

GENDER ATTITUDES ACROSS GENERATIONS IN CONTEMPORARY ARMENIAN SOCIETY (COMPARATIVE ANALYSIS)

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Abstract: Contemporary gender norms and attitudes in Armenia have been shaped by a complex interplay of pre-Soviet traditional culture, the legacy of the Soviet socialist modernization project, and the post-Soviet spread of western ideas and values. The paper examines generational differences in gender norms and attitudes in Armenian society, by comparing three generational groups. The mixed-method analysis is based on quantitative and qualitative data, including the nationally-representative household-based Gender Barometer Survey conducted in 2014, as well as in-depth interviews and focus group discussions among members of different generational groups in Armenia during 2015-2020. The results of the factor analysis show considerable generational complexity in gender norms and attitudes. We find that the majority of Armenian society, regardless of gender and generation, strongly adheres to the core family values and the corresponding gendered family roles. At the same time, the analyses show that individuals who belong to the older generation, i.e., the generation whose socialization took place under Soviet rule, display the most conservative patriarchal gender attitudes. The middle generation, whose coming of age occurred during the period of the early radical post-Soviet transformation, demonstrate inconsistent gender attitudes: while adhering to conservative gender norms, they are also most dissatisfied with the state of gender equality and in some aspects, such as achievement of status and wealth, display considerable gender egalitarianism. Finally, the youngest generation generally subscribes to the most egalitarian attitudes, but this group is far from homogenous, demonstrating a sharp divide between urban dwellers, who are very egalitarian-minded, and rural ones, who are remarkably conservative. Notably, young women living in cities display by far the most egalitarian attitudes. Moreover, among men, the generation is not a significant predictor of the level of egalitarianism in gender attitudes, compared to education and area of residence (city/village). However, it has a more significant impact on women’s perception of the traditional gender scheme. We conclude with a discussion of the role of changes in gender norms and attitudes in a broader transformation of Armenian society.

Keywords: Armenian society, gender attitudes; generational differences, post-Soviet transition

ՏԱՐԲԵՐ ՍԵՐՈՒՆԴՆԵՐԻ ԳԵՆԴԵՐԱՅԻՆ ԴԻՔՈՐՈՇՈՒՄՆԵՐԸ ՀԱՅԱՍՏԱՆՅԱՆ ԺԱՄԱՆԱԿԱԿԻՑ ՀԱՍԱՐԱԿՈՒԹՅՈՒՆՈՒՄ (ՀԱՄԵՄՏԱԿԱՆ ՎԵՐԼՈՒԾՈՒԹՅՈՒՆ)

Մարիա Զասլավսկայա

սոցիոլոգիական գիտությունների դոկտոր, ԵՊՀ կիրառական սոցիոլոգիայի ամբիոնի պրոֆեսոր

Վիկտոր Ագաջանյան

Կալիֆորնիայի համալսարանի սոցիոլոգիայի ամբիոնի և միջազգային ինստիտուտի պրոֆեսոր, Լոս Անջելես, ԱՄՆ

Ամփոփում. Ժամանակակից գենդերային նորմերն ու դիրքորոշումները Հայաստանում ձևավորվել են նախախորհրդային ավանդական մշակույթի, խորհրդային արդիականացման նախագծի ժառանգության և արևմտյան գաղափարների ու արժեքների հետխորհրդային տարածման արդյունքում: Աշխատանքում ուսումնասիրվում են հայ հասարակության մեջ գենդերային նորմերի և տրամադրությունների միջսերնդային տարբերությունները՝ համեմատելով երեք սերունդների մոտեցումներ: Ուսումնասիրությունն իրականացվել է սոցիոլոգիական հետազոտությունների արդյունքների երկրորդային վերլուծության միջոցով՝ խառը մեթոդների կիրառությամբ, մասնավորապես՝ «Գենդերային բարոմետրի հետազոտության» տնային տնտեսությունների քանակական ազգային ներկայացուցչական տվյալների և մի շարք խորին հարցազրույցների և ֆոկուս-խմբային հարցումների արդյունքների հիման վրա, որոնք իրականացվել են 2014-2020 թթ. Գործոնային վերլուծության արդյունքները ցույց են տվել, որ հայաստանյան հասարակության անդամների մեծ մասը, անկախ սերնդից և սերնդից, հավատարիմ է ընտանիքի հիմնական արժեքներին և հայրիշխանական ընտանեկան գենդերային դերերին: Մինևույն ժամանակ, վերլուծությունները ցույց են տալիս, որ այն

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անհատները, որոնք պատկանում են ավագ սերնդին, որոնց սոցիալականացումը տեղի է ունեցել խորհրդային իշխանության օրոք, դրսևորում են ամենապահպանողական հայրիշխանական գենդերային դիրքորոշումներ: Միջին սերունդը, որի հասունացումը տեղի է ունեցել վաղ հետ-խորհրդային վերափոխման ժամանակաշրջանում, ցուցադրում է հակասական գենդերային դիրքորոշումներ. մի կողմից՝ նրանք կողմնակից են պահպանողական գենդերային նորմերի, մյուս կողմից՝ այս սերունդը առավելապես դժգոհ է հասարակությունում գենդերային հավասարությունից: Կարգավիճակի և ֆինանսատնտեսական բարիքների ձեռքբերման հարցերում այդ սերունդը ցուցաբերում է առավել բարձր աստիճանի գենդերային էգալիտարիզմ: Վերջապես, ամենաերիտասարդ սերունդը ընդհանուր առմամբ դրսևորում է ամենաէգալիտար դիրքորոշումը, սակայն այս խումբը հեռու է միատարր լինելուց. դրսևորվել է կտրուկ անջրպետ էգալիտար քաղաքաբնականների, պահպանողական գյուղաբնականների պատկերացումների միջև: Հատկանշական է, որ քաղաքներում ապրող երիտասարդ կանայք դրսևորում են ամենաէգալիտար գենդերային դիրքորոշումները: Ավելին, սերնդային պատկանելությունն այնքան էլ էական գործոն չէ տղամարդկանց գենդերային դիրքորոշումների համար՝ համեմատած կրթության և բնակության վայրի (քաղաք/ գյուղ) հետ, որոնք ավելի էական ազդեցություն ունեն ավանդական գենդերային սխեմայի՝ կանանց ընկալման վրա:

Բանալի բառեր – հայաստանյան հասարակություն, գենդերային դիրքորոշում, սերունդների տարբերություններ, հետխորհրդային անցում

ГЕНДЕРНЫЕ УСТАНОВКИ РАЗНЫХ ПОКОЛЕНИЙ В СОВРЕМЕННОМ АРМЯНСКОМ ОБЩЕСТВЕ (СРАВНИТЕЛЬНЫЙ АНАЛИЗ)

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Аннотация: *Современные гендерные нормы и установки в Армении сформировались в результате сложного взаимодействия досоветской традиционной культуры, наследия советского социалистического модернизационного проекта и постсоветского распространения западных идей и ценностей. В статье рассматриваются межпоколенческие различия в гендерных нормах и установках в армянском обществе путем сравнения трех поколенческих групп. Исследование основано на вторичном анализе данных социологических исследований с использованием смешанных методов, в том числе количественного национального репрезентативного исследования домохозяйств «Гендерный барометр», а также глубинных интервью и фокус-групповых опросов среди разных поколенческих групп Армении на протяжении 2014-2020 гг. Результаты факторного анализа показали значительную поколенческую комплексность гендерных норм и установок. Мы находим, что основная часть армянского общества, независимо от пола и поколения, твердо придерживается основных семейных ценностей и соответствующих гендерных семейных ролей. В то же время анализ показывает, что лица, принадлежащие к старшему поколению, т. е. к поколению, социализация которого происходила при советской власти, проявляют наиболее консервативные патриархальные гендерные установки. Среднее поколение, взросление которого пришлось на период ранней радикальной постсоветской трансформации, демонстрирует противоречивость гендерных установок: придерживаясь консервативных гендерных норм, они также наиболее недовольны состоянием гендерного равенства, а в некоторых аспектах, такие как достижение статуса и богатства, демонстрируют значительный гендерный эгалитаризм. Наконец, самое молодое поколение обычно придерживается самых эгалитарных взглядов, но эта группа далеко не однородна, демонстрируя резкий разрыв между эгалитарно настроенными городскими, и консервативными сельскими жителями. Примечательно, что молодые женщины, живущие в городах, демонстрируют самые эгалитарные установки. При этом фактор поколения является не столь значимым для уровня эгалитаризма в гендерных установках мужчин по сравнению с факторами образования и места жительства (город/село), которые оказывают более существенное влияние также на восприятие женщинами традиционной гендерной схемы.*

Ключевые слова: *армянское общество, гендерные установки, межпоколенческие различия, постсоветский переход*

Introduction.

The process of gender socialization, as one of the basic mechanisms of formation of gender attitudes and stereotypes, reproduces and develops the gender culture of society. Gender attitudes are formed through a continuous process, which depends on many factors reflecting political, economic, cultural transformations in society. In this article, we analyze gender attitudes in contemporary Armenian society focusing in

particular on changes and continuities across generations in this rapidly changing transitional setting. Armenian society is a special case in the sense that it has existed for centuries, not having its own statehood and experiencing frequent influence from outside, as well as being at the crossroads of many migratory flows. This unique background has greatly influenced gender identities and relations.

The recent developments of Armenian society, as dramatic as they have been after the collapse of the Soviet empire, have deep historical roots. Before the 20th century the Armenian people existed for centuries without having own statehood. Attempts of rulers of other countries to get rid of the Armenian people and culture (including genocide) continued during whole history of Armenia. For example, the ancient Persian rulers tried to introduce forcibly their religion (Zoroastrianism) in Armenia, and later the Turkish sultans sought to subjugate Armenia, by the imposition of Islam. However, the unique religious, cultural and linguistic identity of Armenian people sustained the Armenian ethnos. The preservation of this identity in the minds of people contributed to the Armenian diaspora, which is several times larger than the population of contemporary Armenia. However, over time, certain cultural and other differences between the Diaspora and the population of Armenia emerged and deepened.

The population of the Diaspora, functioning in ethnically different environments, aspired to keep the ethnic identity, and the cultural features emphasizing their ethnic origin. At the same time Armenia's population, being under the domination of the Communist ideology, was forced to transform the national values in accordance with the prevailing trends in the country. During the Soviet era, there were some waves of repatriation flows from the Diaspora to the Armenian SSR (in 1920-1929, 1939-1940, 1945 - 1953), and in the post-Soviet period the ties of Armenian society with the diaspora have greatly intensified. This interlacing of cross-cultural peculiarities is a specific feature of modern Armenian society.

At first, public views on gender roles and relations were formed in the framework of the official Communist ideology during the 70-year period when the Armenian Republic was part of the Soviet Union. The second stage started with the period of reorganization ("perestroika"), when the habitual system of Soviet values began to collapse and the country entered what we define as a state of societal anomie. Finally, the current stage is characterized by conditions, when the liberal-democratic ideology of egalitarianism and unification of gender roles begins to be interwoven into a gender discourse in Armenian society.

All these features of the development of Armenian society should be related to gender relations, whose transformation occurred in various cultural environments and led to the emergence of new patterns of behavior, diversity and also contradictions in the perceptions of women's and men's roles in Armenian society. As in other low- and middle-income countries, the processes of globalization and modernization are important components of development, and in such societies, processes of transformation of gender structure are even more complex and ambiguous (Engendering Development, 2001).

Background: Analysis of gender socialization and gender differentiation in the social structure

In any society, an integral part of its existence is social differentiation: it serves as a certain guarantor of stable functioning of society and entails the creation of a durable structure of statuses and roles. In fact, the stability of the functioning of society is associated with how well social groups perceive their position in society, through a system of fixed statuses and roles. Clear delegation of representatives of socially necessary roles of a particular social group provides certain guarantees to execution of the functions that are necessary for the existence of social structures. The mechanism of socialization (Franklin, 1996; Stockard, 1999; Chafetz, 1999; Wharton, 2005) creates and reinforces the differentiation of role structure of society in the minds of people. Any social differentiation begins to acquire a hierarchical structure associated with the degree of accessibility for different social groups to public resources where instrumental relations of power and subordination are organically included (Ruxton, 2004).

The social perception of gender is an integral part of any social structure functioning. During the periods of social transformation, the perception of the social structure, and in particular, the system of statuses and roles begins to change. In such periods, the perception of the structure of gender roles in the public consciousness becomes blurred.

According to some researchers, the attitudes towards gender have changed substantially, starting in Western settings, since the mid-twentieth century. They argue that the proportion of individuals whose families have egalitarian structure where men and women share the household economic and domestic responsibilities, has increased relative to families with "traditional" structure (Wilcox and Nock, 2007; Maurer and Pleck, 2006; Phillips, 2013).

So, the analyses of contemporary trends in social transformations have largely focused on the erosion of traditional status-role structure of society. Racial-ethnic differences are gradually evolving, demarcation criteria for stratification of people in modern societies are becoming less distinct, as well as gender

differences tend to gradually level. Before the mid-20th century, the gender display was rigidly different for men and women. However, in recent decades, we see an obvious tendency of its homogenization. This tendency manifests itself vigorously in almost all areas, including clothing, gestures, and physical characteristics (e.g., voice, parameters of an ideal body), the permissible areas of activity, etc.

In this connection, in each period of social development certain type of gender ideology arises. As Kroska wrote: “Gender ideology refers to attitudes regarding the appropriate roles, rights and responsibilities of men and women in society. Most gender ideology constructs are unidimensional and range from traditional, conservative, to egalitarian, liberal, or feminist. Traditional gender ideologies emphasize the value of distinctive roles for women and men. According to a traditional gender ideology about the family, for example, men fulfill their family roles through instrumental, breadwinning activities and women fulfill their roles through nurturant, homemaking, and parenting activities. Egalitarian ideologies regarding the family, by contrast, endorse and value men's and women's equal and shared breadwinning and nurturant family roles. Gender ideology also sometimes refers to widespread societal beliefs that legitimate gender inequality” (Kroska, 2006: 186). J. Lorber defined gender ideology as “the justification of gender statuses, particularly, their differential evaluation. The dominant ideology tends to suppress criticism by making these evaluations seem natural.” (Lorber, 2011: 30). Gender ideology in contemporary developed countries aims to ensure the greatest possible equality of citizens regardless of their physical sex, and this, in turn, leads to gender-unification, the erosion of the gender inequality structure in society. However, gender-unification compared with unification in relation to other social groups (e.g. ethnic) has a special character as a differentiating criterion of gender is closely related to the biological characteristics and so its leveling depends not only on social factors. So, the gender unification is more problematic and ambiguous in comparison with other socio-differentiating criteria. Gender socialization is one of the most important mechanisms through which people internalize gender roles in society (Hamieh, 2011; Pilcher, 2004).

It should be noted that these mechanisms function through gender socialization within the framework of at least two types of gender ideology: the formal (declared by the government agencies and the media) and informal (popular). A number of studies revealed situations when in conditions of the declared principles of gender equality and absence of discrimination by a gender the completely different traditional gender ideology was broadcast in latent way through mass media, education and family relations (Williams, 1987; Narahara, 1998; Matthews, 2007).

Questions concerning the variations of gender attitudes across different generations and different historical periods of societal development have been debated in many sociological studies recently. The topic of gender seen from an intergenerational point of view speaking about gender socialization is presented in many researches as important topic of gender studies (Crespi, 2004). Many researchers consider the dependence of gender stereotypes on the information received from indirect sources such as mass media, parents, political and religious leaders, peers, teachers etc. (Hibbard et al., 1998; Macrae et al. 1996; Witt, 2000).

The relation between the generation and the gender attitudes was found by Schnittker, Freese, & Powell, (2003), who stated that “the individuals who entered adulthood during the “second-wave” feminist movement are more likely to hold specific feminist attitudes”⁸. Thus, in our study, described in more detail below, we give some hypotheses based on set out background.

Traditional gender relations in the Armenian society.

As previously mentioned the traditions, customs, anchored in people's minds, and cultural, religious identity of the Armenian people were important factors that contributed to preservation of Armenian people for many centuries. Therefore, until now in Armenia traditional patterns of gender behavior and gender attitudes are particularly strong outside the capital city. They are manifested in ceremonies and rituals concerning gender relations. Especially visualize these models are traced in the code intra family relationship of the man and the woman. Now all the greater urgency gets a church ceremony of wedding, especially among young people. Let us note that the church marriage ceremony is included now into the category fashionable nowadays rituals followed by residents on almost the whole territory of Armenia, including the capital Yerevan. The church code of the marital relationship can be expressed in the words of the Bible: "Wives, submit yourselves unto your own husbands, as it is fit in the Lord. Husbands, love your

⁸ Treleaven, C. (2015). *Gender, Generation, and Jobs: Differences in Gender Role Ideologies by Age and Occupation*. Research Paper. 1, https://ir.lib.uwo.ca/sociology_masrp/1

wives, and be not bitter against them" (Colossians 3: 18-19). Already since the moment of creation of a family during the church marriage ceremony the gender inequality begins to arise. The priest at the time of marriage asks future husband, who literally reads as follows: "Are you a Master?" The question of the future spouse is: "Are you obedient?" Of course, these questions imply the positive responses and they are rhetorical, however they have a socializing nature. There is a following curious fact: usually the bride's parents did not attend church during the wedding. It is considered that they are in sadness during marriage of their daughter. Moreover, it is considered as non-admissible behavior, if the Armenian bride during her wedding shows fun and joy. It is considered more ethical, when the bride expresses unless sadness and resignation, then at least some restraint in behavior during the wedding ceremony. The traditional behavior of the bride and her family, as a demonstration of sadness during the wedding ceremony, has its reasons. This is where the feature of the gender structure of the traditional Armenian family. The sadness is showed by the bride's family, is the part of socialization of bride in a view to prepare for her future role, which was destined in the family of her future husband in the framework of the Armenian traditions. The role of the newly daughter-in-law in her husband's family is rather unenviable: decent daughter-in-law is obliged to do all the "dirty work" in the family, and she should be submissive not only to her husband, but even more so to his parents. Note that the performance of such a role in the traditional Armenian family was determined by the need of family survival to the difficult conditions especially in rural areas, and a rigid division of roles in the family were aimed at strengthening the stability of family functioning. However, until now in many Armenian families the people still know and quote the code of conduct of good daughter-in-law in her husband's family (in Armenian language the specific term "hars" characterize the role of daughter-in-law in husband's family). In some families, there are still some rules of this code, for example, polite daughter-in-law can show their subordinate position in the presence of her father-in-law without speaking and without raising her head.

The fairy tale of the well-known Armenian writer Hovannes Tumanyan «Damned daughter-in-law» is devoted to this subject:

«Daughters-in-law the share is heavy.
And this such was -
She not only will not have a little cry,
But even will stay without turning a hair,
Let offend again and again
Her both father-in-law and mother-in-law»⁹ (Tumanian, 1991).

An old Armenian proverb says that the good daughter-in-law will not cry even in that case when the husband will wound her hand until it bleeds. Subordinated position of the woman in a traditional Armenian family changes with age: the woman becomes more senior, the she receives more rights in a family. One of markers of increase of the status of the woman in a family is that with age she acquires the right to sit for one table with men during various actions in a family. No wonder that the Armenian women are often inclined to exaggerate the age.

The special place in rituals of wedding is given to the requirement of virginity of the bride. Parents of the groom after the first marriage night or express gratitude to parents of the bride for preservation by the bride of virginity, or show the discontent with its loss before wedding. In this regard, there is even the special ceremony called «red apple» which still has not lose the urgency.

The state gender ideology in modern Armenian society

The official gender ideology in modern Armenia formally corresponds to principles of gender equality. For the last decades Armenia joined a number of international agreements in the field of gender equality, such as the Convention on discrimination in the field of work and employment, the Convention on Discrimination in Employment and Occupation, the Convention on Equal Remuneration for Men and Women Workers for Work of Equal Value, Convention on the Nationality of Married Women, the Convention on Discrimination in Education, Convention on the Elimination of All Forms of Discrimination Against Women. Moreover, the Government of the Republic of Armenia has ratified the documents and taken their responsibilities for gender equality, in particular the UN Convention on the Elimination of All Forms of Discrimination against Women (1993), the Beijing Platform for Action (1995), "Millennium Development Goals" (2000), the Optional protocol to the Convention on the Elimination of All Forms of Discrimination Against Women (2006), Concluding observations of the Committee on the Elimination of discrimination against Women (2009).

⁹ In author's translation from Armenian.

The national legislation, including the law "On ensuring equal rights and opportunities for women and men" adopted in YEAR, corresponds to modern principles of gender equality. The Constitution of the Republic Armenia is the guarantor of equality of men and women. In the changes in the Constitution of RA approved in 2005, the prohibition of discrimination based on gender is formulated as follows: «Any discrimination based on sex, race, color, ethnic or social origin, genetic features, language, religion or belief, political or other opinion, membership of a national minority, property, birth, disability, age or other personal or social nature is forbidden»¹⁰.

Since 2008, the gender discourse has been part of the official program of the Government of Armenia. For example, in the section "Social Protection" Program of the Government for 2008-2012 gender equality is recognized as one of the priority tasks. The ensuring of equal rights and possibilities of women and men is recognized as one of strategic priorities in "The program of a sustainable development» approved by the Government of Armenia on October 30, 2008. February 11, 2010 the RA Government approved the "Concept of gender policy" of the state, and in 2011 - "Strategic Program of the gender policy of the Republic of Armenia for 2011-2015". In the Strategic Program of Gender Policy of Republic Armenia for 2011-2015 in the section "Strategy implementation of gender policies in the management and decision-making level" the government objectives are clearly defined: fulfillment of requirements of CEDAW and the Beijing Platform for Action and other international instruments on gender equality, the implementation of special mechanisms in order to achieve 30% representation women in legislative and executive authorities. In 2011, the National Assembly of the fourth convocation of RA adopted in the first reading the RA Law "On ensuring equal rights and opportunities for women and men"¹¹. Moreover, a commission on women's problems at the Prime Minister of Armenia was established on December 29, 2000, which has the status of an advisory body. Thus, at first glance, the problem of gender equality is presented in the agenda of government reform.

However, if we analyze the specific programs of the parties included in the political field, it can be concluded that even at the institutional level, the question is presented mainly at the fields of social problems: protection of motherhood and childhood, the reproductive role of women, strengthening of family¹². For example, in the program of the ruling Republican Party of Armenia it's emphasized: "Any reform must match the traditional system of values of the society and be directed to the modernization of that system"¹³ or "...The basis of the Armenian society is a traditional family. Formation of strong and healthy families, retention and development of national values"¹⁴; or "Highly valuing the role of the Armenian Apostolic Church in the spiritual life of Armenian people, in the retention of Armenian language and culture, ... the RPA regards the Church as an integral part of the Armenian essence, a national worldwide entity which is appealed to serve the Nation and God with its creed and dedication"¹⁵.

Studies have also addressed other problems related to gender in modern Armenia, such as the impact of migration or martial law (see, for example, Gevorgyan, 2020, Astvatsaturov & Marzpanyan, 2014).

Thus, we see the contradictory tendencies in gender ideology of modern Armenian society: on the one hand, the egalitarian gender ideology is recognized, and on the other hand, the appeals to the national values, to the church charter and family way of traditional society realizes the traditional gender scheme with deepening of a gender inequality.

Conceptualization and hypotheses

Modern Armenian society can be considered from the perspective of three main historical periods when bases of gender socialization was changed. This is, firstly, pre-perestroika stage, the stage of the era of the Soviet Union before 1985. Secondly, it is the perestroika and early independence stage of 1986 - 2000, when the system of values established during the previous 70 years began collapsed. And finally, it is the current stage, starting from the beginning of this century. According to this periodization, we can divide our study population into three main groups, differentiated by the age at which their primary socialization occurred. The first group is those 18-35 years old, i.e., those who has passed the primary stage of

¹⁰ The Constitution of the Republic of Armenia, <http://www.president.am/hy/constitution-2015/> art. 14.1.

¹¹ *Political participation of women in the 2012 parliamentary elections in the Republic of Armenia* / Analytical Review. Yerevan: Asogik, 2012. (in Russian). *Political participation of women in the 2012 parliamentary elections in the Republic of Armenia* / Analytical Review. Yerevan: Asogik, 2012. (in Russian) <http://www.osce.org/ru/yerevan/116091?download=true>

¹² *ibid.*

¹³ See more at: <http://www.hhk.am/en/program/#sthash.A59tlf9a.dpuf>

¹⁴ <http://www.hhk.am/en/program/> (18/18/2015); See more at: <http://www.hhk.am/en/program/#sthash.NPhdW9u5.dpuf>

¹⁵ See more at: <http://www.hhk.am/en/program/#sthash.wgpwMqjb.dpuf>

socialization in the most recent period. The second group is the group of respondents aged 36-55 years, whose formative years fell on the period of perestroika and early independence. And, finally, the third group are those 56 and older, who were socialized during the Soviet times.

We assume that older respondents share the gender scheme of the Soviet stage, middle-aged respondents have intermediate gender attitudes, and finally, younger respondents hold modern egalitarian gender attitudes.

Accordingly, we propose the following hypotheses:

1. Individuals whose main socialization was in the third period will hold more egalitarian gender attitudes than individuals of older generations.
2. Individuals whose main socialization was in second period will hold more conflicting gender role ideologies than older and younger individuals.
3. Because men are typically more conservative than women in their gender attitudes, the generation is a less significant factor for the level of egalitarianism in gender attitudes of men compared to education and residence (city / village).

Data and Method

The analysis is based on data collected from 2014 to 2020 using mixed methods by the Department of Applied Sociology and the Center for Gender and Leadership Studies of Yerevan State University on the gender attitudes of the Armenian population.

The standardized face-to-face interviews were conducted as part of the nationally representative Gender Barometer Survey carried out under the USAID-funded project “Advancing gender equality and women’s empowerment in Armenia” (Grant #HED003-9722-ARM-12-01) The aim of this survey was to determine the characteristics of gender attitudes and normative value system in relation to gender in the Armenian society among the different generations, trends and dynamics of their transformation. It was implemented through a cluster stratified sample. The sample included individuals aged 18 and above living in Armenia. The sample size was 2134. In the analysis of the survey data, the level of egalitarianism - traditionalism in gender attitudes is measured using the 33-point scale, constructed by the modified method of summarizing scale by R. Likert measurement of social attitudes. In this scale, 0 means the fully traditional gender attitude, and 33 - a fully egalitarian gender attitude. The logical indexes were used to describe some social characteristics of respondents. For example, the level of involvement in politics is measured by two indicators: 1. The degree of interest in politics, 2. The participation in the elections. Finally, the factor analysis was implemented to characterize the structure of gender attitudes. In this article, we also use qualitative data on the topic of family gender relations conducted by the first author to complement the statistical analyses. During 2015-2020, 46 in-depth interviews were carried out in urban and rural areas of Armenia in three age groups, and in 2018, 12 focus group discussions were carried out, where groups were recruited according to 3 criteria: gender, age and place of residence - urban or rural.

Results

The results of the research demonstrate that in modern Armenian society the traditional gender ideology is manifested very strongly. The greatest importance is assigned to gendered family roles. At the same time, some more stringent obligations than women are imposed on men: this, for an ideal Armenian man, it is important to be on top in the performance of almost all his roles - first of all in the family as a father, husband, breadwinner, or son), then in their professional activities, then as a respectable member of society (a devout Christian, an educated person, and a defender of national values). For the Armenian men it is also quite important to have a fulfilling sex life and to be rich, to monitor their appearance and to be actively included in social life with many friends. And finally, the men’s role in politics is attributed medium importance by respondents.

The most important role for women is in the same area as for men – it is her role in the family (especially, the roles of mother, wife and daughter). For the Armenian woman is important to be a good Christian. The next most important group of characteristics relates to the professional activities of women - she should be a good specialist and have a good education. She should also take care of her appearance and have a fulfilling sex life. At the same time, for an Armenian woman it is less important to ensure her family financially, to be the bearer and defender of national values and have a successful career. And it is less important for an Armenian woman to be rich, to have an active social life, and to have many friends. Finally, it is absolutely unimportant for the Armenian women to be active in the political life.

Thus, most the respondents believed that the main role for men is that of the breadwinner: for a woman, family should be in the first place, while a successful career for women cannot be a primary concern. The

majority of all respondents believed that a woman must be a mother and have children. Furthermore, the majority of all respondents highlighted the importance for a woman to be a virgin at marriage.

Despite the fact that the survey respondents expressed their agreement with the thesis that men and women should have equal rights, they mostly agree with the statement that a man should earn more than women should, and in the context of employment shortages men should have more privileges than women in getting a job. Respondents also generally agree with the statements of that men perform better in the important work compared to women, and that they are the best leaders in politics and in business. However, concerning education, the respondents, in principle, expressed their disagreement with the statement that getting education is more important for men than for women.

Thus, the traditional gender ideology, in principle, is accepted by Armenian society, but some important exceptions indicate that traditional models of gender behavior not always clearly prevail in the minds of people. In particular, for example, in gender attitudes in Armenian society it is not revealed such a traditional scheme of sphere differentiation of gender roles with men's main roles being in the public sphere, and women's in the private sphere. Both for women and for men the main social roles are functionally related to the private sphere.

Moreover, despite the fact that at least two generations socialized with the influence of communist ideology, the results of the study show that the social roles of women, such as a being "hard worker", being "professional" developing career (which were cultivated in the Soviet ideology), are not a priority in the public mind. Likewise, the roles of men as defenders of the Fatherland, soldiers and warriors are not so relevant either. In other words, considering the overall public perception of gender roles, we can conclude that the Soviet gender ideology in many respects concedes to traditional gender ideology in the public mind, and corresponding patriarchal elements in the perception of gender roles.

An analysis of the overall structure of gender attitudes and stereotypes identified some interesting features. In the survey respondents' perceptions, five important components emerged from the factor analysis of the survey data¹⁶. The most significant factor in the respondents' perception of gender attitudes is the *importance of family roles for men and women*. Another factor in the of respondents' perception of gender relations is the *importance of education and a successful career first for men and then for women*. This factor is more significant for older respondents and young women. It is interesting that for other respondents it has lesser importance. Respondents' perception of gender issues includes another important factor - the *importance of the social status of woman* (her education, career, social inclusion). This factor is not important for men in their gender attitudes, but it is important for women of all age groups. The fourth factor in the public mind is the *importance of inequalities in the traditional family roles in the family*. It includes the primary importance for a woman to have children, to fulfill the role of mother, to devote herself to household chores, and primary importance for a man to feed his family. This factor is important to middle-aged and older respondents and less important to young people. Another factor in the respondents' perception is related to the *importance of male dominance in society*. This factor is not important only for young women; for all other groups this factor is important.

In addition, some other factors were identified in estimations of gender attitudes, even though they are not directly related to gender inequality. Moreover, they have less importance in the public consciousness. These factors are as follows: *the importance of Christian values* (this factor is important for young women and respondents of middle age), *the importance of the social status of the family* (wealth and social network) (important for women of all generations, while less important for men), *the importance of national values* (important for the middle-aged men and the older respondents), *the importance of sex relations* (important for all men and young women), *the importance of involvement in politics* (important for older respondents and middle-aged women) and, finally, the *importance of caring for own appearance* (important for young respondents and for middle-aged women).

Now, let us consider the differences across the different generations. First, for the common characteristics of all three generations we turn to the system of values. If we make a comparative analysis of the values of all three generations, we can note that for older respondents more valuable than the other groups values are education, public acceptance of merits, wealth, tradition, public opinion, politics and peace in the country. For young people more valuable than for the other groups are an opportunity to make independent decisions, the struggle for their own opinion, and friendship. For the middle generation of respondents, compared with the other groups, work and prosperous life are more valuable, and a relatively lower value characterize the social acceptance of merits and friendship. Thus, the primary social context of socialization of respondents had a definitive impact on the peculiarities of perception of certain values

¹⁶ For the factor analysis the method of principal components with Varimax rotation and Kaiser normalization was used.

among different generations.

Despite current trends toward homogenization of gender roles, a number of gender stereotypes, typical for traditional classical ideology, does not cause any differentiation of opinions among representatives of different generations. For all respondents the family roles of women and men are very important, among which first of all, are roles of the mother and the wife and roles of the father and the husband, respectively. The role of man as the breadwinner of the family also is perceived by all generations as very important.

However, as it turned out, the older generation revealed more traditional (paternalistic) gender attitudes and stereotypes. The older generation, in difference from the younger and middle generations, significantly more resolutely supports that a man for the sake of the maintenance of his family is obliged to undertake any work and that men should have privileges in comparison with women in employment. "Men, in comparison with women are the best in responsible works," - said the representatives of the older generation in a focus group discussion. Also, the older generation believes that men are better politicians and are better at business than women. The older generation is significantly more likely to agree with the statement that the main purpose for women is to have children. Moreover, the requirement for a woman to be a virgin until marriage is important for the older generation. According to the older generation, getting education is more important for a man than for a woman. They also emphasize the importance of a career for men, mostly considering that for women a career is secondary. Furthermore, the older generation is more in accordance with statement that men should earn more than women should. These patterns were confirmed by both quantitative and qualitative data.

As we proposed in hypotheses 1 and 2, on all mentioned issues, the youth shows attitudes that are most egalitarian and the middle generation occupies a middle ground. However, as the results show, the middle generation more than others emphasizes the importance of careers for women and least of all agree on the need for women virginity before marriage. However, for the middle generation also significantly more important are Christian values than for the older respondents and even more so than for the younger ones. National values are most important for older respondents; young people emphasize the national values less than do others. Thus, they expressed the least traditional views of family and national values in comparison to the older generation. In general, young respondents show greater detachment from traditional values and attitudes.

The first and most significant area of gender socialization is the family. In the family, the foundation gender identity of a person, their behavior and attitudes are formed. As a result of the analysis, a relationship between gender responsibilities in a family and gender attitudes of the respondents could be observed. As it turned out, the perception of division between men and women in the household responsibilities is associated with more traditional gender attitudes demonstrated by the respondents. Meanwhile, it is interesting, that the family structure of the division of responsibilities in the family does not depend on the generation to which the respondent belongs.

Results of the analysis also showed a certain difference between preferable features of characters of girls and boys in the process of family upbringing. Thus, the main perceived qualities for boys are responsibility (mentioned by 89.1% of respondents), diligence (87.8%), respectfulness (68.5%) and perseverance (42.4%). For girls, desirable qualities are somewhat different: first, diligence (82.7% of respondents), responsibility (82.7%), respectfulness (62.5%), and then, in contrast to the image of a boy, humility (53.3%) and frugality (48.9%).

However, when we analyze these perceptions between different generations and by gender, we can see some differences. First of all, regardless of age, men are more likely to emphasize humility in girl's image: for men this quality takes the 3rd-4th places in rating. And young men are most conservative in this sense: 61% of them consider this quality, along with hard work and responsibility, as preferable girl's qualities. Older respondents are more likely to emphasize the need to educate boys in thrift and hard work, in contrast to the younger generation, who stress the importance of independence for boys.

Thus, the manifestation of gender inequality related to power-submission is more important for the young generation, in comparison with other generations. This is also confirmed by the attitudes of youth to violence against women. If we characterize in general the attitudes of respondents to the gender-based domestic violence, verbal violence of husband toward his wife is more acceptable in respondents' view. For about 15% of the respondents verbal violence of the husband over the wife is acceptable, and for more than 6% of respondents physical abuse of the wife by the husband is acceptable. However, the violence of the wife against the husband is not acceptable for practically any respondents. At the same time, despite the relatively egalitarian attitudes, young people more of all accepted any violence from the husband over the wife. The middle generation whose childhood fell on the period of dramatic societal transformations and war, have more negative attitudes toward violence, in general. Respondents of the middle generation have

most negative attitudes toward physical violence by husband against his wife. In this relation, it is interesting that young people are more exposed to violence from parents in their childhood than other generations. The older respondents whose childhood was in the Soviet era reported less exposure to violence than the other generations. Thus, there is no direct correlation between domestic violence justification and the exposure to violence from the parents in childhood, however, a certain correlation between groups of families, in which domestic violence is natural, and the existence of violence among members of family, of course, does exist¹⁷.

Also, young men are most of all interested in having male heirs; and older women are more interested in the heiress-girls. Young and middle-aged women are more egalitarian in terms of sex of their heirs. Note that 80% of respondents said that there is inequality between men and women in Armenian society. About 60% of respondents expressed a concern about the protection of the rights of women in Armenian society, and about half of the respondents noted insecurity of rights of men.

Let us note an interesting fact: the level of traditionalism in gender attitudes directly related to the level of acceptance of vulnerability of men in society: the respondents who reported a higher degree of insecurity of the rights of men in society showed more conservative traditional gender attitudes. Also, the level of egalitarianism of gender attitudes depends on the respondent's perception of the degree of insecurity of the rights of both men and women in society; however, this relationship is less pronounced than the dependence on assessing of insecurity of the rights of men. Also, the level of egalitarianism of gender attitudes depends on the respondent's perception of the degree of insecurity of the rights of both men and women in society. However, the respondent's perception of the degree of insecurity of men's rights in society is a stronger factor in egalitarianism in gender attitudes. Meanwhile, the tendency to emphasize the vulnerability of women in society does not affect the level of egalitarianism in gender attitudes of the respondent.

Young women are more skeptical concerning gender equality than middle-aged women. Young men and older men are more optimistic in a question of gender equality, and older women are most optimistic. As we can also see, in this matter there is age discrimination of women as young women continue to feel less protected in society. Young women are most concern about violation of the rights of women. With age the degree of optimism increases, but nevertheless more than 50% of older women also note violation of the rights of women in a family. Young men are most optimistic on this question: for 32.3% of them nobody's rights are violated in Armenian family.

With regard to the protection of the rights of men and women, older men feel most skeptical, followed by middle-aged men. Young men feel most indifferent about the protection of women's rights in society, and young women - about the protection of the rights of men. The analysis of opinions of respondents on gender inequality in the various fields of social life shows that representatives of the middle generation are concerned about rights more than others. In particular, their concerns are manifested in the following areas: education, the rights of profession choice for women, and violation of the rights of men and women at work and in business. It is interesting that as age increases, people are more dissatisfied with their sex and would have preferred to be born with the opposite sex, although this tendency is mainly present among women.

To remind, the values of education and professional activity were very central in the Soviet gender ideology. As our analysis shows, the importance of these values among both men and women is more significant for the older generation, while for the younger generation these characteristics are least important compared to the other age groups. The middle generation (grown in what we defined as a societal anomie environment) are least likely to emphasize the importance of education and career for men, but women's career for respondents of the middle generation is quite important.

Concerning material prosperity, note that this value was not included in the priority values in the Soviet gender ideology, but as it turned out, older respondents more than all other groups emphasized prosperity, family material well-being, and the need for men to ensure that well-being. A man, in their opinion, should earn more than a woman should. However, Armenian youth is less inclined to agree with this opinion than are the other age groups.

Meanwhile, the older generation emphasizes the need for social activities and involvement in politics but also perceive the involvement of men in politics as more important than that of women. At the same time, the older generation shows higher levels of real activity than other respondents. The greatest interest in politics is shown by older men, followed by older women. The young people (rather than young women) are most passive in this respect. Concerning the involvement in the elections, the older and middle-aged

¹⁷ Some scholars believe that there is an association between violence in a person's family or community of origin and later spousal victimisation (Macmillan and Kruttschnitt, 2005).

women most actively participated in the election (87.4% and 86.5%, respectively), followed by older men and middle-aged men (81.4% and 78.3%), young women (74.5%), and, finally, young men (68.8%).

Summarizing the results of the estimations, we can see that the average score of egalitarianism level in respondent's gender attitudes in general is not so high. Using the index of egalitarianism level in respondent's gender attitudes by 33-point scale of "traditional - egalitarian" measurement (where 0 is indicated the most conservative attitudes, and 33 - the most egalitarian) the average score for the entire sample is 10.8 points, with a variance of 5.3 points. In other words, Armenian people, in general, hold rather conservative gender attitudes.

Concerning the differences in the egalitarianism level in gender attitudes for different generations, we can conclude, that there is a significant correlation between generation and level of egalitarianism: older respondents have less egalitarian gender attitudes. However, the picture is complex. As it turns out from the statistical analysis, the association of the level of gender egalitarianism with generation is significant only for women: younger women show significantly more egalitarian gender attitudes than do older women. However, this association does not transpire for men: there is no significant correlation between different generations of men and the egalitarian nature of their gender attitudes, which supports the third hypothesis of the study.

Thus, we observed that young women have the most egalitarian attitudes. Moreover, among young men, those living in rural area are more conservative than those living in cities; in fact, this is the most conservative segments among all respondents. Respondents from the middle-age group occupy a middle position, and the middle-aged women have more egalitarian attitudes than do middle-aged men. The older age group has the most traditional gender attitudes, and the older men are most conservative. Among all respondents, the older men living in provincial cities, older women and middle-aged men residing in rural areas are most conservative, except for rural youth, who, regardless of gender, are more conservative than all other groups. And young women and middle-aged women in Yerevan have the most egalitarian attitudes, young men and middle-aged men in Yerevan follows them by level of egalitarianism, and finally, in this list by level of egalitarianism in gender attitudes there are young women from provincial towns.

Finally, we also examined the influence of the factors that are universally associated with the traditionalism of gender attitudes; specifically, these are the level of education (elementary, secondary, not complete high, bachelor, master or doctoral degree) and the place of residence (capital city, other city, or village). As the results of our analysis show, conforming to global patterns, the most important factor for the level of egalitarianism in gender attitudes is educational level of respondents: the respondents of higher educational level are more egalitarian.

Conclusion

Our analyses have confirmed the main hypothesis that the younger generation, in general, has more gender egalitarian attitudes than their older counterparts. The hypothesis that the official state gender policy has little influence on the formation of gender attitudes was also confirmed. As the results of the analysis show, the historically rooted gender ideology, which is based on traditional gender patterns of behavior transmitted from generation to generation is more typical of Armenian society. In comparison, the gender ideology of the Soviet period, which for seventy years formed special conceptions of gender relations, and the official gender policy of the independent Armenian government have had less impact on gender attitudes of the Armenian population.

Results of the study show the following characteristics of gender attitudes in modern Armenian society, which are related to historical features of its development. Thus, we conclude that in the conditions of long-term impact of various factors in the development of society some kind of a stable core of values arises in the views of people, which is aimed at integration and consolidation of the society. Indeed, there is a certain stability component of gender attitudes in the public opinion, which is accepted as the basis of gender relations by the majority of Armenian society, regardless of age and gender. Their core concern is about the importance of *family* roles of both women and men (and mostly men), as the family in Armenian society retains the supreme value.

However, the gender attitudes of representatives of different generations in Armenian society also differ. Thus, members of the older generation who experienced their socialization during the Soviet era, which in many respects cultivated the ideology of double standards, show the most conservative patriarchal gender attitudes. The official Soviet gender ideology is preserved in the older generation's attitudes, as an ideology of traditional society, which does not accept gender equality. Nevertheless, in their attitudes there are certain features of the Soviet gender ideology, e.g., the importance of including both men and women in public life and politics and the importance of education and professionalism for both genders.

The middle generation, whose youth fell on the period of the radical transformation of Soviet values and subsequent societal anomie, has indistinct and contradictory gender attitudes. Having quite conservative gender attitudes, they are more dissatisfied with the situation relating to gender equality in society and demonstrate greater gender egalitarianism in matters related to the achievement of family high status and wealth.

The younger generation of Armenia demonstrates the most egalitarian attitudes, as their socialization began in conditions of the contemporary discourse on egalitarian gender ideology. However, notably, this generation also shows most contradictions in their gender attitudes, and our hypothesis that individuals whose main socialization was in second period will hold more contradictory gender role ideologies than older and younger individuals has therefore not been confirmed. The Armenian youth contingently could be divided into two subgroups, which have opposite gender attitudes. The most egalitarian attitudes in Armenian society are held by young women living in cities. The most conservative patriarchal gender attitudes characterize young men living in rural areas. Male rural dwellers are more likely to approve of domestic violence against women and to accept high humility and tolerance as qualities of girls rather than boys.

We can also conclude that, in line with our hypothesis, men are more conservative in their gender attitudes than are women. In addition, the analyses showed that men of different generations have similar level of egalitarianism in their gender attitudes. In this case, the level of education and the place of residence have an impact that is more significant of the overall perception of the traditional gender schemes.

In sum, we can conclude that gender attitudes among different generations have their own peculiarities, which are reflected in some internal contradictions. Taking into account the three main eras that have had a significant impact on the process of formation and transformation of gender norms and relations in modern Armenian society, we can suggest that women are more impacted than men by these historical transformations, and now they are the main social agents in the processes of social modernization in Armenian society. In other words, the gender ideology of Western liberal conception, which in recent decades has had a significant influence on the formation of gender ideology in Armenia, is introduced and spread in society mostly by young educated women.

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