

# A Comparative Analysis of Contemporary Movements in Indonesia and the Islamic Revolution in Iran

Yahya Fozi<sup>1</sup>, Zohreh Hemmati<sup>2\*</sup>

1. Professor of International Relations, Institute of Humanities and Cultural Studies, Tehran, Iran (yahyafozi@yahoo.com)
2. PhD Student of Political Sciences, University of Isfahan, Iran (Corresponding Author: zhemmati1421@yahoo.com)

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## Abstract

Throughout history until today, the Islamic world has been witness to various movements which have been formed in response to special demands. The current article aims to address the similarities and differences between the political thought<sup>1</sup> of the Islamic Revolution of Iran and two movements in Indonesia namely the Nahdatul Ulama (NU) and the Muhammadiyah movements using a descriptive-comparative method. The research findings show that some similarities exist between these movements regarding a) unity of the Muslim world and b) political liberties (role of people in politics); however, some differences are apparent in other areas such as a) governance model and its type, b) type of the relationship between religion and politics and the issue of modernity.

**Keywords:** Indonesia, Islamic movements, the Islamic Republic of Iran.

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1. Political thought deals with the issues pertaining to the realms of government and governance also involving such matters as the relationship between religion and politics, type of governance, characteristics of governance and Islamic system, legislation based on the Islamic Law (Sharia), role of people and parties in religious governance, the unity of the Muslim world, role of women in religious governance and their approach to modernity.

## 1. Introduction

The occurrence of Iran's 1979 Islamic Revolution was one of the most important political incidents of the 20<sup>th</sup> century. The revolution was characterized by its Islamic nature and the special quality of its leadership, which distinguish it from many similar developments. Islamic movements in the East Asia region particularly in Indonesia raised special attitudes and foundations in response to their internal and external political issues. The traditional movement of *Nahdatul Ulama* and the conservative movement of *Muhammadiyah* can be introduced as two major movements in this country. Evidently, the centrality of Islam in these two movements involves a series of influences as well as similarities and differences. Therefore, the present study takes a comparative look at the political views of the leaders of the Islamic movements of these two countries.

In an explanation of the research's necessity and objective, it can be stated that only a few studies have been conducted on Islamic movements in Indonesia and the political activities of these movements in response to external and internal issues. This is why a comparative analysis of these issues would both explain the various dimensions and aspects of these movements, as well as clarify not only the type of their occurrence but also their associations and contradictions with the Islamic Revolution in Iran.

Existing literature on the topic includes books, dissertations and articles concerning Islamism in Indonesia, a limited number of which will be mentioned here to avoid redundancy. An article titled "Islamic Revolution and Muslim World Movements" by Morteza Shiroudi for example can be named whereby the author both examines the common grounds and mutual influences of various Islamic revolutions and Muslim movements and reflects upon Iran's Islamic Revolution in terms of its political and

cultural influences on contemporary Islamic political movements. The article “Wahhabism in Indonesia” written by Seyyed Mohsen Miri (1388 [2009 A.D]) also roots out how Wahhabi tendencies entered Indonesia in addition to exploring the grounds and causes of such phenomenon. Moreover, “Shiites in Southeast Asia” (1387 [2008 A.D]) authored by Ismail Marcinkowski both points out the history of Iranian cultural relations with east and generally with Southeast Asian countries, and explains, in particular, the conditions of Shiites in these countries focusing on the influences of Iranian culture. However, what distinguishes the current paper from similar studies in this field is that it individually analyzes both the approach of these movements as well as the views of their leaders and the Islamic Revolution in Iran especially the political thoughts of Imam Khomeini.

This research uses a descriptive-comparative technique to analyze research data. Given that the present paper is descriptive and exploratory, the author takes no specific hypothesis into account. The theoretical framework provides an explanation of the concept of Islamic movements and the causes of their emergence. Subsequently, the historical ground of this phenomenon will be examined. Afterwards, the historical transformation of Indonesia, the entrance of Islam to this country and the emergence of its Islamic movements will be addressed; moreover, characteristics of Islamic movements in contemporary Iran and a comparative analysis of the political thought of Iran’s Islamic movement and Indonesia’s movements will be provided. In conclusion, an analysis of the convergence or non-convergence of Islamic movements in Indonesia and Iran will be provided.

## **2. Theoretical Framework**

The term “movement” literally means circulation and motion.

Movement is derived from *move+ment*; gerund of to move in contrast to stillness and inertia (Dehkhoda, 1381 [2002 A.D]: 421); moreover, Islamic movements refer to well-organized, democratic movements based on Islamic Sharia laws at all intellectual, doctrinal, social and political levels which have expanded through peaceful and non-peaceful methods in Muslim communities (Fouzi, 1389 [2010 A.D]: 154). Leaders and proponents of Islamic movements often run the community claiming to establish political systems based on Islamic teachings and rules and they seek to transform the political system thereby establishing an Islamic state (Khosravi Nia, 1382 [2003 A.D]: 557).

Another common classification is based upon the way the movements react to modernism. More precisely, industrial and economic developments in Europe gave rise to new economic and political powers in the West, so that the advent of such powerful empires as Spain, Portugal and Great Britain was mostly due to these developments; an issue which caused the Muslim world to lose its dominant military position over the West thereby experiencing various challenges in political, economic and military aspects; therefore, the power of Islamic states gradually waned against Western Colonialism. Many political and intellectual elites of the Muslim world have provided some answers to explain the causes of this incident presented in form of three trends including modernity, return to self and nationalism. Due to superiority of the second trend, the advent of contemporary Islamic movements is a direct consequence of the Islamic Awakening movement in the last decade of the 19<sup>th</sup> century (Ahmadi, 1390 [2011 A.D]: 26-33). In addition to the above classification, Islamic movements can be classified based on different criteria. Under a geographical classification, they can be classified based on continent and geographical region. Accordingly, they can be grouped into Islamic movements in Africa such as the Muslim Brotherhood in

Egypt, Senussin in Libya and Mahdi Sudani in Sudan; on the other hand, one could point out the Islamic movements in Middle East countries particularly in Arab countries or similar movements in South-East Asia, the Indian sub-continent, as well as the Islamic movements of Central Asia and Caucasus. Islamic movements can also be classified based on campaign strategy into various classes of extremist, moderate and conservative; or cultural, military, political or a combination of all (Fouzi & Payab, 1390 [2011 A.D]: 75). Different theorists have suggested various reasons for the emergence of Muslim movements.

### **2.1. The Revival of Islam**

The theory of the sun presented by Ahmad Khan, also known as the revival of Islam, holds that Islamic movements are created in the New Age and are not rooted in ancient history. He states that although some movements existed in the history of Islam, all of them had been temporary, and new Islamic movements have only emerged from the 19<sup>th</sup> century onward. He believes that Islamic movements are born of colonialism, in other words, behaviors created in response to colonialism are called new Islamic movements (Moradi, 1392 [2013 A.D]).

### **2.2. Iran's Islamic Revolution**

Hossein Hanafi, a theorist in this field, believes that the victory of the Islamic revolution in Iran is another reason for the emergence of Islamic movements. He assumes that the victory of the Islamic Revolution in Iran can be examined from two perspectives: positive and negative. In other words, from a positive perspective, Iran's Islamic Revolution could provide support for the anti-Israel Hizbollah movement; from a negative perspective, however, it has given rise to the advent of Sunni uprisings against the Islamic Republic of Iran (Moradi, 1392 [2013 A.D]).

### **2.3. Objective and Subjective Factors**

*Herari Dekmejian*, influenced by the theory of Jacques Berque, classifies the effective factors in the formation of this process to two groups: subjective and objective. Accordingly, the formation of Islamic movements is on the one hand affected by objective factors such as Western colonialism, intellectual decline, dictatorships, hasty secularism in Islamic societies, Muslims' military defeats by enemies; and on the other hand, it is influenced by subjective and intellectual factors like Islamic reformist instructions and religious orders concerning fighting against oppression, paganism, and blasphemy, and attempting to establish a society bound together by religious values. Moreover, according to Dekmejian, the emergence of identity crises and legitimacy crises as well as class conflicts inside Islamic countries play a crucial role in the advent of Islamic movements in Islamic communities (Moradi, 1384 [2005 A.D]: 25). Therefore, all these movements stress on returning to Islamic values and reviving the original Islam as the only way out of current crises in Islamic societies. It should be said that all Islamic movements are formed through a combination of theoretical and practical movements often attempting to organize their thoughts and deeds in specific and predetermined forms which are strong incentives on motion and change creation. Thus, it is clear that the way they interpret and understand Islamic teachings can have the highest impact on their intellectual and practical formation. Based on the above explanation, the last classification is examined in the current article.

## **3. Indonesia and its Islamic Movements**

### **3.1. Grounds**

With the spread of Islam in Indonesia, people found out that to protect Islam and fight against Western colonization and the

penetration of Christianity, it is impossible to maintain a passive stance towards the circumstances. Islamism, which emerged in East Asia principally in Indonesia and in the form of Islamist parties and movements are actively present in the political process of the country with moderate, not fundamentalist, viewpoints (Ahmadi, 1390 [2011 A.D]: 185). Prior to the initiation of the reform movements of the 19<sup>th</sup> century, some of the campaigns were posed by the local princes of Malay and Indonesia Islands. In this regard, such figures as Sultan Abdul Faith Bentami, Surapati, Sunan Mas and Dinungru who revolted against the Dutch over the course of 17<sup>th</sup> to 19<sup>th</sup> centuries, can be named. Dinungru's campaigns in 1855 against the Dutch in the Republic of Indonesia is considered as the beginning of Indonesia's resurrection against the aliens. In addition to him, other Muslim fighters such as Imam Bonjol (Yatekno Imam) and Tuko Omar, who were active in Java and Sumatra, are represented as national and Islamic heroes of Indonesia (Hoseyni Jebeli, 1389 [2010 A.D]: 162).

### **3.2. Formation and Genesis of Islamic Movements in Indonesia**

The religious reform movement, which was formed in Indonesia in the 19<sup>th</sup> century, grew dramatically until the 1940s giving rise to the positioning of Muslims in Indonesia. This paved the way for the formation of Islamic movements in this country. The scope of these movements was such that not only they stood against colonizers such as the Netherlands but also against the state's containment measures. Indonesia's own anticolonial struggle against the Dutch, Portuguese and British over the recent centuries had been continuously increasing. After signing a treaty between the British and the Dutch in 1816 under which Java and Sumatra were returned to the Dutch, various cultural, social and political movements were formed in this country in response to internal decline and external colonization. In

general, the entrance of Islam and its spread into different classes took place through peaceful ways, using trade as the means for its growth (Fouzi, 1389 [2010 A.D]: 50-51); however, the entry of Islam into various regions during different Indonesian Kingdoms was not the same. In the 7<sup>th</sup> and 8<sup>th</sup> centuries, for example, during the reign of Shrivijaya, Muslim traders entered this country through the Strait of Malacca in order to enter Southeast Asia and East Asia. The attempts of Muslim preachers gradually set the stage for Islam's further expansion in this country. Finally, Indonesia became the country with the largest Muslim population. Islam was recognized in Indonesia during the period of Sukarno's Pancasila; in 1945, Sukarno gave a speech outlining the Pancasila; the five guiding principles of the Indonesian nation including:

1. Belief in God. This principle reaffirms the Indonesian people's belief that God does exist. It also implies that the Indonesian people believe in life after death.
2. Humanitarianism (a just and civilized humanity). This principle requires that human beings be treated with due regard to their dignity as God's creatures. It emphasizes that the Indonesian people do not tolerate physical or spiritual oppression of human beings by their own people or by any other nation.
3. The unity of Indonesia. This principle embodies the concept of nationalism.
4. Democracy (through deliberation and consensus)
5. Social Justice (for the whole people of Indonesia: this principle calls for the equitable distribution of welfare to the entire population, not in a static way but in a dynamic and progressive approach).

These five principles are in fact a combination of different ideologies such as Western democracy, Islamic modernism, Marxism, native village democracy and some common beliefs

(Mortazavi Emami Zavareh, 1387 [2008 A.D]: 25). Therefore, Islam became a religion with no political function, since in the period after the declaration of independence during Sukarno's era, political elites intended to apply political sovereignty through limiting the role of religion in the public domain; and with a Muslim majority population in Indonesia, the early 1960s saw Sukarno veering Indonesia to the left by providing support and protection to the Indonesian Communist Party which spread the gap between religious and Islamic elements with the secularists, finally leading to the fall of Sukarno's regime after internal conflicts between the Indonesians and the Communists. Afterwards, the Suharto regime and military seized power. Islamic organizations were hoping to play a more important role in socio-political issues of Indonesia; this regime, however, like Sukarno's government paid no attention to Muslim group demands thereby leading to severe tensions between the Muslims and the government during Suharto's regime in the 1980s. Generally, it can be said that the Pancasila's principles were further promoted during Suhatra's period. From 1985, all sectors of Indonesian society were required to accept the five principles of Pancasila; moreover, Suhatra controlled Islam and its followers while imposing great limitations on them (Hoseyni Jebeli, 1388 [2009 A.D]: 19). Today, the Mohammadiyah, Nahdatul Ulama, the United Development Party and Islamic Unity Coalition of Indonesia are four of the most prominent Islamic movements and parties in Indonesia. It should be mentioned that two major groups exist in the categorization of Indonesia's Islamic society including: traditionalists who are proponents of native Islam and reformists who are proponents of progressive Islam.

### **3.3. Traditionalists**

They were interested in Islam with a Fiqh approach while at the same time rejecting any type of Ijtihad and Taqlid (imitation).

They believed in Sufism, and in this regard, they sometimes practiced some deeds which were close to blasphemy thereby weakening monotheism. This led to their blind obedience since in Fiqh and Sufism, both mentors (Kiyayi and Sheikh) were considered to be innocent and faultless. Traditionalists usually did not get involved in political matters due to their adherence to religious issues; however, this did mean that they were satisfied with the current situation. Although the traditionalists, especially during the Dutch colonial period, had taken a negative stance, now we are witness to their considerable presence in the political arena of Indonesia (Noer, 1370 [1991 A.D]: 368).

### **3.4. Reformists**

They paid attention to the nature of religion, they believed that the orders (Ahkam) of Islam can fulfill the needs of any time; reformists strongly highlighted the Islamic limits as the determinant criteria of Muslims' deeds. Furthermore, from this perspective, Islam encourages promotion and does not hinder the pursuit of knowledge. They accused traditionalists of bid'ah (innovation) believing that traditionalists, following Sufi doctrines, practiced some deeds which were at odds with monotheism; whereas reformists, focusing on rationalism and rational inference, believed in principles which are constant over time but time, place and innovations cause the fundamental principles to be less clear; therefore, through removing all the extra matters mistakenly believed to be rooted in religion, the reformists tried to recover the correct method by liberating people from dogmatic thinking. From this viewpoint, they are also called modernists as well. They never stop revising and recovering their findings, since progress and improvement essentially depend on Ijtihad and revision. In contrast, traditionalists accuse reformists of following Wahhabi doctrines thereby disagreeing with their beliefs (Noer, 1370 [1991 A.D]: 371-373). In the following, an introduction to two of the most

influential Islamic movements in the recent history of Indonesia will be provided:

#### **4. Muhammadiyah**

##### **4.1. Grounds**

The largest and the most active Muslim reformist organization in Indonesia founded in 1912 by Ahmad Dahlan with Muslim members who are often actively involved in business and trade. Ahmad Dahlan, who went to Mecca in 1908, was educated by Ahmad Khatib, established Muhammadiyah after his return from Mecca in order to reform religious matters and counter the propaganda of Western Christianity. As a matter of fact, China's trade threat and cultural and religious identity threats under the pressure of European Evangelism, who had begun an intense activity in central Java in the first decade of the current century, all caused the revival of Islam to be warmly welcomed.

##### **4.2. Objectives**

Muhammadiyah tried to coordinate Islamic values with its social and educational demands. Haji Ahmad Dahlan established Muhammadiyah in order to purify Islamic practices and improve Indonesian Muslim communities. In response to the spread of different Islamic thoughts brought about by other groups against different reformist viewpoints, he tried to prevent incorrect interpretations of Islam; therefore, a network of religious scholars was shaped who defended traditional principles of Islam in Indonesia while rejecting many Sufist interpretations of the Qur'an (Hoseyni Jebeli, 1390 [2011 A.D]: 404). Muhammadiyah endeavors are implemented to advance and renew education and to promote public welfare in order to deal with Christianity and common local superstitions. In its endeavors to purify religious rituals, Muhammadiyah criticized many of the rituals which Javanese Muslim believed for many

centuries to be the authentic Islam. This movement focused on educational activities, therefore, it established a great number of schools and libraries for the education of its religious followers and the spread of Islam. Finally, Muhammadiyah, which has no political claim, tried to separate itself from political matters, and despite the support of some of their affiliated parties such as the National Mandate Party, it never established a formal link with it (*Muhammadiyah Basics, Muslim Freedom and Unity*, n.d.). In the following sections, Muhammadiyah views on some political issues extracted and translated from their official website is examined.

#### **4.2.1. The Relationship between Religion and Politics**

Muhammadiyah, at the beginning of its establishment, faced strong opposition and indifference from traditional Islamic teachers in villages and government-approved religious authorities (Hashemi Nik, 1366 [1987 A.D]: 623-625). These people who believed in the application of reason in explaining religion, adopted the organizational methods and educational beliefs of the West during the whole education period with open arms. This spread of modernist views among many Indonesian Muslims gave rise to an awareness and trust according to which there was unity in Islam between religion and politics; in addition, in the minds of the modernists, Qur'an and Hadith were considered as not only the source of understanding religious beliefs and practices, but also as a guideline to political and social beliefs; thereby the belief in the unity of Islam and politics was shaped in the minds of Muslims.

#### **4.2.2. Government**

Muhammadiyah were not successful in the establishment of an Islamic government during the Revolution and the independence of Indonesia, and their last hope in the Constitution, including

formulation of terms and conditions entitled the ‘*Jakarta Charter*’<sup>1</sup> to maintain the interests of some non-Muslim minorities and government’s position in maintaining the country’s unity was all forgotten<sup>2</sup>.

#### 4.2.3. Liberty

Support of the liberty of the four religions (other than what was in Hijaz), agreement with political liberties and the activity of parties and groups, agreement with democracy within a religious framework can be considered as the main issues related to the movement’s stance on liberty. Dr. Muhammad Amien Rais, a university professor in Indonesia believes that: “if Muhammadiyah once more revives the reform spirit, it would be able to find solutions to Indonesia’s problems at the forefront of history; issues such as social justice, the development of science and technology, research activities, dealing with socio-economic, socio-cultural and socio-political issues- in case of finding solutions for which, the Islamic movement of Muhammadiyah born in 1982 can once more achieve huge power to attract the attention of Indonesia’s Islamic society” (Rayis, 1995: 189).

#### 4.2.4. Unity of Muslims

Muhammadiyah movement, influenced by the ideas of Seyyed Jamal and Abdeh who held that strengthening Muslims in their own country should be prioritized over anything else, was supposed to expand according to the current conditions within new frameworks such as regional associations; an issue which

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1. five principles of Pancasila

2. All sectors of Indonesian society were required to accept the five principles of Pancasila (which did not directly mention the position of Islam). In addition, the government, especially in Suhatra’s era, controlled Islam and its followers while imposing great limitations on them; an issue which caused this movement to be influential in implementation of religion in social and country matters rather than in the government.

placed Muslims in a better situation against the West. Therefore, they also had a national perspective; that is, they saw no conflict between the nation, Islam and the Ummah (*Muhammadiyah Basics, Muslim Freedom and Unity*, n.d.).

This movement, under the current leadership of Dr. Din Shamsuddin, is moving more towards moderate tendencies while avoiding fundamentalism (Ahmadi, 1390 [2011 A.D]: 186). Currently, this council has about 5000 branches across Indonesia as well as 30 million members and 5754 schools across Indonesia besides some branches in Malaysia, Singapore, Iran, America and Europe.

## **5. Nahdatul Ulama (NU)**

### **5.1. Grounds**

Nahdatul Ulama was established for two reasons:

1. The decline of the Islamic Caliphate by pro-Ataturk movements in 1924, which gave rise to disagreements on the issue of the Caliphate between Mecca and Egypt later on.
2. Move of Wahhabism to Mecca following the interaction between Saudi Arabia's King and Malik Ibn Mas'ood.

On the other hand, the internal current of Indonesia, Muhammadiyah which followed the Wahhabi movement, started to become active in Indonesia, finally giving rise to the formation of Nahdatul Ulama in 1926. NU, under the leadership of Haji Hashim al-Ashri in 1946, fought for the independence of Indonesia, it continued its activity with the formation of a political party while maintaining its cooperation with Sukarno's policies. During Suharto's period, this party had the chance to return to its basic principles of 1926 and get involved in major political and social programs of its own (Noer, 1370 [1991 A.D]: 280).

## 5.2. Objectives

The main and fundamental goal of this movement was to consolidate each one of the four religions, respectively (in order to consolidate the unity between Ulama); therefore, the members of this organization could only follow one of the religions which usually was Shafei. The main interest of NU was in issuing formal Fatwa based on principles of the four religions, since Taqlid (imitation) was obligatory in the view of NU. The members of this organization consist of Ulama and non-Ulama focusing more on the power and wealth of non-Ulama; however, this organization paid attention to both religious and economic issues and raised the issue of establishing economic jobs as one of its goals. The establishment of the Endowment Committee was created in this regard. Increasing and enhancing training centers, providing assistance to the lower strata of society and creating forums to promote the economic organization of the members are among other goals of this movement (Noer, 1370 [1991 A.D]: 282). According to the abovementioned points, many consider NU as the true representative of the traditionalist groups.

### 5.2.1. The Relationship between Politics and Religion

NU, especially some of its leaders such as Wahid, who was even selected as the president of Indonesia, seem to belong to the tradition of those Muslim liberalists who believe that Islam does not necessarily provide a theory of state and government. They believe that the Qur'an and the Prophet's Sunnah shaped the fundamentals of the legislative laws of Islam, the leadership example of the prophet and the first Islamic community established and led by the Prophet. Wahid's emphasis, during his growth in power, was on the fact that the Qur'an has invited Muslims to respect other minorities as 'People of the Book' (Ahle e Kitab). Accordingly, Wahid's approach contradicts with

political forces who have been following an Islamic tradition which insists on the inseparability of politics and religion. In general, NU, despite disagreement with many of the governing states like Sukarno and Suharto, tried to adapt itself with their policies, always trying to avoid violence in this way (Ahmadi, 1390 [2011 A.D]: 188).

### **5.2.2. Government**

Although NU over the course of its activity has never been a serious force against the government and has always contributed to the power of the government, it does not consider Islam and democracy to be contradictory; moreover, Islam is a valuable example which can provide an effective political program suitable for the formation of a civilized society. Regarding the formation of an Islamic government, Wahid's words, which is closely related to NU, clearly indicate his position: "I want Islam to be the cultural and spiritual context of the society, rather than a basis for legislation; such that non-Muslims inhabiting this country become second-class citizens; our intention is not to form an Islamic government (Rayis, 1995: 154).

### **5.2.3. Liberty**

NU, through a liberal interpretation of the role of Islam in the future government of Indonesia, provided an Islam, which was both traditional, clear and flexible. At the head of this movement, Abdul Rahman Wahid, the president of Indonesia, did not suddenly separate himself from the reformists as millions of non-Muslim Indonesians did. In his view, belief in other religions is not equal to blasphemy; rather we should not follow other religions, but at the same time we are not allowed to desanctify them as well. He separated himself from those parties which in his view "intend to use Islam as a tool to reach their goals" (Mortazavi Emami Zavareh, 1387 [2008 A.D]: 29);

therefore, NU with its flexible reaction, provided the grounds for both the political participation of people and respecting the beliefs and doctrines of minorities within legal limits. Over this period, he encouraged the liberty of parties in order to respond to the liberal demands of Indonesians, such that the Indonesian communist party, which was in contrast to the Muslims of Indonesia, initiated its activities. Christians found their capability to be beyond their potential, to the extent that they were involved in a struggle against Indonesian Muslims and, with the Vatican's support, started to think about dividing the Christian-inhabited parts of Indonesia. Due to Wahid's close ties with Israel, Jews gained a new spirit, and when Wahid entered a Jewish synagogue with a kippah on his head, they found that they can position themselves in Muslim Indonesia. Even the Baha'i Community, mostly resented by Indonesian Muslims, was allowed to take part in activities; however, all these activities were done under the name of supporting liberty and democracy (Pak Ayin, 1383 [2004 A.D]).

#### **5.2.4. Unity of Muslims**

NU, like Muhammadiyah, highlights both the necessity of unity among Muslims in order to primarily deal with Western colonialism and maintenance of internal cohesion as an introduction to building and enhancing cohesion with other Muslim nations; moreover, cooperation with secular governments (due to 'necessity overrides prohibition' (*al-darurat tubih al-mahzurat*)) did not seem to be contradictory to this point.

This organization rapidly expanded across Java after being witness to the opening of its first branch in Kalimantan in 1930. The current head of this organization is Aqil Seraj. Today, this organization has around 40 million members across Indonesia with branches in countries such as the U.S., Australia, Germany, Egypt, and Lybia (*About the Organization, n.d.*).

## **6. The Islamic Republic of Iran**

### **6.1. Grounds**

Today, we are witness to the increasing growth of Islamic movements across the Muslim world. Iran is among the countries which, during its historical process, has witnessed various movements in order to achieve political and social demands within an Islamic framework. In the following sections, the Islamic Republic of Iran will be explained as an Islamic movement.

The establishment of the Islamic Republic of Iran in the last quarter of the 20th century in response to autocracy and foreign intervention, due to its Islamic nature, was distinguished from many similar phenomena, since, unlike other modern revolutions, it somehow challenged the world-oriented and materialist view dominating the world system, creating a wave of hope and enthusiasm among the nations of the world and the Islamic world (Mohamadi, 1385 [2006 A.D]: 21). In other word, this revolution not only reached its goal, i.e. religious revival and the resurgence of Islam, but it also led to the birth and continuation of the life of contemporary Islamic political movements (Shiroudi, 1387 [2008 A.D]: 21).

In the following sections, in order to have a clearer understanding of the nature and the basic instructions of this movement, some aspects of the political thoughts of Imam Khomeini, who led this movement, will be mentioned:

#### **6.1.1. The Relationship between Politics and Religion**

Regarding the necessity of establishing an Islamic state, Imam Khomeini notes that it is necessary to follow Islamic law including political, economic and legal rules. He maintains that “This slogan of the separation of religion from politics and the demand that Islamic scholars should not intervene in social and

political affairs have been formulated and propagated by the imperialists; it is only the irreligious who repeat them. Were religion and politics separate in the time of the Prophet (s)? Did there exist, on one side, a group of clerics, and opposite it, a group of politicians and leaders? These slogans and claims have been advanced by the imperialists and their political agents. They will thus be able to gain dominance over our people and plunder our resources, for such has always been their ultimate goal” (Khomeini, 1360 [1981 A.D]: 23). The frequent survival of Islamic rules necessitates a system which ensures the validity of these rules and their execution through policy initiatives. This is made possible only through the establishment of an Islamic state. Regarding the goals of government, Imam Khomeini, says that “the necessity of establishing a government in order to expand justice and maintain society’s system as well as prevent oppression and transgression and protect borders, is among the clearest affairs, with no difference existing between the period of occultation and Presence of Imam Zaman, or between this and that country.” Accordingly, in the thought of Imam Khomeini, all *fuqahā* were obliged to try for the establishing of government; moreover, if one *faqih* of the time managed to form government, other *fuqahā* would be obliged to follow him (Emami Meybodi, 1387 [2008 A.D]: 58).

### 6.1.2. Government

Regarding government, Imam Khomeini defends the necessity for the continuation of political order in society; however, he does not consider any government to be suitable; in his statements, the Imam considers “the Islamic government” or “the Islamic Republic” to be the suitable government (Khomeini, 1378 [1999 A.D]: 334). In his view, “The fundamental difference between Islamic government, on the one hand, and constitutional monarchies and republics, on the other, is this: whereas the representatives of the people or the monarch

in such regimes engage in legislation, in Islam the legislative power and competence to establish laws belongs exclusively to God Almighty.” Thus, as can be understood, the Imam pays special attention to the form and content of the government; however, the form of a government, in view of the Imam, cannot show the suitability of that government, rather the nature and content of a government shows its suitability (Fouzi, 1386 [2007 A.D]: 107).

### **6.1.3. Liberty**

Emphasis on liberty within the framework of Islam and constitutional law is one of the main characteristics associated with the thought of the Imam. That is, the government, in addition to following God’s rules, should be accepted by the people as well. This issue is quoted in Imam’s Sahife as follows: “by Islamic government we mean a government desired by the nation; moreover, God Almighty says to him that those who pledge allegiance with you, in fact did pledge allegiance with God- a ruler should be the one, allegiance with whom is like allegiance with God (Khomeini, 1378 [1999 A.D]: 460). In his statements, the Imam highlighted that the government is not imposed on the people on the one hand, and that the efficiency of government is of great importance on the other; since in his view, the performance efficiency of a government will be negatively affected making it unable to fulfill its tasks if the people do not accept it (Fouzi, 1386 [2007 A.D]: 110). He considers the government to be both the right of the people and their responsibility while introducing the government to be under the control of the people: the nation itself is the observer, it is an omniscient observer (Haji Sadeghi, 1384 [2005 A.D]: 54).

### **6.1.4. Unity of Muslims**

The term ‘Islamic Solidarity’, as opposed to Islamic divergence,

refers to coordination, cooperation, and Islamic Unity. The Islamic Republic of Iran takes into account the principle of unity and avoidance of division in Islamic sects, such that Article 3<sup>1</sup> of the Constitution confirms this principle. Imam states that: we are no different from our Ahlul Sunnah brothers, we are all from one nation, one Qur'an (Khomeini, 1378 [1999 A.D]: 384). What, in view of Imam Khomeini, establish the foundation of Islamic Solidarity are: Monotheism, Qur'an and Prophethood. The foundation of unity, in view of the Imam, is the principle of monotheism and following the Qur'an's commandments and the Prophet's tradition as the most important common principles of the Islamic World. In the view of the Imam, the existence of dependent authoritarian states is the main obstacle to Islamic solidarity and unity; therefore, "overthrowing imperialism, that is the powers ruling across the Islamic country, is the duty of all of us" (Moghami, 1386 [2007 A.D]: 95).

## **7. A Comparative Analysis of Islamic Movements in Iran and Indonesia**

In this section, a comparison of the fundamental principles of Islamic movements, mentioned earlier, will be presented.

### **7.1. The Relationship between Politics and Religion**

As we know, defending the relationship between religion and politics is common to both movements; more precisely, both movements clearly defend the relationship between politics and religion as well as socio-political Islam having the ability to manage human societies; that is, they highlight the full and unconditional implementation of the Islamic Sharia with the mutual relationship between religion and politics. However, an

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1. Framing the foreign policy of the country on the basis of Islamic criteria, fraternal commitment to all Muslims and unsparing support to the freedom fighters of the world.

important point is that, practically, Muhammadiyah and NU have not been quite successful in implementing Islam in the political context. Moreover, we are witness to the formation of secular governments by the NU organization; Muhammadiyah organization, which accepts secularism, is practically more involved in socio-cultural activities; Islamic Republic of Iran, however, was formed on the basis of strengthening the relationship between religion and politics, such that we are witness to the utmost degree of association between religion and politics in Iran.

## 7.2. Pattern of Government

As mentioned earlier, the first principle of Pancasila, i.e. belief in One God, was introduced for reconciliation of all religious groups; since the majority of the Indonesian people are Muslims, after independence, Islamic values have been attributed the highest importance by politicians. Overall however, the demand of some Muslims regarding an “Islamic Government” was rejected. Based on the principle of belief in One God, the government in Indonesia is neither Islamic nor secular, rather it is a religious government whereby all the monotheistic religions are accepted and supported, and each Indonesian person is free to worship his or her God. This principle is raised in order to prevent sectarianism and religious superiority. As a result the followers of Islam, Christianity and Buddhism, in a modern way and with mutual respect, can carry out their religious rituals (Meuleman, 1375 [1996 A.D]: 42). Following this principle, neither Muhammadiyah nor NU organizations tried to establish an Islamic government,<sup>1</sup> rather

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1. First, Indonesian Muslims and Muhammadiyah organization, in particular, expressed their opposition to the Principles of Pancasila and non-formation of an Islamic government; however, what we see today is the acceptance of secular governments by Indonesian society.

they emphasized the non-political and socio-cultural aspects of Islam; to put it simply, they are not concerned with formation of a government based on Islamic principles.

In this regard, Imam Khomeini's response to the question "what is the duty of Islam and Muslims during the Occultation?", was: "about the necessity of an Islamic ruler after the death of the Prophet, there has been no substantial doubt or disagreement among Muslims. The only disagreement was about the person who was going to be responsible for this important task" (Khomeini, 1360 [1981 A.D]: 32). In this regard, following numerous considerations and referring to different texts and traditions (Hadiths), the Imam propounded the idea of establishing an Islamic government based on *velāyat-e faqīh* during three stages.

### 7.3. Liberty

In Article 28<sup>1</sup> of the Indonesian Constitution, the liberties of association and assembly, the freedom of thought expressed verbally or in writing, are defined. Within this framework and on the basis of the above-mentioned points, NU and Muhammadiyah organizations respect the political liberties of citizens, and NU, in particular, is more prominent in the theoretical and practical aspects of liberty. In the view of Imam Khomeini, liberty which is constantly regarded as the "great blessing of God", "Heavenly gift" and "divine trust", is not an advantage given or taken by the government. "Liberty is a right, like the right to live, granted to human being before formation of the society and government, and the government is obliged to protect it" (Khomeini, 1378 [1999 A.D]: 130). As explained

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1. Varasteh, H. (1380 [2001 A.D]). *Qānun-e asāsi-e Andunezi*. Tehrān: Edāreh Kol-e Qavānin va Moqararāt-e Kešvar.

earlier, religious law (Sharia) and national legislation are the main criteria to protect and maintain liberty of the nation in different arenas.

#### **7.4. Unity of Muslims**

Regarding the stance of the Indonesian movements on the unity of political thought, it can be said that national unity (years of experience of colonialism and foreign intervention and civil war) ranks first and the unity of the Islamic world comes next. In fact, affirming the need for unity among Muslims of the world is an index of introducing unity by these two movements. In contrast, the Islamic Republic takes into account the unity of the Muslim world and avoidance of sectarianism inside and outside the country in a wider scope. As Imam Khomeini states: “Our program is Islam’s program; It is the unity of expression of all Muslims, it is unity of all Islamic nations; it is the brotherhood of all Islamic factions all over the world and the confederation of all Islamic governments of the world” (Khomeini, 1378 [1999 A.D]: 326). Based on the points previously mentioned concerning the political thought of the Islamic Revolution, one can consider the main aspects of unity in this movement to be the avoidance of divisions, working towards Islamic Unity and supporting the Islamic nation. The symbol of this event can be marked by the “Unity Week” coincided with Mab’ath (Official Appointment of *Prophet* Muhammad *PBUH* to *prophet-hood*) of the Prophet of Islam.

#### **8. Conclusion**

In conclusion, the following can be stated:

1. Although these movements have been formed during different time intervals and in different places, both are influenced by international conditions, or more precisely, by objective factors particularly Western colonialism and

foreign interventions; on the other hand, in internal aspects, they faced despotism and hasty secularism in society leading to the formation and growth of thoughts in restoring original Islam and establishing an Islamic state, such that they observe the demands of the Muslim nation in establishing a government on the basis of religious identity and instructions opposing idolatry and blasphemy and trying to establish a society bound together by religious values.

2. One common aspect of these movements is that both, in terms of theory and doctrinal foundation, they believe in the relationship between religion and politics as well as the Islamic government as the satisfactory form of government and unity.
3. Functionally, the effectiveness of the approaches of the movements are different. The Islamic Revolution, for example, unlike the Indonesian movements, has a more pragmatic approach in terms of governance quality, the type of political system and the relationship between religion and politics and even on the issue of Islamic Unity (the interests of the Muslim Ummah). Indonesian movements, however, are, to a great extent, influenced by internal conditions and governing political relations.
4. The exposure quality of the two movements to the issue of liberty, like other indices of political thought, is not absolutely similar; religious law besides the internal law, however, is an important criterion in determining the limits of freedom.
5. In general, Islam is taken into account in both movements, and each movement, based on its nature, the quality of the dominant worldview as well as specific internal and external requirements, have concerns in this regard.

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