

The Reflection of Iranian Moderate Islam on Politics and Society in Indonesia

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Abstract

The most important concern of Muslims after the passing away of the Holy Prophet (PBUH) has been that political and social life be based on the teachings of Islam. During the past few centuries, Islamic societies have made different interpretations of Islam, including traditionalism/fundamentalism, modernism/secularism, and moderation. One of the most important readings in recent years has been Iranian Moderate Islam. Moderate Islam is derived from pure Quranic thought and the Prophetic tradition. Iranian Moderate Islam is based on the sovereignty of God and emphasis on the role of people in politics and society.

Indonesia as the most populous Islamic country has both influenced and been affected by other Islamic regions which has had cultural relations with other regions of the Islamic world, especially the Middle East, for hundreds of years. This research tries to answer this question using the documentary method and interviews with experts, posing the question: What has been the impact of Iranian Moderate Islam in the field of strengthening religious legitimacy and political and social participation based on Islamic teachings in Indonesia?

Iranian Moderate Islam emphasizes the sovereignty of God and the role of people in the political and social system. The reflection of Iranian Moderate Islam in Indonesia has strengthened Islamic teachings, such as relying on religious identity, symbols, culture, and the attention of political systems to religious issues and participation of people in political and social arenas with religious motivations and so on.

Keywords: Moderate Islam, Indonesia, political legitimacy, political participation.

1. Introduction

The complete understanding of Islam and its implementation after the passing away of the Holy Prophet (PBUH) has been the most important concern and challenge among Islamic societies. Islamism in the Middle East is divided into traditionalism/fundamentalism, modernism, secularism and moderation (Fouzi, 2014: 23). Iranian Moderate Islam is one of the most important and influential readings of Islam, which has been of interest since the beginning of the life of the Holy Prophet (PBUH) until the contemporary era. Moderation is used in Islamic sources with words such as intention, ‘al-adl al-qasd fi al-umur’ (Tarihi, 1415 A.H., vol. 2, 1176) (Ibn Abi al-Mahor, 1403:199).¹

The Holy Qur'an has called the Islamic Ummah ‘the Middle Nation’: ‘Thus we have made you a middle nation that you may be witnesses to the people, and that the Apostle may be a witness to you’ (Quran, 2:143). The life of the Prophet of Islam, Sirte al-Qasd, means moderation. And in individual behavior, in family and society, in managing affairs and politics, in facing enemies and on the battlefield, he has exemplified moderation. Imam Ali (AS) says, O people! Be Moderate (Quran, Nahj al-Balagheh, 2010: Aphorisms: 67). God has introduced the causes of departure from moderation as ignorance (Quran,16:55) and sensual desires (Quran,18:28).

After two centuries of colonialism and anti-religious regimes in most Islamic societies, Islamic currents gained power by expanding the circle of Moderate Islam in the Middle East, especially in Iran. Among the important issues in Moderate Islam

¹ ‘Al-Mu'min Sirte al-Qasd and Sunnah al-Rashad’ Rayshahri, 1389: Vol. 10: 489 ‘And we are the people of the nation’ (Dilshad, Beita: Vol. 1: 174).

are Divine sovereignty and attention to the role of people in politics and society. People play two important roles in the field of legitimacy and political and social participation. For hundreds of years, Indonesia, as the most populous Islamic country, has been influenced by other Islamic regions with which it has had cultural relations, especially the Middle East. Like many other Islamic countries, Indonesia has a common historical experience of colonialism and the rule of anti-religious governments. In recent years, with the rise of the Islamist movements and influences from other regions of the Islamic world, attention has been paid to the revival of Islamic values. Iran's Islamic revolution in Indonesia led to the spread of moderate Islam. Despite the fact that the spread of Imam Khomeini's ideas was controlled by the government authorities, the works of Shariati and Motahari, who were effective in formulating the ideology of the Islamic Revolution of Iran, were welcomed by Indonesian society (Zolkifli, 2013: 36; Talib Zain, 2012: 75; Latif, 2008: 306). Religious movements in this country spread as a result (Majared, 2016: 210). The official silence of the Indonesian government about the victory of the Islamic Revolution of Iran expressed its difficult situation because it had caused the tendency of Indonesian citizens with the ideas of forming a just and egalitarian government in Iran (Majard, 2016: 261).

This paper sets out to explore what has been the impact of Moderate Islam in the field of strengthening religious legitimacy and political and social participation based on Islamic teachings in Indonesia. **Iranian** Moderate Islam has been derived from pure Islam and the prophetic tradition, in which Islamic scholars have emphasized the sovereignty of God and the role of people in the political and social system based on the conditions of time and place. The reflection of Iranian Moderate Islam in Indonesia has strengthened Islamic teachings, primarily, but not

limited to, the reliance on religious identity, religious symbols, religious culture, the attention of political systems to religious issues and participation of its peoples in political and social arenas and so on.

This research investigated the impact of Iranian Moderate Islam in the strengthening of religious legitimacy and political and social participation in Indonesia by using documentary methods and interviews with experts. Though the documentary method descriptive and interpretive search was undertaken in relevant documents, papers and texts, as well as interviews held with experts in this field.

There is no doubt that the Islamic Revolution in Iran had an impact on Muslim countries throughout the world. Sehboodi (1996) argues that though Imam Khomeini was not a 'Sunni', he was the greatest and most influential Muslim personality of the 20th century. Imam Khomeini's works have influenced all Islamic religions and all Muslims, especially Indonesia, and have been able to revive Islam in this country. Anis and Haider (2005) in 'Islam and Democracy' show how the Islamic Revolution of Iran has supported the oppressed, the growth of intellectual freedom, intellectualism, development of the country, and the social role of women. The presence of followers of the Prophet's family in Indonesia has been researched by Latief (2008), who traces the historical events in the formation of their presence. Covering the period from 1979 to 2004 Zolkifli (2013) had collected his detailed data through field observation and interviews, going to the main leaders and most influential followers of Ahl al-Bayt in Indonesia and focusing on issues such as Imamate, the Ahl al-Bayt (pbuh), Jafari jurisprudence, the Mahdi (pbuh), and the differences with Sunni schools of thought. Zolkifli sought to answer the question of how Shias as a minority group were able to be recognized in Indonesia where the majority is Sunni, and how they were able to maintain and expand Shi'a beliefs. In his research of the efforts of the Sunnis to confront the Shi'a in Indonesia,

Mohammad Taleb Zain (1437) investigated the theoretical foundations of the Shi'a, the situation of the Shi'a and the Shi'a organizations and institutions in this country.

2. The Semantic System of Moderate Islam

Islam is a social and individual religion and addresses all aspects of human life. The immortality and comprehensiveness of Islam is the basis of the necessity of forming a Moderate Islam. Moderate Islam believes that God is aware of all matters of life and worldly and otherworldly happiness. God has revealed the Shari'a to humanity to be in charge of the administration of society.

The semantic system of Moderate Islam is derived from a religious approach to the foundations of ontology, epistemology and anthropology. Moderate Islam believes in the monopoly of the law and the sovereignty of God.

The power and sovereignty of God and the right of custody and rule must be respected.² Moderate Islam, as a reading of political guardianship during the absence believed, *vilayah* returns to divine attributes and actions (Javadi Amoli, 2000: 143). Divine *vilayah* is the source of the legitimacy of Moderate Islam. *Islam is a social, individual religion and considers all aspects of human life. The immortality and comprehensiveness of Islam is the basis of the necessity of forming Moderate Islam. Moderate Islam believes that God is aware of all matters of life and worldly and otherworldly happiness. God has revealed the Shari'a to humanity to direct the administration of society.*

² Ayatollah Khamenei delivered a speech at a meeting with government officials on April 2, 1990

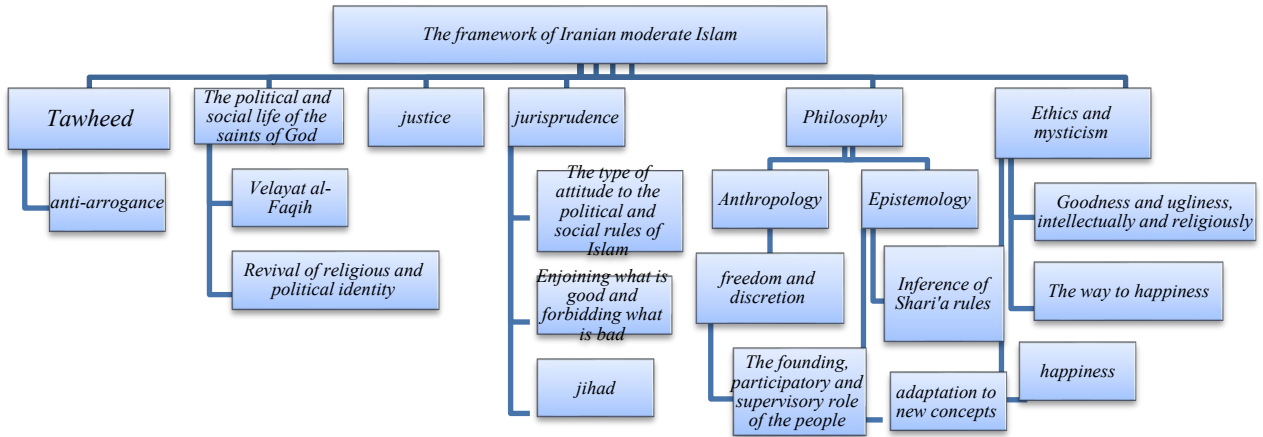


Table number 1: The framework of Iranian Moderate Islam

Tawhid (unity) is the foundation of Islam. Its principle of monotheism guarantees the freedom of man; Everyone believes in the oneness of God and accepts monotheism, It must set man free: ‘Certainly We raised an apostle in every nation [to preach:] ‘Worship Allah, and shun fake deities’’ (Quran 16:36). Avoid those who are evil, and want to capture and enslave man. Islamic freedom is based on monotheism, the monotheistic spirit is based on the denial of worship of non-gods and the obedience to divine commands, and the acceptance of the system is based on divine thought (Khamenei,1987).

The theory of Moderate Islam is based on Islamic Shari’a, which is the basis for legitimizing the political system based on the religious values accepted by society (Namdari, 1997: 215). And it is this basis of reason which ensures the acceptability

and efficiency of the political system. This basis is used to determine human destiny and happiness. Therefore, the right and degree of human intervention to ensure prosperity based on rational judgment must find a suitable place within the military and political structures so as to establish a stronger government, efficiency and social acceptance (Namdari, 1997: 215-216).

Moderate Islam is derived from *ijtihad* (jurisprudential reasoning) in religious sources. *Ijtihad* thinking is based on time, place, and condition (Imam Khomeini, 2000, J 21: 98). Moderate Islam based on belief in a jurisprudential epistemology and emphasis on Islamic traditions. In other words, this idea comes from a kind of ‘epistemological community’ (Zagzebski, 1392: 164).

This chapter has so far focused on the reflection of Iranian moderate Islam in the two areas of divine sovereignty and the political and social role of the people in Indonesia, these two discussions will be briefly discussed. The general framework of the name of moderation is stated in table number 1, and in table number 2 the differences and similarities of moderate Islam with fundamentalist Islam and secular Islam are set out.³

³ See ‘Moderation in the political thought of Imam Khomeini (PBUH)’, written by Mohammad Ali Nazari and colleagues - *Quarterly Journal of Political Thought in Islam* No. 25 http://andishehsiyasi.ri-khomeini.ac.ir/article_139341.html

<i>Islamic secularism</i>	<i>fundamentalism</i>	<i>of moderate Islam</i>	<i>Component</i>	<i>Islamic thought</i>
<i>Religious monotheism</i>	<i>Religious and political monotheism</i>	<i>Religious and political monotheism</i>	<i>The type of attitude towards monotheism The type of attitude towards monotheism</i>	<i>science of theology</i>
<i>Religion</i>	<i>Religion and politics</i>	<i>Religion and politics</i>	<i>The political and social history of the saints of Allah</i>	
<i>Non-religious sovereignty</i>	<i>religious sovereignty</i>	<i>religious sovereignty</i>	<i>sovereignty</i>	
<i>Centered Justice</i>	<i>Centered Justice</i>	<i>Centered Justice</i>	<i>justice</i>	
<i>Minimal Revival</i>	<i>Maximum Revival</i>	<i>Maximum Revival</i>	<i>Revival of religious identity</i>	
<i>Passive</i>	<i>anti-arrogance</i>	<i>anti-arrogance</i>	<i>anti-arrogance</i>	
<i>Rationalist</i>	<i>narrative oriented</i>	<i>rationalist / narrative oriented / Intuition and mysticism</i>	<i>Epistemology</i>	<i>Philosophy</i>
<i>Hermeneutics</i>	<i>analogy analogy</i>	<i>Ijtihad Javaheri</i>	<i>Inference of Shari'a rules</i>	
<i>Agree</i>	<i>disagree</i>	<i>agree</i>	<i>adaptation</i>	
<i>Emphasis on the power of reason(</i>		<i>Moderation between human forces</i>	<i>Anthropology</i>	
<i>Delegation and freedom</i>	<i>Predestination and lack of freedom</i>	<i>No coercion and no authorization</i>	<i>freedom and discretion</i>	
<i>Establishment, supervision and participation</i>	<i>Allegiance</i>	<i>Establishment, supervision and participation</i>	<i>Political and social freedoms</i>	
<i>Reason</i>	<i>Sharia</i>	<i>Sharia and reason</i>	<i>Basics of ethics</i>	<i>Ethics and mysticism Ethics and mysticism</i>
<i>Worldly</i>	<i>hereafter</i>	<i>Worldly and hereafter</i>	<i>Happiness</i>	
<i>Relying on custom</i>	<i>Saleh's predecessor</i>	<i>Communication with the perfect human being</i>	<i>The way to happiness</i>	
<i>Minimal religion</i>	<i>The comprehensiveness of Islam</i>	<i>The comprehensiveness of Islam</i>	<i>Attitude towards political and social rulings</i>	
<i>Mustapha</i>	<i>Obligatory</i>	<i>Obligatory</i>	<i>Enjoining what is good and forbidding what is bad</i>	<i>jurisprudence</i>
<i>Special interpretation of Jihad</i>	<i>Ideological</i>	<i>Jihad Akbar/ Asghar</i>	<i>Jihad</i>	

Table number 2: moderate Islam, fundamentalism and secularism

The Legitimacy of the Political System

The formation of political systems arise from the existence of common ideas and values between the government and the people; therefore, what causes the survival, permanence and establishment of political regimes, is a mental sharing between politicians and people, the basis of the strength of the regime is within the content of the minds of the people (Bashiriyeh, 2005: 116).

The existence of common beliefs and values between politicians and the people strengthens the foundations of legitimacy. The existence of the state is not equal in the protection of individual rights; rather, its existential nature is the preservation of the process involving the formation of will and belief which free and equal citizens come to understand that goals and norms are in the best interest of all (Habermas, 2001: 7).

Creating a communicative action and reaching an agreement based on this content leads to the reproduction of the biological world through the strengthening of culture, the integration of society and the formation of personality (Ritzer, 2011: 608). Legitimate government is based on the will of the people. No authority, no possession, no exercise of power without reliance on God or without His permission and authority is legitimate, as God has given the right of sovereignty over human beings to the prophets and innocent Imams (Mousavi, 2011: 196). Furthermore, the political system is not allowed to take over public, private and public affairs (Khamenei: 1991).

According to Khamenei, Moderate Islam means the rule of the people over the people based on religion (Khamenei: 2016B). In Moderate Islam, the people must be the basis of the political system, and the acceptance of the political system depends on the acceptance of the people. According to Moderate Islam, the people's

vote is based on human dignity, and no guardianship or sovereignty over human beings is accepted except God's (Khamenei: 2003B). Without the will of the people, the Islamic system cannot be established (Khamenei1999B).

Emphasis on people's participation in the political and social

Civil society has voluntary associations and organizations which have made possible the unrestricted dissemination of information and ideas in the sphere of the living world. Communication action is a type of interaction through speech and a way of recreating society (Tohid Pham, 2009: 24). A dialogue in which private individuals gather to form the public sphere (Habermas, 2001: 265). The public sphere is centered on rational and critical discourse and is the result of a clear separation of the private sphere and public power (Hulab, 1996: 29). Discourse is a manifestation of active and democratic participation of citizens (Mirahmadi, 2008: 22).

Ayatollah Khamenei believes that political participation is a voluntary activity with divine goals and motives through which the citizens of a society participate in their socio-political affairs on the basis of duty with empathy and support. And directly or indirectly (Khamenei: 1989), supportively (Khamenei: 1989B) or competitively (Khamenei: 1988), they contribute to shaping their political and social life. In fact, political participation means a sense of belonging to society (Khamenei: 1988B); involvement and cooperation in political processes leads to the choice of the types of government, structures and political leaders. Political participation determines public policy or affects it, in such a way that it has an effective presence in the process of governing the society, including planning, organizing, coordinating and supervising in order to achieve the goals of that society. From this perspective, participation is an organized process in which citizens engage in voluntary activities (Khamenei: 2002). Moderate Islam relies on elections and the active presence of

political people in politics (Khamenei: 2017E), and so the vote of the people is part of religion and shari'a. (Khamenei: 2014B).

3. The Reflection of Moderate Islam on Politics and Society in Indonesia

The Role of Religion in the Legitimacy of the Political System

Islam in Indonesia is a Sufi profession and derived from mystical teachings (interview, Rabbani). Although, throughout history, the dimension of Sufism and mysticism has overcome Sharia and the teachings of rituals have faded (Interview, Zanganeh). Of course, the simplicity of accepting Islam and the flexibility of this religion against local and customary customs, its deep logical and rational content, its power to persuade and respond to natural needs, its deep logical and rational content, its power to persuade and respond to natural, natural and spiritual needs And brotherhood, equality, justice and distance of Islam from ethnic and class prejudices caused Mystics and Sufis use the most to attract and attract the people of those areas to Islam (Arnold, 2010: 278).

The expansion of correct mysticism and the introduction of a new model of mysticism that believes in Sharia and political and social presence in the society are considered to be consequences of Moderate Islam in Indonesia (interview, Ali Shahab).

After Indonesia's independence, secular currents made a lot of effort to limit Islam to the individual domain (Hosseini Jabali, 2010: 271). But after the resurgence of Moderate Islam in the Middle East, Islam returned to the social sphere and

religious currents were revived (Interview, Ismailzadeh). Moderate Islam strengthened the belief in the comprehensiveness of religion and made people understand that religion has the ability to respond to human needs and caused the return of Islam to social, political and cultural relations (interview, Omar Shahab).

The teachings of Moderate Islam in the field of identity proved to the people that it is possible to create a religious system in the modern world (interview, Hakim Elahi) and strengthened Islamic identity in Indonesia (interview, Omar Shahab). Suharto was a strategic ally of America and was worried that Islamic tendencies would infiltrate his government and lead to his downfall (Rabbani, 2013: 52). However, with the rising influence of the discourse of Moderate Islam in many Islamic countries, especially Iran, Suharto was forced to interact with them in order to prevent these waves of Islamism from acting against him, and many Islamic centers were allowed to be established in Indonesia. The number of Muslim officials in the country increased, so that the Muslim Intellectuals Assembly. In 1991, the Islamic Bank became a trading bank, the freedom to wear hijab in official centers such as schools, universities was given, lottery tickets cancelled, and Suharto went to Hajj. (Collection of authors, 2012: 28).

Strengthening People's Participation in Politics and Society

According to Article 29 of the Indonesian Constitution, the government has guaranteed the freedom to perform religious duties for followers of various religions. By adopting the policy of harmony between religions, the government sought to create a kind of balance in religious life. This government policy has caused the religious life in Indonesia to continue peacefully and the followers of different religions live comfortably next to each other (interview, Hakim Elahi).

Sukarno and Suharto always looked at religious movements as a threat, and they tried to manage them with policies of threat and enticement (Interview, Ismailzadeh). According to many observers of contemporary Islam in Indonesia, Moderate Islam had a very important effect on the revival of Islam and the refamiliarisation of Muslims with their identity. The revolution in the Middle East, especially the Iranian Islamic Revolution, was more attractive to many Indonesian people as a symbol that Islam was a symbol of victory over Western ideological and materialistic forces (Esposito, 2008: 261).

Moderate Islam has had various impacts in the field of political and social participation. One of these cases has been emphasizing the role of Muslim women in the political and social arena. In the early years of Indonesia's independence, with the influence of western culture in this country, women developed an instrumental role. Their political and social presence was based on western models, however, and were set apart from religious identity. One of the results of Moderate Islam in Indonesia has been that women have been able to realize their religious identity and their desire to learn religious issues increased. Today women have an active presence in the political and social arena while maintaining their Islamic identity, and participate in scientific and specialized meetings as speakers, and are studying and teaching at higher education levels (interview, Ismailzadeh).

Islam is mixed with symbols and ceremonies. Each of these rituals and symbols is an expression of religious identity. One Islamic symbols in social participation is the *hijab* among women. Before the 80s in Indonesia, *hijab* was not considered seriously among women and girls. And ignoring the issue of *hijab* had become a popular culture. However, after the Islamic revolution in Iran and the increase of those interested in Moderate Islam, the revival of religious values and

symbols, people realized the importance of *hijab* and the tradition of *hijab* became bold again (interview, Omar Shahab).

Other effects of Moderate Islam on social participation in Indonesia with an emphasis on religious identity include the holding of religious ceremonies such as Friday prayers, observances of 'Ashura and Tasu'a ceremonies, other mourning ceremonies, the expansion of the establishment of religious schools, education and the publication of religious books (Interviews with Omar Shahab and Mousavi).

Islamic currents influenced by Moderate Islam in Indonesia have always tried to avoid emotional and hasty movements in this country and maintain their interaction with the government. And within the framework of the Pancasila Constitution and belief in the multiculturalism, national unity, belief in Islamic ideals, serious concern for Islamic unity and confronting religious radicalism (interview, Ali Shahab) They made Quranic culture and friendly relationship with the government and relying on morality and mysticism their focus (Ebrahimian, interview) and engaged in cultural activities (Nazary et al, 2019c:99).

Political and Social Participation Strengthening Islamic ideals

During the time of Sukarno and Suharto, the Indonesian government emphasized that secular and modern groups should not have an Islamic orientation towards the country's foreign policy, because they did not want Islamic tendencies to be included in their laws. On the issue of Palestine and Israel, they condemned Israel with an anti-imperialist view. Therefore, secular groups introduced any defense of the Palestinians outside the principle of Pancasila (Madani, 1385: 117).

One of the results of the spread of Moderate Islam in Indonesia has been reviving the name of Palestine in Indonesia and holding a Quds Day march in this country (Interview, Hakim Elahi). Also, numerous scientific meetings are held in

this country to examine Quds Day and the freedom of Palestine (interview, Rabbani). The spread of Moderate Islam in Indonesia has led to resistance to and confrontation of arrogance and oppression (Nazary et al, 2019c:99).

Conclusion

Paying attention to Islamic teachings has been important in the political and social life of Muslims. After the passing away of the Holy Prophet (PBUH), various readings of Islam grew, which included traditionalism/fundamentalism, modernism/secularism, and moderation. During the 19th century, many Islamic societies were colonized by great powers due to internal conditions and the international system, and anti-religious governments came to rule and many Islamic teachings were forgotten. But from the 70s of the 20th century, attention began to be paid to the political and social teachings of Islam, which led to political and social revolutions in many Muslim societies. Iran's Islamic revolution was the result of Moderate Islamic reading. Moderate Islam believes in divine sovereignty and the political and social role of people in politics and government.

Indonesia as the most populous Islamic country has influence and effectiveness from other Islamic regions which has had cultural relations with other regions of the Islamic world, especially the Middle East, for hundreds of years. Indonesia, like many Islamic countries, has experienced foreign colonialism and the rule of anti-religious governments. After the political and social revolutions of the 70s in the Middle East, especially in Iran and the rule of Moderate Islam, Indonesia was affected like many Islamic countries, and attention to religion in the political and social spheres was noticed. Among the most important cultural and political effects in the field of political and social system, the following can be mentioned: The dominance of Islamic currents in the political system, the political and social participation of people with religious motivations, the revival of religious identity,

more attention to religious symbols such as *hijab*, observance of religious ceremonies, anti-arrogance stances and anti-liberty, and the establishment of Quds and Palestine Day ceremonies.

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