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A Study of the Components of Republicanism with Emphasis on Sahifeh-ye Imam Khomeini through Thematic Analytical Method

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Abstract

Research Paper

Democracy is a public demand in the new era and non-democratic systems are on the verge of collapse. The main difference between the two systems is the role of people in governance system. The main problem of this article is to study the status of Republicanism in the Islamic Republic system from the perspective of Imam Khomeini. This characteristic plays an important role in the stability or instability of the system. The necessary data has been collected through studying Sahifeh-ye Imam Khomeini until saturation and analyzed through thematic analytical method. The findings of the research, organized in the form of the tables of basic themes, organizer, comprehensive themes and network of themes demonstrate that: 1- The legitimacy of the political system has two aspects, the divine aspect and the popular aspect (republicanism) that have an organic relation and are not in opposition to each other. 2- People's will and demand play a key role in political system and its logic is different from that of the liberal and socialist systems. 3- The rule of law is its fundamental trait which guarantees people's rights. 4. People are not merely obliged to obey, but they have a fundamental right to create the political system and supervise the performance of its executives at all levels. 5- The executives are accountable for their performance. 6- The positions are temporary and the executives are directly and indirectly elected by the people. Explanation of these components can change the social and organizational approaches in the fields of decision-making and decision-making and can be a step towards ending the challenge of the relationship between republicanism and Islamism.

Keywords: Imam Khomeini, republicanism, law, people, legitimacy.

Introduction

Problem Statement: Theoretically, democracy is the end of an era of despotism and the ideal model of humankind in the modern age. Despotism is primarily characterized by the singularity of a ruler and a state, whereas democracy signifies the end of this singularity and the return of power to citizens. Three streams of thought can be underscored in Imam Khomeini's philosophy regarding the associations between republicanism and Islamism: 1) instrumentalism of the people, where the acceptance of republicanism borders on necessity and is only instrumental in

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the external realization of the jurist's guardianship (People's choice lacks legitimacy); 2) instrumentalism of the religion, where people are regarded as primary, and religion is a tool to serve public interests; 3) people-religion integration, where people and religion have no contradiction. The primary question in this research is whether Imam Khomeini's emphasis on people's role is a sign of their true effectiveness in the political system or whether they serve as a political compliment due to domestic and international sociopolitical obligations.

Literature Review

Previous studies conducted on the scope of this paper can be summarized into three categories:

A) Studies that present an instrumental narrative of republicanism: In this viewpoint, people's political participation is a means of objective realization and efficiency of the Islamic jurist's guardianship. However, the legitimacy of the government is derived from God.

B) Studies that suggest the primacy of republicanism: From this standpoint, religious texts contain many signs of political and social issues, and clergy can have a democratic reading of religion based on their proximity to religious texts and the importance of people's consciousness.

C) Studies that consider the Islamic Republic's effectiveness to rely on public cooperation and participation in political, social, economic, and cultural fields

Studies in the A and C categories are both thematically and substantively outside the scope of this study. In essence, this paper critiques these studies. However, it shares the same purpose as type C studies and differs from type B studies in methodology and content comprehensiveness.

Methodology

This study conducts a thematic analysis, which entails extracting, categorizing, and identifying themes from data regarding the research question within a text. The population and sample included Imam Khomeini's *Sahifèh*. This study encompassed six steps: studying and extracting statements, extracting basic themes, categorizing basic themes, extracting organizing themes, extracting overarching themes, and organizing a theme network.

The reliability of each theme was assessed using the content validity index (CVI). In this approach, items with values below 0.70 are rejected; however, those between 0.70 and 0.79 are considered revisable, and those greater than 0.79 are acceptable. The items were validated using a four-point Likert scale: 1. "is irrelevant," 2. "requires revision," 3. "is relatively relevant," and 4. "is highly relevant." The CVI is calculated as the number of respondents who chose options 3 and 4 divided by the total number of respondents.

Findings

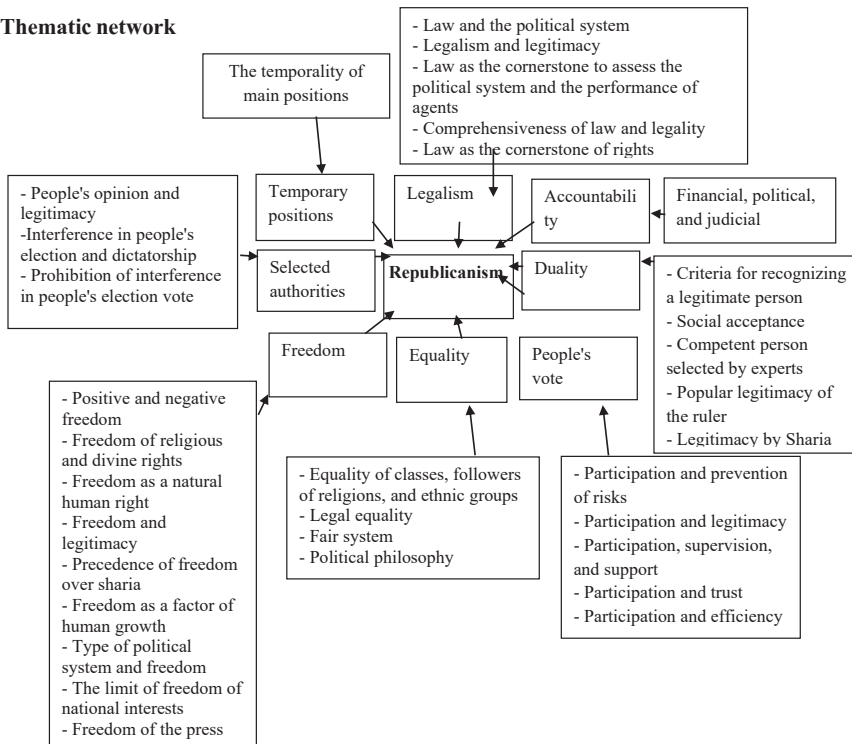
Steps three and four were implemented following code extraction and basic themes (Steps 1 and 2). The themes were derived as summarized in the following table, and the validity of each measure was confirmed by experts. Organizing and overarching themes were derived from the pool of basic themes.

Transforming organizing themes into overarching themes

Organizing Themes	Overarching Themes
Financial, political, and judicial responsibility of officials	Accountability
Legal equality	Equality
Equality of classes, followers of religions, and ethnic groups	
A fair and equitable system	
Political philosophy	
The temporality of elected positions	Temporality of positions
People's vote and legitimacy	Selectivity of officials
Interference in people's choice and dictatorship	
Prohibition of interference in people's election	
Participation and efficiency	Reliance of affairs on people
Participation and legitimacy	
Participation, supervision, and support	
The type of political system and freedom	Freedom
Human freedom as a natural right	
Freedom as a factor of human growth	
The freedom of religious and divine rights	
Civil, social, and political freedom	
Negative freedom	
Positive freedom	
Precedence of freedom over sharia	
Freedom and legitimacy	

Law as the cornerstone of rights	Legalism
Lawlessness and corruption	
Law and political system	
Legalism and legitimacy	
The condition of social acceptance and religious and popular legitimacy of the ruler (election)	Duality of legitimacy Legitimacy: criteria and people's choice

Thematic network



Conclusions

The themes of republicanism in Imam Khomeini’s works were identified through seven key indicators: accountability, legalism, the temporality of positions, the duality of legitimacy, the primacy of public opinion, equality, freedom, and elected officials. These indicators are comparable to the components of a democratic political system. Popular vote, from both apophatic and cataphatic perspectives, can impact governance and signify the importance of human freedom and equality in determining one’s destiny. From an apophatic view, denying people the right to

vote and acting against their will would question the legitimacy of the government and place the political system in the category of dictatorial/authoritarian regimes. From a cataphatic perspective, it is one of the foundations and pillars of the political system's legitimacy. Imam Khomeini's theoretical and practical conduct is suggestive of his inclination towards the duality of religious and legal rights derived from the majority vote. He considers the majority vote to be valid even if it is against his own interests or the desires of certain groups and factions. He believes that governance and holding office by a jurist without the majority vote is devoid of influence and legitimacy. According to him, defiance of people's will in governance and stubbornness against it are medieval habits and contrary to national and international norms. Belief in the equality of people under a just law stems from the principle of monotheism and God's creation, according to which all human beings are God's creatures and have equal dignity. No one has any superiority over others. The only criterion for human distinction in the sight of God is piety, according to the Quranic principle of legislation.

In his belief, freedom is a basic human right, and no individual has the right to deprive any person, society, or nation of their freedom. This understanding of freedom is consistent with his notion of "*abahah*" [original permissibility], according to which freedom is of primary significance, whereas obligatory religious rulings are secondary. The concept of original permissibility posits that humans are born free from any constraints or obligations and that human duties and limitations should only exist to the extent that they are necessary. Therefore, duties should not conflict with the principle of freedom and must be clear, rule-based, unambiguous, and non-infringing.

The most significant findings of this study are as follows: 1) Imam Khomeini's viewpoint opposes the instrumentalism of both people (republicanism) and religion (Islamism). People are free to entrust governance to a jurist, and the jurist's assumption of power is through popular election. 2) Freedom takes precedence over criminal laws and obligations according to the principle of original permissibility, freedom of thought, conduct, and skepticism regarding the comprehensive application of the principle of precaution. 3) Human freedom and legal equality are based on the principle of human dignity and free will. The principle of human dignity necessitates that criminal laws be clear, limited, and certain to avoid the violation of human dignity and liberty. 4) The mere legality of a system without the acceptance and consent of the people fails to indicate legitimacy. That is why Imam Khomeini considered the Pahlavi monarchy illegitimate and against human rights despite its legality. 5) The establishment and persistence of the elements of popular governance play a fundamental role in the reproduction of legitimacy, whereas a failure to adhere to these elements leads to de-legitimization and the emergence of dictatorship.

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