

## Evaluating the Relationship between Hezbollah Lebanon's Discourse with the Islamic Revolution of Iran: A Critical Approach

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(Received: November 23, 2021 - Accepted: December 24, 2021)

### Abstract

The Islamic Revolution of Iran in 1979 by the leadership of Imam Khomeini, the resulting discourse and its influence on the internal political and social structure, affected the Islamic world, the Middle East, and the Lebanese Shias. The rise of Hezbollah in Lebanon was a manifestation of the Islamic Revolution discourse on the Shia community regarding meaning and identity. With a critical approach, the present study aimed to answer the question 'How close and different has Hezbollah discourse with the Islamic Revolution discourse from view, structural and identity?'. The issue was analyzed using the theory of Laclau and Mouffe's discourse analysis and operationalized by explaining the positions of the movement, its leaders and the function of Hezbollah and comparing it with the political thought and works Imam Khomeini as the Islamic Revolution ideologue. It shows that the Islamic Revolution has been very influential in shaping Hezbollah's Islamic and revolutionary identity. Meanwhile, the sign of Shia political Islam is the central sign of the Islamic Revolution discourse, and the (Islamic) resistance is the primary sign of the Hezbollah speech. The result indicated similarities in most floating characters, namely Shia political Islam, belief in Velayat-e Faqih, justice-seeking, nationalism, independence, issuance of Revolution and revolutionary identity, and resistance (struggle against Israel and anti-Zionism, and anti-arrogance). However, there are some identity distinctions regarding the emphasizing Hezbollah on the Shia, Arab and Lebanese identity and the broad definition of some signs and, consequently, the attribution of some meanings to them, which should be considered from the pathology of future relations between Iran and Hezbollah. This issue regarding common counter-discourses such as Salafi-Takfiri, Liberal Democracy and the Akhavani is essential.

**Keywords:** Iranian Islamic Revolution Discourse, Lebanese Hezbollah Discourse, Discourse Analysis, Shia Political Islam, Resistance, Identity.

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### Introduction

The victory of the Islamic Revolution in 1979, while affecting the internal political and social structure and system, also affected its environment. Many Western analysts have considered it. They referred to it as the reflection of the Islamic Revolution in the international system. The Islamic Revolution influenced other societies, governments, and non-state actors through its discourse. Therefore, understanding the Islamic Revolution discourse is vital. Because this Revolution, using values, concepts, and signs, tried to create a unique semantic system. So, while defining the revolutionary and Islamic identity for the political strategy derived from the Revolution, namely the Islamic Republic of Iran, it also affects many foreign actors.

Lebanon and the Shia community were prone to issuing the Revolution and accessibility regarding the favourable historical, religious and social contexts. By allocating the values and revolution teachings among the Lebanese Shias, Imam Khomeini and his Iranian revolutionaries provided the ground for the hegemony of elements and signs of this revolution discourse in the Lebanese Shia community. Meanwhile, the Israeli regime's invasion of Lebanon in 1982 was an accelerating factor that unleashed the power and potential of the Shias following the Islamic Revolution, and with the leadership and support of Iran, Hezbollah of Lebanon emerged. A movement that was initially formed and gained the power to fight the Israeli occupation. Its victories over the regime and its Western allies in Lebanon, and its effects on other Islamic movements in Palestine, transformed Hezbollah from a mere military and guerrilla movement into a powerful actor and symbol of resistance in Lebanon and then in the Middle East. It was achieved by transferring the Islamic Revolution's discourse elements to Hezbollah and creating an Islamic and revolutionary identity and the continued Iranian support for Hezbollah during the 1980s and 2000s.

The manifestation of Hezbollah's victory was to force the Israeli regime to withdraw from Lebanon in 2000 and accept defeat against the movement in the 33-day war in 2006. With the start of the crisis in Syria, Hezbollah, based on its discourse and identity elements, supported the Syrian political system and countered Salafi-Takfiri terrorism in the region. Some factors had an indirect effect on Hezbollah's position in Lebanon and the area:

“The ISIS crisis in Iraq, the Saudi military invasion of Yemen, the rise of Ansar Allah alongside the Islamic resistance movements’ victories in Palestine against the Zionist regime”.

Regarding the role of the Islamic Revolution in shaping the identity and discourse of Hezbollah, it is essential to study how the discourse of the Revolution affects Hezbollah, its discourse and identity, and the degree of convergence and difference between Hezbollah's discourses with the Islamic Revolution. Therefore, the central question is ‘How

close and different has Hezbollah to the discourse of the Islamic Revolution from the discursive view, structural and identity?'.

To this aim, the theory of Laclau and Mouffe discourse analysis was used. Therefore, while explaining this theory, the amount of convergence and differentiation of Hezbollah's discourse with the Islamic Revolution of Iran is compared. So, by analyzing the discourse, the points of intersection and difference of these two discourses by the leaders' positions and influential members of the two, their central and floating signs are examined.

### 1. Research Background

Moshirzadeh (2018 AD/1397 SH), in "From the Islamic Revolution Discourse to the Discourse of the Islamic Republic Foreign Policy" explained the impact of the Islamic Revolution on the formation of the Islamic Republic foreign policy from a discourse perspective. He expresses the manifestations of this matter in two general discourses, idealistic and pragmatic. Toriki and Sotoudeh Araei (2019 AD/1398 SH), in "Hezbollah as a Socio-political Movement" explain how Hezbollah transitions from an ideological force to a socio-political movement in Lebanon.

They believe that two elements of ideology and belief are essential. Dabiri Mehr (2013 AD/1392 SH), in his book "Cultural Components of Islamic Resistance Discourse in the Middle East" uses discourse theory to study the cultural components of the discourse of resistance against rival speech. The two main currents opposed to this discourse are Salafi fundamentalism and American-centered liberal imperialism. Akbarzadeh (2016), in the English article "Why Does Iran Need Hezbollah?" considered the influence of the Iranian revolution ideology and a particular version of Shia Islam on the strategic ties between Iran and Hezbollah. Azani (2009), in his book "Hezbollah:

A Narrative of God party" considers the Hezbollah appearance in the 1980s as a result of the Islamic Revolution reflections and the Israeli invasion of Lebanon. Deeb (1988), in "Shia Movements in Lebanon: Their Constituent Ideology, the Social Foundation and Ties with Iran and Syria" analyze the Amal and Hezbollah Shia movements formation in Lebanon, their ideology and social foundations and relations with Iran and Syria in the 1980s.

Regarding Hezbollah, he also pointed to the organizational structure of this movement. He paid attention to the influence of this actor on Imam Khomeini's political thought and his belief in Velayat-e Faqih. According to the Persian and English works, we can say that none of these works from the discourse analysis and with a critical approach to explain the differences and similarities between Hezbollah's discourse and the discourse of the Islamic Revolution. The contrast of the present study with the previous research is that it does not pay to the similarities between the speech, identity and norms of Hezbollah with the Islamic

Revolution discourse and the Islamic Republic of Iran. Instead, it considers this issue from a critical and pathological point of view.

## 2. Theoretical Framework: Laclau and Mouffe Discourse Analysis

According to Laclau and Mouffe, must include every action and phenomenon to be meaningful and understandable in the discursive system (Haghighat and Hosseinizadeh, 2008 AD/1387 SH: 106-114). According to Ernesto Laclau and Chantal Mouffe, discourse is a set of signs, and articulation is a process by which the symbols fuse and create a semantic system (Soltani, 2004 AD/1383 SH: 153-155). In this theory, the concepts of signifier and signified have great importance. Signifiers are fundamental ideas, phrases, and symbols with different meanings in different discourses. Signifieds are a definition and an example that a signifier indicates. In other words, the signified is a sign that, when seen, the desired signifier enters the human mind. Among the signifiers, the symbol or concept that is the pillar of other symptoms is called the central signifier. As the central core of discourse, this signifier keeps other signs in their realm of semantic attraction. A floating signifier is also a sign whose meaning is floating and unstable, has several signified and different discourses try to give sense to it and compete with each other to attribute questioned signified (Kasraei and Poozesh Shirazi, 2009 AD/1388 SH: 243-244).

Another concept in Laclau and Mouffe's theory is opposition. According to these thinkers, identity has not always been discursive and established. Opposition shapes identity, and each identity is created in reaction and confrontation with the other. Therefore, discourse identification requires conflict with another (or discourses) (Nozari and Karimi, 2012 AD/1391 SH, 62-63).

Identities and discourses are shaken regarding the hostility and dependence on the "Other." "Other" on the one hand, provides the conditions for the possibility and creating identity and, on the other hand, threatens it and exposes it to destruction (Haghighat and Hosseinizadeh, 2008 AD/1387 SH: 106-114).

In Laclau and Mouffe's theory, identity, subject and discourse are formed through the confrontation between inside and outside and the enemy and the other, and otherness and otherness-making (Soltani, 2004 AD/1383 SH: 156-162).

Laclau calls the attempt of political projects to consolidate certain discourses the hegemony acts. Hegemonic actions aim to create or stabilize the semantic system with hegemonic formulation (Haghighat and Hosseinizadeh, 2008 AD/1387 SH: 114-106).

Discourse becomes a hegemonic discourse when it can reach relative stability, consolidate its semantic system, gain consensus and persuasion, and be accepted by agents and subjects. Conclusion and meaning become hegemony of a discourse, highlighting the desired signifiers and their

semantic system and marginalizing rival discourses' signifiers and semantic systems (Moghaddami, 2011 AD/1390 SH: 101 and 93-94).

A discourse is hegemonic when relying on its central signifier brings its intended signifieds closer to its discourse signifiers. In other words, it establishes its desired semantic system in the collective social mentality, even temporarily, and attracts public satisfaction. According to Laclau and Mouffe, hegemony is set when a particular signifier approaches its signified, and they agree with the meaning of that sign. Deconstruction occurs, confronting the hegemony, so the signifier is separated from the signified and the hegemony is destroyed. It happens when rival discourse can, with the help of various mechanisms, undermine the semantic system of the dominant discourse and disrupt the semantic structures formed in the collective mentality of the people. It occurs when this discourse loses its hegemony. Therefore, the success of actors and political groups depends on their ability to produce meaning (Soltani, 2004 AD/1383 SH: 155-160).

In deconstruction, signifiers are redefined and find a new meaning. It is done by separating the signified from its signifier and assigning another signified. The investigation aims to destroy the stability of a sign's definition and break the hegemony of the opposite discourse (Kasraei and Poozesh Shirazi, 2009 AD/1388 SH: 351).

### **3. A Study of Distance and Proximity Amount (Convergence, Differentiation and Distinction) of Hezbollah Lebanon's Discourse with the Islamic Revolution of Iran**

In the Islamic Revolution discourse, the central signifier is Shia political Islam. Floating signifiers are:

“Independence-seeking, justice-seeking, Islamic resistance (opposition and struggle against Zionism and anti-arrogance), revolution issuance (revolutionary identity), nation-oriented and belief in Velayat-e Faqih”.

In Hezbollah's discourse, the resistance signifier is the central signifier. Because Hezbollah resulted from the resistance against Israel, other signifiers above, including the signifier of Shia political Islam, are floating signs. Each of these discourses has been articulated with its central and floating signifiers by their meanings. Despite the many discourse similarities between the Islamic Revolution and Hezbollah and the similarities in a signifier and conceptual element, Hezbollah's attitude differs from the revolution discourse. The present study will not explain all the signifiers, points and aspects of the two discourses of the Islamic Revolution and Hezbollah. Instead, we want to address and emphasize the familiar and different signifiers and elements of these two discourses that have influenced their identity, distance and closeness to each other.

The similarity and convergence mean how close or similar the components of Hezbollah's speech are to the Islamic Revolution. Although the two discourses of the Islamic Revolution and Hezbollah in Lebanon are very close to each other, even Hezbollah's discourse is a

sub-discourse in the general discourse of the Islamic Revolution, in terms of discourse analysis, and they are in contrast in some signifiers. It needs attention to the difference and non-alienation of the two discourses to each other. In other words, in addition to signifiers' commonalities, there are some discourse differences between the two discourses addressed during the discussion.

### 3.1. Believe in Shia Political Islam

Shia political Islam and Shia politically mean that it believes in religion and Sharia in political and social affairs during the absence, based on Shia faith. Hence, political-Shia Islam seeks the formation of an Islamic government. There are several main characteristics of the revolutionary Shia jurisprudential Islam, represented by Imam Khomeini:

“Absolute jurisprudence of the jurists (meaning the rule of provincial rule based on expediency, which takes precedence over the primary and secondary rules), Revolution and violent methods (such as Jihad) to overthrow the cruel system (internally and externally, i.e. the international strategy), and the rejection of the colonial aspect and ideas of the West (i.e., confronting the political-military and cultural domination of the West)” (Haghighat and Jeddi, 2013 AD/1392 SH).

Acceptance of the religious authority and Islamic law in political and social affairs is one of the common denominators of the Islamic Revolution and Hezbollah discourse. More precisely, Hezbollah has taken this component of its identity from the speech of the Revolution and Imam Khomeini.

In official documents published by Hezbollah, we can see the movement's belief in Imam Khomeini's Shia political Islam and this part of the Islamic Revolution's discourse. Hezbollah's official views on the belief in Shia political Islam were in an open letter published by the movement in 1985. In this letter, Hezbollah, which while announcing its existence, identity, strategy and ideological program for the first time, explained its belief in Shia political Islam:

“At the same time, we emphasize our belief in the life-giving religion of Islam as an idea, political system, thought and government. We invite everyone to know Islam and accept its sovereignty and commitment to carry out its orders and rulings at the individual, social and political levels. We demand an Islamic system based on free and direct choice by the people” (Asadollahi, 2000 AD/1379 SH: 200).

Shia political Islam was accepted as an ideology by Hezbollah because it contrasts with Sunni political Islam, especially its fundamentalist form, in terms of discourse and denationalization of identity. But this has not distanced Hezbollah from Islamic resistance movements in Palestine. In other words, Hezbollah, in line with the Islamic Revolution discourse and the signifier of Islamic resistance and support for the Palestinian ideal, has accepted and supported Sunni political Islamist movements (such as Hamas and Islamic Jihad) even

endorsed them. It is also essential to unity Ummah creation signifier and Islamic unity.

The Islamic Revolution discourse affected Hezbollah's movement (and derived from Shia political Islam), and this Revolution also inspired the culture of Hezbollah slogans. Also, the name of Hezbollah, derived from verse 22 Surah "al-Mujadilah" "أَلَا فَإِنَّ حِزْبَ اللَّهِ هُمُ الْغَالِبُونَ" and verse 56 Surah "al-Maedah," "وَمَنْ يَتَوَلَّ اللَّهَ وَرَسُولَهُ وَالَّذِينَ آمَنُوا فَإِنَّ حِزْبَ اللَّهِ هُمُ الْغَالِبُونَ." It is a discourse derived from the political culture of Iran after the Revolution. Therefore, in the discourse of Hezbollah, Muslims and other weak nations of the world are called oppressed, and the United States of America is referred to as global arrogance (Asadollahi, 2003 AD/1382 SH: 184-185).

The Islamic Revolution discourse and Shia political Islam has also influenced Hezbollah's political and organizational culture. The committed and revolutionary clergy had a unique role in the political action and the pillars and activities of Hezbollah. Many Lebanese clerics were acquainted with Imam Khomeini's political-religious thought in Najaf before the Islamic Revolution and were drawn to political issues after the victory of the Revolution and the establishment of the Islamic Republic in Iran, inspired by the Revolution it and influenced by Imam Khomeini's views. While establishing Hezbollah, they became the head of this movement (Javan and Khosroshiri, 2009 AD/1388 SH: 120).

Hezbollah's numerous successes at the national and regional levels during the time of the Secretary-General of a cleric named Sayyid Hassan Nasrollah demonstrate the objective and successful adoption of this model and discourse of the Islamic Revolution and the Islamic Republic of Iran. Other manifestations of Hezbollah's acceptance of this model is in the presence of clerics in Hezbollah's structure, such as Sheikh Naeem Qasim, Deputy Secretary-General, Sayyid Ibrahim Amin al-Sayyid, Head of the Political Bureau, Sheikh Mohammad Yazbak, Member of Hezbollah's Central Council and chairman of the movement, Ayatollah Khamenei's jurisprudential (religious) lawyer in Lebanon and in charge of collecting his sharia funds from the imitators, and Sayyid Hashem Safi al-din, the head of Hezbollah's executive council.

### 3.2. Belief in Velayat-e Faqih and Following It

Since its inception, acceptance of the Velayat-e Faqih and belief in it have been a central element of Hezbollah's discourse. It is evident from the performance of Hezbollah's central nuclei, from allegiance to Imam Khomeini in the 1980s to the movement's open letter in 1985, which is considered its manifesto. In this letter, regarding the identity of Hezbollah and its relationship with the Supreme Leader, is stated:

"We, the children of the Hezbollah ummah in Lebanon, declare our commitment to the orders of the one, wise and just leadership of Vally-e Faqih, who is currently embodied in the person of the Grand Ayatollah Khomeini" (Asadollahi, 2000 AD/1379 SH: 199-200).

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The importance of Hezbollah's belief and the full acceptance of the theory of Velayat-e Faqih and the leadership of Imam Khomeini and Ayatollah Khamenei was the essential link between Hezbollah and the Islamic Republic of Iran (and at the more significant level of the Islamic Revolution discourse). Because since the establishment of this movement in 1982 until now, Velayat-e Faqih and its role have been one of the fundamental and inseparable pillars of Hezbollah's intellectual and practical foundations (Javan and Khosroshiri, 2009 AD/1388 SH: 118).

It separates Hezbollah apart from other Islamist groups in the Arab world. This feature has dominated all of Hezbollah's organizational pillars and views. It has been one of the main reasons for the merger of the Lebanese Shia community in 1982 and the creation of Hezbollah (Asadollahi, 2003 AD/1382 SH: 174).

Therefore, there is a unique closeness between the Islamic Revolution discourses and Hezbollah in Lebanon from the position of Velayat-e Faqih. This subject is one of the differences between Hezbollah's discourse and Palestinian militant Islamist movements such as Hamas. In other words, by emphasizing this element, Hezbollah creates alienation between itself and the militant Palestinian Sunni movements, especially Hamas, and consolidates its identity accordingly. Prominent members of Hezbollah and Sayyid Hassan Nasrollah have emphasized the belief in Velayat-e Faqih on various occasions and forms.

Sheikh Naeem Qasim, Hezbollah's deputy secretary-general, explains Hezbollah believes in the supreme leader. There is no connection between the top leader's nationality, influence, and authority as a religious leader. Naeem Qasim referred to Imam Khomeini as the "Muslims Leader" who, while managing the Islamic State of Iran, defined the political duties of all Muslims in other countries in various fields. According to him, after Imam Khomeini, Ayatollah Khamenei has the same powers and position. While emphasizing the acceptance of Hezbollah's directorate and command of the Supreme Leader, Naeem Qasim believes that the Secretary-General of Hezbollah and its other pillars gain their legitimacy from the Velayat-e Faqih (Qasim, 2004 AD/1383 SH: 80-82).

There are some differences and distinctions, apart from the above similarities in the signifier of Velayat-e Faqih, the view and approach of the revolution discourse and the Iranian system from Islam and Velayat-e Faqih with the Hezbollah idea. For example, while Imam Khomeini emphasized Islam rather than Shia Islam or Iranian and Arabic Islam, some statements by Hezbollah leaders differ. We can refer to the speech of Sayyid Hassan Nasrollah in November 2010 AD/Aban 1389 SH, which was published on the Al-Manar website belonging to Hezbollah, emphasizing the duality of the Arab-Persian discourse and stating:

"Maybe it means Iran, but there is no such thing as Persianization or Persian civilization in Iran today. What is in Iran is Islamic civilization. Iran has the religion of Mohammad Arab Hashemi Maki Qurayshi



Tahami Mazri [refers to the Arab lineage and ancestors of the Prophet of Islam]. The founder of the Islamic Republic was Arab, and he is the son of the Prophet Muhammad; peace be upon him and his family. Today, the leader in the Islamic Republic is Imam Sayyid Khamenei Qureishi Hashemi, the son of the Prophet of God and the son of Ali ibn Abi Talib and Fatemeh Zahra, who were Arabs” (Nasrollah, 2010).

Enumeration of characteristics such as Qurayshi, Arabic affiliations for Valy-e Faqih and otherness-making of Islamic civilization versus Persian civilization, Arab versus Persian and Arabic identity versus Persian identity and emphasis on ethnic, linguistic and primarily Arabic elements in the field of religion and the characteristics of Velayat-e Faqih are different and contradictory with the discourse of Imam Khomeini and the Islamic Revolution. Imam Khomeini did not emphasize the nationality of Valy-e Faqih in his book Velayat-e-Faqih, and other speeches and positions. According to him, being a scholar and fair is necessary. Simultaneously, he was opposed to any racial and ethnic view of Islam and religion. He believed this view is reactionary and considered the dual perspective of Arabs and non-Arabs ugly; he emphasized the importance of divine holiness among the people. He says: “إِنَّ أَكْرَمَكُمْ عِنْدَ اللَّهِ اتِّقَاكُمْ” it means no difference between Arab and Persian, Arab and non-Arab, Islam is a point of reliance. Racism is a reaction” (Khomeini, 2013 AD/1392 SH: 19).

According to the revolution discourse, Imam Khomeini emphasized the necessity of "Leaving ethnic and ignorant dogmatism in favour of the world colonialists and their dependents." (Khomeini, 2013 AD/1392 SH: 37). Therefore, the emphasis on Arab identity, mild pan-Arabism, and the excessive focus on Shia identity by Hezbollah is not in line with the Islamic Revolution discourse.

### **3.3. Justice-seeking, Revolution Issuance (Revolutionary Identity) and Establishing a United Islamic Nation**

Justice-seeking, one of the fundamental pillars of the Islamic Revolution's discourse, has been determining role in shaping the Islamic identity of Iran and has shaped the identity of the Islamic Republic of Iran as a justice-seeking state. It is reflected in support of justice-seeking movements and the oppressed of the world (Moshirzadeh, 2006 AD/1385 SH: 22-23).

According to the norms of the Shia religion, the unit of analysis is the Islamic Ummah and not the national government. As one of the norms emphasized by the Shia faith, justice-seeking has obligated the Islamic Republic of Iran to support the Muslims and the oppressed of the world, particularly the Hezbollah movement (Yaghouti, 2011 AD/1390 SH: 22).

Because in the Islamic Revolution discourse, the international system is not composed of national units, but in terms of faith, the world is divided into two realms, Dar al-Kufr and Dar al-Islam, or arrogance and oppression. From this point of view, the existing international system does not have the necessary religious legitimacy. It is the result of

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historical changes in which Western powers have played a significant role; because it contradicts the idea of Dar al-Islam and Dar al-Kufr. From this perspective, they should make continuous efforts to create a united Islamic nation in the future and at the world system concerning the spread of Islam (Moshirzadeh, 2006 AD/1385 SH: 21-22).

Accordingly, Iran's support for Hezbollah aligns with the Islamic Revolution discourse. It is consistent with signifiers such as justice-seeking, nation-oriented, confronting arrogance, and supporting the oppressed. The revolution issuance is the signifiers of the Islamic Revolution discourse, which Imam Khomeini has emphasized in his speech. In emphasizing revolutionary identity and exporting the Revolution, he states: "We end the domination, and oppression of the repressor by issuance our revolution, which is the export of true Islam and the expression of the Muhammad commands (PBUH)." (Khomeini, 1999 AD/1378 SH: 20/345)

He states in another position: "We export our revolution to the whole world, because our revolution is Islamic and until the slogan of

" لا اله الا الله و محمد رسول الله " do not spread all over the world remain the struggle, and as long as there is a struggle against the arrogant everywhere in the world, we are." (Khomeini, 1999 AD/1378 SH: 12/147-148)

Accordingly, the Imam speaks of the duality of oppression and justice in the revolution discourse, true Islam, pure Muhammadan Islam versus American Islam. He calls the Islamic otherness-making and anti-arrogance of the Revolution, Jihad and martyrdom-seeking in the revolution issuance against inaction, passivity and compromise. Many analysts consider the creation of Hezbollah in Lebanon as one of the most significant and most successful manifestations of the strategy of revolution issuance. In the early 1980s, Hezbollah's revolutionary model turned the Lebanese Shia peaceful protest model into a radicalized movement, which eventually led to the growing power of the Shia community in Lebanon (Harzan, 2011 AD/1390 SH: 251).

The impact of this Revolution on the Lebanese Shia has been in the form of creating religious self-awareness, increasing socio-political and military mobilization. It was because the Islamic Revolution discourse of Iran, by its very nature, had a revolutionary and justice-seeking identity. It tried to expand this identity in line with the principle and rule of issuing the Revolution. From another perspective, this discourse sought to attract the Lebanese Shias, who had been in contact with Iran and its Shias for centuries.

Creating the necessary consensus and persuasion led to the acceptance of its semantic system and strengthened its signifiers, including revolutionary identity. Therefore, regarding its radical nature, the Islamic Revolution had different content effects and thought types, behaviour, and action of the Lebanese Shias. The result was creating a revolutionary identity in the formation of Hezbollah's anti-Zionist and anti-arrogance

movement. From this perspective, there is a lot of closeness and similarity between the Islamic Revolution discourse and Hezbollah.

Therefore, the revolutionary identity of Hezbollah is placed under the revolutionary essence of the Islamic Revolution discourse. The Islamic Revolution discourse and its Shiism ideology provided and strengthened the Lebanese Shias. The Shia romantic elements to which the Iranian clergy - and later the Iranian political system - granted them social and political protest ideology (The Essence of Confrontation With Shia oppression and Justice-seeking that Culminated in the Uprising of Imam Hussein (AS) in Karbala) (Alagha, 2011: 19).

Hezbollah promoted the position of the Shias in Lebanon and confronted the oppression that these Shias had endured for years in numerous Israeli military aggressions aligned with justice-seeking. In addition, Hezbollah, in alliance with the Islamic Republic of Iran, has acted to achieve these justice-seeking ideals at the national and even international levels. Its objective manifestation has been its presence in Syria to counter Salafi-Takfiri terrorism and support resistance movements in the region.

That is, Hezbollah, following the Islamic Revolution discourse, pursues justice-seeking in its broadest sense with a strategic view. They aimed to create justice at the national, regional and international levels by confronting the hegemonic-seeking plans of the United States, Israel and its allies. This issue is in line with the discourse of the Islamic Revolution.

The similarity of the Hezbollah logo with the Islamic Revolutionary Guard Corps logo as a symbol of the revolutionary identity of the Islamic Republic of Iran shows the influence of the Islamic Revolution discourse. From a discursive point of view, it indicates the closeness of these two discourses and Hezbollah's adherence to the revolution discourse. Of course, this indirectly shows the unique role of the Revolutionary Guards in the creation and empowerment of Hezbollah.

This similarity is significant because, according to the Constitution of the Islamic Republic of Iran, the Revolutionary Guards should defend the values of the Islamic Revolution at the national and transnational levels. Regarding the similarities between the Ansarullah Yemeni logo as a united movement of Iran, which was created after Hezbollah (in the 1990s) with the symbols of the Revolutionary Guards and Hezbollah in Lebanon, according to figure 1-1, it shows their discourse elements and signifiers.



**Figure 1-1: Similarity between the Logos of Hezbollah in Lebanon and Ansarullah in Yemen and the Islamic Revolutionary Guard Corps**

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Regarding the discursive difference, Hezbollah has accepted the independence-seeking discourse of the Islamic Revolution, but objectively, it relies on the support of Iran. Iran support from Hezbollah has been emphasized by its leaders. For example, Sayyid Hassan Nasrollah states in this regard: "We say out loud and clear that we receive material and financial support from the Islamic Republic and we are proud to have this kind of support. The Islamic Republic is also proud to support this resistance [Hezbollah] and the resistance movements." (Nasrollah, 2015).

Based on a strategic view, we cannot criticize Hezbollah. Because of Lebanon's unique social and political conditions, which since the creation of all the Sunni and Maronite tribes have enjoyed foreign support, have imposed the lack of autonomy on the Shia Hezbollah like other tribes. Hezbollah is also a minority in the Arab world regarding its kinetic nature, logistical, military, financial, and ideological affiliations with the Islamic Revolution and the revolution discourse (the most important of which is the acceptance of Shia political Islam and Velayat-e Faqih) is dependent on the Islamic Republic of Iran and its supporters. In other words, Hezbollah is a discourse derived from the Islamic Revolution, but from this perspective, a distinction has been made between the discourses of the Islamic Revolution and Hezbollah.

Hezbollah's lack of speech confronting Iran has impacted the positions and policies of Hezbollah and its leaders regarding Israel, the United States, the West, Arab rulers, the crises in Syria and Iraq and Yemen, and other regional issues. It has made Hezbollah a follower of the Islamic Republic in the region. As evidenced by its military presence in Syria and its support for its government as an ally of Iran and Hezbollah. That is, a strategic move to preserve Syria as a bridge between Hezbollah and Iran. As a result, Hezbollah does not have absolute autonomy, but at the same time, it is not dependent on Iran.

Regarding the revolution issuance, despite the cultural nature of the Islamic Revolution had a cultural identity. Still, the action of Hezbollah was based on militaristic actions and mainly indicated the military export of the Revolution and not necessarily its cultural export. These actions have been after increasing their national and regional role (since 2010), their efforts against the Zionist regime, cooperation with the Palestinian resistance movements, military presence in Syria, and cooperation with other Shia non-governmental allies of Iran, show the emphasis on Guerrilla and military identity, the strengthening of allied military networks and the export of the Revolution. Based on strategic view, these measures have been in the interests and national security of the Islamic Republic of Iran and its allies. But from a discursive perspective, this does not deny the discursive conflict between Hezbollah and the Revolution, at least from the signifier of the revolution issuance. In other

words, this part of Hezbollah's actions is not in line with Imam Khomeini's view and emphasis on the cultural export of the Revolution.

From another perspective, Iran, through Hezbollah, has sought to export this movement model to various Shia areas such as Iraq and Yemen - and even Sunnis such as Palestine and in recent years Syria - in the Middle East. These actions have had more military networking than a cultural dimension. It is regarded as a challenge for Hezbollah and Iran. Because this type of networking is faster than cultural export, it does not have the necessary stability. The cultural export of the Revolution is time-consuming but was more permanent. Instead, the military export of the Revolution in the short term will not have the necessary stability and durability.

While supporting the establishment of a united nation in its discourse (including in the 1985 statement), Hezbollah makes little difference with the Revolution speech regarding reading and signifying this signifier.

It concerns the emphasis on the Arab identity and the Arab ummah alongside the Islamic identity, which contrasts to the Islamic Revolution discourse, which emphasizes the Islamic identity and not national or Persian. In addition to confronting the Zionist regime, this movement has emphasized Arab unity, nations, and the Arab nation. Some of Sayyid Hassan Nasrollah's positions are analyzed in this regard. For example, his remarks in response to the UAE government's peace agreement with the Israeli regime in 2020:

“I say to the oppressed and affected people of Palestine and to the Arab and Islamic people who are still at the heart of the problem on behalf of the resistance movements that we are angry in our hearts, and we deny this evil in our hearts. ‘Where is the Arab consensus and departure from the Arab agreement?’ ‘Where is this Arab consensus, which has left the United Arab Emirates alone?’ ‘Where is the Arab peace plan?’ ‘Is there still an Arab route or table and a peace plan?’

‘Is there an Arab League or an official Arab organization in the first place?’ We do not want to say that there are still Arabs because they are not Arabs, the Arabs are another people. ‘Is there still an Arab path or table and a peace plan?’ ‘Is there an Arab League or an official Arab organization in the first place?’ Basically, if the masks are removed, the natural face of some Arab rulers will be revealed” (Nasrollah, 2020).

Nasrollah has tried to draw his own and others borders, while emphasizing the identity of resistance and anti-arrogance and anti-Americanism of the Hezbollah movement by otherness-making and emphasizing the Arab-non-Arab duality, i.e. foreign otherness-making, and internal among Arabs, describe the Arab rulers as a traitor to Islam and sanctities, a servant and dependent on the United States. At the same time, he emphasizes the Arab people issues and his Arab and anti-Zionist identity as a defender of Palestine and the Arab and Islamic peoples.

#### **3.4. Islamic Resistance (anti-Arrogance, Struggle against Israel and anti-Zionism)**

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In the Islamic Revolution discourse and based on the jurisprudential view and the rule of Nafy-e Sabil, the domination of infidels over Muslims has been vehemently denied. Hence, the Israeli regime is a symbol of the authority of the values and colonial tendencies of the West. Therefore, any compromise and cooperation are rejected with Israel (Yaghouti, 2011 AD/1390 SH: 22). In this regard, Imam Khomeini emphasizes the Qur'anic verse, " لن يجعل الله للكافرين على المسلمين سبيلاً " (Khomeini, 1999 AD/1387 SH: 4/317).

The resistance signifier, as the element of the revolution discourse, is semantically related to other signifiers such as being revolutionary, independence (which is necessary to maintain and promote that resistance) and the continuation of the struggle (to save the worlds oppressed) (Moshirzadeh, 2018 AD/1397 SH: 54). This signifier has two elements of anti-arrogance and anti-Israel and struggles against it. Those elements form the resistance identity of the Islamic Revolution and the Islamic Republic of Iran system.

Imam Khomeini in explaining the resistance position, anti-arrogance, struggle against Israel and Zionism and revisionism, the issuance of the Revolution and the principle of invitation and justice-seeking, as the signifiers of the revolutionary discourse that have formed the Islamic and revolutionary identity of the Islamic Republic of Iran and Hezbollah, says:

"We have repeatedly stated this fact in our foreign and international Islamic policy that we seek to expand the influence of Islam in the world and reduce the domination of the cruel. Now, if the American servants call this policy expansionism and the idea of forming a great empire, we are not afraid and welcome it. We seek to dry up the corrupt roots of Zionism, capitalism and communism in the world. With the grace and care of God Almighty, we have decided to destroy the systems based on these three pillars and promote the Islamic system of the Prophet (PBUH) in the arrogant world (Khomeini, 1999 AD/1378 SH: 21/81).

According to Imam Khomeini's speech, we can analyze the expansion of the resistance area-based align with the revolution discourse, the development of the Islam influence in the world and the Revolution issuance from a cultural rather than a military perspective.

In the Islamic Revolution discourse, the non-recognition of Israel and the non-normalization of relations with the United States are considered defining pillars of identity. The United States and Israel are two "Other" enemies in this discourse. Transnational selves are Palestine and its supporting actors (such as Syria, Hezbollah, Hamas, the Palestinian Islamic Jihad, Ansar Allah, Iran's allied Shia militias in Iraq). They constitute Iran's primary collective selves and are essential for regional and international coalitions (Moshirzadeh, 2018 AD/1397 SH: 58).

Hezbollah's intellectual connection to Iran, through its belief in and adherence to Velayat-e Faqih, leads to Hezbollah's ideological stance on

many important regional and international issues (derived from the Islamic Revolution discourse).

The nature of Hezbollah's conflict with Israel has been influential, relationships with other Muslims, and attitudes toward the Western world. Therefore, Hezbollah believes in world division into arrogant and oppressed and considers the United States the great devil. It assumes that American policy in the Middle East is an instrument of Israel and is the leader of state terrorism in the world (Hajjar, 2012 AD/1391 SH: 222-227).

Hezbollah blames the United States for all the Middle East's suffering and considers it the most significant enemy of the Islamic world. Hence, anti-American symbols are so visible in Hezbollah's public ceremonies. This discourse is also seen in Hezbollah media, including Al-Manar TV, followed by broadcasting short films between programs with slogans of struggle-seeking and resistance against the repression of Zionism and the United States (Fakt, 2009 AD/1388 SH: 296-297).

So, in its discourse, Hezbollah, in line with the Revolution, considers the United States, Israel, and the West as its "Other." Therefore, it defines relations with other governmental and non-governmental actors based on distance and closeness to these others.

The manifestation of the conceptual elements of Imam Khomeini's political Islam in Hezbollah's behaviour and identity is in accepting the Islamic Revolution's discourse in foreign interactions and trying to revive political Islam and fight the United States, as well as Israel as the main restraining force of political Islam in the region.

The struggle against Israel, as the leading cause of the intellectual war between Western liberalism and political Islam, is an attempt to preserve and perpetuate the kind of political Islam that this regime seeks to destroy. Hence, Hezbollah's conflict with Israel has a positive dimension alongside a negative one; from a positive point of view, it is a basic necessity to strengthen the identity and achieve the goals of Hezbollah (Dehghani Firouzabadi and Vahabpour, 2013 AD/1392 SH: 223-225).

Align with the Revolution discourse, Hezbollah has emphasized the rejection of the unjust Western system that rules the world - and established in Lebanon - and has called for the deconstruction of this order. To explain Hezbollah's destructive attitude towards the international system, Hezbollah's open letter in 1985 is crucial, which states the movement's view of international organizations:

“We fight to eradicate denial and believe that the root of all rejection in the world is America. So, any conspiracy to force us to take marginal action compared to confronting the United States will not work. We emphasize that these organizations have lost their effectiveness regarding the dominance of global arrogance over the adoption or rejection of resolutions” (Asadollahi, 2000 AD/1379 SH: 194-214).

Imam Khomeini considers the issue of Zionism danger for Islam and Muslims beyond national and regional borders and (with an ummah-

centred view) speaks of the vital importance of the conflict with Israel. He knows this struggle not only as a Palestinian or Arab issue but as an Islamic issue that all Muslims are responsible for and emphasizes the necessity to confront Israel as a threat to the Muslim ummah, even with the sacrifice of life. Thus, the practical concept of Imam Khomeini's positions for Muslims - including Hezbollah - is that all ways are closed to Israel, and the only solution is to resist using all means, methods and facilities. In this way, must confront any action to justify the existence of Israel and its legitimacy. Finally, it should be destroyed by adopting (strategy) of ground-making resistance (Center of Bahith lil-Dirasat, 2009 AD/1388 SH: 208-209).

Hence, this discourse is opposed to the speech of compromise with Israel. According to the discourse distinction, Hezbollah, contrary to Iran's broad view of the issue and the axis of authority, the axis of resistance means most Arab actors aligned with Iran in the Fertile Crescent and much fewer issues of non-Arab Shias and beyond the Arab Middle East. At the same time, consider the issues of Muslims and Shias, who are aligned with the axis of resistance and support them against Israel if necessary.

In 2017, for example, Sayyid Hassan Nasrollah responded to Israeli threats against Hezbollah. He warned Israel that in any future Israeli regime war with Lebanon, Syria or Gaza, "Tens of thousands and possibly hundreds of thousands of Jihadist auxiliary forces from Iraq, Yemen, Afghanistan and Pakistan, but from all over the Arab and Islamic world" will enter the struggle (Radio Farda, 2017). So, Hezbollah is divisive and demarcating itself between Muslims and Shias. In other words, Shias and Muslims are considered supporters of Hezbollah and its allies, insiders and others. Of course, these remarks also indirectly emphasize the Arabic identity of Hezbollah.

#### **4. Analysis**

By examining the signifiers and elements of Hezbollah's discourse and comparing it with the Islamic Revolution, as shown in Table 1, we can see the convergence and difference or distance and proximity of Hezbollah's identity and discourse with the Islamic Revolution.



**Table 1. The convergence, difference, distance and proximity of Hezbollah in Lebanon to the Islamic Revolution of Iran discourse regarding the discursive, identity and structure**

Convergence/difference	Islamic Revolution/Islamic Republic of Iran	Convergence (proximity)/ Hezbollah	Difference (distance)/ Hezbollah
The nature, type of discourse and scope of coverage/mission	Cultural/Government, Global Discourse National and global	Cultural	The nature of the movement and guerilla and paramilitary group Guerrilla-national-regional discourse
Ideology	Political Shia Islam	Political Shia Islam	
Issuance of Revolution (type of publication and expansion)	Cultural	cultural	Cultural and military / with the support of Iran
The extent of independence	With political-military independence (independence to the West and the East) and autonomy		- Relying on and dependent on Iran's political-military and financial support - Lack of political, military and ideological autonomy from Iran
anti-Arrogance	anti-Arrogance (with emphasis on some Western countries such as the United States, Britain, France, Germany) Using all instruments (political, military, economic, cultural, media) to confront the United States		Emphasizing on America as a manifestation of arrogance - Using military, cultural and political tools to confront arrogance and the United States
Justice-seeking	A Fair approach at the national, regional and international levels	- Lack of legitimacy of the unjust order governing the global system - Supporting Islamic resistance movements	Efforts to establish justice at the national and regional levels
Resistance and resistance pillar	- Fighting against Israel and anti-Zionism, anti-arrogance and confrontation with the West - Detailed definition of the resistance pillar (Arab Middle East, Afghanistan and even outside the region such as Venezuela) -Emphasizing extended and multidimensional resistance	Fighting against Israel and anti-Zionism, anti-arrogance and confrontation with the West	- Narrow definition of the resistance pillar (geographical area of the Fertile crescent) - More emphasis on military resistance
Identity	Islamic, Revolutionary	Islamic, Revolutionary	Islamic-Shia, Arabic, Lebanese
Vilayat-e Faqih	Fair and scholar Valy-e Faqih	Accepting Velayat-e Faqih, its leadership and believing in it in the arena of action and opinion	Emphasizing being a Quraysh and an Arab Valy-e Faqih
Islamic Ummah	Paying attention to all Muslims problems regardless of religion and language		Special attention to the Shias problems and Muslims alike (insiders) and Arabs
Opposite discourses (Anti-discourse)	Liberal Democracy, Salafi-Takfiri and Ekhvani	Liberal Democracy, Salafi-Takfiri and Ekhvani	

(Source: Authors)

### Conclusion

The Islamic Revolution discourse has sub-discourses inside and outside Iran as a macro discourse. Hezbollah in Lebanon is the superficial level manifestation. Regarding the identity and the Islamic Revolution effects on the Hezbollah identity, this Revolution has influenced forming Islamic and revolutionary identity of Hezbollah. Evaluating the distance and closeness of these two discourses shows similarities between Hezbollah and the Islamic Revolution in many aspects of identity and semantics, and of course, in some signifiers and signifieds.

Hezbollah has adopted signifiers and concepts such as political Islam, Velayat-e Faqih, ummah-oriented, justice-seeking, nationalism, anti-arrogance, fighting Israel and Zionism, and revolutionary identity from the Islamic Revolution discourse. It also has attributed some of its signifieds to it. In other words, although there is much convergence between these discourses, there are some discourse and identity differences. For example, while there are similarities between the two discourses regarding nationalism, there is a signified difference between them.

Although Hezbollah believes in nationalism, it has not to discourse independence regarding its movement nature, special political, social, and religious conditions in Lebanon and the region, and its reliance on Iranian support and ideological affiliation with the Islamic Revolution. It does not have complete military security, political and economic autonomy and independence from Iran. According to the sign of resistance, which has become a discourse on a larger scale, in the speech of the Revolution, resistance is broad and includes various dimensions. Still, considering Hezbollah, it has more military and political dimensions.

Regarding the resistance manifestations, the Islamic Revolution has a macro view. Hezbollah emphasizes the resistance against Zionism and the United States and its allies in the Arab region. From a justice-seeking perspective, the Revolution discourse has a broader idea (at the national, regional, and international levels), and Hezbollah has a more general view in Lebanon and the region. Regarding the Ummah-oriented component, the attitude of the revolutionary discourse emphasizes the Islamic Ummah, Hezbollah the Islamic-Arab and the Islamic-Shia Ummah. Also, it emphasizes the Arab, Lebanese identity and Arab unity. Regarding regional issues, Hezbollah's discourse view of the necessity of being a movement and being Lebanese and Arab has a narrower view of the Islamic Revolution and the Islamic Republic of Iran as a system derived from it. Of course, referring to the differences between the two discourses does not mean distancing Hezbollah from the Islamic Revolution and the Islamic Republic of Iran. Because, as explained in this study, Hezbollah undoubtedly has the closest discourse to the Islamic Revolution from a discursive point of view. It also has a similar strategic position with the Islamic Republic of Iran. Therefore, the comparison of

Hezbollah's discourse with the Islamic Revolution aimed to pathology this discourse and strengthened the doctrinal, ideological and strategic ties between the Islamic Republic of Iran and Hezbollah as members of the resistance. It prevents any abuse by the enemies of the revolutionary discourse. Liberal Democracy, Salafi-Takfiri, and even the Ekhvani are considered discourses against the Islamic Revolution discourse and Hezbollah, which seeks to dominate and hegemony their desired signifiers in the semantic system.

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