

Islamic feminism in Iran; Opponents and supporters

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I. INTRODUCTION:

At the time of their inception, the movements of women's rights. Both in the West and in the Islamic world were aimed to protest against some social inequalities¹. But after some time, the movement changed to analyze the cultural norms and the inequality of women and women's aspirations and began addressing specific issues. Islamic feminism is a new term in the literature of women's rights which emerged in recent years in various Islamic countries. Beginning in the 1960s, however, many Chinese, African-American and women from third world countries began to criticize the white women leading the movement at the time, because of they believe that their breed of feminism only provides for the interests of this group of women, and lead to other ethnical, racial, religious and class discrimination². Black feminism, Third World Feminism, Islamic Feminism, were the new voices created in the context of dominant feminism, and seek to enrich it by providing more context to the problems of women from diverse backgrounds³. Among all of them, Islamic feminism is one of the strongest currents of feminism in the modern world, and had an effective role in promoting women rights awareness of Muslim women in Islamic countries. Understanding Islamic Feminism (that feeds on both feminist and Islamic ideas at the same time) is not possible without a brief overview of the state of feminism in the world and in Islamic societies⁴. Islamic feminism is a new term and phenomenon in the Islamic countries especially in Iran, where it has been discussed since two to three decades⁵. After the Islamic Revolution in Iran in 1978 the debate on women's rights, became very controversial. Some tried to defend the rights of women through secular thinking, arguing that religion and social structures formed on the basis of religion are the main reasons for the discrimination against women⁶. Therefore, they believe, by eliminating religion from the structure of society, this discrimination can be eliminated against women.

However, some believe that religious influence in Iranian women are strong and fundamental, and no fundamental change in Iran, regardless of religion, can be made. They believe that with a new interpretation of Islamic texts, many social inequalities and discrimination can be prevented against women. Moreover, they believe that Islamic Feminism is one way of emancipating Muslim women from discrimination and inequality⁷. Islamic feminism has its opponents and supporters in Iran. I will first briefly define the feminism trend and historical birth of Islamic Feminism. Secondly I will highlight the thoughts of one opponent (Mehrangiz Kar) and one supporter (Ziba Mirhossaini) of this new movement in Iran.

¹ Shaikh. Sadiyya. (2003). Transforming Feminisms: Islam, Women and Gender. P 150.

² Ibid.

³ Tohidi.Nayyereh.(1996)."Feminism, Democracy, Islamism". Comprehensive Human Sciences Portal. Available at: <http://ensani.ir/fa/article>.

⁴ Gomez-Garcia. luz. (2002). Islamic Feminism: From an Identity-based Response to an Islamic Knowledge Frame . Available at: <http://www.travellingconceptes.net>.

⁵ Shahidian. Hamed.(1998). Islamic Feminism and Iran Movement. Letter of Iran. USA. p 612.

⁶ Ibid.

⁷ MirHosaini.Ziba.(2013). Gender and equality in Muslim Family Law. published by I.B.TAURIS & Co L.td.

II. FEMINISM:

Feminism can be seen as the reaction of modern Western women to traditional European culture⁸. This movement, on the one hand, is rooted in the new concepts of contemporary history (including humanism, secularism, equality, human rights and social freedoms), recognized by the victory of the French Revolution and the adoption of international human rights. On the other hand, after the French Revolution and the political and social atmosphere, industrialization rose and gradually developed new issues⁹.

Therefore, in order to understand the thought behind Feminism, we have to review the woman's situation in the traditional West, the political-social thought of the modern West and the changes in the capitalist system. These were the bedrock of feminist creation and should not be overlooked. Sometimes feminism is defined as organized movements to defend women's rights. And sometimes it is defined as theories of political, economic, social and legal equality of men and women¹⁰. Some also consider it an ideology that aims to change the social structures. Despite various definitions, all feminists believe that women are being oppressed on the basis of their gender. The term, with a slight change in pronunciation, is used in English, French, and German in one sense, and is taken from the Latin word *femina* which means woman or the female sex. The first time this word "feminist" is used, was in French medical texts 1871 to describe the morbidity of the growth of the organs and sexual characteristics of male patients, who suffered from having female characteristics¹¹. At first, in medical culture, the meaning of feminism was descriptive of female characteristics in men, politically; this term was first used in 60th and 70th to explain the masculine behavior of women¹². These days, this term is used for all groups related to women's rights¹³. Charles Fourier, a socialist, used the term feminism for the first time in the nineteenth century to defend women's rights. And then, at the beginning of the 20th century, during the first wave of feminism, fighting for their right to vote, a large number of women were called feminists. And then this term gradually opened its place in literature, politics, art, history, economics, law, anthropology, and sociology¹⁴. The idea of feminism from the time of its formation to this day has gone through three major stages of change and evolution, and before reaching the wide concept we use today. In the following sections, I will briefly explain these three phases.

III. THE FIRST WAVE OF FEMINISM:

The first wave, which considered feminism as an organized movement for women's rights, is known as probative feminism, was formed in the 17th and 18th centuries. At that time, the dominant insight or culture was Patriarchal, and the woman was considered to be a subject and a dependent man, and without independence. The thought of the women are subordinate creatures can be seen in the literature, philosophy, law, and politics of those centuries¹⁵. So, the demand of this group of feminists is to prove the dignity of the woman in the social sphere and the family institution. After that, Feminist egalitarianism emerged. This group does not just think that the woman is an independent creature and with limits to be respected. They believe that this human being should have the same rights as a man¹⁶. When legal reforms in the 1890s recognized the universal right to vote for men, the same thing has revealed the discrimination between men and women more than before. Hence, paying attention to legal and political reforms is the obvious point of the first wave of feminism and accordingly, it can be called the Women's Rights Defense Movement¹⁷. In England, in 1825, the first statement in defense of women's rights was signed by William Thomson. In France,

⁸ Eftekhari.Asghar.(2000). Feminism and its dimensions. Journal of Strategic Women Studies. No 9.

⁹ Friedman.Jane.(2005). Encyclopedia of contemporary terminology: Feminism. P 6.

¹⁰ Tohidi.Nayyereh.(2015). Gender, Modernity, Democracy, Second Sex. No 38.

¹¹ Najmabadi. Afsaneh.(1995). Nimeye Digar Magazine . No 2. P 121.

¹² Ibid.

¹³ Yazdani.Abbas,Jandaghi.Behrooz.(2018). Collection of articles: Feminism and feminist studies. Publication:Center of Women Studies and Research.

¹⁴ Friedman.Jane. (2005). Encyclopedia of contemporary terminology: Feminism. P 597.

¹⁵ MoshirZadeh. Homayra. (2003).from movement to social theory. P 51.

¹⁶ Friedman.Jane.(2005). Encyclopedia of contemporary terminology: Feminism. P 136.

¹⁷ Najmabadi.Afsaneh.(1995). Nimeye Digar Magazine. No 2. P 121.

in the period of 1848-1838, the Women's Rights and Duties Act on Public Employment was published in the Women's Magazine¹⁸. In the 1840s, the women's rights movement in the United States began with the Seneca Waterfall Treaty, and its achievement was the Declaration of Sentiment. This declaration emphasized the historical oppression of women, the freedom and equality of women in the economic, educational, social and political spheres, and was reflected in the American Declaration of Independence. The United Kingdom has witnessed the emergence of women's rights movements since the 1840s. Because of the spread of women's movements in the 19th century, many consider the first half of the nineteenth century to be the beginning of the first wave of feminism¹⁹.

The Second Wave of Feminism:

The years 1920-1960 witnessed the recession of feminist movements in the world. The access of women voting in countries where feminist movements were formed and the outbreak of the Second World War was the cause of the recession of feminist movements²⁰. The decade of the 60s was the decade where social movements peaked and new philosophical theories formed, and these had a great influence on the formation of new feminist theories and women's revolutionary movements²¹. Moreover, the capitalist system, by making changes in the structure of employment, the needs of the labor market and the educational system, in women's socio-economic situation, greatly the movement influenced and without it feminism could not be strengthened²². The second wave of feminism, labelled as Egalitarian with social color was formed in the beginning of the 60s and 70s decades ,and opened its place in literature, politics, art, history, economics, law, anthropology and sociology. What distinguishes the second wave of feminism from the first wave is the emphasis on cultural critique. Since the early 1970s, women's studies have flourished in curricula at universities and colleges and have been introduced as an academic branch of the women's liberation movement²³. The second wave fans tried to analyze the causes of the subordination of women and outline the ideal state. Equality was the dominant discourse of the second wave of feminism, drawing up political and social rights and status in line with men, was the ideal of the second wave of feminism²⁴.

IV. THIRD WAVE OF FEMINISM:

The third wave of feminism, also known as Modern Feminism has new claims. Women can and have the right to replace women's power with what has been so masculine²⁵. This current movement is insisting on the gender issue and providing a new interpretation of it. Feminism sought to critique all the thoughts. Regarding the term "feminism", there is no comprehensive definition. Some believe feminism is an organized movement to gain women rights. And some believe that feminism is the prospect of eliminating subversion, oppression, inequality and injustice against women. And some believe that it is an ideology whose purpose is not only the equality of women and men, which transforms all social structures. All of these groups believe that, women oppressed because of their gender²⁶.

V. THE BIRTH OF ISLAMIC FEMINISM:

The movement of feminism has made an important change in the Islamic world. Feminism was born into a state of new nations in colonial and postcolonial worlds as a movement for the opening up of public spaces for women²⁷. In the early twentieth century,

¹⁸ Dictionary of Ethics, Theology and Society. (1997). p 377.

¹⁹ Kadivar. Jamileh.(2003). Nasime Shargh Magazine: "Zan". No 119. P 164,165.Available at: <https://hawzah.net>.

²⁰ Ibid.

²¹ Shadloo.Shideh.(2006). Noor Specialist Magazine portal: "Women Social Movement". Available at: <https://www.noormags.ir>.

²² Ibid.

²³ Ibid.

²⁴ Moshirzadeh.Homeyra. (2008). Feminism and its dimensions. pp 184-318-309.

²⁵ Dictionary of Ethics, Theology and Society. (1997).p 377.

²⁶ Bashiriyeh.Hosain. (2008).Cultural Theories in Feminism. Zanane Farda Magazine. No 1. P 52.

²⁷ Gomez-Garcia. luz. (2002). Islamic Feminism: From an Identity-based Response to an Islamic Knowledge

some Muslim women thinkers gradually began to write about feminism and awareness and in Female-oriented texts. Some of them are Tahereh Qarat al-Ain and Bibi Khanum Astarabadi (Iran), Zaynab Fawwaz (Lebanon), Aisha Taymur and Ghasem Amin (Egypt). Qassem Amin was the author of the book "Tahrir al-Amrat", which criticized polygamy, wearing the Hijab and sexual separation in Islam in his book²⁸; considering them contrary to the true spirit and laws of Islam. He is known as the father of feminism in Egypt, and his book has had an immense impact on women's political movements throughout the Arab world and Islamic societies²⁹. None of these efforts are known as Islamic feminism, and women are trying to change traditional laws by resorting to holy Islamic texts³⁰. The secular feminist movement has raised the issue of women's right to research, work and political rights in Islamic countries, and was created by the growth and influence of Western culture in Islamic countries. But in the economic political Exchanges that was created between Islamic and western countries; Muslim women who are aware of the notions of feminism and legal equality must be in line with the nationalist and anti-colonial priorities and also the new secular and tyranny modernist governments³¹.

Since the adherence to the holy texts of Islam, the culture and the religious tradition have become the traditional and accepted lifestyle of women in Muslim countries. Therefore, any change in women's freedom of expression, such as the removal of a veil, meant the simulation of a Muslim woman to a Western woman and it means giving up against the influence of the culture of the West³². Any move to liberate women was seen as Treason of Islamic nationalism³³. In fact, for nationalists and Muslim colonialists, Feminism means the promotion of women's rights and colonial projects, which must be resisted against³⁴. While Western feminists at the beginning of the twentieth century challenged patriarchal parts of their culture, Muslim women could not invoke Western ideologies and continue to fight inequalities against them. Therefore, Muslim women faced a painful choice. They should choose between their Islamic identity and gender awareness³⁵. But this wandering of Muslim women between western feminism and Islam became lighter after two or three generations, because Muslim women came to realize that there is no institutional relationship between Islamic ideals and patriarchal structure, and therefore, there is no contradiction between the Islamic faith and feminism³⁶.

Therefore, "Muslim Feminism", in particular Muslim Arab Feminism, gradually formed in the 1970s and could focus on cultural differences and confront typical models of Western Feminism³⁷. In Islam, they sought signs that would help them achieve their goals, such as women's rights, gender equality and social justice. As a result, a defensive-reaction discourse emerged and this period is known as the "revival of Islam". This period provided a space for the emergence of "Islamic Feminism" in the 1990s. In the same decade, clear signs of a new consciousness emerged. A new way of thinking and a gendered discourse was formed in that their demands were feminist, but the language and source were Islamic in legitimacy. This new discourse was called "Islamic feminism"³⁸.

Frame . Available at: <http://www.travellingconceptes.net>.

²⁸ Sanasarian.Eliz.(1982). Women's rights movement in Iran: mutiny, appeasement and repression from 1900 to Khomeini. Translating by Ahmadi,Nooshin. Tehran: Akhtaran Publication.p3.

²⁹ Tohidi. Nayereh.(2001) .Islamic Feminism : Perils and Promises. Mews Review 16. p 314 .Available at: <http://www.nodo50.org/feminismos/spip.php?article118>.

³⁰ Gwendolyn. Zoharah , Simmons. (2003). Are We Up To the Challenge ? The Need for a Radical Recording of the Islamic Discourse on Women. Progressive Muslims . Oxford : one world.

³¹ Mirhossaini.Ziba.(2006). New feminist voices in the Muslim world. Zanan Magazine. No 132.pp 46-50.

³² Ibid.

³³ Mernissi.Fatima. (1985). "Beyond the Veil: Male-Female Dynamics in Muslim Society". Massachusetts: Schenkman Publishing Company.

³⁴ Ibid.

³⁵ Mirhossaini.Ziba.(2018). An overview of Islamic feminism. Available at: <http://asre-nou.net/php>.

³⁶ Gomez-Garcia. Luz. (2002). Islamic Feminism: From an Identity-based Response to an Islamic Knowledge Frame. Available at: <http://www.travellingconceptes.net>.

³⁷ Ibid.

³⁸ Mirhossaini.Ziba.(2006). New feminist voices in the Muslim world. Zanan Magazine. No 132.p 47.

Margot Badran and Miriam Cooke³⁹ identify three critical periods of feminism in the Arab world: (1) The period of invisible feminism, based on a critique of social gender roles, which take place from the beginning of the 1860s until the middle of the 1920s, especially in Egypt, where middle and upper class women expressed their ideas through literature and poetry; (2) The period of social activism, between the 1920s and 1960s (in Egypt – 1920-1950; Lebanon, Iraq, Syria – 1930-1940; Sudan – 1950), marking a development of the organized, public feminist movements focused on recovering the rights of Muslim women; (3) The period of resurgent feminism, starting in the 1970s until present day⁴⁰.

VI. Women's Rights Movements in Iran:

The women's rights movements in the Middle East have been organized since the past two centuries as a truly organized movement⁴¹. All of these movements have been for women's rights and for eliminating the discrimination against women. Iranian Women Participating in the Tobacco Movement (1821)⁴² and then in the Constitutional Movement (1905)⁴³, they started protesting and trying to get their rights⁴⁴. Before that, they were engaged in activities such as sitting in the shrine of Abdul Azim to defend constitutional scholars, they by participating in the Tabriz Constitutionalist Battles, they sold jewels to collect shares for the National Bank, and they gave sanctions on textiles and foreign goods and made an ultimatum to the parliament Participated in political and social affairs⁴⁵. They also founded a special school for girls, a women's magazine, women's clubs, and fought for equality and elimination of discrimination against women. Iranian women with Burqas and black veils came out and screamed for equality. They were initially under the influence of religious leaders. The formation of hidden women's associations was the first step for Iranian women to follow their wishes. One of these was "Women's Freedom Association ", which was secretly held in gardens around Tehran. Well-known women's rights activists criticized the political and social issues in association meetings. But however, these activities working because of negative propaganda⁴⁶.

Unfortunately, after the victory of the Constitutional Revolution, women did not achieve their share. Women did not achieve the right to vote, and no law was passed in their favor⁴⁷. With the more public activities of women and the publication of women's magazines, The Iranian Women's Equality Movement became more open and more radical. With their participation in the International Congress of Women's Vote Right, and giving the bill to the parliament to improve the living conditions of women and linking with other women's movements in other countries were their activities. None of these associations persisted but lead to the voice of Iranian women's protest which was heard by everyone⁴⁸. In 1962, a bill was passed on the women's right to vote in parliament⁴⁹. Ayatollah Khomeini and some

³⁹ Ibid.

⁴⁰ Alak.Alina Isac.(2015). Islamic Feminism(s): A Very Short Introduction. Analize – Journal of Gender and Feminist Studies. New Series. Issue No 4.

⁴¹ Yeganeh.Nahid.(1984). Quarterly Journal: Women's Movement in Iran. First Year. No 2,pp 27-8.

⁴² The Persian Tobacco Protest (nehzat-e tanbāku), was a Shi'a revolt in Iran against an 1890 tobacco concession granted by Nasir al-Din Shah of Persia to Great Britain, granting British control over growth, sale and export of tobacco. The protest was held by Tehran merchants in solidarity with the clerics. It climaxed in a widely obeyed December 1891 Fatwa against tobacco use supposedly issued by Grand Ayatollah Mirza Hassan Shirazi.

⁴³ The Persian Constitutional Revolution (Mashrūtiyyat, Enghelāb-e Mashrūteh), also known as the Constitutional Revolution of Iran, took place between 1905 and 1911. The revolution led to the establishment of a parliament in Persia (Iran) during the Qajar Dynasty.

⁴⁴ Sanasarian.Eliz.(1982). Women's rights movement in Iran: mutiny, appeasement and repression from 1900 to Khomeini. Translating by Ahmadi,Nooshin. Tehran: Akhtaran Publication.p 3.

⁴⁵ Yeganeh.Nahid.(1984). Quarterly Journal: Women's Movement in Iran. First Year. No 2,pp 27-8.

⁴⁶ Afary.Janet.(1992). Women in Qajar period and constitutional revolution. Nimeyeh Digar Magazine. No 17,pp 27-8.

⁴⁷ Ibid.

⁴⁸ Sanasarian.Eliz.(1982). Women's rights movement in Iran: mutiny, appeasement and repression from 1900 to Khomeini. Translating by Ahmadi,Nooshin. Tehran: Akhtaran Publication.p 63.

⁴⁹ Ibid.

clerics asking for a cancellation the bill by sending a letter to the King, because of they considered it contrary to the Islamic rules. Eventually, the government canceled the bill but women did not step back, but instead sat in the Prime Minister's building as a protest⁵⁰. Finally, women were able to vote in the February 6, 1962 election and in on March 12, a law that prevented women from voting was removed. Getting the right to vote was effective in enacting legislation in parliament for the benefit of women and in order to equalize them with men. Many laws were passed in support of the family during the Pahlavi regime and before the revolution of 1978⁵¹.

With the establishment of the Islamic regime in 1978, all the opportunities and laws in the name of family protection law were eliminated. The right to education and the right to vote were the most consistent achievements of the 7th decade of women's struggle. These rights stayed but the Family Protection Law, Freedom of Abortion, and Freedom of choice of clothing, the Right to Justice and Ministry, and the Right to Political Participation for women were removed⁵². After the Iran-Iraq war, feminist activities by women in the form of film, literary creativity, and critical writings of journalists and academic rewriting of Iranian women's history continued⁵³. Women strongly felt the need to prove that the call for equality was a global move, not a Western one, arguing that it has a national and indigenous background in Iran and its roots go back to the Constitutional Revolution. Increasing communication with women's international NGOs of United Nations at regional and global conferences provided unique opportunities for the discovery, learning and dialogue between cultures, countries, and ideologies for Iranian women and the women of the world. Since 1990, Iran was elected for three consecutive periods as one of the 45 voting members of the UN Commission on status of women. Women scholars and activists who live outside Iran were the link between the domestic and world feminist factions. They also served as the link between the women's movement in Iran and international NGOs and the other women's movement in other countries⁵⁴. Their activities include raising the level of international awareness on the situation of Iranian women and mobilizing global pressures against women's rights violations in Iran. Another activity of Iranian feminists was their participation in scientific and cultural communication and gatherings to express their views in scientific and specialized seminars outside of Iran⁵⁵. The fact is that over the past decades, women had challenges with conservative Iranian community. Not merely from secular feminists, but from the thousands of Islamist women who were among the supporters of the Islamic state⁵⁶. Therefore, Islamic Feminists are increasingly seeking to provide an interpretation of religious texts which shows gender equality. So, we can see the co-operation of secular feminists and active Islamist women in that time⁵⁷. When the thought of Islamic Feminism entered into Iran such as other Muslim countries, Iranian women showed different reactions to it. In this section, I would like to discuss the views and thoughts of one of the opponents and one of the advocates of this idea in Iran.

VII. Ziba Mir-Hosseini's Thoughts:

Islamic feminism in Iran have supporters and opponents and Ziba Mirhosaini is one of the supporters who believes Islamic Feminism is a solution for ending the discrimination against Muslim women⁵⁸. She believes that it will work in Iran such as other Muslim countries. Mir Hosseini is a consultant, independent researcher and author that was born at

⁵⁰ Iran Almanac: Book of Facts (1962-77), Echo of Iran. p 411.

⁵¹ Sanasarian.Eliz.(1982). Women's rights movement in Iran: mutiny, appeasement and repression from 1900 to Khomeini. Translating by Ahmadi,Nooshin. Tehran: Akhtaran Publication. p 63.

⁵² Kaar. Mehrangiz.(2012).Woman and Gender in the IRI Criminal Law. Available at: www.mehrangizkar.net.

⁵³ Ibid.

⁵⁴ Tohidi. Ahmadreza.(2001). The United Nations in the field of women's rights. Volume 2. p 528.

⁵⁵ Ibid.

⁵⁶ Nayyereh. Tohidi. (2014). Iranian Women after Islamic revolution. Available at: <http://www.dw.com/fa-ir>.

⁵⁷ Ibid.

⁵⁸ Tavernise. Sabrina. (2009). "Islamic women seek recognition of their rights". The New York Times.

Available

at: <https://www.nytimes.com/2009/02/15/world/asia/15iht-women.4.20201081.html>.

1951, and spent her education in sociology and Anthropology in University of Cambridge at 1980. She returned to Tehran for the support of the Islamic Revolution in 1979. In 1984, she started her research work at the Center for the Middle East Islamic Law in London. She made a documentary film "Iranian-style divorce" based on her book "Marriage in the Test Plant" with Kim Linguotou (British independent filmmaker). This film is focused on Islamic Family Law and shows the differences between the legal perspective of marriage and the concept of marriage in everyday life⁵⁹. She works, in issues such as family relationships, gender laws, Islamic law, and development. Mir Hosseini is an independent scholar who has an inexorable passion for discussing gender justice⁶⁰. As a feminist, she disclose the inequalities that these laws impose on women and makes criticisms of them. Her studies focus on the social legal context of Islam. She believes that feminism has much potential for criticizing gender inequalities in the context of Islamic law. Mir Hosseini is one of the founders of the Equality Movement (Musawah)⁶¹ for justice and equality in the Muslim family's. Through her activities in the Equality Movement, she links the research findings of Muslim feminists to practical programs⁶². She believes that the only way to change the patriarchy of Islam is feminist interpretation of Islamic law text. Justice and equality are the main pillars in Islam but because of the patriarchal culture and the manly interpretation of Islam, equality cannot be seen between men and women⁶³. The legal perspective of Islam should be modernized and democratized through domestic Feminist Movements. Without a modernized and democratized legal perspective of Islam, we cannot reach equality. She supports The Islamic feminism movement because she believes that discriminations has made by humans not by Islam⁶⁴. In her opinions, sexual inequality is also seen in in Judaism and Christianity, but the Western Feminists challenged this inequality without asking for the abolition of religion⁶⁵. Islamic Feminism is an awareness of discrimination and attempts to remove it. She believes the only way to reach equality in relation to men and women is Islamic Feminism.

She divides the perspective of Islam in 2 categories⁶⁶:
 1-Absolute Islam that cannot be compatible with changes
 2- Democratic and pluralist Islam that is based on human rights and modern ideology⁶⁷.
 Additionally, she believes we have three categories of Muslims:
 1- Traditional Muslims: this group resists against every change, and believe that the only resource for women rights is Sharia. They do not consider gender equality as a social demand of women. The women rights should just be ratified in the family framework where a woman is as mother and wife. In the family Law, Marriage is a contract that mentioned after the buying contract. The Quran mentions that the sexual need of women is more than men, so for the protection of the family and prevention of the corruption of society, men should dominate over women and women should use Hijab.
 2-Fundmantalist Muslims: they follow the changes in interpretation of Islam but in shape of the return to pure and main resource, the Sharia. Al-Qaeda, Taliban and ISIS are in this category.
 3- Secular Fundamentalists Muslims: They believe that equality and justice has no place in

⁵⁹ Naficy. Hamid. (2012). a Social History of Iranian Cinema, Volume 4: The Globalizing Era, 1984–2010. Duke University Press. Pp 151. ISBN 9780822348788.

⁶⁰ Safizadeh.Fereydoun. (2001). " Islam and gender" .p 55.

⁶¹ The movement began its activities in Kuala Lumpur in February 2009, with the combination of Islamic standards and human rights standards. It tries to expand awareness among women of various social strata and groups. Its goal is to achieve equal laws in Muslim. www.musawah.org.

⁶² "Successful Iranian ".Available at: <https://ir.voanews.com/a/mirhosseini-succesful-2011-06-12>.

⁶³ Mirhosaini. Ziba. (2013). Justice, Equality and Muslim Family Laws. p 25.

⁶⁴ Ibid.

⁶⁵ Tracy. Higgins. (1996). Anti-Essentialism, Relativism and Human Rights. 19thHarvard Women's Law Journal.

p 89.

⁶⁶ Ibid.

⁶⁷ Mirhosaini. Ziba. (2018). Understanding Islamic Feminism: Interview with Ziba MirHosseini. Available at: <https://mronline.org>.

Islam. Therefore, Islam must be abolished⁶⁸. MirsHosseini believes that in Iran, in 20th century, we have a new group of traditional Muslims such as Motahari, Shariati and Abdolkarim Soroosh, who call themselves religious intellectuals. They believes we cannot change Islam but we can change the interpretation of Islam. Gender discrimination is against the main pillars of Islam and God, and she believes that based on a democratic and pluralist Islam, we can change the interpretation of Islam. The Islamic Feminism is practical in this category.

VIII. Mehrangize Kaar's Thoughts:

Mehrangiz Kaar is a lawyer, journalist and Human Rights activist. She believes, Islamic feminism is not a solution for Muslim women, because the main problem for discrimination against women in Islamic countries are the Islamic rules themselves⁶⁸. She believes that Shiite jurisprudence (*Fiqh*) does not have the ability to solve Muslim women's problems, and only by human rights can this situation improve⁶⁹. Additionally, for having Human Rights rules, you must have a democratic structure and country. Based on her beliefs, the foundations of human rights, at least in terms of equality between women and men, have contradictions with Islamic law and Islamic equality has no place in Sharia. So far, none of the Shi'a and Sunni clerics and authorities have contributed to the promotion of women's rights. Some clerics said that there could be other interpretations of *Fiqh*, but none of them were codified. Feminism in Islamic societies is meaningful when it comes to separating religion from the government⁷⁰. Islamic Feminism has not succeeded in Arab countries and in Iran because of non-democratic structures of government. Fighting violence against women is not Islamic Feminism, unless equality is guaranteed between men and women, Muslims and non-Muslims in the laws. Justice and Islamic Feminism will not work if non-democratic situations cannot established⁷¹. She believes social harms such as divorce, prostitution, and runaway girls in Iran are examples of women's efforts for confront the Islamic sovereignty and patriarchy⁷². In her perspective, the society and government of Iran are crisis-stricken, and the root of this crisis is the bad situation of women in Iran that is the result of the Islamic laws⁷³. She wrote the book about Violence against Women in Iran, and mentioned that Islamic law is a handful of discriminatory laws that are not proportionate to today's life. One of Mehrangiz Kar's actions during her presence in Iran was the establishment of the "Women's Cultural Center" in March 2000, which was registered in August 2001. It consisted of all the radical feminists in Iran. The center provides regular reports on the social situation of the country, Human Rights Reports about legal issues and especially women's issues⁷⁴. She believes that the term "Islamic Feminism" has come from western countries and has been imported by Iranian women's studies as scholars.

IX. CONCLUSION:

Women's movements, with every name and context, have been in the context of a particular objective, which is combating with injustice, and fighting against discrimination against women. Muslim women have fought in their Islamic countries to achieve their human rights and Iranian women have not been the exception. The idea of Islamic feminism in Iran, like other Islamic countries, has its opponents and supporters. Those who are like Mir Hosseini are in favor of joining this trend because they believe that all discrimination against women in Islamic countries results from male-dominated culture and manly interpretation of Islam. In Islamic countries, with the interpretation of human rights and democracy, pluralistic Islam overtake discriminatory laws. These people believe that Islamic Feminism is the only way for reaching equality in relation between men and women in Islamic countries. On the other hand, people like Mehrangiz Kar argue that the basis of discrimination and injustice against women in Islamic countries are the male-dominated and anti-women laws of Islam.

⁶⁸ Biography of Mehrangize Kaar. Available at: <http://www.persongram.com/2193>.

⁶⁹ "I cannot be with extreme feminists" Interview with Mehrangize Kaar. Available at: <https://shahrgon.com/>.

⁷⁰ Ibid.

⁷¹ Jane. Bayes , Nayereh. Tohidi.(2001). Globalization, Religion and Gender: The Politics of Implementing Women's Rights in Catholic and Muslim Contexts (New York: Palgrave).

⁷² Ibid.

⁷³ Ibid.

⁷⁴ Ibid.

The structure of Islamic countries is non-democratic. Therefore, the implementation of the idea of Islamic Feminism in non-democratic Islamic countries would be meaningless, unless by the drastic change of the current structure of these countries and the implementation of the laws of human rights and democracy. So, with the separation of religion from the legal, social and political structure, it would be possible to implement feminist ideas in Islamic countries. As we see in Iran after the victory of the Islamic Revolution and the coming of the Islamic State, the legal system of Iran changed dramatically after Pahlavi regime (1920-1979). After the 1979 Revolution, some achievements and several laws favoring women's right in Pahlavi regime were simply overturned by the hardliner clerics in power. Only two weeks after the revolution, in the chaotic and inflamed situation of the country, Ayatollah Khomeini ordered the then Minister of Justice to review the Family Protection Law and remove the "antiIslamic" rules therein⁷⁵. A new Constitution was adopted which established Islam as the basis for the legal system. However, the Constitution viewed women through the lens of Islamic ideology and this constitutional law did not recognize women as individuals but rather as "family mothers and wives."⁷⁶ For example, Article 2 of the Universal Declaration of Human Rights (UDHR) and Article 2 of the International Covenant on Civil and Political Rights (ICCPR) protect every person's human rights "without distinction of sex." The Iran's national laws fail to uphold these principles and instead apply an unequal and discriminatory system on the basis of gender. In my perspective, we know feminism is a product of modernity and its ideals and activities are in harmony with the modern world, and much of what feminists demand (In every tendency of feminism) arise from the text of modern culture, therefore feminism cannot be distinguished from modernity. We cannot, however, wait for the democratization of the country's structure. Muslim women must come to the conclusion that in a global village, one cannot be blurred and distant from other cultures and nations. Therefore, Islamic countries should strive to coordinate their culture with the universal culture and seek to change their thinking, interpretation, and distance to world culture. If Islamic Feminism causes Muslim women to seek a modern interpretation of Islam, this could lead to the democratization of the country's structure. In fact, I do not see these two ways of thinking as opposed to one another. Because of, women's efforts to achieve their human rights by persuading Islamic scholars to provide human rights interpretations of Islam, it will lead to a change in the structure and democratization of the country. And of course, after the creation of these changes, the idea of Islamic Feminism will be implemented. Although culture and religion are considered the main actors to ignore the rights of women, injustice against women is not specific to a culture or religion and a particular society. Islam is perhaps one of the patriarchal tools, but not the cause of all oppression against women. But one must not ignore the oppression and discrimination in secular societies that hides itself behind the magic of secular life. Ultimately, an intelligent feminist movement needs a correlation between women, Muslim and non-Muslim, religious and non-religious people in different social and economic situations.

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