Introduction

Within the field of Political Science, specifically in American politics, a significant amount of research argues that a positive direct relationship exists between religious participation and political participation. Specifically, the research conducted within the United States argues that individuals who attend and are involved with a local church are much more likely to participate in various forms of political participation be that voting, contacting elected officials, participating in local boards and community projects, volunteering for campaigns, and participating in political protests. The most well known research on this issue is the work on political mobilization and participation conducted by Sidney Verba, Schlozman, and Brady which presents survey evidence claiming that attendance and involvement in American Christian churches increases church members and activists political interest, civic skills, and exposure to political recruitment efforts. They argue that while increases in levels of political interest occur within both Protestant and Catholics churches, the development and endowment of civic skills by individuals is much more likely to occur in Protestant churches. In contrast to Catholic churches in which ordained priests or nuns lead and organize many of the church’s activities instead, most Protestant churches are internally governed by a democratic congregational structure, in which lay leadership and support is more prevalent, and the minister of the church is more an employee of the church rather than its spiritual and organizational leader.

According to current research, church participation increases political interest through (1) stimulating political interest, thereby increasing the potential benefit a person believes they may receive from political participation and (2) the development of civic
skills transferable to political participation, thereby reducing the potential costs a person believes they may incur from political participation. The mechanisms put forth for the stimulation of political interest occur within religious institutions by the exposure of members to religious sermons, and meetings, in which general political topics, or specific political issues are referred to and discussed within the church (Verba, pg 375). This rise in increased political interest and political requests amongst church attendees results in both greater voter turnout during elections, as well as greater contact of elected officials by church members. The mechanisms put forth for the development and endowment of civic skills occurs by members volunteering for and participating in church fellowship activities, bible studies, community improvement projects, and ministry programs. Over time, the endowment of church activists with civic skills can result in greater participation by church members in serving on local community boards, volunteering for campaigns or political rallies, and increased contact of elected officials. The importance of religious participation to the health of American political participation has been highlighted by scholars, due to the fact that church membership and religious participation constitutes the largest form of voluntary organizational activity within the United States, and that Christian churches function in a very egalitarian manner effectively increasing political interest, and developing civic skills within individuals, regardless of an individual’s socio-economic status or education prior to involvement in the church (Verba). The role churches have played in the political mobilization of population segments with otherwise low political resources, has contributed in the representation of these population segments policy preferences to elected officials, as well as provided these groups with credible means of enforcing sanctions through the
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ballot box if these policy preferences are ignored.

While most scholars of American politics seem to agree on the positive, direct relationship between religious participation and political participation, some researchers have taken issue with what they view as the over importance Verba, Schlozman, and Brady make regarding Protestant churches, and by analogy any democratically governed religious institution, development of civic skills and its relationship to political participation. According to Jones-Correa, and Djupe, whether a church promotes a religious message of political engagement, and actively recruits members into the political process are much more consequential for the presence of political participation amongst church members. They argue that while civic skill development in democratic Protestant churches do increases the level of civic resources by individuals of low socio-economic status, this is a much smaller predictor of political participation as compared to the political and civic orientation of individual churches.

Other scholars such as Robert Wuthnow, have argued that while existing social survey research in both political science and sociology has found a positive relationship between religious participation and political participation, scholars should pay attention to the content of different religious traditions, and not just their internal governing structure, as an important independent variable that influence civic and political participation (Wuthnow, 338). Wuthnow, argues that in the case American Christianity, significant differences exist between the religious practices of more strict evangelical churches, and more moderate mainline Protestant churches. According to Wuthnow’s research, while both mainline Protestant churches and evangelical churches develop civic skills and produce social capital, evangelical churches greater demands on their members, smaller congregational size, emphasis on being separate from the world, and
discouragement for over-socialization with non-evangelicals, result in mainline and evangelical Protestant churches significantly differing in the type of civic and political participation their members are willing to expend their energies upon (Wuthnow, 343). Members of strict evangelical churches are more likely, than their mainline counterparts, to spend their time and resources in activities that benefit their own congregation, leading both to their increased growth within the United States, but also a removal of time and resources that could be used in civic and political participation for the larger public. Mainline Protestant church members on the other hand are more likely to spend their time and resources in activities targeted at public civic engagement (Wuthnow, 346). While members of both evangelical and mainline protestants churches tend to vote, contact elected officials, and volunteer their time and money in addressing local community issues more than those who do not participate in religious activities, mainline Protestants are much more likely to participate in and work with individuals from outside their church or denomination, while evangelicals are much more likely participate and work with other evangelicals.

In David Campbell’s work, he argues that while both mainline and evangelical churches are able to increase political participation, the stricter social regulations, and high demands of time made by strict church members on their members make the costs of political participation higher for evangelicals. This higher level costs are only reduced when evangelical religious leaders dedicate the resources of their church to political participation by increasing the benefit perceived by members through sermons addressing political issues, and other church activities. However, this can only easily be done when the political issues in question can be made relevant and salient to the theology of the church. In the case of evangelical churches, it is much easier for church leaders to
mobilize the on issues of personal morality and behavior rather than on issues
concerning social justice and structural inequalities. In contrast, mainline Protestants can
both make issues of social justice salient to their congregations due to shared
understandings of religious culture and theology, and even in situations when this is not
possible the less strict religious prohibitions on their behavior make it so that members of
mainline Protestant churches are much more likely to be recruited into political
participation through friends or associates that do not attend their specific church, unlike
evangelicals.

To recap, since the publishing of *Voice and Equality*, the relationship of religious
participation to political participation has focused on three religious variables: (1) the
content of religious messages (2) the internal governing structure of religious institutions,
and (3) the level of strictness a religious institution demands from its members through
religious beliefs and practices that place it in tension with larger society. The range for
each of these variables, as they have been studies in American churches, and the effect of
these variables on political participation is summarized in Table 1.

| Table 1: Religious Variables that have been found to be relevant to study of
Political Participation in the United States |
<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th></th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td><strong>Range for each Religious Variables</strong></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>(1) religious message</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>(2) governing structure</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>(3) level of strictness</td>
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Theory of this Paper

In light of the research reviewed so far, it should not be surprising that scholars and students who only study American politics would infer that due to the fact that religious participation in the United States overall seems to promotes political participation, a similar relationship between religious participation and political participation should exist in other parts of the world. Even Robert Wuthnow’s caution regarding the long term trends of evangelical churches and their influence on American political participation has said,

“None of the research discussed here suggests that religion has a negative effect on civic engagement (evangelical religious participation, with the exception of voting, just doesn’t encourage it).” (Wuthnow, 357).

However, a quick view of the relationship of religious participation and political participation in the Middle East, South Asia, and East Asia would immediately provide us with situation in which the religious messages held by certain religious group not only is ambivalent about political participation, but actively discourages it. Even in the American context, in the case of both Jehovah’s Witnesses, and the Amish though neither of these religions groups officially prohibits voting in their doctrine, the act of voting is not viewed a meritorious act, and the absence of an official prohibition on voting in the case of Jehovah’s Witnesses may very well be there desire not to have their members draw public attention to themselves by facing legal penalties for refusing to enter the polling booths, especially in light of the fact that they are already officially banned from operating in a number of countries in both Europe and elsewhere.

In order to better understand the complex relationship between religious participation, and political participation throughout the world while at the same time not fall into the trap of cultural based explanations, is a theory that not only explains
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religious participation’s promotion of political participation, but also religious participation’s active discouragement of it. I argue that attendance and involvement in religious institutions can both promote political participation by praising civic and political engagement as a meritorious act, and increasing civic resources, as well as inhibiting and discouraging political participation by condemning civic and political engagement as a reprehensible act, and increasing the costs of participation.

I argue that a more accurate theory that explains the influence of religious participation on political participation must examine the content of religious messages, that are not only civic oriented, and otherworldly, but also for religious messages that emphasize intense separation from non-believers. In contrast to the claim put forth in Voice and Equality, I argue that besides answering questions of salvation, religious messages present in individual houses of worship can promote, have no effect, or reduce political participation based on whether the content of religious messages contains a civic orientation that 1) promotes political participation by viewing it as a meritorious act or 2) has no effect on political participation by viewing it as a valueless neutral act equal to other activities outside of religious life or 3) reduces political participation by viewing it as a harmful act. If a religious institution advocates a religious message that possesses either 1) a positive civic orientation or 2) a neutral civic orientation, political participation may then be further increases if the religious institution possesses a democratic structure over an hierarchical or autocratic one, in which the opportunity for civic skills development is greater, as argued in Voice and Equality. In addition, the strictness of a religious institution should also matter in having an inverse relationship to those forms of political participation that require sustained attention rather than sporadic activity, due to very strict social restrictions may face higher personal costs to participation than others,
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as well as higher levels of time consumed by strict religious institutions reducing the potential time available for political participation. However, if a religious institution advocates a religious message that possesses a message of strong separation from non-believers, regardless of the religious institution’s governance structure or the strictness of advocated by the religious institution, political participation will decrease and in extreme cases manifest itself in anti-state behavior such as terrorism.

Table 2: A Revision of the range of Religious Variables that should be studied to explain the relationship of Religious Participation to Political Participation

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Range for each Religious Variables</th>
<th>Effect on Political Participation</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>(1) religious message</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>i. civic oriented message</td>
<td>i. encourages political participation</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>ii. otherworldly message</td>
<td>ii. ambivalent on political participation</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>iii. separatist message</td>
<td>iii. discourages political participation</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>(2) governing structure</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>i. congregational</td>
<td>i. develops civic skills</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>ii. autocratic</td>
<td>ii. no effect on civic skill development</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>(3) level of strictness</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>i. moderate</td>
<td>i. lower costs for political participation</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>ii. strict</td>
<td>ii. higher costs for political participation</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

The Usefulness of Using American Mosques to test this Theory

In testing this theory regarding the relationship between religious participation and political participation, the study of American mosques seems especially useful for testing the implications of this theory for several reasons. American mosques, whether Sunni or Shia, all provide significant variation in the independent variables of religious civic orientations, individual religious institutional structure, and theological and social structures. Additionally, due to the relatively small number of American mosques in the
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United States and their relatively recent presence in the United States as compared other previously studied religious institutions, the ability to observe adaptation to changing political environments, as well as religious competition between American mosques is much easier. This study also plans to use actual membership lists from American mosque congregations, as well as develop lists of unmosqued Muslims enabling us to use actual voter registrations lists, and campaign finance records in studying the dependent variable of political participation rather than survey data which is more prone to subjective errors by the respondents. Finally, the author of this study believes that before any meaningful study of the role of mosques and the relationship between religious participation and political participation in other parts of the world can be seriously undertaken, a study in the Unites States must be completed first. This is due to the fact that in many other parts of the world, governments may prefer certain religious over others either through government subsidies, or government regulation. This preference for a certain religion in a country interferes with the religious market present in that society and creates political incentives for both preferred and regulated religions to behave ways that may have significant implications for political participation. This is however, much less the case in the United States today, where the “Free Exercise” clause and “Establishment” clause present in the 1st amendment of the U.S. Constitution act as a barrier to government regulation and subsidization of particular religious groups. We know move on to a small discussion of Islamic theology and law to better explain the variation that exists in American mosques regarding their religious message on civic and political participation, as well significance of fatawas in conveying these messages to Muslims.
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The Existing Metric in Islamic theology and law

Similar to Christianity, Islam claims the existence of an afterlife consisting of heaven and hell. However, unlike certain branches of Protestant Christianity where salvation is only attained through grace by accepting Jesus as one’s Lord and Savior, in Islam the evaluation of a person’s deeds plays a role in the determination of who God ultimately grants salvation. According to Islamic theology, rather than a soul immediately being sent to heaven or hell upon death, souls are to remain in the grave until a “Day of Judgment” in which all humanity is to be resurrected and God determines the final destination their for each soul based on an accounting of people’s faith, their deeds, and God’s mercy. However, unlike most denominations of Christianity, in Islam both heaven and hell are viewed as possessing seven levels of gradation in which each higher level possesses greater joys or torments.

Due to Islam’s doctrine in gradations of reward or punishment in the afterlife based in part by ones deeds, the performance of good deeds and the avoidance, and repentance of evil deeds is of extreme import for Muslim religious life. Consequently in Islamic law, human actions are categorized as being beneficial, permitted, or harmful to both an individual as well as the community’s well being both in this life and the next. The significance of this categorization is that it makes known to the Muslim community how the performance of an action most probably will be evaluated by God on the Day of Judgment and whether that action will help or hinder an individual’s chance of entering heaven or hell.

In Islamic law, all human actions can be placed into five categories: prohibited (haram), discouraged (maqruh), permissible (mubah), recommended (mandub), or
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obligatory (*fard*). The performance of a prohibited action renders an individual liable to punishment, while the intentional avoidance of a prohibited action earns an individual spiritual merit and reward. Similarly, the performance of a discouraged action does not make an individual liable to punishment or moral blame, however the intentional avoidance of a discouraged action earns individual spiritual merit. The performance of a permissible action, in and of itself, does not earn an individual spiritual merit or make him or her liable to punishment, though if the performance of the action leads to the performance of an obligatory or prohibited action, it can then itself be recategorized, until circumstances change where that relationship for the permissible action no longer exists. The performance of a recommended action also earns an individual spiritual merit, but the lack of performance does not make an individual liable to punishment. Finally, For Muslims, the performance of an obligatory action earns for an individual spiritual merit and reward, while the intentional neglect of an obligatory action earns an individual a sin and renders him or her liable to punishment. A representation of these categorizations can be found in Table 3.

**Table 3: A Categorization of Actions in Islamic Law**

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th></th>
<th>Obligatory (<em>fard</em>)</th>
<th>Recommended (<em>mandub</em>)</th>
<th>Permissible (<em>mubah</em>)</th>
<th>Discouraged (<em>maqruh</em>)</th>
<th>Prohibited (<em>haram</em>)</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td><strong>Performance</strong></td>
<td>+</td>
<td>+</td>
<td>0</td>
<td>0</td>
<td>---</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td><strong>Avoidance</strong></td>
<td>---</td>
<td>0</td>
<td>0</td>
<td>+</td>
<td>+</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

+ = good deed  
0 = no inherent merit or liability  
--- = evil deed
However, there are two more categories of action we must discuss before moving on to competing views regarding political participation amongst American mosques. The first is collective obligations (fard kifaya), and the second are actions that constitute acts of disbelief (kufr). Within Islamic law, obligatory actions are defined as being personal or collective actions. Personal obligatory actions (fard ‘ayni) are actions addressed to individuals and are actions that can not be fulfilled on behalf of another individual. Collective obligations (fard kifaya) are addressed to an entire community, and can be fulfilled if only some, or even only one person performs the action, in which case the entire community is absolved of the obligation, though the spiritual merit and reward is only earned by those individuals who participated in the action. When a collective has yet to be fulfilled, for those individuals in the community who are able to participate in discharging of the collective obligation, the collective obligation is transformed into a personal obligation for them until its performance is fulfilled. In the event that the collective obligation is not fulfilled, all individuals who could have participated in discharging the obligation but failed too earn a sin and are rendered liable to punishment. The concept in Islamic law of collective obligation can be understood as or modeled as a multi-person game of chicken which is solved by providing selective incentives to those individuals who participate in providing the collective good. In the case of acts of disbelief (kufr), these are acts that are not only sins, but they are acts viewed as so reprehensible that no amount of good deeds can compensate for them, except sincere repentance before death. Muslims are not liable for acts of disbelief in the event that these actions are done in ignorance of their prohibition, but rather are actions in which a Muslim is fully aware of its categorization as an act of disbelief in which there is no disagreement amongst religious scholars of its categorization as an act of disbelief.
and yet still chooses to perform the act. A more complete categorization of actions in Islamic law is provided below in Table 4.

**Table 4: A more Complete Categorization of Actions in Islamic Law**

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th></th>
<th>Personal Obligation (fard ayn)</th>
<th>Communal Obligation (fard ayn)</th>
<th>Recommended (mandub)</th>
<th>Permissible (mubah)</th>
<th>Discouraged (maqruh)</th>
<th>Prohibited (haram)</th>
<th>Disbelief (kufr)</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td><strong>Performance</strong></td>
<td>+</td>
<td>+</td>
<td>+</td>
<td>0</td>
<td>0</td>
<td>---</td>
<td>- ∞</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td><strong>Avoidance</strong></td>
<td>---</td>
<td>--- or 0</td>
<td>0</td>
<td>0</td>
<td>+</td>
<td>+</td>
<td>+</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

+ = good deed  
0 = no inherent merit or liability  
--- = evil deed  
- ∞ = Evil deed God will not forgive, if sincere repentance does not occur before death

For our purposes of understanding Muslim political participation, the significance of these categorizations whether here in the United States or abroad, is that depending on how acts of political participation are categorized by Muslim religious leaders, and to the degree that these views are accepted by Muslim in general, the overall utility derived from political participation by a Muslims should change resulting in the rise or decline of political participation. We now turn to a set of *fatwas* (legal opinions), regarding Muslim political participation in democratic elections to demonstrate the range of religious messages Muslims in America, and Muslims in other countries are exposed in relationship to political participation.
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Various Fatwas on American Muslim participation

The technical definition of a *fatawa* is that of an Islamic legal opinion issued by an Islamic legal jurist following the principles of Islamic legal theory (*usul al-fiqh*). In Sunni Islam, a *fatawa* has no binding obligation upon Sunni Muslims to act upon them, unless a Sunni Muslim sincerely believes and is persuaded by the scriptural reasoning present in the *fatawa*. In Shia Islam, a *fatawa* may be binding upon an individual depending upon their relationship to the Shia scholar issuing the *fatawa*. The details of this relationship in Shia Islam are beyond the scope of this paper, but it is sufficient to say that even in Shia Islam there exists differences of opinion on legal issues that provide lay Shia Muslims some latitude in adherence amongst *fatawas* based on their own moral intuitions, and reasoning.

While the debate of Muslims participating in elections has existed since the introduction of democracy in various parts of the world where Muslims were previously under European colonial rule, the issue of Muslims participating in elections in which they are the numerical minority is a much more recent issue. For our purposes to show the range of opinions present in this debate here are excerpts from various *fatawas* issued in 2007 and 2008 in with positions that voting is a personal obligation and constitutes a sin if avoided, to voting is an act of disbelief. The purpose of reviewing these *fatawas* is not to convey the idea that all American Muslims were exposed to these *specific fatawas*, or that even exposure to only one of these *fatawa* for a lay Muslim would be significant to explain a Muslim’s behavior regarding political participation. Rather the point of reviewing these *fatawas* is to convey the type of content and tone present in many
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Muslim sermons, and conversations amongst Muslims regarding the value of voting that has and is continuing to take place both in the United States, as well as in other developed democracies with Muslim populations.

Fatawas that view voting as a Personal Obligation (fard ayn):

(1) Voting in the elections is a form of testimony. …Whoever so votes or abstains from voting in the general elections causing the defeat of a trustworthy and deserving candidate but on the other hand allows the candidate who is less trustworthy and undeserving to win, one has gone against the command of Allah concerning giving testimony.

By Sheikh Yusuf Al Qaradawi, Egyptian Scholar

(2) Since seeing that voting is a testimony (giving Shahadah) and being aware that a particular party will be more willing to fulfill our Islamic rights, not to vote for this party will he tantamount to transgression and breach of trust in the eyes of Shariah (Islamic Law).”

By Mufti Ibrahim Desai, South Africa

(3) Voting for a non-Muslim candidate who would serve the Muslim community in the country and deal with Muslim countries on the basis of justice and fairness is not only permissible but required. It is the responsibility of the Muslim minorities in non-Muslim democratic countries to participate in public life, including voting and financing campaigns in order to be able to positively influence the political decision in these countries.

By Shaykh Muhammad Al-Mukhtar Al-Shinqiti, Imam residing in Texas

Fatawa that view voting as a Recommended Act (mandub)

(1) Looking at the situation of the Muslim community and their need to have their interests met, it becomes advisable for the Muslims to achieve this purpose through the available political system. Through voting, a man can bring to Parliament such candidates who sympathize with the Muslim cause. The vote can be treated either as a good intercession (Quran 4:85), or as advise (naseehah), or it can be treated as
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tawkeel (deputizing someone on your behalf to achieve a certain task). Whichever you take, by voting you can bring a better change in the affairs of this country.

Shaykh Suhaib Hasan, Imam residing in London, UK

Fatawas that view voting as only a Permissible Act (mubah)

(1) It has long been my position that any type of participation in democracy is a type of approval of that system. I have no doubt that democracy is antithetical to Islam. However, having read and listened to the sayings of many scholars on this issue, and being faced with the reality of a growing Muslim population here in the UK, who for all intents and purposes consider this their home, it has become clear to me that we must participate in every aspect of society as much as possible to ensure our rights and continued existence and well being in this society. This participation most certainly includes voting for whichever party or candidate best serves the needs and interests of the UK and indeed world wide Muslim population. This does not mean approval or acceptance of the ideal of democracy, but the intention is to use the means and avenues available to benefit the Muslims. The Prophet (saws) did not approve of the system of tribalism in Arabia, in fact he condemned it, but this did not stop the Prophet (saws) from accepting the protection of his uncle and the tribe of Banu Hashim. In addition to that it seems to me that the evil of participation is far less than the evil that will befall the Muslims if we do not, and the Shariah teaches us always to choose the path of lesser evil. This has been expounded and clarified by the scholars.

Shaykh Abdur Raheem Green, London, UK

(2) I hold the opinion that it is lawful to participate in elections, as this may reduce suffering, and it is a way to choose the better among the available candidates. I believe participating in elections will, in any event, contribute to the reduction of evil and be a forum for countering bad policies and exposing their deficiencies, as well as being an opportunity to present proposals of a different kind that may help people.”

As for participation in politics itself, we should consider that if the parliaments and congresses of these countries do not have any Muslim members, then this will pave the way for the opposition to come forth with their harmful views and policies, which will consequently be incorporated into the laws of their countries and bring harm to the Muslims.

I hold this opinion to participate in elections and to vote for those who seem to be good or at least less harmful than others.

Shaykh Salman al-Ouda, Imam Bin Saud Islamic University, Saudi Arabia
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(3) it is permissible for a Muslim who enjoys the rights of citizenship in a non-Muslim country to take part in elections and the like because it is more likely that his participation will bring benefits such as presenting a true picture of Islam, defending Muslim issues in that country, supporting the rights of religious and other minorities, strengthening their role in circles of influence, and cooperating with reasonable, fair-minded people on a basis of truth and justice.

Islamic Fiqh Council, Saudi Arabia, Nov. 8th on the issue of
“Participation of Muslims in elections with non-Muslims in non-Muslim countries.”

Fatawa that view voting as an act of Disbelief (kufr)

(1) Electing and voting is giving the power of attorney to someone to do things on your behalf. It is a permissible means in general. In this case, it is authorizing someone to legislate or rule by the Kufr rule on your behalf. It means to give someone the power to make laws instead of Allah, denying His (swt) sole right to make laws that manage our lives. Voting in this election means to empower someone to implement the kufr rules made by the faulty human beings.

By voluntarily voting for Kufr, in such Democratic/Secular system, we willingly choose and authorize humans to legislate and legalize evil (Munkar) and rule according to it. We authorize –willingly and happily- humans to implement a system that is known for its corruption in all aspects of life; political, economic, social, educational, healthcare …etc. Not only that, but we also –willingly- authorize and request them to protect and preserve this kufr system and this way of life!

Accordingly, based on the clear cut evidences from the Quran, participation in the general election on November 4th is a clear prohibited (haraam) act, as it compromises the foundation of the Islamic creed (aqeedah).

O Muslims, in addition to this, we came to say something else. Muslims in the United States are being dared, duped, and ultimately deceived into adopting voting in the kufr U.S. secular democracy/capitalism by the enemies of Islam. Participation in elections will successfully contain the Islamic struggle within a prison of secularism rather than pursuing the liberation of humanity through the establishment and expansion of the Islamic State.

An excerpt from, “Cooperate in Piety or Sin! Participation in the American Election”
Produced by Hizb ut-Tahrir, America, Tuesday Oct, 28th 2008
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Research Design and Data Collection

The majority of scholarly research conducted on the relationship between religious participation and political participation has predominately relied on sample survey data, and while there are many benefits to using survey data, in order to more comprehensively test the relationship between religious message, church institutional structure, religious strictness and various forms of political participation this project hopes to use more objective sources of data. This project will focus on Muslim-American participation within the cities of Detroit, Chicago, and Houston on account that these three cities provide us significant variation on race, ethnicity and socioeconomic status within their respective Muslim populations, so as not mistake the variable of religion as a proxy for class, race or ethnicity. Due to the small, but geographically concentrated number of mosques in various metropolises, it is possible to identify almost every mosque in certain cities, and infer from interviews with Imams, board members, as well as editorials present in local newsletters the civic orientation and religious strictness held by a mosque as an institution, as well as previous orientations and levels of strictness held since the establishment of the mosque. Also, in order to qualify for non-profit status within the United States, all houses of worship are required to submit to the IRS documentation either in the form of an organizational constitution or organizational by-laws that specifies the governance structure of the religious institution. Finally, in determining the strictness of an individual mosque, in addition to interviews with Mosque Imams, and board leaders, the role of women in a mosque both in the context women’s spaces in the mosque, as well as the presence of women leadership on the boards of mosque can be used to assess the social tension a mosque possess with its
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surround city.

Similar to Orthodox Jewish synagogues, mosques require a degree of gender separation between men and women during worship services. In the context of America, a mosque can fall in one of five categories of gender separation:

1. **Men only mosques** – In these mosques, there is no female designated space for women, either due to a belief that women are prohibited from attending the mosque common in South Asia, or due to lack of space in the first years of mosques construction.

2. **Total Separation** – Men and women enter through separate entrances as well as pray in separate prayer halls. Separation extends into the communal spaces (halls, etc) as well as to any community event.

3. **Separated Prayer with divider** – Men and women enter through the same door. They have separate prayer areas often delineated by a wall or other type of divider. While communal space is usually mixed, it may or may not include spatial distance between men and women.

4. **Separated Prayer without divider** – Men and women usually enter through the same main door and pray in one hall without any physical divider. Women continue to pray behind the men and communal space is also separated.

5. **Separated Prayer without divider / Non-Separated communal space**. Men and women enter through the same door, pray in one hall with no wall or other physical divider. Communal space is mixed with free intermingling.

In terms of female Mosque leadership, mosques may also come in three types. First, a mosque may have an official prohibition against women serving in leadership positions within the mosque either in the constitution or their by-laws. Second, a mosque may have no official prohibition against women serving in a leadership position, but cultural norms within the mosque may have prohibited a women from ever serving in such a capacity. Third, a mosque may have women serving in leadership positions upon the mosque board. These measures on the proper spaces and places for women in the
mosque allow up to develop a strictness measure for a mosque independent of a mosque’s civic orientation.

In regards to gathering data concerning political participation, there are predominately three types of participation acts this project is concerned with: voting, campaign donations, and contacting elected officials. Rather than relying upon survey data to ask individuals whether they participated in the acts, this project plans to look at the actual registered voter lists, voter election lists, campaign finance records, and letters to the president written by Muslim-Americans living in the cities of Metro Detroit, Chicago, and Houston. In order to identify the names of Muslims within these public records, this project will be implementing the methodology used by demographers over the past ten years to identify Arab-American and Asian-American surnames as compiled from various federal records concerning applications for social security numbers. This study also hopes to receive copies of Mosque membership lists from the cities of Detroit, Chicago, and Houston to refine this list. After compilation of a list of common Muslim surnames and members of mosques, this project plans to develop maps of mosques and Muslim American addresses to study how affiliation and attendance at specific type of mosques influences Muslim Americans voting behavior, and campaign contributions over time. This project also plans to develop a social network map of campaign contributions for Muslim Americans to infer not only which Muslim American donate, but to what degree they donate to candidates outside their electoral district. Finally, while letters from individuals to representatives in congress, and the senate do not constitutes public information and can only be acquired by the consent of the senator or congressman in
question, letters to the President of the United States are public record. This project plans
evaluate letters written to president, and potentially senators or congressman if consent
can be acquired, to compare the relationship between attendance and membership of
certain types of mosques influences Muslim Americans contact of public officials.
The Role and Influence of the American Mosque and Muslim Religious Participation on U.S. Political Participation

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