of adaptation to transitional social climates, such as Iranian society, and the involvement of youth in identity construction, future images have the potential for coherence and high identification.

8) Another title is "Media and the Challenge of Identity Crisis from a Futurology Approach," which establishes a connection between identity and the media. The author believes that crises are an inseparable part of social life and their numbers and diversity increase day by day. Furthermore, with the expansion of mass media, both domestically and internationally, and their influence on cultural institutions within society, the intensity of identity crises has also increased. Therefore, the author emphasizes the role and position of the media in explaining values and cultures of societies. As a result, they have concluded that the misuse of media has led to challenges in identity crises.

Therefore, research studies in this field indicate that researchers have addressed the analysis of influential dimensions on national identity and youth in general, but they have not paid attention to the aspects of adolescents' and the new generation's identity, even with process-oriented approaches, and have not focused on the relationship between the identification of the new generation with social networks, virtual space, and their behavior in the social sphere. Likewise, in this article, an attempt has been made to first discuss the theoretical concepts of identity and the influential factors on it using a combined method and framework, and then analyze them using a descriptive-analytical approach.

4. Key Concepts

4.1. Adolescence

Adolescence is generally referred to as the period between childhood and adulthood. However, considering the variable nature of its age range, some believe that it can be considered a social concept relative to time and place (Lee, 2001).

4.2. Identity

Identity is an ambiguous and elusive term. The reason for this ambiguity and elusiveness lies in its widespread use in various fields and for different purposes, as well as its application to similarities and differences. In fact, on the one hand, identity is something unique to each of us that we perceive as relatively stable over time (and therefore consistent), like an identification card - here, our identity is something we

possess uniquely and distinguishes us from others -; on the other hand, identity is constructed in relation to a limited or broader social group. For example, when we talk about national identity and cultural identity, we refer to this matter. Here, our identity depends to some extent on what we share with others, and identity related to self-perception is similar to others whom we consider at least important aspects (Buckingham, 2008 AD).

In fact, every individual may strive to "Being Yourself" or "finding Their True Self," and in doing so, they seek multiple identifications with others based on social, cultural, biological, as well as shared values, history, and personal interests; that is, at one level, a person is the unique product of their personal biography. However, who someone is depends on the social situations they are in and the motivations they may have at that time (Jenkins, 2004 AD). Based on this, scholars in this field believe that the most discussion about identification arises from the tension between these two general aspects, especially the relational contexts between individuals.

Accordingly, identity is the collection of personal and social characteristics through which an individual recognizes him/her and is recognized by others.

4.3. Digital Identification

Digital identification is a form of identity based on new communication technologies that has gained significant popularity, especially in recent decades, and has created a new generation called Generation Z. Based on digital and internet technologies, there have been significant developments in how adolescents identify themselves, which is directly related to the amount of time they spend on the internet. In other words, with the increase in internet usage and access to mobile phones, virtual and online identities alongside real identities define the position and status of the new generation and shape their behaviors (Beddington, 2013 AD). This platform creates variables such as pervasive and transpersonal communications, increased rapid access to information and cross-sharing, and the fluidity of communications, ultimately making identities fluid, flexible, and variable.

Accordingly, digital identity refers to the selected actions of the new generation on the web and virtual space, which its prominent features include fluidity, flexibility, and validity.

5. Conceptual Framework

Researchers and analysts have so far used the "Historical Memory" approach to study and analyze the identity of adolescents, in which they consider today's identity of the new generation as a continuation of

Digital Identification of the Adolescent Generation and Conflict in the Social Sphere (A Framework for Analysis)

traditional components (from the past to the present); or they have used psychological and sociological theoretical frameworks to analyze existing data and the current situation in Iran for identification. Although each of these methods has its merits in examining the current situation and analyzes significant aspects of recent developments, providing a descriptive-analytical understanding of the phenomenon, they cannot be considered comprehensive approaches in analyzing new aspects of adolescent identity and their impact on the civil and social sphere. These approaches place the current situation within the framework of reason and past experiences, justifying and analyzing the new and distinct aspects and characteristics of the current phenomenon along the path of the past, without giving them independent consideration; they also overlook its behavioral possibilities.

Therefore, we want to analyze the trends and understand the main axis and core of social opposition (youth and their issues) through an analytical approach and consider their issues within the system. We will analyze the concept of "Virtual Identification" and generational behaviors in the social and political sphere. So, at first, we should depict the current situation and identify the foundations and components leading to such unrest by referring to the core identity of the disturbances, and then present the trends.

Accordingly, we will use a two-level conceptual framework: First, for better analysis of the data and components leading to the current situation, considering different perspectives on the relationship between identity and new developments, we will utilize the analytical concept of "Digital Identity" and the thought processes of scholars in this field from the past to the present, which provide new possibilities for analysts. Then, after understanding the existing space, we will use trend analysis to navigate generational identity transformations and their implications for the future. In general, depicting the current situation entails illustrating the unrest that has taken shape within it. It involves breaking down events into their constituent elements in order to understand its distinct features from the past, identifying the core of the transformations (adolescents), and enumerating and examining the systemic issues around the main axis. Alongside the concept of "Digital and Online Identity" and investigating the possibilities, they form the framework of our conceptual understanding.

6. Gender Identification in the Context of Technological Changes

Concerns about changes in identity components and the transformation of identity, especially among new generations, are not a novel concept; although undoubtedly in the contemporary world, due to the speed of

transformations, it has taken on new urgency, form, and dimensions. This new urgency, form, and dimensions indicate the determination of identity destiny at various levels - individual, group, class, generational, ethnic, national, and even transnational - by the background and components that have become active in many parts of the world after the technological revolution. Technological advancements, which have a significant impact on "How Communication Occurs and Evolves," have provided new possibilities for the newer generations to perceive affairs and issues in the "Local-Global" scope; this has introduced new variables into everyday life, with a major effect being the emergence of interconnected, fluid, dynamic, generational identities with local-global coordinates.

In this regard, Zygmunt Bauman, a sociological theorist, argues that the new dimensions emerging in identification are a reflection of a reality that is becoming increasingly difficult to understand and control. With the continued presence and growing inclination towards these components, traditional sources of identification will have less impact (Bauman, 2004 AD). Therefore, many contemporary authors emphasize the fluidity of identity and see it as almost infinitely negotiable. Another important and accepted point is that "Identity" only becomes a subject when it is somehow threatened or contested and requires explicit expression (Buckingham, 2008 AD).

Hence, the nature of identity is formed in the intersection of social fabric components such as poverty, inequality, social class, gender, ethnicity, and contemporary contexts (technologies of the time); not as something internal and unchangeable like growth hormones (Griffin, 1993 AD). For this reason, they also believe that conflicts that occur in the social sphere are not merely internal, but rather rooted in the interpretation and intersection of internal and external components and embedded in social uncertainty, which adolescents and individuals of every generation are confronted with.

Therefore, the fluidity of identity and its flexibility, especially among new generations in each period of time, manifests itself socially in relation to family management and the political system in two forms: a gradual cultural transformation with the acceptance and inclusion of family and the political system, and secondly, the lack of understanding by adolescents and the attempts by the political system to control them, threatened by previous generations, leading to conflict in the social sphere.

Digital Identification of the Adolescent Generation and Conflict in the Social Sphere (A Framework for Analysis)

Main Assumption: Fluidity and Flexibility of Identity		
Behavior of Adolescents (New Generation)	political system behavior	behavior of the previous generation
The Feeling of Satisfaction and Change in Identities	Planning and Policy-making in Sync with new Developments (Companion Policy and Streamlining)	Accompanying and Understanding the Needs and System of New Generation Issues
The gradual Transformation of Identity while preserving some Traditions and Values	Control and Changes Engineering	Control and Supervision
Feeling Threatened by family, the Political System, and a tendency towards Extremist and Violent Actions (Conflict from home to Social Sphere).	Violent Confrontation With Changes and their Supporters	Opponent Tough and Rough

7. Digital Technologies and Identification of the New Generation

Based on what has been stated, identity is a flexible, fluid, and conversational phenomenon that takes on the color and scent of a generation, in line with the characteristics of the time. In order to complete the discussion, we strive to address some points in this section regarding how to understand digital technology, adolescence, and identification to arrive at a general view on this matter.

"Technology" is often recognized as a transformative force in social, economic, and various aspects of public and private life. As Marvin points out, such argumentation has been commonly discussed in public debates, advertising materials, and academic fields, thus having a long history of discourse. He demonstrates how the introduction of electricity and telecommunications in the late 19th and early 20th centuries was encouraged by discourses that attributed immense power to technology and challenged by opponents (Marvin, 1988 AD). Indeed, on one hand, proponents celebrate these technologies for the opportunities they enable, but on the other hand, critics condemn them based on repeated claims that they might threaten established social relationships. For example, the telephone was admired for its ability to make businesses more efficient and facilitate more democratic social lives, but it was also condemned for disrupting intimate relationships and creating upheaval in established social hierarchies.

Therefore, almost a century ago, there were discussions about the use of new technologies and their impact on social and identity trends. These discussions bear significant similarities to debates regarding the use or control of new digital technologies and their impact on the identity trends of new generations. These similarities can be summarized as follows:

- 1) Technology creates new forms of social and civic life and provides immense resources for personal and generational freedom and empowerment;
- 2) Conversely, some believe that technology poses threats to privacy, creates new forms of inequality, facilitates commercial exploitation, and becomes a target for deviant groups and profit-driven companies;
- 3) New technologies liberate individuals from limitations and hierarchical traditional modes of work;
- 4) New technologies present alternative realities as an improper substitute for existing discourses and traditional values.
- 5) From this perspective, it appears that technology in generational identification stems from a neutral process of scientific research and development influenced by complex social, economic, and political forces. Depending on how it is applied and utilized, technology creates issues and challenges for the new generation, either by provoking opposition to the existing status quo or by improving trends towards social integration of the new generation (Buckingham, 2008 AD).

Therefore, the important point is that the impact of technology, regardless of the methods used and the social contexts and processes it enters cannot be ignored in social and psychological changes in generations and consequently in their identification.

"Kevin Robbins" and "Frank Webster" have conducted extensive research on the social and psychological influence of technologies on the new generation in schools. Based on the results obtained, they believed that new technologies lead to a "Desocialized" perspective of technology among the new generation. While disregarding traditional social trends, these technologies still have an impact on society, even beyond social influence. They have influenced the information society and knowledge economy, which are often used to justify the increasing use of information technology in schools. These pervasive influences create highly debatable assumptions about variables such as employment, skills, and others that are related to adolescent identification and directly affect the mental well-being of the generation (Garnham, 2000 AD).

Based on this, there are two general perspectives regarding the impact of technology on the processes and platforms of identification for new generations in each period: First, some believe that new technologies inherently have no power to change but rather define and operate within

Digital Identification of the Adolescent Generation and Conflict in the Social Sphere (A Framework for Analysis)

established frameworks, similar to other tools. And second, some believe that new technologies not only change existing platforms but also, as a new meta-condition, create the greatest changes and transformations in the identity platforms of generations.

The initial viewpoint of supporters is that in the new economic, political, social, and cultural order, where established forms of economic, political and social activities are fundamentally changing, the assumption that these changes are somehow an inevitable result of technology has been widely challenged (Buckingham, 2008 AD). Critics argue that the extent to which technology has brought about these changes is merely a matter of possibilities in relation to people; that is, people choose how to use it rather than it having inherent power to bring about changes on its own, so technology has no intrinsic characteristics and is essentially meaningless without the utilization and deployment by individuals.

The rival viewpoint, however, argues that this approach has severely underestimated the value of technology and disregards the fact that technologies have inherent potentials or "Affordances" and that a relatively small number of transformations resulting from the effects of new technologies are unavoidable. According to this group, the history of technology is full of examples of unforeseen consequences and even malicious uses. Nevertheless, the problems that arise with technology are largely shaped by social actors and social institutions that play a primary role in its production and in determining the place, time, and manner of its use (ibid.).

In combining these two perspectives, Raymond Williams, in his discussion of the impact of television, believes that technology both influences social changes and shapes social transformations - which play a prominent role in identification - through a dialectical approach (Buckingham, 2003 AD). According to Williams, the role and influence of technology are determined to some extent by how it is used and primarily controlled by the social interests of those who restrict and, in turn, produce, circulate, and distribute information. Therefore, this approach goes beyond the concept of technology as a simple "Cause" of social changes (on one hand) and the idea of technology as a simple "Barrier" to complex social problems (on the other hand).

However, reconsideration in the digital generation enhances the power of such ideas when combined with ideas about childhood and adolescence. The discussion about the impact of media and technology on children and adolescents has always been a center for hopes and much broader fears about identification and social changes. On the one hand, there is a powerful discourse about the ways in which digital technology threatens or even destroys childhood and adolescence. It is evident that

individuals are not only exposed to more apparent dangers such as pornography and online predators but also to a wide range of physical and psychological negative consequences resulting from their interaction with digital technology, putting them at risk. From the perspective of this digital media discourse, they are responsible for many social damages, such as addiction at a young age, antisocial behaviors, obesity, academic failure, commercial exploitation, weak imagination, and so on.

However, in recent years, unlike those who express regret over the loss of innocence in childhood and adolescence due to the digital space, supporters of the "Digital Generation" see new technology as a force for young people's liberation - a means for them to overcome larger intrusions and restrictions and create a new and autonomous private space. In this approach, technology, far from corrupting young people, creates a generation that is more open, democratic, creative, and innovative than their parents' generation.

In this regard, Mark Prensky distinguishes between "Digital Natives" (those who have grown up with this technology) and "Digital Immigrants" (adults who have entered it later), which has had a significant impact on discussions of the new generation's identity. According to him, Digital Natives have a very different learning style; they crave interaction, prioritize graphics and visuals over words, and seek ubiquitous access, and so on. As a result, they are dissatisfied with traditional instructional methods based on step-by-step explanations and logic, viewing Digital Immigrants as completely alien and outdated subjects. Prensky even believes that Digital Natives have a fundamentally different brain structure from immigrants, as if technology has accelerated a form of physical evolution in just over a decade (Prensky, 2006 AD).

In the same way, there are evident and absolute differences between technologies (television vs. the internet) and generations ("TV Kids" vs. the "Network Generation") in terms of identity; television is a passive medium, while the network is active. Television makes its users "Passive," whereas the network enhances their intelligence. Television broadcasts a unique representation of the world, while the network is democratic and interactive. Television isolates, while the network builds communities, and so on.

Given this matter, just as television is the opposite of network, the "Television Generation" is also the opposite of the "Network Generation." The values of the "Television Generation," such as the technologies they now control, are increasingly conservative, hierarchical, inflexible, and centralized. In contrast, Generation Z is thirsty for expression, discovery, and self-growth: they are intelligent, self-reliant, analytical, expressive, creative, curious, open to diversity, and socially aware. It seems that these

Digital Identification of the Adolescent Generation and Conflict in the Social Sphere (A Framework for Analysis)

generational differences are created by technology rather than being caused by other social, historical, or cultural forces. Unlike their parents, who are portrayed as "Technophobic," it appears that young people have a sensory and self-stimulating relationship with digital technology. Toffler argues: "For many children, using new technology is as natural as breathing." Technology empowers them and ultimately leads to a "Generational Explosion." (Seiter, 2005 AD)

From this perspective, it seems that technology has brought about fundamental changes in a wide range of fields and the path to identification for new generations. It has created new styles of communication, interaction, and tools for building communities. It has generated these new styles of learning that will continue to evolve.

One of the distinguishing factors in these discussions, which is also important in the identification of the new generation's identity, is "Informal Learning," which defines the everyday interactions of young people with technology. For this reason, Seymour Papert praises what is called "Home-style Learning" and outside of school, considering it self-directed, self-motivated, and inspiring, in a way that sidelines "School-style Learning" (Papert, 1996 AD). Similarly, Prinske and Tapscott also look for alternatives outside of school for what they perceive as the old-fashioned teaching methods of teachers.

Adolescents are using virtual spaces to develop specific orientations towards acquiring information, specific methods of gaining knowledge and new skills, and a sense of self-identity as learners. They likely experience a strong sense of autonomy and the right to choose and follow their preferred paths. In these domains, instead of following external instructions and guidelines, they primarily learn through experimentation and play. However, there are significant limitations for all of these. Moreover, media content is not necessarily neutral or trustworthy; rather, it presents the world in particular ways and does so in service of the interests of its producers. For these reasons, we need to be cautious about celebrating adolescents' "Informal" experiences with media and technology, and there are good reasons to exercise caution in extending these experiences into the "Formal" fabric of schools (Livingstone and Kirsten, 2010 AD).

The following points were obtained regarding the analysis and conceptualization of the digital identity of the younger generation at a general level:

- Identity is a fluid, flexible, and dynamic concept between personal perception and social relationships;
- Generational identity is shaped by political, economic, social, cultural trends on one hand, and new technologies on the other;

- Generational identities are complex, emerging from new technologies that are fluid, dynamic, and negotiable;
- Technological advancements are the main drivers of changes in the identities of the new generation;
- Information technologies, including the discovery and use of the Internet, have rapidly increased identity gaps and generational conflicts;
- Inter-generational identity conflicts have led to conflicts in the political and social sphere.

7.1. Components of Digital Generation Identification

At the first level of conceptualizing the research framework, an attempt was made to analyze the data and trends of generational identities and their social consequences by using perspectives that consider the major part of the identity of new generations in the contemporary era as emerging from modern technologies, especially digital technologies. However, what become important are the potential consequences of identity transformations among adolescents who are born into and have grown up within the internet.

Growth in this new space - also known as the virtual or online space - has created a different mindset among its users regarding various social, cultural, political, economic, and environmental issues compared to the mindset of individuals from previous generations. This different understanding has led to the emergence of new issues within the generational sphere, with political and social consequences, and various conflicts that require examination by analysts.

Based on this, while considering the factors that change gender identities, especially the identity of today's youth, efforts are being made to analyze the identification of the pioneering generation, their patterns of political and social behavior, and their consequences. In fact, we believe that the identification of adolescents in a complex and rapidly changing space is linked to social and political transformations in the country; therefore, decision-makers should make double efforts to recognize transformative platforms and measure their effectiveness in order to prevent disruptive crises. Because today's signs, symptoms, and developments in society indicate that the lack of proper understanding and control in a networked society with variables such as increased virtual interactions, the influence of the virtual space on changing values and existing attitudes, changes in lifestyle, etc., have led to uprisings and sustained opposition. Along with increasing costs, it has separated a portion of society from its existing structure.

Accordingly, while these generational transformations have led to the analysis of social transformations based on a "New Paradigm" with conflicting axes such as traditional and modern values, traditional and

Digital Identification of the Adolescent Generation and Conflict in the Social Sphere (A Framework for Analysis)

modern lifestyles, religious beliefs and existing and new worldviews, political-social consensus and convergence or bipolarization, national legitimacy and solidarity, traditional and new authorities, etc., they will also lead decision-makers to two decisions; first, the acceptance of an open society with global variables and second, the controlled nature of the network space with the updating of variables and national-Islamic identity values.

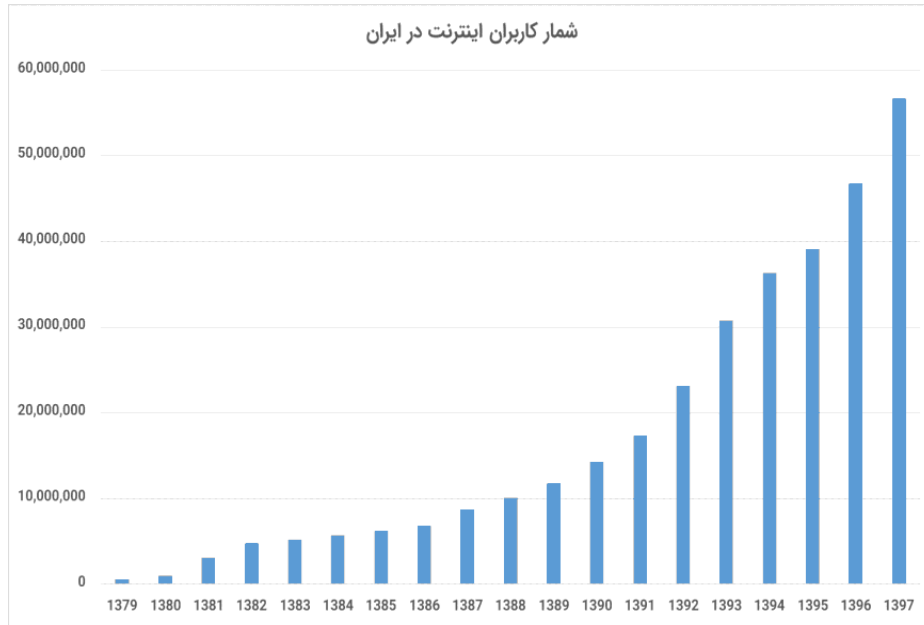
7.2. Components of Identification in the Digital Space

Today's teenagers (and future members of Iranian society) have multiple overlapping identities with a mix of global influences instead of a unified identity rooted in native components. These identities are shaped and transformed dynamically in various stages and environments of life, particularly within the digital space. According to research findings, generational identity in the online realm is undergoing significant changes through three important pathways:

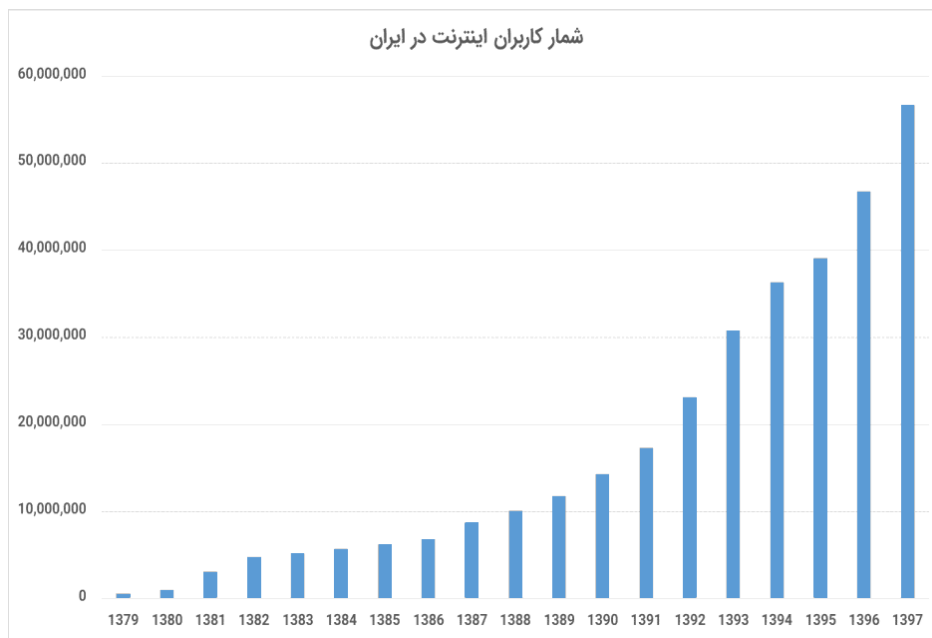
7.2.1. Excessive Communication: Excessive communication and consequently receiving multiple images of lifestyles from around the world lead to social changes and increased expectations. If until around 1380, close to one million users were connected to the internet, this number reached approximately 60 million in 1397 and around 79 million in 1400 (this upward trend of internet usage can be seen in the first graph). Of this number, nearly 55 percent have been members of a social network (Instagram), meaning it has increased from around 24 million in 1396 to nearly 48 million in 1400 (Beta Research Center).

Also, such networks provide individuals with the opportunity to document any aspect of their lives and create a massive amount of data that can be extracted and utilized by the government for analysis and insights (as depicted in the second image), thanks to unlimited storage capacity. This means that, on one hand, individuals' online identities gain new value and cannot be easily ignored or disregarded, and on the other hand, controlling and managing them requires new, updated, and tailored approaches and policies that align with this new nature.

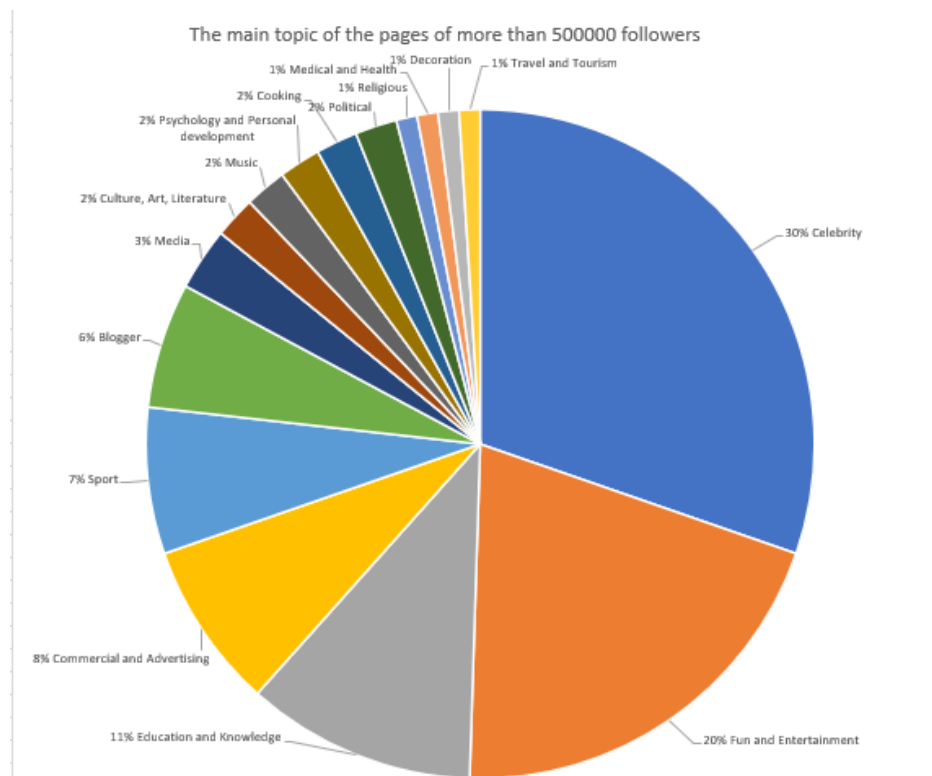
First image: The number of Internet users in Iran until 1397



Second image: Main interests of Instagram followers



Digital Identification of the Adolescent Generation and Conflict in the Social Sphere (A Framework for Analysis)



Source: Fars News Agency

Given the number of users and topics followed in the virtual space [according to the second image], it must be said that identity for a teenager in the Islamic Republic is currently constructed through the fusion of virtualization and the existing content in the virtual environment and physical location. Today's teenage users are increasingly part of a global network and framework, meaning that data and events shaping up elsewhere in the world - with any idea or concept - can have a real and immediate impact on the mind of an Iranian teenage user, and vice versa. As a result, it must be accepted that the new generation has become accustomed to constant movement between the online space and the physical world and uses social media in a way that eliminates the gap between online and offline identities. The internet has empowered this generation to connect with others like themselves at any point, engage in discussions about various ideas, and also disseminate different and inaccurate information, which can quickly spread widely. This excessive connectivity not only has the potential to accelerate social changes but, without intelligent regulation, can make social changes more unstable and digitalize and superficialize identity. Consequently, through increased accessibility, the internet and the web have generated a new type of

identity for young people while simultaneously producing variables that challenge traditional identity.

7.2.2. Increasing in Social Fragmentation: One of the most significant consequences of dysfunctional behaviors and accumulation of unresolved issues and problems in economic, cultural, and political domains, and their reflection in the online space and social networks, is the society becoming more fragmented, increasing social polarization, and diminishing national cohesion. These consequences have a serious and profound impact by influencing attitudes and perspectives, shaping generational identity, particularly among the youth who are born and raised in the virtual community. Alongside these social changes, virtual support networks emerge, leading to the proliferation of diverse content in the minds of this generation.

In this regard, it is predicted that, given the opportunities provided by the virtual space and the web for individuals and various groups, the influence of ethnic and even minority groups on the population will increase in the next decade. While this can lead to diversity, it can also have consequences for national and ethnic identities. Surveys show evidence that especially among young people, there is a more tolerant attitude towards minority identities, migration, and adopting values and norms of other nations (A look at the population statistics of Iranian immigrants over the past few decades shows an upward trend in Iranian migration. The population of Iranian immigrants was about 820,000 in 1990 AD, and this figure reached 4.4 million in 2020 AD, which means that in the past 30 years, the population of Iranian immigrants, mostly young people, has increased by 4.2 times).

Furthermore, it seems unlikely that the impact of traditional identity components - such as religious and spiritual elements - will remain unchanged in future decades, and there will be a gradual long-term shift towards a change in the perception of religion and an increase in secularization tendencies. For example, in a study, the level and nature of religiosity among the people in Iranian society, especially among young people who have a traditional cultural-religious foundation, mainly Islamic, and their inclination towards it is strategically important, and changes in it can have security implications. The trend has been towards decline. Some studies and figures indicate a decrease in religious sentiments in Iran. For example, the level of "Public Belief in the Existence of God" decreased from 98.7% in 2009 to 93.4% in 2019. Furthermore, Iranians claimed 4% less belief in concepts such as "Prophethood" and "Resurrection" compared to 2009. Overall, this study emphasized that approximately 88% of Iranians can be considered inclined towards religion, compared to 92% in 2009. Participation in

Digital Identification of the Adolescent Generation and Conflict in the Social Sphere (A Framework for Analysis)

religious rituals, pilgrimages, and ceremonies decreased from 95.5% in 2012 to 82.5% in 2019. Meanwhile, it is said that "Illicit Relationships," "Improper Hijab," and "Lack of Using Alcohol" are on the rise. The interviewees of this study were almost unanimously agreed that the influence of religion in Iran is declining, and more individuals and young people tend to view religion critically or lean towards a form of "Global Spirituality." This phenomenon has been analyzed as a result of undesirable performance, economic problems, "Generational Gap," "Global Trends of Modernity," and the "Effects of Virtual Space" on generational identification (Mohabbat-Kar, 2018 AD).

7.2.3. Fading and Blurring of the Boundary between Public and Private Identities: Young people now have a greater tendency to share personal information in public domains such as social networks. This means that attitudes towards privacy, especially among the new generation, are changing. These changes blur the boundaries between social, private, and public identities. For example, the emergence of mobile technology has enabled a wider range of individuals to share various photos and videos of their daily lives online, creating competition for visibility and gradually leading to cultural change. It has also resulted in relinquishing control over certain aspects of one's identity to others, with potential and actual serious consequences for personal life and identity. This fading of traditional boundaries, particularly between public and private identities, is a significant and transformative consequence of social and technological changes (Beddington, 2013 AD).

7.2.3.1. Consequences of Digital Identification

The impact of these triple cultural-social changes, whether distant or close, on the path of identification for the new generation in the context of the web and society can be expressed as follows:

7.2.3.2. Radicalism and extremism: A tendency towards greater social diversity and increased acceptance of new technologies may pose challenges to intergenerational space and policymakers seeking to manage it. One of the most important of these challenges is the rise of radicalism and extremism among the new generation, who perceive themselves as alienated from what has been defined for them. For this reason, understanding the process of identity transformation in adolescents is crucial to grasp these developments.

1) Social Mobility: Trends indicate that understanding and improving social mobility will become more complex in the future, and there will be a greater divergence between different age groups and existing power structures and the new generation, as unfair perceptions of access to opportunities may reinforce certain aspects of youth social identities, such as courage, instead of real equality and enhance the potential for collective

action. However, with increased internet access and connectivity, information and education may be more freely available and shared, increasing life opportunities for many individuals.

2) Decreasing social cohesion: Increased social diversity, demographic trends, and gradual decline in the importance of certain traditional aspects of identity indicate that without unifying elements, Iranian society is likely to have less cohesion in the future. However, excessive connectivity can create or strengthen new group identities. Therefore, policymakers should consider direct and indirect policies for the younger generation and new groups to enhance their sense of belonging to the national community. It is important to recognize that policies can interact with identities in complex and unpredictable ways. Awareness of this should be incorporated into programs to monitor policy implementation and respond to outcomes. Additionally, there are opportunities for policies to support social integration and validate new forms of community during development.

3) Promoting national and cultural identities among young people: The increasing diversity of the population in Iran means that dual national and cultural identities will become more common among young people in border areas.

4) Increasing religious awareness and reducing inclination towards religious issues among adolescents: It seems that the slow trend towards the creation of secular policies will continue in the next decade, considering the identity trends of adolescents.

Conclusion

In the modern world, with the widespread expansion of communication technologies and their innovative capabilities and functions, opportunities, threats, and concerns have arisen in various areas, including adolescent identification. Identifying identity trends, components, and influential factors on generational identity among Iranians - especially after the Islamic Revolution - is a key and fundamental issue that explains many behaviors in the social and political sphere. On the other hand, due to negligence and unawareness of some identity-building resources, it is necessary to create a framework that can explain both the trends of generational identity transformations and depict its future and behavioral probabilities. In fact, the increasing inclination of adolescents towards modernization, along with the selection of certain ethnic, national, and cultural features, has made it necessary for decision-makers and society to have a better understanding of "Current and Future Changes and Developments." For this reason, there is a significant need for a

Digital Identification of the Adolescent Generation and Conflict in the Social Sphere (A Framework for Analysis)

framework that can demonstrate the trends of identity and their relationship with new developments and technology, and also depict and illustrate the probable future and future possibilities at another level. Due to the increasing complexity and dynamism of the environment and the influence of environmental variables and increased global interactions, futures studies and exploring the path of future identity transformations become essential. Developing and formulating future visions and examining and illustrating possible and desirable trends through trend research are reasons why future events are uncontrollable. With this method, disruptive factors and hindrances to native identification are identified as key and influential variables for programs and policymaking. Furthermore, since national identity is linked to the political stability and national security of countries as a distinguishing feature of nations, countries must make double efforts to strengthen and consolidate it. Nowadays, in the era of information and communication, we witness an increase in awareness and interactions through media, social networks, and the consequent changes in values, attitudes, and lifestyle in the face of globalization and modern identity. This magnifies the importance of national identity and its future.

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