OPEN PEER REVIEW

Investigating the Theological Foundations of Religious Democracy from the Perspective of Nahj al-Balagha

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1.   Round 1

1.1.   Reviewer 1

Reviewer:

The sentence "Nahj al-Balagha is the most important book after the Qur'an which can serve as a guide for human beings in all aspects of life..." makes a strong claim. Consider adding supporting references or examples from scholarly works that highlight Nahj al-Balagha's influence across multiple domains.

In the statement "The Qur'an has promised the faithful and righteous humans the caliphate and vicegerency," further clarification is needed regarding how these theological promises are interpreted in both historical and contemporary contexts. A comparative analysis could enrich this discussion.

You mention "religious democracy stems from the principles of Islam and its fundamental values..." yet the section lacks an exploration of how these principles are derived from scriptural texts. A more explicit reference to specific Qur'anic verses or Hadith would strengthen the argument.

The definition of democracy, while insightful, seems very general. A deeper discussion on how the original Greek concept of democracy contrasts with the Islamic understanding of governance could provide more analytical depth.

The discussion of "consultation and Shura" is a key aspect of Islamic governance but lacks references to specific Shura practices in early Islamic history or modern-day implementations. Including examples would clarify how Shura is operationalized.

The sentence "the goal of democracy is not for a few to become rulers but for all people to uphold justice" is philosophically rich. However, providing a concrete definition of justice within this framework would help prevent ambiguity. Is it social, legal, or distributive justice?

The statement "Imam Ali's leadership was rooted in law, justice, and rights" could be expanded by exploring specific incidents from his caliphate to demonstrate how these values were applied practically.

The discussion on "Trump-style democracy, Daesh, Talibanism, and Wahhabism" is provocative, but consider expanding on how these models diverge from Alawi democracy in terms of specific legal, social, and governance practices.

Authors revised the manuscript and uploaded the document.

1.2.   Reviewer 2

Reviewer:

The claim that "religious democracy means the participation of all members of society in decision-making with equal rights within the framework of Sharia" could benefit from discussing the practical limitations of this framework, especially in non-democratic Islamic contexts.

The phrase "the conduct and tradition of Imam Ali and the Prophet are the best evidence to support this research's argument" lacks a detailed explanation of how these traditions are interpreted to align with democratic principles. Consider providing specific historical examples to clarify this connection.

The differentiation between Western and Alawi democracy, while insightful, could be deepened by discussing how contemporary scholars reconcile Islamic governance with modern democratic principles.

The argument about the "theological foundation of religious democracy in Nahj al-Balagha" would benefit from further exploration of contrasting views from other Islamic sects (e.g., Ash'arites, Mu'tazilites) to provide a more balanced argument.

The references to Sartre and secularism are interesting but appear abruptly. Consider providing a clearer transition and deeper engagement with how these Western philosophical concepts challenge Islamic political theory.

The Kharijite view of governance as explained here is a crucial theological point but lacks primary source citations. Referencing classical Islamic sources would lend more authority to the discussion.

Authors revised the manuscript and uploaded the document.

2.   Revised

Editor's decision: Accepted.
Editor in Chief's decision: Accepted.