Cooperation and Participation in Pluralistic Societies

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Tarek Hussein - Bio

Brother Tarek Hussein is a dedicated servant of Allah whose life is defined by honorable service, sincere devotion, and a steadfast commitment to social and political activism. With a deep passion for uplifting his community, he has spent decades working at the intersection of healthcare, education, and civic engagement to promote justice, understanding, and Islamic values in American society.

Dr. Hussein holds a **Master of Science in Physical Therapy** from **Cairo University**, a **Ph.D. in Physical Therapy** from **Texas Woman's University (TWU)** in Houston, Texas, and a **Master's degree in Sociology** from the **University of Houston– Clear Lake (UHCL)**. His diverse academic background reflects a lifelong pursuit of knowledge aimed at integrating scientific expertise with sociological insight for the betterment of individuals and society.

He has served as a **Professor of Physical Therapy** for the graduate program at **Cairo University** and as a **Professor of Sociology** at **UHCL** for many years, shaping future leaders in both health and social sciences. Currently, Dr. Hussein is an **administrator at All About Home Care**, a healthcare organization that provides compassionate, quality home health services to hundreds of underserved individuals.

A visionary community leader, Dr. Hussein is a **founding member of several key Muslim institutions** in Houston, including **CAIR-Houston (2001)**, **Iman Academy (1996)**, and **Clear Lake Islamic Center (CLIC, 2000)**. His sociology thesis—recognized as the first of its kind in the nation—focused on **prejudice against Muslim students in public schools**, using Houston as a case study and highlighting his commitment to addressing systemic injustice.

Through his advocacy work with **CAIR-Houston**, Dr. Hussein has participated in **media outreach**, **public education**, and **government dialogue** with agencies such as Homeland Security, CBP, FBI, and local law enforcement. He has consistently championed the civil rights of Muslims, working to dismantle discrimination and promote inclusion.

In addition, he is the **author of a practical guide for immigrants**, offering a culturally grounded roadmap to help newcomers successfully navigate American society while preserving their Islamic identity and avoiding common social and legal pitfalls.

Dr. Hussein also serves as a **khateeb with the Islamic Society of Greater Houston (ISGH)**, where he regularly delivers sermons and community lectures that inspire Muslims to embrace their faith with confidence, wisdom, and a deep awareness of the American social landscape.

Abstract

Political participation is essential for the health and legitimacy of democratic societies. As citizens, activists, and organizations engage in political action, they are often driven by aspirational goals rooted in visions of justice, equity, and systemic change. To achieve aspirational goals Muslims in America must be guided by Muslim Religious Scholars. However, Muslim Scholars should realize effective political participation also requires a realistic assessment of the socio-political context and institutional constraints. This paper explores the importance of setting strategic goals that align aspirational ideals with feasible actions, maintaining moral clarity and long-term vision, emphasizing how this balance can enhance impact, sustain momentum, and foster meaningful change that leads to prosperity and success for all. This paper also focuses on the importance of political participation in the American system and how to preserve the Muslim identity with full integration. Knowing how the system works, including the importance of voting at all levels and lobbying for justice, fairness, and equality, will ease the job for Muslims to understand and respond to challenging situations they may face when engaging in the political process.

Strategic Goals for Political Participation-Balancing Aspirations and Realistic possibilities

Political participation in the USA has a vital role in the life of every individual. Decisions are made by people through elected officials and range from voting and policy advocacy to protest, community organizing, and running for office. Motivated by values, ideology, or immediate needs, individuals and groups often envision ambitious goals that seek to transform society. Muslim Americans can play a vital role in the democratic process based on the inspiration from Islam which is based on justice, equality and respect for others. However, history has shown that untampered idealism, while inspiring, can lead to disillusionment when progress is slow or setbacks occur. Conversely, an overly pragmatic approach can stifle innovation and fail to capture the public's imagination. Therefore, strategic political action requires a synthesis: aligning aspirations with realistic possibilities to design goals that are both visionary and attainable (George, A.Shaji, 2024). For Muslims to achieve that, they must be part of the system, but more important to understand how system works, so they can go through the system and be part of it.

Aspirational Goals: The Power of Vision

Aspirational goals are critical in mobilizing support and defining long-term objectives. These goals—such as universal healthcare, climate justice, or racial equality—create a compelling narrative that motivates engagement and sustains activism over time (George, A.Shaji, 2024). Islam invites people to be active participant in the society they live in based on the honor that Allah has given to them **Surah Al Imran (3:110)**: You are the best community ever raised for humanity—you encourage good, forbid evil, and believe in Allah. Had the People of the Book believed in God's words, it would have been better for them. Some of them are faithful, but most are rebellious.

Those who do believe serve as moral compasses, guiding decisions and highlighting systemic problems that demand attention. However, aspirations without a grounded strategy risk becoming symbolic rather than substantive. The civil rights movement, for example, succeeded not only because of its aspirational goals of justice and equality but also due to its calculated strategies that targeted specific policies, such as voting rights and desegregation. Islamophobia is an industry in America and must be counteracted. This can be done through education and connection between Muslims and non-Muslims in the USA.

Realistic Possibilities: Understanding Context and Constraints

Political systems are shaped by institutions, power dynamics, legal structures, and public opinion which is formed by the influence of specific lobbying groups. Realistic political action acknowledges these constraints and seeks to navigate or reform them incrementally (George, A.Shaji, 2024). Realism does not mean abandoning transformative goals; rather, it involves sequencing actions, building coalitions, and identifying leverage points within existing systems.

Realism also requires an assessment of resources: organizational capacity, funding, political will, media influence, and public support. A well-informed understanding of what is politically and logistically feasible allows actors to set intermediate goals, measure progress, and adapt when conditions change.

Choosing the right goals is an important life skill. Goals act as guideposts that help us navigate our opinions and manage our time, play a major role in shaping the kind of people we become. How we decide which goal to pursue? The SMART framework approach encourages people to focus on goals that are Specific, Measurable, Attainable, Realistic, and Time based. However, aspirational goals provide the beacon of truth and light that helps us choose which smart goals to prioritize over the long term (Fun Man Fung, 2018).

Bridging Aspirations and Realism by using incremental Steps with Transformative Ends

Strategic goals serve as bridges between the ideal and the achievable. Breaking down large-scale aspirations into achievable policy changes or cultural shifts can build momentum (George, A.Shaji, 2024). For example, pushing for local police accountability reforms can serve as a step toward broader justice system transformation. We must dream big; however, we should take baby steps towards achieving this dream. Effective goal setting in political participation often follows these principles:

1. **Coalition Building**
   Aligning diverse stakeholders around shared, achievable objectives builds power. Even groups with different long-term visions can collaborate on short-term wins.
2. **Tactical Flexibility**
   Conditions change, and so should strategy. Strategic goals allow for adaptability while maintaining a clear direction. Choosing between the two major political parties in America must always be strategic.
3. **Feedback and Evaluation**
   Continuous assessment ensures that goals remain relevant and effective. Strategic participation includes mechanisms for learning and recalibrating goals.

Challenges in Strategic Political Participation

1. **Maintaining Unity Amid Ideological Differences**
   Community members often disagree on the path forward, risking fragmentation.
Surah Al-Ankabut (29:46): Do not argue with the People of the Book unless gracefully, except with those of them who act wrongfully. And say, "We believe in what has been revealed to us and what was revealed to you. Our God and your God is ˹only˺ One. And to Him we ˹fully˺ submit." Even though we may have ideological differences, we must agree on basic tenants the United States hold dear.

The Founders created a system of separation of church and state to ensure religious freedom for all, including non-Christians and non-religious people. The First Amendment **explicitly states:** *"Congress shall make no law respecting an establishment of religion, or prohibiting the free exercise thereof..."* This clause, known as the **Establishment Clause**, ensures a separation between church and state. It prevents the government from favoring one religion over another or from favoring religion over non-religion. This principle was reinforced in the 1947 Supreme Court case *Everson v. Board of Education*, which applied the Establishment Clause to state laws, emphasizing that government must remain neutral in religious matters (*Everson v. Board of Education*, 1947).

While the majority of Americans have historically identified as Christian, and many cultural traditions (e.g., holidays, moral values, rhetoric) are influenced by Christianity, the religious landscape is shifting. In a recent survey (2024), the Pew Research Center reported about 63% of Americans identify as Christian. In addition, the percentage of religiously

unaffiliated (atheist, agnostic, "nothing in particular") has grown significantly, and is now accounting for around 30% (Pew Research Center, 2025). Finally, there are growing populations of Muslims, Jews, Hindus, Buddhists, and other religious groups. While the United States citizens hold many different believes, we all should abide by the U. S. Constitution.

2. **Legal Precedents and Interpretations:**

The U.S. Supreme Court has consistently upheld the principle of church-state separation. For instance, in May 2025, the Court blocked the establishment of a taxpayer-funded religious charter school in Oklahoma, citing the First Amendment's Establishment Clause (Kruzel, 2025). This decision underscores the ongoing commitment to preventing government endorsement of religion.

Despite this ruling, entrenched power structures can delay or dilute reform efforts, testing the resolve and patience of participants. For example, Texas is among several states pursuing legislation to incorporate religious elements into public education. As of May 2025, Texas is on the verge of enacting legislation that would require the display of the Ten Commandments in every public school classroom (Sorochinskaia, 2025). Senate Bill 10 is awaiting final approval from the senate to be applied in September 2025 before being sent to Governor Greg Abbott to sign it into law.

3. *Preventing Co-optation*

Those in power attempt to gain support or loyalty from potentially opposing groups by incorporating them into the existing system or granting them privileges. It's a way of neutralizing the power of the opposing group by co-opting some of its members by promising them they will vote for some of their issues if they vote against their own party. For example, the ceasefire bill introduced by Ilhan Omar and Rashida Talib was blocked by some Democrats who joined Republicans to deny it (Kurtzleben, 2023). Even though these women are congressional Democrats, they did not get the full support from all members of the party.

4. *Balancing Urgency with Patience*

The desire for rapid change must be weighed against the slow nature of institutional reform. The need to educate younger Americans to be the right side of history takes time and patience.

Conclusion

Strategic political participation requires careful calibration between aspiration and realism. Aspirational goals inspire and direct action, while realistic assessments ensure that these goals are pursued effectively within existing political frameworks. The most successful political movements are those that maintain their visionary core while adapting to real-world conditions through strategic planning, coalition-building, and incremental progress. In this synthesis lies the potential for both meaningful change and sustained democratic engagement.

Engagement in Political Parties, Voting, and Political Lobbying Groups

For Muslims, Islam is a way of life and the deen that Allah has chosen for mankind *Surah Ali"Imran (2:19)*: Certainly, Allah's only Way is Islam. Those who were given the Scripture did not dispute "among themselves" out of mutual envy until knowledge came to them. Whoever denies Allah's signs, then surely Allah is swift in reckoning.

A Muslim should enter Islam full heartedly and don't follow footsteps of Satan. *Surah Al-Baqarah (2:208*): O believers! Enter into Islam wholeheartedly and do not follow Satan's footsteps. Surely he is your sworn enemy.

The AMJA (Assembly of Muslim Jurists of America) conference in 2016 recommended that "among the most important of obligations during these days is to open our doors to all sectors of our society and to reach out to the other ethnic and religious groups as well as political movements on both the left and right of the political spectrum" (AMJA, 2016).

Muslims in the USA should preserve their identity with full integration into the American system. Knowing how the system works will ease the job for Muslims to understand and respond to challenging situations they may face.

Understanding how the system works is crucial for integration. The guardian in each Muslim family is responsible for educating their family on the importance of participating in civic duties. The prophet (PBUH) said" All of you are guardians and are responsible for your wards. The ruler is a guardian and the man is a guardian of his family: the lady is a guardian and is responsible for her family, and so all of you are guardians and are responsible for your wards. All of you are shepherd and every shepherd is responsible for his sheep." (narrated by Ibn Omar in Sahih AlBukhari)

Political participation, as outlined in the **Holy Quran**, is not directly framed in the context of modern-day politics, such as voting or running for office. However, it provides principles that encourage justice, governance, and the protection of people's rights, which can be applied to political participation.

1. **Justice and Fairness in Governance**

The Quran encourage Muslims to participate in governance in a way that upholds justice and protects the rights of all people, ensuring the rights of all individuals are protected.

- *Surah An-Nisa (4:58)***:** *"Indeed, Allah commands you to render trusts to whom they are due and when you judge between people to judge with justice. Excellent is that which Allah instructs you. Indeed, Allah is ever Hearing and Seeing."*

2. **Consultation and Shura (Mutual Consultation)**

The principle of consultation (Shura) is rooted in the Quran. The concept of **Shura** is critical in Islamic political theory, and it promotes the idea of mutual consultation and collective decision-making, which is aligned with the modern democratic ideals of political participation.

- *Surah Ash-Shura (42:38)***:** *"And those who have responded to their lord and established prayer and whose affair is [determined by] consultation among themselves, and from what We have provided them, they spend."*

3. **Standing Up for Justice**

The Quran calls for Muslims to stand up for justice and to speak out against oppression, advocate for truth and well-being of the community which can be an important part of political participation.

- *Surah Al-Baqarah (2:256):* *"Let there be no compulsion in religion, for the truth stands out clearly from falsehood. So whoever renounces false gods and believes in Allah has certainly grasped the most trustworthy, unfailing hand-hold. And Allah is All-Hearing, All-Knowing."*
- *Surah Al-Imran (3:110):* *"You are the best nation produced [as an example] for mankind. You enjoin what is right and forbid what is wrong and believe in Allah."*

4. **Protection of the Rights of the Vulnerable**

The Quran emphasizes the need to protect the rights of vulnerable and marginalized groups in society. This is an important principle for Muslims to consider when engaging politically, ensuring that their actions support social justice.

- *Surah Al-Baqarah (2:177):* "It is not righteousness that you turn your faces toward the East or the West, but righteousness is in one who believes in Allah, the Last Day, the angels, the Book, and the Prophets; and gives his money, in spite of love for it, to relatives, orphans, the needy, the traveler, those who ask [for help], and for freeing captives; who establish prayer, pay alms-tax, and keep the pledges they make; and who are patient in times of suffering, adversity, and in 'the heat of 'battle. It is they who are true in faith and it is they who are mindful of Allah."

5. **Accountability in Leadership**

The Quran holds leaders and rulers accountable for their actions. Leadership is seen as a trust, and political leaders must be ethical, just, fair, and mindful of their responsibilities toward the people.

- *Surah Al-Ahzab (33:72)*: "Indeed, we offered the Trust to the heavens and the earth and the mountains, but they declined to bear it and feared it; but man undertook it. Indeed, he was unjust and ignorant."

6. **Freedom and Equality**

The US Constitution guarantees that all are equal before the law regardless of their race, ethnicity, or social status. This is important in a political context, where participation should be inclusive of all members of society based on dignity and respect for all.

- *Surah Al-Hujurat (49:13):* "O mankind, indeed We have created you from male and female and made you peoples and tribes that you may know one another. Indeed, the most noble of you in the sight of Allah is the most righteous of you. Indeed, Allah is Knowing and Acquainted."

Muslims in the USA have a hard decision to make to choose between the two major parties. The choice is not easy as each party has its own values and principles, and sometimes Muslims found a contradiction between values in Islam and other party values. Majority of members in each party have a strong support for Israel at the expense of Palestinians. This may lead to a sense of disengagement among Muslims in the USA and keep them becoming active participants and having influence in these parties

How Muslims in America becomes active in political lobbying?

Even though voting is not obligatory in the United States and there is no penalty for choosing not to vote, however because it is a constitutional right for every eligible voter, in addition to those elected representatives are the decision makers in the country, Muslims should take the lead in preserving the constitution and make best efforts to choose the right candidates. Also, those voters as constituents have the right to complain to their representatives about their issues of concern. AMJA on November 28, 2016, under Post-election statement: Principles and Roadmap states:

"This land is ruled by a constitution and the rule of law that protects the rights of all its minorities with due respect at all levels, even though the visceral speech of the recent heated election may have seemed to deny this. We shall adhere to our rights and the rights of other Americans and shall strengthen our bonds with civil rights organizations, Muslim or non-Muslim. We shall work with them and defend them whenever needed. However, at the same time, we must always fulfill our obligations completely and be active participants in society working to protect the security and well-being of its inhabitants."

Muslims in America have become increasingly active in political lobbying over the past few decades, especially in response to social, political, and legal challenges they have faced. Their political engagement has evolved through various forms of civic participation, advocacy, and coalition-building. However, there is an increased percentage of discrimination as a significant majority (70%) of Muslims Americans reported experiencing increased discrimination since the onset of the Israel-Hamas conflict in October 2023 (Asharq Al-Awsat, 2024). This rise in perceived discrimination has galvanized political activism within the Muslim community, leading to increasing participation in the political process as protesting, community organizing, and policy advocacy efforts. For Muslims, solidarity with Palestine and the Muslim world is an overarching Islamic and ethical imperative. This imperative has influenced American Muslim politics for decades.

Strategic goals for political participation

Muslims should have a clear vision to participate in the political process. Strategic goals for political participation can vary depending on the context and the specific goals of an individual, group, or organization. However, there are some common strategic goals that are often pursued to enhance political involvement and influence change. For a clear vision Muslim scholars and Muslim activists should continuously meet and discuss the key strategic goals for political participation:

1. Increasing Voter Turnout
- **Goal:** Ensure that more people vote in elections, especially among underrepresented groups.
- **Strategy:** Mobilize communities, educate voters about the voting process, and advocate for policies that make voting more accessible (e.g., early voting, mail-in ballots).

2. Raising Awareness of Key Issues
- **Goal:** Elevate important political or social issues to the forefront of public discussion.
- **Strategy:** Use media campaigns, public demonstrations, social media advocacy, and grassroots organizing to bring attention to critical issues like climate change, human rights, or healthcare reform.

3. Advocating for Policy Change
- **Goal:** Influence the passage or amendment of specific policies or legislation.
- **Strategy:** Lobby policymakers, engage in public campaigns, gather petitions, and build coalitions of like-minded groups to advocate for legislative changes.

4. Promoting Political Education and Literacy
- **Goal:** Improve the general public's understanding of political processes, policies, and their rights.
- **Strategy:** Organize workshops, provide informational resources, and create accessible content that helps people understand how to engage in politics, from voting to contacting elected officials.

5. Building Political Alliances and Coalitions
- **Goal:** Form alliances with other organizations, interest groups, or political figures to strengthen collective action.
- **Strategy:** Identify shared goals with other groups, form coalitions to advance specific issues, and pool resources for greater political leverage.

6. Ensuring Fair and Equitable Representation
- **Goal:** Advocate for more inclusive political processes and representation for marginalized groups.

- **Strategy:** Support initiatives that promote diversity and inclusion, such as voting rights protections, fair districting, and equitable political participation for women, minorities, and other underrepresented group

7. Increasing Political Accountability
- **Goal:** Hold elected officials and institutions accountable for their actions and decisions.
- **Strategy:** Encourage transparency, monitor government actions, organize campaigns to hold officials accountable, and engage in recall or impeachment efforts if necessary.

8. Advocating for Electoral Reform
- **Goal:** Reform the electoral system to make it fairer and representative.
- **Strategy:** Push for changes like ranked-choice voting, proportional representation, or campaign finance reform to ensure that elections better reflect the will of the people.

9. Strengthening Grassroots Participation
- **Goal:** Empower individuals at the local level to participate in political decision-making.
- **Strategy:** Organize community meetings, create volunteer opportunities, and develop local leadership to ensure that political power is distributed across different levels of society.

10. Fostering Political Engagement and Dialogue
- **Goal:** Create an environment where diverse political perspectives can be discussed respectfully and constructively.
- **Strategy:** Facilitate town halls, debates, and discussions that encourage open dialogue on political issues, fostering a culture of civic engagement and critical thinking.

By setting these goals, individuals and organizations can create focused strategies to increase political participation, improve the political process, and drive social and policy changes that reflect the values and needs of the community. This can lead to better participation in the political process.

Political participation of Muslims in America

Muslims voter turnout was 78% of eligible Muslim voters who participated in the 2020 presidential election, 17% of Muslims contacted an elected official 22% attended a town hall or community meeting 16% volunteered for a political campaign or civic organization, and Muslim Youth showed increased interest in activism and public service careers (Mogahed & Ikramullah, 2020; Mogahed, 2024). The main reasons for active Muslim participation in the U.S. are:

1. Post-9/11 Political Mobilization and Civic Participation
Following the events of 9/11, Muslim Americans have increasingly engaged in civic life, including voting, running for office, and advocating for justice (Gjelten, 2016). This surge in political activity has been a response to heightened social hostility and scrutiny, leading to a more pronounced political identity within the community.

2. Growth of Political Representation
In the 2022 midterm elections, Muslim candidates achieved a record by winning 83 seats, up from 71 in 2020 (Mansoor, 2022). Notable victories included Nabeela Syed, elected as the youngest member of Illinois's General Assembly, and Zaynab Mohamed, the

first Muslim woman in Minnesota's state Senate. These successes highlight the increasing political representation of Muslims in America.

3. Role of Advocacy Organizations

Muslim-American organizations play a central role in lobbying efforts. Key groups include:

- **Council on American-Islamic Relations (CAIR):** One of the largest Muslim civil rights and advocacy groups. Focuses on lobbying on civil liberties, anti-discrimination policies, and foreign policy, and coalition-building to represent Muslim interests at various government levels, legislative advocacy, Media representation on behalf of Muslims, and voter registration drives (CAIR, 2023).
- **Muslim American Society's Public Affairs and Civic Engagement (MAS-PACE):** Focuses on promoting civic engagement, educate and mobilize the Muslim American community, emphasizing leadership development and advocacy for social justice (MAS-PACE, 2012).
- **Muslim Public Affairs Council (MPAC):** Focuses on policy advocacy and public affairs, especially related to national security, religious freedom, and civil rights.
- **Empowering Muslim Americans Through Civic Engagement (Emgage):** A political advocacy group. Focuses on increasing Muslim American political participation, endorsing candidates, organizing get-out-the-vote efforts, and lobbing on various issues.
- **Islamic Circle of North America:** Focuses on Islamic education to Muslims, promotes awareness of Islam among the wider public, serve the community through outreach and humanitarian work, and encourage American Muslims to participate in civic duties including voting, and engagement with elected officials.
- **Islamic Circle of North America-Council for Social Justice:** Focuses on promoting social justice through education, activism, policy engagement grounded in Islamic principles, and defending civil liberties in solidarity with oppressed communities.
- **Islamic Society of North America:** The oldest, largest, and most influential organizations representing Muslims in the United States and Canada. Focuses on providing platforms for youth leadership and spiritual development, promotes Muslim participation in civic life such as voting, advocacy, and public service, and works with government and civil society on issues affecting Muslims such as immigration and civil rights.

These organizations represent Muslim concerns to lawmakers and provide platforms for political mobilization.

4. Formation of Political Coalitions

In anticipation of the 2024 elections, major American Muslim political groups formed the American Muslim 2024 Election Taskforce. This coalition aims to amplify the community's views on key policy issues, enhance civic engagement, boost voter turnout, and issue joint endorsements, reflecting a strategic approach to political participation (American Muslim 2024 Election Taskforce, 2024).

5. Voter Mobilization and Education

- Muslim groups have run campaigns to register voters, educate communities on political **issues**, and encourage turnout, especially during presidential and midterm elections.
- High-profile campaigns like MyMuslimVote and Million Muslim Votes (by Emgage) have raised visibility and participation (EMGAGE, 2024).

6. Participation in National and Local Politics

- More Muslim Americans are running for office and winning seats, from local school boards to Congress (e.g., Ilhan Omar, Rashida Tlaib, and André Carson).
- Muslim elected officials are helping shape legislation, giving the community a stronger voice.

7. Coalition Building and Interfaith Alliances

- Muslims often partner with other minority and civil rights groups, including Black, Latino, Jewish, and Christian organizations (Mogahed & Ikramullah, 2020).
- These coalitions lobby on shared issues like immigration reform, hate crimes legislation, and racial justice.

8. Legal and Civil Rights Advocacy

- Post-9/11 surveillance, the Patriot Act, and the Muslim ban prompted strong legal and political responses.
- Legal action is often paired with lobbying to influence lawmakers and public opinion on national security, immigration, and religious freedom.
- There has been a notable increase in civic engagement within the community over the past decade. This includes higher rates of voter registration, participation in political campaigns, and involvement in advocacy organizations.

9. Grassroots Organizing and Community Engagement

- Local Muslim communities are increasingly involved in town halls, school board meetings, and local lobbying efforts (Mogahed & Ikramullah, 2020).
- Mosques and community centers serve as hubs for civic education and mobilization.

10. Leveraging Media and Public Narrative

- Muslim advocates are using traditional and social media to challenge stereotypes and highlight policy concerns.
- Storytelling and visibility campaigns help humanize Muslim issues and influence public opinion, which in turn affects lawmakers' decisions.
- There is a need to have an increase in:
  - Electoral participation and grassroots mobilization.
  - Legal challenges and civil rights work.
  - Coalition and interfaith alliances.
  - Political candidacy and representation.

How Muslims Choose Among Political Parties: Muslims are always interested in choosing candidates based on their agenda for the following matters:

1. Civil Rights and Anti-Discrimination Policies

Post-9/11 discrimination, racial profiling, and anti-Muslim rhetoric have made civil rights a major concern for Muslim voters. Muslims often support parties and candidates who oppose Islamophobia and promote religious freedom. Historically, Democrats have been perceived as more proactive in defending civil liberties and opposing racial and religious discrimination, which has led to increasing Muslim alignment with the Democratic Party. A 2020 CAIR survey found that over 70% of Muslim voters identified as Democrats or leaned Democratic (McCaw, 2020).

2. Social Justice and Domestic Policy

Many Muslims support healthcare access, education reform**,** and economic equity, which align with Democratic platforms. The progressive emphasis on social services and equal opportunity resonates with the Islamic value of *social justice*. However, on certain social issues (e.g., abortion, LGBTQ), more conservative Muslims may find alignment with aspects of the Republican platform.

3. Foreign Policy and International Affairs

U.S. foreign policy in Palestine, Iraq, Afghanistan, and broader Muslim-majority regions significantly impacts Muslim voting patterns. Many Muslims support candidates who advocate for just and balanced foreign policy, including the end of unconditional military aid to oppressive regimes or occupations. Discontent with both major parties on foreign policy sometimes leads to independent or issue-based voting.

4. Religious and Moral Values

Some Muslims, especially first-generation immigrants, may be socially conservative. In theory, this could align them with Republicans on issues like family values, modesty, and religious freedom. However, the mainstream Republican Party's ties to Christian nationalism or anti-Muslim rhetoric often alienate Muslim voters despite any shared values.

5. Generational and Ethnic Differences

Younger Muslims tend to be more politically active and progressive, often supporting Democrats or third-party candidates ([Young](#), 2019). Older immigrants may prioritize stability, religious conservatism, or economic opportunity and vary in their choices. Ethnic background (e.g., Arab, South Asian, African American, African) also shapes political engagement, with Black Muslims having a longer history of political activism in the U.S., often aligned with civil rights movements. The Pew Research Center (2024) reports 53% of Muslim Americans identify or lean Democratic, while about 42% lean Republican (Smith, et al. (2025). The annual *American Muslim Poll* from the Institute for Social Policy and Understanding (ISPU) shows that religious identity, concern for justice, and perceived political inclusion are the top motivators for Muslim political behavior (Mogahed & Ikramullah, 2020).

Conclusion

While the Quran does not directly outline modern forms of political participation (like voting or running for office), its principles of justice, fairness, accountability, and consultation lay the foundation for active involvement in governance. Muslims are encouraged to participate in political processes in ways that ensure justice, protect the vulnerable, and promote equality and fairness for all people. These principles can guide Muslims today in their political participation, striving for a society where everyone's rights are upheld and the community thrives.

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