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**Muslim Contributions to the Modern American Politics during
Obama's Presidency**

**Dissertation Submitted in Partial Fulfillment of the Requirements for
Master's Degree in Literature and Civilization**

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Dedication

To ourselves for passing all the hardest times together,

To our beloved ones, our parents, for their endless and unconditional support,

To those who encouraged us, our husbands, to achieve the dream,

To those who believed in us to be their good example, our sons,

And to those who trusted us, our sisters, brothers, and our husbands' families;

we dedicate this humble work

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Abstract

This dissertation in hand investigates the topic of the contribution of Muslims to the American politics during Barack Obama's presidency, it discusses mainly, the American immigration system, religious groups in the United State, the emergence of Islam, and the first Muslims who come to the new world, the structure of the American political system, and the American process of the presidential election. It also gives an overview of Barack Obama's presidency and focuses on the participation of Muslims in the American political sphere pending Obama's rule. The fundamental objective of this research is to identify the influence of Muslims on American society as well as their participation in the political framework. This investigation comes to bring attention and significance to the topic of Muslims' contribution to American politics and opens doors to discussions and further research into this issue. This research paper belongs to the descriptive□analytical approach of research. Checking the validity of this hypothesis is done using a questionnaire submitted to a group of Muslims who live in the United States of America. Discussion and analysis of the consequences of this research tool come to validate the hypothesis and prove that Muslims, indeed, participate(d), contribute(d), influence(d), and engage(d) in the American political field during Barack Obama's era, in addition to, their obtaining significant political positions in the American government.

Keywords: American politics, Barack Obama, Muslims' contribution, political system, religious groups.

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General Introduction

1. Background of the Study

America was founded in the late 18th century by a group of former Europeans declaring their independence from Great Britain. It became the symbol of hope for a better way of life for countless millions of people, initially from Europe and eventually for folks from all corners of the globe. Throughout the 19th and 20th centuries, America became known as the Great Melting Pot, welcoming people from all over the world. It is a country that is constructed from immigration and a mixture of cultures, values, traditions, and religions. Indeed, the USA has a diversity of people who come from an immense and sustained global immigration.

Probably no other country in the entire world has such a wide range of multiethnic groups as does the USA. In America, the coming together of many different peoples of different origins has created a diverse religious environment. Islam is one of the three monotheistic religions, along with Christianity and Judaism, it is the third-largest religion in America according to John Esposito, Islam is the fastest-growing religion in the U.S and Europe. It is the second-biggest religion in France (4 million) and the third in Britain (1.5 million), Germany, (1.9 million), and North America (Supra note, 8 at 3/ Colorado Mapping International 2000). He also says that Islam in the future will replace Judaism as the second-largest religion in the U.S, he proves with the high Muslim birth immigration and conversion. In the United States, a significant portion of the population follows Islamic traditions and believes in a single God.

The Muslim population of the USA increased dramatically in the second half of the 20th century as most of them became legal residents of the USA, originating from more than 80 countries on four continents. They made their way to the continent for settlement. During that time; they built mosques and schools. The majority of Muslims are employed, some of them are actively participating in politics, their presence in the political sphere has actually increased, they vote according to what they perceive as their interest as a Muslims, and they enjoy political

rights, especially if they are naturalized in America, being more educated is also important for political participation and the development of various attitudes that correspond with both democratic support and voting records. They influenced American society and contributed to the political era of Barack Obama's presidency.

2. Statement of the Problem

There have been many American Muslims who were elected, participated, and contributed to the political era of Barack Obama's presidency. The unanswered question here is whether the contribution of American Muslims to the American political sphere during Obama's presidency is significant or not. Have they influenced American society or not?

3. Aims of the Study

The objective of this research paper is to identify the influence of Muslim politicians during Obama's service. Moreover, it aims at showing how American society sees these politicians as a member of society.

4. Research Questions and Hypothesis

In an attempt of achieving the research objectives cited above, the following questions are asked:

- a.** How do Muslim Americans influence American society?
- b.** How does American society react to those contributions?

In accord with these questions, we hypothesize that Muslims has a significant influence on the political system during Barack Obama's presidency.

5. Research Methodology

In order to answer the proposed questions and reach the set aims, this research uses a questionnaire to collect data from participants who are American Muslims. Also, it refers to previous studies and analyzes the available data.

6. Significance of the Study

The importance of this research is that not many research papers have discussed this particular point in the political era, especially since we, as Muslims, need this research as a proof to show to the entire world how Islam and Muslims are able, capable, and strong enough to change the whole world to the best, mainly for westerners' thinking.

7. Structure of the study

Our dissertation consists of two chapters. The first chapter reviews the literature, and the second one includes the empirical part of the study. Chapter one, on one hand, provides information about Muslims and the American political system, starting with immigration to the USA, the American religious groups, the emergence of Islam and Muslims, the American political system, and ending with Barack Obama's presidency period. On the other hand, chapter two is devoted to shedding light on the participation of Muslim politicians in the American political framework, it proposes a list of influential Muslim politicians living in America, furthermore, this chapter discusses and analyses the results of the respondents' answers to the given questionnaire.

CHAPTER ONE

Muslims and the American Political System

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Introduction

This chapter gives an idea about the formation of the new continent as well as the diversity of the American religious categories, it discusses also the construction of the political system of the United States of America including the USA constitution, separation of powers, check and balance system, American political parties, and the presidential election process. It also presents Barack Obama's presidency period and sheds light on the emergence of Islam and Muslims in the USA.

1.1. Immigration to the New World

The United States is a home for millions of arrivals with their racial and ethnicity diversities that made America a melting pot country, the latter can refer to the country's story and the immigration of these citizens from all over the world to the new world hoping for a better life, as they came into waves in different periods of time.

1.14.3. The Native Americans

The first people who came to America are The Native Americans who are small bands of Stone Age hunters who walked across a land bridge between eastern Siberia and western Alaska into the new world(Magazine, 2020).They are also called 'Indians' because it seems later that Christopher Columbus in fact wanted to discover India but he arrived in America(American Indians - native Americans,n.d).

1.14.4. Christopher Columbus and the European Explorations of America

Next, the Italian navigator Christopher Columbus was funded by the Spanish Crown, and sailed westward from Spain at the Port of Palos on August 3, 1492,in hopes of finding a new sea route to South and Southeast Asia. On October 12thof that same year, he made landfall on an island in the Bahamas(Phoneia,n.d) instead of his intended destination Asia(Beecham, 2017) where the American continents appeared at first to him and the Spanish as a problem, not an opportunity. They were not

glad about this discovery because it constituted a major obstacle to their real goal which is reaching China or India(Trade, Discovery, and the new world' of 1492,2020).Although, the Spaniards later started to profit from the occasion and enslave conquered Indians and put them to work to support the Spanish enrichment(ruined and lost Spanish destruction of the pearl, n.d). Columbus opened the way for other European explorations,invasions, and colonization of the Americas, who were aiming for finding new trade routes, new enterprises, and riches, looking for lands to build an empire for their mother country and to spread Christianity among indigenous people. Firstly, the French Francis I, King of France was in charge of their great invasion of North America, which was looking for a Northwest gateway to Asia and the expanding fur trade in Europe. Later, the French inhabitants, or farmer settlers, settled around the St. Lawrence River, While French fur traders and missionaries explored the Great Lakes region and the Mississippi River in the interior of North America (Course Hero, n.d). Secondly The Spanish colonization. the Spanish conquistadors colonized coastal Florida, the southwest, and California in the 1500s and 1600s when the Monarchy of Spain sought to promote trade and propagate the Christian faith by enslaving the natives and converting them to Christianity, farming, and sheep-herding. Juan Ponce de Leon, a prominent Spanish invader of the Americas who sailed in Columbus' second voyage to the new world and founded the new land of Florida, is one of the most famous Spanish invaders of the Americas. After an attack by American Indian soldiers in neighboring Cuba, he died as a result of their rejection of the enslaving way of life (Course Hero, n.d.).

Unlike the Spanish colonization, Dutch expansion was small and humble, they remained small business based on the fur trade like the French (Course Hero, n.d), they settled along the Hudson River and New York Bay, and New Sweden, along the Delaware River (The Pennsylvania magazine- JSTOR, n.d), to recruit soldiers, farmers, craftsmen, clergymen, and their families to offer the demand of the fur traders who bought pelts from the natives, they eliminated their commercial affairs to only present New Jersey then it flourished and circulated beyond this boundaries. For over 200 years, the Dutch maintained their culture in rural New York and New Jersey where there are white,

red, brown, and black citizens; institutions for Catholics, Jews, and Protestants; and a diversity that resulted in eighteen different languages being spoken(Mauk & Oakland,2009).

Afterward, for the British. England had experienced a huge rise in population in the 16th century, and it set up about a dozen colonies because it saw that the colonies are inviting put for those who suffered from overcrowding and destitution at home thus it energized immigration far more than other rival expansions.The English worked within the field of Tobacco in Maryland and Virginia,Jamestown(Course Hero,n.d), which was the first permanent settlement established by the English in 1607. Because of the shortage of plantations, the English imported the first African laborers as indentured servants in 1619(free people who contracted for 5 to 7 years of servitude). By 1700, there were 75,000 white Americans and 10,000 Africans in hereditary slavery in America (Mauk&Oakland,2009). After the European colonization called the founders, there were four main waves of immigration to the new world.

1.14.5. Waves of Immigration to the New World

1.14.5.1. The First Wave: Colonial Immigration (1680-1776)

The majority of its immigrants (voluntary newcomers) were the Scots-Irish With encouragement from the English(the Crown) who refused emigration from England and Wales but encouraged it from other nations after 1660.In the 1500s Scots-Irish ancestors came from Scotland to Northern Ireland then after 1680 a 250 of them left Northern Ireland for the American colonies, settled on the frontier where land are not expensive and they were continuously searching for better land which lead to the scatteration of their settlements from western New England to the hill country of Georgia resulting difficulty in the preservation of their cultural heritage(Mauk&Oakland,2009).

The largest non-English speaking region in the American colonies(200,000) are the German immigrants. The Germans lived on the frontier. They survive their religion and culture in North

America by learning German from their descendants. They developed German-speaking cities, but they were introverted and colonial politics were not their interest. Germans were hard workers and they are also known for their caution, farming methods, and care of their property, and they achieved a big success (Mauk & Oakland, 2009).

The first wave had played a great role in making America see its diversity as a new vision, possession of religious tolerance, and a federal system of government. This first wave of immigration changed the demography of the colonies. The US was called by Thomas Paine a 'nation of nations' at its founding because of the great diversity in the country as (20%) of the inhabitants were African-American slaves settling in the southern colonies and (52%) are English whose Anglo-American domination in culture, politics, and economics is markable and other Non-English regions residing in coastal cities, the south, Pennsylvania, and parts of the other colonies (Mauk & Oakland, 2009)

1.14.5.2. The Second Wave: The Old Immigrants (1820-1890)

The spread of the industrial revolution and an international trade boom from Britain to the USA During the 1800s, the huge population surplus from the countryside and The 'America letters' from people's friends in the USA show the changing economic conditions there are reasons that lead 60 million people to leave their motherlands between 1820 and 1930 and came to America, they were orderly in size, Germans who were invited for their technical knowledge and industry, Irish who were usually stereotyped as grimy and violent drunks the reason of their suffering from discrimination in America, Britons, and Scandinavians who had language difficulties that made them look incomprehensible and others were French Canadians, Chinese, Swiss, Dutch, and British who had integrated easily in American community because of their English and Anglo-American's culture. They were all looking for a boundless supply of land and Jobs (Mauk & Oakland, 2009).

1.14.5.3. The Third Wave: The New Immigrants (1890-1930)

Around 1890, Immigrants were mostly from southern and eastern Europe. Between 1890 and 1914, America witnessed a rise in the volume of immigration to more than a million yearly. Italians, Jews, Poles, and Hungarians were the biggest 'new' groups in order, in addition to many Mexicans, Russians, Czechs, Greeks, Portuguese, Syrians, Japanese, Filipinos, and others. These new immigrants were also looking for the improvement of their own and their children's futures (Mauk & Oakland, 2009).

The new immigrants were younger, usually unmarried and sojourners who viewed immigration as a short-term strategy because of the cheap travel. They stayed not a short time in America in order to save money for purchasing land or a small business in the old country (Mauk & Oakland, 2009).

1.14.5.4. The Fourth Wave (1965 to the present)

The fourth wave of immigration started with the issuing of such laws as the 1965 law. In the late 1990s, this wave generated the largest immigration totals in American history. Hundreds of thousands of immediate relatives and refugees beyond the hemispheric limits and millions of undocumented immigrants were contained in this wave. Nearly 39 million people lawfully settled in America between 1960 and 2007. This wave is regarded as the most diverse wave in the history of the United States, as it included Latino, European, Mexican, and Asian immigrants. This fourth category includes socio-economic groups. The vast majority of legal and illegal immigrants are above average academically and economically in their native countries, but below average in the United States. They have come because their traditional economies have been disturbed by commercialization and industrialization. Recently arrived groups of refugees from wars and

other tragedies are frequently at the socioeconomic bottom of this wave. People who acquire visas because they are close relatives of recent, more skilled immigrants or who accept jobs that Americans do not want are among the lowest. Latina women working as live-in domestic maids and nannies are among the latter. They progress to better-paying jobs as their English improves (Mauk & Oakland, 2009).

To conclude, America is melting pot as a result of the arrival and the coming of a huge mixture of people and regions from different sides and their settlement in the new world in addition to their specific occupations, crafts, and activities in multiple fields which are needed for building a complete and self-efficacy community.

1.1. Religious Groups in America

Religion is a persuasive and powerful force in modern society. It is illustrated in the wide variety of religious groups which reflect the personal, communal, and ethnic identities of citizens; and its influence on the political structure, social institution, national institutions, morality; and on the country's history (Why study religions?, n.d) is inescapable whether in the United States or around the world. As President Obama declared: "This is America, and our commitment to religious freedom must be unshakeable. The principle that peoples of all faiths are welcome in this country and that they are not treated differently by their government is essential to who we are." This emphasizes the idea and the belief that the United States is a place of religious pluralism and associated tolerance and such a society supported by the strong principle of religious freedom (Magazine, 2010) that allows the religious groups to maintain and develop their faith or beliefs within the common society, thus we could see the appearance of a wide variety of religions worshipped by people of the same country which could be Christian faiths, Non-Christian, other faiths or even the Nones.

1.14.6. The Nones

For the Nones, they are simply the non-religious and people of no particular faith, their presence has been a significant element in the national identity and character from the earliest days of the nation, they are residing in the West and the Northeast (The 2020 Census of American Religion, 2021) and they make up a (22.8%) of the U.S population (Religious landscape study, 2022).

1.14.6.1. The Atheists

(3.1%) of them are Atheist (Religious landscape study, 2022) who belongs to Atheism which has no clear definition and usage. For example, consider the following definitions of 'Atheism' or 'theist' all taken from serious scholarly writings published in the last ten years: (Bullivant & Ruse, n.d)

- ❖ "Atheism (...) is the belief that there is no God or Gods" (Baggini, 2003 :3) (Bullivant & Ruse, n.d)
- ❖ "At its core, atheism (...) designates a position (not a 'belief') that includes or asserts no god(s)" (Eller, 2014 :1; Bullivant & Ruse, n.d)
- ❖ "(A)n atheist is someone without a belief in God; he or she need not be someone who believes that God does not exist" (Martin 2007:1; Bullivant & Ruse, n.d)
- ❖ "(A)n atheist does not believe in the god that theism favours" (Cliteur, 2009; Bullivant & Ruse, n.d)
- ❖ "By 'atheist' I mean precisely what the word has always been understood to mean a principled and informed decision to reject belief in God" (McGrath, 2004:175; Bullivant & Ruse, n.d).

Atheists are knowledgeable and well-informed about religion but they negatively express views when they are asked about the role of religion in society, most of them consider "family" as a source of meaning (Lipka, 2021).

1.14.6.2. The Agnostic

(4.0%) are identified as Agnostic (Religious landscape study, 2022). Agnosticism is characterized by skepticism about or bracketing of the existence of God, and the construction of world view and identity without any assumption that there is a God (Baggini, 2003; Mackie, 1982). It signifies a turn away from specific images of God, it is less resolute than atheism, more open to religious or spiritual sentiment and quest. Both atheism and agnosticism are based upon (even though refusing or bracketing) a culturally dominant and specifically theistic image of God (Pargament et al., 2013).

There are specific motives and biographical factors which developed atheism and agnosticism:

- a.** “an opposition against Christianity because of faults of the Catholic Church (e.g., the crusades or witch-hunting, clergy sexual abuse) and its rigid sexual morals regarding contraception, premarital sex, and homosexuality” (Pargament et al., 2013).
- b.** “experiences of religious hurt and disappointment, in particular the feeling of being abandoned by God in times of burden and loss” (Pargament et al., 2013).
- c.** “negative and critical images of God (e.g., the feeling of incapacity to meet God’s demands and of being supervised and punished by God)” (Pargament et al., 2013).
- d.** “the question of theodicy (if God is just, loving, and all-powerful, why does he allow evil and suffering to exist?)” (Pargament et al., 2013).
- e.** “the yearning for God and faith to find meaning and comfort. These factors may support the emergence of skepticism against religious beliefs, groups and institutions and, as a consequence, raise serious questions about religion in general” (Pargament et al., 2013).
- f.** “severe illness, the loss of a loved person, physical, emotional, and sexual abuse, and other traumata also can incite spiritual struggles that lead to agnosticism” (Pargament et al., 2013).

Other (15.8%) belong to no particular religion(Religious landscape study,2022).

1.14.7. Christian People

Concerning Christian faiths, Christianity has been the foremost predominant and influential pluralist religion in American society which has made a difference cultivate a multiplicity of the expression and the practice of its religious rites that changed the religious landscape of the country.

This religion is embraced by a wide majority (70.6%) of white Americans. (46.6%) identify with a Protestant denomination, including (25.4%) identified as an evangelical protestant(Religious landscape study,2022)who are most heavily concentrated in counties in the South and lower Midwest (The 2020 census of American religion – pri,n.d)they are divided into many groups The Calvinist, The Anglican,most members of their church are Virginia’s population,Baptists, Presbyterians, andMethodists. (14.7%) who are Mainline protestant(Religious landscape study,2022)and intensely settled in counties in the Midwest(The 2020 census of American religion – pri,n.d), and (6.5%) who are Historically Black protestant(Religious landscape study,2022)most residing in the South and Southeast, particularly in the Deep South(The 2020 census of American religion – pri,n.d).Another (20.8%) of the Christian people are identified as Catholic(Religious landscape study,2022) who are centered in counties in the Northeast and Midwest and southern Louisiana(The 2020 census of American religion – pri,n.d).(1.6%) are Mormon(Latter-day Saint) (Religious landscape study,2022) who are settled in Utah (The 2020 census of American religion – pri,n.d)this Mormonism appeared as a reaction to traditional faiths in the nineteenth century(Divining America: Religion in American history,TeacherServe, National Humanities Center,n.d). (0.5%) are Orthodox Christian.(0.8%) are Jehovah's Witness and (0.4%) are other Christian(Religious Landscape Study,2022).

1.14.8. The Non-Christian People

1.14.8.1. The Jewish.

Concerning the Non-Christian faiths, The United States represents a Home and welcoming place for the migrant Jews of Israel, this justifies the reason why (1.9%) of the population embrace Judaism. (Religious landscape study, 2022) which makes it the largest religious group in America after Christianity. Most Jewish residents in the northeastern states such as New York and New Jersey in addition to Newport, Rhode Island which became their center of life in Utah (The 2020 census of American religion – pri, n.d) and live with a secular mentality as they consider their Jewishness as a matter of culture and identity not a way of life.

1.14.8.2. The Hindus

A small part of the American society embraces Hinduism (0.7%) (Religious landscape study, 2022) most of them are Asian, and they primarily reside in larger metropolitan regions, particularly near New York City and San Francisco Utah (The 2020 census of American religion – pri, n.d). The American Hindus used to express their presence, identity, and culture in the religious landscape by establishing temple buildings and cultural hubs which cater to their spiritual and cultural need (Pier, n.d).

1.14.8.3. The Buddhist

Buddhism co-exists alongside cults of Gods and supernatural entities of all kinds. Visitors to many Asian Buddhist temples regularly find some space within the temple shared with a shrine to a local or trans-local deity, or indeed one or another of a variety of non-human entities with which the visitor might interact (Bullivant & Ruse, n.d) is a small religious that embrace (0.7%) of people (Religious landscape study, 2022) from different ethnic and racial background including Asian, Latino, African American and others who are primarily concentrated in Hawaii and the West

Coast, particularly in the San Francisco Bay Area (The 2020 census of American religion – pri,n.d)though the ethnicity diversity of people ,still their temples composed of only one single ethnic group,Buddhismdiffers among people in its practices and organizational structure(Pier,n.d).

1.14.8.4. The Muslims

Later there is (0.9%) of the whole population embraceIslam(Religious landscape study,2022),such a religion based on the idea of the total submission to God’s will. The Human is an obedient servant to benevolent Godmeans that Islam commits absolutemonotheism.The other major expression of Islam known as Sunni Islam involves people who are following the teaching and the practice of our prophet Muhammad,itpresents the majority of the Islamic world. It focuses on the belief in unity embracing multiple legal views,the teaching of the Qur’an, and the practice of prophet.TheUlama interpret the religious laws and they present religious authorities to Sunni Muslims(Islam,n.d).

1.2. Islam in America

Americans’ first contact with Islam was through the earlysettlement,Muslims first came to North America during the seventeenth century as they came from Syria, Lebanon,Jordan, and Palestine and settled in California,The Great Lakes, and near the Northeast commercial and industrial centers.they were uneducated and incompetent farmers then they work on themselves to be sellers,manufacturing plant workers,laborers,miners, and shop owners.Their communal gatherings and prayers were taking place in in-built communal institutions situated in storefronts and private homes(Islam in America / history detectives,n.d).The desire to be welcomed quickly in the Christian American society and the sociological reality to be a small minority in a Christian environment to a big extent are reasons for the rising rates of intermarriage and assimilation which its early period ended with the start of the World War I (The World's Muslims: Unity and diversity,2022).

After the war to the mid-1960s, many Palestinians, Egyptians, Iraqis, Iranians, Syrians, and Eastern European Muslims who were well educated and from big families escaped social and political unrest and conflict and immigrated to America in addition to Others who came from India, Pakistan, Turkey, and Egypt (Arab and other Middle Eastern Americans, 2021).

Since the late 1960s, a high percentage of highly-educated English-speaking Muslim immigrants arrived looking for educational and economic opportunities. While Lebanese, Palestinians, and Iraqis - have been displaced by civil conflict and unrest in their motherland, Some Pakistanis, Syrians, and Iranians—have looked for freedom from repressive regimes (Arab and other Middle Eastern Americans, 2021). The postwar years witnessed an important development in the Islamic community including the foundation of big, multifunctional religious institutions, known as Islamic centers, a number of essential centers which were built—in New York, Ohio, California, Illinois, Michigan, and Indiana primarily during the 1950s. The opening of the Islamic Center of Washington, D.C. in 1957 reflects the significant development for many reasons such as the symbolization of the Islamic universality and the public presence of Islam at the center of American political power, the need for political and cultural reinforcement, and it was established with the cooperation and participation of fourteen Islamic states, and it put the American Islamic community on the map of world Islam (Academic dictionaries and encyclopedias, n.d).

Recent studies characterize American Muslims as the big middle-class and an integral part of American society. They are present in all walks of life as the public life by establishing institutions of their own which create programs that serve both American Muslim communities and the public, besides the economic and political sides. They work as taxi drivers, lawyers, journalists, vendors; accountants, homemakers, academics, media personalities, athletes, entertainers, and other different jobs.

1.3. American Political System

Politics is the process of governments making collective choices to allocate public resources and develop and enforce norms for the functioning of society. A political system describes how a society organizes and conducts its politics at various levels of government (Kollman,2014).

The American political system began in 1776 as a test of liberty and democracy; it is now more accurately defined as a constitutional federal republic. The term "constitutional" refers to the fact that the United States government is based on the principle that the people have the last say in the system. The United States was founded on the concepts of limited government, separation of powers, checks and balances, judicial review, and federalism. The executive branch, which is distinct from the legislative branch, is led by the president. The two legislative houses of Congress are the Senate and the House of Representatives. The Supreme Court and lesser federal courts make up the judicial branch (or judiciary), which has judicial power. The judiciary's job is to interpret the US Constitution as well as federal legislation and regulations. Resolving problems between the Executive and Legislative branches of government is part of this. The federal government was formed by the United States constitution. The Democratic Party and the Republican Party have dominated American politics since the Civil War, while smaller parties have grown. This authority is exercised through presidential elections that are held on a regular schedule and in which voters elect the President using a certain electoral method from among a set of candidates. Policymaking is in the hands of these authorities and their staff. As well as overseeing the government's daily operations(Boucif,Ben Ali& Ben Amor,2020).

1.3.1. The United States Constitution

The United States Constitution is the oldest written constitution in use by nation-states worldwide. Despite the fact that it has served as a model for many other constitutions, the form of governance it established is fundamentally American. The Constitution, which was ratified in 1788, gave the fledgling republic the crucial government qualities it lacked under the Articles of Confederation(Kollman,2014).

These characteristics contributed to the national government's strength by allowing it to deal with collective difficulties among states and people. The Founders, on the other hand, purposefully constructed a constitutional system with limited public control, fearing that too much democracy would lead to bad governance and mob rule. The Senate, the president, and federal court judges were all appointed by officials selected in some fashion by the people—the Senate by state governments, the president by the electoral college, and federal court judges by the president and the senate (Kollman,2014).

1.3.2. The Separation of Power

The government of the United States is organized into three branches: executive, legislative, and judiciary. The executive branch is in charge of enforcing laws, while the legislative branch is in charge of making laws and the judicial branch is in charge of interpreting them (Faouzi and Ammar, 2018). Each arm of government has its own authority, which keeps the other branches in check and prevents one branch from becoming too powerful. Congress, for example, has the capacity to pass laws, the president has the right to veto them, and the Supreme Court has the power to deem them unconstitutional. The separation of powers contrasts with a parliamentary system (as in the United Kingdom), in which the executive (usually the prime minister) is chosen by the parliament and continues in power at the discretion of the parliament. In parliamentary systems, the parliament stands atop a hierarchy and has the authority to hire and remove the executive. In reality, a separation-of-powers system is distinguished by having a president chosen independently of the

legislature. The separation-of-powers system used in the United States, in which the legislature does not pick the executive but rather imposes the rules that the administration must follow, is becoming increasingly popular in nascent democracies throughout the world. Many nations in Latin America, Africa, and Asia have democratically elected presidents with significant power. Parliamentary systems—in which the legislative and executive responsibilities are merged by virtue of the parliament choosing the executive—are more widespread in older democracies, particularly in Europe. Based on their experiences with the British government, the Founders decided to create a separation-of-powers structure to prevent a form of government with a single sovereign. Divided governmental authority was a bulwark against oppression for the Founding Fathers(Kollman,2014).

1.3.2.1. An Executive President

The executive branch was the subject of several proposals at the Constitutional Convention. They included anything from a plural executive (three or more individuals) to a president who served for life(Kollman,2014).The president of the United States of America is both the country's head of state and its chief executive. The president is in charge of the executive branch of the federal government and is responsible for seeing that laws are followed(Kiyayi,2016).The delegates finally decided on a single president who would serve for four years. Unlike the Articles, which made it impossible for states to band together to put down rebellions and negotiate with foreign powers, the Constitution's individually held executive powers were meant to give the national government decisiveness in the face of collective challenges. The president has vast powers under the Constitution to carry out laws, protect the country from internal and external military threats, negotiate with other countries, and select members of the executive branch. The electoral college, which is made up of state-level elector groups, indirectly elects the president. This type of presidential election was a compromise between those who want an executive appointed by Congress and others who desired an executive appointed directly by the people in a popular election(Kollman,2014).

1.3.2.2. A Bicameral Legislature

The delegates decided on a Congress with two chambers or houses (a bicameral legislature), each of which must pass legislation for it to become law. Members of the House of Representatives are directly chosen by the voters since it is designed to represent the people. The House is divided into districts based on population, with each representative serving a two-year term. The purpose of the Senate is to represent the states. Each state has two senators, who were initially elected for six-year terms by the state governments. Senators have been directly elected by the people of their states since 1913 when the Seventeenth Amendment to the Constitution was ratified. The Founders intended Congress to be at the core of the national government, so they gave it the most stated powers in the Constitution, far more than the executive or judicial branches. The so-called elastic clause's general phrasing, which refers to the right to make "all laws necessary and appropriate," gives Congress broad legislative authority to provide the tools to carry out its defined powers(Kollman,2014).

1.3.2.3. An Independent Judiciary

The federal courts, led by the Supreme Court, have supreme judicial power over the whole country, having jurisdiction over all issues "arising under this Constitution." Congress, tasked by the President with deciding whether "inferior" federal courts should be established, established a system of federal district and appeals courts early on. In contemporary societies, courts that are independent of other branches of government and the interests of their respective states or localities play a critical role in preserving social order and promoting the common good. The courts decide on the interpretation and application of laws and contracts. People, governments, and organizations would often settle their issues using other ways, such as violence or intimidation if there were no objective, unbiased courts. A federal court can also handle conflicts between states or sub-units of the federal government. A powerful Supreme Court was viewed as vital to address interstate conflicts as well as

matters involving broader legal or constitutional concerns. States have kept their own court systems to handle state-level concerns, but federal courts have jurisdiction over cases involving conflicts between states, between people residing in different states, and between representatives of foreign governments and the United States. Soon after the Constitution was written, the Supreme Court declared that it had the right to decide whether actions taken by any government inside the United States were valid. Despite the fact that the Supreme Court's ability to evaluate the legality of government laws or acts is not addressed in the Constitution, it was asserted by the Federalists and implemented by the Supreme Court in the Marbury vs. Madison decision of 1803(Kollman,2014).

1.3.3. Checks and Balances

The concept of checks and balances (as distinguished from the concept of separation of powers) relates to how power is shared across the three parts of government. The Founders included a number of "checks" in the democratic system to guarantee that power did not get centralized in any of the three branches. No branch can undertake core business without the consent or agreement of the others. While separation of powers splits major functions among many branches, checks and balances ensure that no one branch has complete authority over any function(Kollman,2014).

1.4. The First American Political Parties

Since their founding in 1789, the American political parties have pursued numerous paths. This prompted a discussion about accepting the constitution, especially during the ratification debate in 1787. Following these conversations, two varied political parties were formed to serve as the country's first two principal political parties(Aouabdi,2018).

Political scientists use the word "party system" to characterize a generally long-lasting system of political party and voter arrangements, electoral procedures, and policy agendas that dominate a democratic political system's election process for a certain amount of time. The "system" illustrates

how political parties manage the government, organize a voting base, and handle finance, information, and candidate and officeholder selection. Critical Elections in one nation divided two-party systems, transforming important portions of the previous system and establishing a new one. Political scientists in the United States number the party systems, beginning with the, which lasted from the 1790s until around 1824. The researcher now goes to the next phase, which is described in the subheading "National Government Creation(Aouabdi,2018).

James Madison and Thomas Jefferson argued with Alexander Hamilton over who was leading the country in the right direction. The dispute centred on each camp's perception of how it defined the common good. They created the Edmund Burke-inspired Anglo-Irish political parties of the eighteenth century. According to academics, the founding age was afraid of factions and the potential for national fragmentation that they represented. Later, when they became politicians, they discovered that parties were essential for allowing them to establish the coalitions necessary to rule. According to Alexander Hamilton, the survival of the young nation depended on a powerful central authority. Many of Hamilton's opinions were shared by both President George Washington and Vice President John Adams (Maisel, 2007). However, Thomas Jefferson was in favour of a more rural, state-centric country. The party division developed as a result of disagreements over the direction the country should go (Maisel, 2007). During the dispute over the pro-British Jay Treaty, the split between the Federalists, which included Washington, Adams, and Hamilton, and the Democratic-Republicans, which included Jefferson and Madison, became permanent. It was opposed by Jefferson, a Francophile. He left his cabinet job and returned to his Virginia estate, Monticello. But only for a short time. In 1796, Washington stated that he would not seek re-election to a third term. As vice president, John Adams wanted to replace him, determined to carry out Hamilton's plans without the presence of Hamilton himself. Opponents of Hamilton's ideas in Congress formed a campaign for Jefferson by writing to voters seeking support(Maisel,2007).

By three electoral votes, Adams barely defeated Jefferson in the election; Jefferson conceded to Adams and consented to serve as his vice president, as required by the electoral process at the time, a significant step in nation-building as he recognized the validity of the political system. This party system was policy-driven, originating at the national government's seat and expanding across the country(Maisel,2007).

Adams was a divisive figure, and Jefferson stood up to him once again in 1800. By that time, the party structure had matured sufficiently that all of Jefferson's supporters also voted for his running partner, Aaron Burr, and the two tied for the president, with each receiving eight more electoral votes than Adams. Because no candidate received a majority of electoral votes, the election was thrown into the Federalist-controlled House of Representatives to decide among the top three finishers, and the country was in a state of emergency, rife with rumors of covert deals to keep Jefferson from becoming president. After 35 inconclusive votes in the House, Jefferson was ultimately elected. The validity of the voting process was proved since the election winner was not denied his award(Maisel,2007).

The contributions to nation-building during these early years are absolutely astonishing, and the parties, which were hated by the founders before coming to power, played a big role. First, in 1796, a popular president, who might have easily been reelected indefinitely, willingly renounced power. Following that, due to a constitutional clause in effect at the time, a candidate who opposed the president's policies and was barely beaten consented to serve as vice president after the election to succeed him. Third, a political party structure emerged, allowing national leaders to present their policy differences to the population for a vote. Of course, the electorate was small back then—restricted to white males and property owners in many states(Maisel,2007).

Fourth, the incumbent president lost the election in 1800 and finally conceded, even though he might have stayed in office by manipulating the House of Representatives. The legitimacy of the new

nation's political system was confirmed when Adams voluntarily handed over the presidency to Jefferson; and the role that parties were to play in that system displayed a predominance never seen before(Maisel,2007).

The Federalists quickly devolved into a New England sectional party following the election in 1800. Its ideas were too conservative to appeal to the general public, and its leaders made few concessions in an attempt to achieve favor. They were staunch Anglophiles who opposed Congress' declaration of war against Britain in 1812. By 1820, the Democratic-Republicans had no serious opponents(Maisel,2007).

The Federalists were the first political party in American history to dissolve. Americans today would be surprised if a major political party disappeared, but keep in mind that these were frail and immature parties(Maisel,2007).

Citizens had not had time to acquire a sense of allegiance to a political party as an institution; instead, they were devoted to the leaders. On not every subject, the political elite was split. "Every difference of opinion is not a difference of principle," Jefferson stated in his first inaugural address. "We are all Republicans; we are all Federalists." Legislators were more loyal to their home districts than to their political parties. As president, Jefferson held carefully planned dinner parties to persuade legislators to accept his positions. There was no established party organization to support the Federalist party when its leaders failed to respond to widespread unhappiness with their ideals. The party dispersed once the leader returned to their homes(Maisel,2007).

1.4.1. The Basic Establishment of the American Democracy

Previously, a group of people associated with the eighteenth-century revolutionary generation used the term democracy to describe their political and social programs. Following the loss of British domination, legislators in all states were extremely strong, indicating a favorable trend

toward democracy. The term "democracy" was not used throughout the revolution. It was not mentioned in the Declaration of Independence, the first state constitutions, or the United States Constitution. Even Thomas Jefferson avoided using the word in any of his communications or addresses because he considered that a government-run by a simple majority - even of farmers - could be as tyrannical as a single man(Aouabdi,2018).

Democracy flourished rapidly after the French Revolution began in 1789. Local societies were formed in every state following the American Revolution in 1793 in order to continue politics and education. There were 42 societies that named themselves "Democratic"- "Republican," fifteen societies that called themselves "Democratic," and the rest used the title "Republic." The congress included two well-organized parties, each of which tried its utmost to further its own interests. The anti-federalist party then organized local conventions to choose a name that matched them. Some of them identified as Republicans, while others chose the moniker "Democratic-Republican," and the others identified as democratic. However, no formal identities of the parties were provided. The national convention of 1840 discussed "Cardinal Principles in the Democratic Faith." It was poised to declare the party "the American Democracy," the democratic party of the United States, in 1844. All Americans agreed that democracy arrived at the perfect time to assist people in realizing their rights to liberty and wealth. The democratic principles began to spread quickly throughout the country. Wealth and social status were more evenly distributed. The additional states received the power to vote when the constitution was adopted. However, the number of senators and members in Congress has grown. There were greater opportunities to implement democratic principles in everyday life. All Americans agreed that democracy arrived at the perfect time to assist people in realizing their rights to liberty and wealth(Aouabdi,2018).

1.5. American Presidential Election Process

The presidential election is one of the most important events in American politics. It goes through a lengthy and complicated procedure to select the president and vice president for the following four years(Salhi, Mehanaoui& Mega,2021).

American citizens go to the polls every four years to elect a president. However, the process of choosing the president begins well before election day. Candidates engage in a series of state-by-state competitions to decide who gets their party's nomination beginning early in an election year. The nominees would next compete in a nationwide election for the president. The state primaries and caucuses kick off the nominating process. Each state has at least one, though primaries are far more prevalent.Delegates to represent the state at the parties' national conventions are chosen through primaries and caucuses.Voters travel to a polling location to cast a secret ballot in a primary election. People meet at a polling location to hear speeches and participate in discussions before casting their votes openly in a caucus. The importance of the primaries and caucuses is reflected in the amount of time and money candidates spend campaigning for the first contests, especially the Iowa caucus and the New Hampshire primary. A bad showing in either of those states can force a contender out of the race, while a strong showing can help a campaign.The Democratic and Republican national conventions, held in the summer before the November election, are the culmination of the nomination season. For many years, conventions were stressful and frequently corrupt occasions, with delegates and party executives meeting behind closed doors and brokering agreements to choose a candidate. However, following the shambolic Democratic convention of 1968, changes diminished the prominence of conventions in comparison to primaries and caucuses. Most convention delegates are now obligated to support a certain candidate, and they essentially confirm the voters' choice. Despite this, the norms are still important. The parties develop their platforms there, which outline the party's goals and presidential candidate. The convention also

serves to bring each party together after what could have been a contentious nomination fight. The presidential candidates have a few months to campaign after the conventions before the general election. On election day, which falls on the Tuesday after the first Monday in November, voters around the country cast their ballots for president. The final vote, however, is cast by an institution known as the electoral college, not by the people. The architects of the United States Constitution were leery about directly electing the president. They entrusted the election of the president and vice president to the electoral college in Article II of the Constitution (Britannica, 2009).

Members of the college, known as electors, were first appointed by the state legislatures. All states picked their electors by a direct public vote by the end of the Civil War. Each state is allotted the same number of electors as its Congressional representation: one for each House member and two for each senator. There are three electors in the District of Columbia. When voters vote for a presidential candidate in a general election, they are essentially voting for a slate of electors. Except for Maine and Nebraska, all states adopt a "winner take all" system, in which the party of the candidate who obtains the most votes receives all of the electors regardless of the state's popular vote margin of victory. As a result, a candidate might lose the popular vote but still win the election if he or she wins the electoral vote, as happened in 1876, 1888, and 2000. On the Monday after the second Wednesday in December, electors gather in their state capitals to vote for president and vice president. The Constitution does not obligate electors to vote for the candidates who received the most votes in their state, while several states have statutes forcing electors to do so. Regardless, electors seldom vote for candidates who are not from their own political party. The votes of the electors are submitted to Congress, and the candidates are legally elected when the electoral votes are counted on January 6 of the following year. The president and vice president are elected by receiving a majority, or more than half, of the votes, cast. If no candidate receives a majority, the

president is chosen by the House of Representatives. On January 20, the next president will be formally inaugurated in Washington (Britannica,2009).

1.6. Barack Obama's Presidency

Barack Obama's leadership style and values have made him one of the most well-known figures in modern history. Obama has established and improved extraordinary leadership techniques and talents throughout his remarkable career, which have aided in his success. Obama has overcome conventional divides of ethnicity, socioeconomics, geography, party affiliation, and race to achieve one significant success after another: president of the century-old Harvard Law Review, Illinois state senator, United States senator, and president of the United States. Obama's outstanding leadership talents helped him overcome the "Clinton machine," engage millennials, broaden the American electorate in new ways, acquire a 2 million-strong donor base, win the presidency, and inspire the biggest Republican voter crossover in modern history, receiving 53 percent of the popular vote—more than any nonincumbent presidential candidate since Dwight Eisenhower in 1952. Obama's achievement is a reflection of how successful his leadership abilities are(Leanne,2010).

On August 4, 1961, Barak Obama was born in Honolulu, Hawaii. He was raised there by his American mother and Kenyan father. On January 20, 2009, Barack Obama was inaugurated as the nation's 44th President and the nation's first African American leader (UVA Miller Center, 2020). During the 2008 presidential campaign, Obama looked to be an improbable participant. He received his education at Columbia University in New York City. He relocated to Chicago, Illinois, and began working as a community organizer. He enrolled at Harvard Law School in 1988. He was the first African American to be chosen president of the prestigious Harvard Law Review during the 1990-1991 academic year. When Obama returned to Chicago, he worked for a civil rights law firm and taught at the University of Chicago. In 1997, he was elected to the state legislature. After

serving as a state legislator for eight years, Obama campaigned for the United States Senate in 2004 and won by the greatest margin in Illinois Senate elections history. In 2012, Barack Obama was re-elected to a second term, a time highlighted by significant events such as the assassination of Osama Bin Laden (UVA Miller Center,2020).

During Obama's presidency, the United States of America has seen significant social, demographic, and technical developments, including significant adjustments in government policy and public opinion, and improved racial relations among black voters. Obama's election improved America's international image, particularly in Europe (Dimock,2021).

1.6.1. Politics as a Career

Obama relocated to Chicago after law school and became involved in the Democratic Party. He coordinated Project Vote, a voter registration operation that registered tens of thousands of African Americans. He also taught constitutional law at the University of Chicago and practiced civil rights law. Obama was elected to the Illinois Senate in 1996, where he helped enact, legislation tightening campaign finance controls, expanding health insurance to low-income families, and reforming criminal justice and welfare laws. Obama was elected to the United States Senate to represent Illinois in 2004. In the first Senate campaign in which the two top contenders were African Americans, he easily beat Republican Alan Keyes, a conservative radio talk-show personality and former ambassador. Since the conclusion of Reconstruction in 1877, Obama is just the third African American to be elected to the Senate. Obama rose to global fame during his Senate race by giving the keynote message at the Democratic National Convention in July 2004. The impassioned address intertwined Obama's personal history with the concept that all Americans are related in ways that transcend political, cultural, and geographic divides. Obama swiftly rose to prominence in his party after assuming office the following year. He was appointed to numerous prestigious committees, including the Foreign Relations Committee. As a senator, he pushed for government ethics reform,

promoted alternative energy sources, and tried to secure or eliminate lethal weapons in Russia and abroad(Britannica,2009).

1.6.2. Election and Nomination

Obama launched his candidacy for the Democratic presidential nomination in 2008 in early 2007. Senator Hillary Clinton of New York was the overwhelming favorite to win the nomination. Many Democrats, particularly young and minority voters, were moved by Obama's personal charm, passionate oratory, and promises to reform the political system. Obama unexpectedly won the Iowa caucus on January 3, 2008, the first major nominating contest. However, in the New Hampshire primary five days later, Obama came in second to Clinton. Following a bruising—and at times bitter—primary campaign, both Obama and Clinton claimed significant victories. After the June primaries, Obama was able to earn the nomination. In August, he accepted the nomination at the Democratic National Convention, making him the first African American to be nominated for president by either major political party. Senator Joe Biden of Delaware was his vice-presidential running mate. Senator John McCain of Arizona was Obama's Republican presidential opponent. The Iraq War, with Obama proposing for a rapid departure of most US soldiers from Iraq, and domestic concerns like health care and taxation were key themes in the hard-fought election. The economy became the single most significant topic in the weeks running up to the election, with surveys showing that the majority of people felt Obama was better able to turn the economy around. Obama won the presidency with a landslide victory in November 2008, receiving almost 53% of the popular vote. He was not only the first African-American president but also the first sitting senator since John F. Kennedy 1960 to win the presidency(Britannica,2009).

Conclusion

To conclude, Though the actions of the American society Turned out to be racist and discriminatory toward minority communities and religions such as Islam, America seems to be a Democratic country and the U.S constitution guarantees religious, social, and political freedom for all its citizens. As we mentioned in our research this freedom could be clearly embodied in the American political system which gives the opportunity to American Muslims and other citizens of different religious landscapes to participate in presidential and other elections, institute many political parties and establish significant institutions and professional organizations in order to engage in the American community, fight the marginalization experienced and prove to the American society how much they are able to govern, make law, provide security and safety among the population, So, far from the drawn image and idea concerning what other people imagine how Muslims supposed to be as primitive, violent, and terrorist.

CHAPTER TWO

The Contribution of Muslim Politicians to the American Politics

Chapter two: The Contribution of Muslim Politicians in the American Politics

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Introduction

The current study investigates the contribution of American Muslim politicians to American politics during Barak Obama's presidency and shows their influence on both American society and the political sphere. This chapter is dedicated to the practical study of this dissertation. In this chapter we aim to test the hypothesis we set at the beginning of this research: whether Muslims had a significant influence on the political system during Obama's presidency, this is done through a questionnaire with a small sample of Muslims who live in the United States of America.

This chapter discusses the participation of Muslims in American politics, it provides a list of influential Muslim politicians who are well-known in the American society, in addition to that it gives a full analysis of the questionnaire's results. The questionnaire analysis is made up of a description of the questions and the intention behind using them as well as some information about the target population. It also contains discussions and analysis of the results of each question.

2.1. The Participation of Muslims in the American Political Sphere

In the late 1960s, immigration laws reform addresses the coming of new immigrants from the Islamic world to the new world. Most of them were students and professionals who were aiming to continue their education and studies; while some choose to settle, other intended to return. These immigrants established a mosque-centered community based on preserving their religious identity and engaging in politics. This new generation of highly educated immigrant Muslims comes to the US from wealthy families during the 1950s in order to continue their studies and then return to their homeland. At first, they tried to isolate themselves from American society and its culture. The ideologies of these new immigrants were affected by the Islamic world they come from. These ideologies shape their identity, that is why they refused the connection and the interaction with the American community. Muslim background differs in race, ethnicity, and

socioeconomic. This diversity caused a different sociopolitical status and the absence of unity in their political activities and participation interest. Muslims improved their English language for many reasons which are: to be able to communicate and interact with other Muslims and the American society. Owing to the English language, Muslims with different ethnicity are able to constitute common associations to improve their communication and also English unified Muslims negating all their sectarian, race and national differences. Such ideologies and concepts are brought by these Muslims like The Arab Nationalism and Islamic Revivalism which aims to protect the Islamic identity of Muslims in non-Muslim regions. In so doing Muslims packed their members into mosques and other organizations thinking that cultural and moral identity would be weakened in the American community. These Muslims created associations and magazines such as MSA News and Islamic Horizons to spread the American knowledge between them. The way of thinking of American Muslims created the status of "us" versus "others" which resulted in a gap between the Muslims and the others, and isolate them from the rest of the American society. Later, this sociopolitical status changed. The modern discourse of religious intellectuals thinks that all believers and non-believers are the same as many scholars attempt to localize Islam in, creating an Islamic identity in the American context. Muslim So to be a part of the American society and be accepted by them. These Muslims tended to improve themselves in this community by applying Christianity's evangelist and missionary thoughts to Muslim activities like social activities including feeding the destitute, receiving the homeless, fight oppression and injustice. Also, to abandon and change the ideologies. Adapt some of the American cultures. Finally, to accept the others and develop their institutions like Sunday schools and mosques. All these engagement factors in the American community helped to raise the civic abilities between Muslims and increase their political participation (Namatpour, 2022). So, what are politics and political participation? And how did Muslims contribute to this politics and influence American society?

Mlawa (2015), in his review about politics in what is politics, noted that :

Politics, in its broadest sense, is the activity through which people make, preserve and amend the general rules under which they live" As such, politics is inextricably linked to the phenomena of conflict and cooperation. On the one hand, the existence of rival opinions, different wants, competing needs, or opposing interests guarantees disagreement about the rules under which people live. On the other hand, people recognize that in order to influence these rules or ensure that they are upheld, they must work with others. This is why the heart of politics is often portrayed as a process of conflict resolution, in which rival views or competing interests are reconciled with one another. However, politics in this broad sense is better thought of as a search for conflict resolution than as its achievement, since not all conflicts are or can be resolved. (p.1)

Political participation is the ordinary citizens' action which they do to influence or support the government and politics. It includes actions of Voting, party rallies, guerrilla gardening, posting blogs, volunteering, joining flash mobs, signing petitions, buying fair-trade products, and even suicide protests. In addition to ceremonial and support activities (Deth, 2016). This justifies the reason why Muslim communities consider The American political system as a way to express their thoughts and goals. We could see that the concept of belonging, partisanship, and participation in politics is improved by Muslims in the sociopolitical environment in the US, Mosques then became an essential place and centered position for Muslims to mobilize, educate and participate in sociopolitical events. Also, their political participation, too, refers mainly to their participation in the mosques, America has 1200 mosques which increased by 62% since the 1980s. Among these mosques, more than 20% have Islamic schools, and the contribution to these mosques is attended by greater participation like helping the poor and the incorporation with other communities, besides other Islamic organizations which improve their role in the public sphere and raise the level of group awareness, also this contribution increases the role in the sociopolitical space for the Muslims (Namatpour, 2022). The religious intellectuals attempt

to find links between these Islamic values and the West emphasizing that « to be the best Muslim is to be a good American and, to be the best American is to be Islamic » (Crane, 1997, XIX).

After the 11/9 crisis, the tendency of Muslims' political participation rose. Although all the difficulties, Muslims become more engaged and involved in the political sphere. As This Crisis and The Middle East event like the military invasion in Iraq and Afghanistan created a negative atmosphere resulting in a pessimistic sense, a situation of depression and instability for Muslims regardin their political position politics (Namatpour, 2022).

This Contribution of Muslims in politics enables them to fight the marginalization and isolation Muslims faced in the aftermath of September 11, 2001. Saving their identity to increase their opportunities in the sociopolitical sphere participation (Namatpour, 2022). Besides the denouncing of extremism and terrorism in the strongest possible terms through the voice of many institutions such as The Fiqh Council of North America which addresses that terrorism or incorporation with any individual involved in prohibited violence or terrorism is Haram and it is the duty of Muslims to protect and guarantee security for civilians (Rashid, 2014).

To incorporate and influence the American society, Muslims institute professional organizations to counsel the government and offer substitutional strategies to reshape the Muslim-American sociopolitical sphere. There are many Organizations like ISNA (Islamic Society of North America), Zaytuna institute, ASMA, and MPAC (The Muslim Political Affairs Council) (Namatpour, 2022) which was founded in 1988, it aims to expose discrimination against Muslims and other minorities; to organize Muslims as a mainstream political force; and to lobby the US Congress and the administration on issues of concern to Muslims (Muslims and American politics, n.d), CAIR, AMA, CSID, FMC, and AIFD (Namatpour, 2022).

Muslims also established Boston's Jetpac in 2005 which aims to strengthen American Muslim political infrastructure and rise the Muslim community 'influence and contribution in America (Muslims and American politics, n.d).

Mosques recently become an essential organization for political activity and mobilization, they encourage Muslims to vote, engage in political campaigns, and support candidates who defend their rights (Namatpour, 2022).

We can notice also that Muslims have a big influence on the process of decision-making, especially after September 11, 2001, and the framing of issues in the system. In so doing they provide information and scholarly analysis; they also control the tendency of application and implementation. Islamic institutions are also related to wider political activity, public participation, and group consciousness which enable them to express their needs (Namatpour, 2022). American Muslim politicians support the freedom of expression and religious liberty (Rashid, 2014).

To conclude, this situation makes the role of Muslims be taken into consideration by the principal American parties in American politics by convincing and attracting them in their campaigns and looking to satisfy their desires and requests (Namatpour, 2022).

2.2. A List of Some Influential American-Muslim Politicians

2.2.1. André Carson

“Having been a Muslim who was targeted by law enforcement as a young man, and having worked in counterintelligence as a police officer, I offer a unique perspective” on the tensions between safety and civil rights, Carson says (Burke & Stix, n.d).

Carson embraced Islam at 16 years old, after being raised in a Baptist family and educated in Catholic schools. he was drawn toward counter-intelligence work and worked as a policeman owing to his experience in being arrested by the Indianapolis police during their entry to his local mosque without plausible cause (Burke & Stix, n.d). Carson was elected in 2008 as a member of the House Intelligence Committee representing Indiana’s 7th District. and was re-elected every two years through 2018 (André Carson, n.d).

“André Carson is the first Muslim to sit on the House Intelligence Committee. That alone is a very big deal.” Other Muslims declare (Burke & Stix, n.d)

2.2.2. Farhana Khera

“The last eight months have honestly been the craziest time in the 12 years of the organization,” Khera declares (Burke & Stix, n.d).

Khera was an expert on constitutional law during her service in the US Senate Judiciary Committee where she battled to correct the USA Patriot Act and built key relationships with lawmakers. In 2005, Khera co-established Muslim Advocates which is a national legitimate advocacy group that's challenging President Trump's travel ban besides the other perceived encroachments on Muslims' civil freedoms (Burke & Stix, n.d).

“She doesn't make a lot of noise, but Farhana knows how to work behind the scenes and get things done.” other Muslims say (Burke & Stix, n.d).

2.2.3. Ilhan Omar

‘Just deal,’ Muslim lawmaker Ilhan Omar says to a pastor who complained about hijabs on the House floor (Burke & Stix, n.d).

In 1995, Omar immigrated to the United States escaping from Somalia's brutal civil war, where she experienced dissimilarity between the country's high ideals and the stark realities that confused her. Ilhan decided to serve, following her grandfather's political pep talk to not sit there and complain. Her journey to become the country's first Somali-American Muslim lawmaker began in a refugee camp in Kenya. Then in 2016, Omar became a representative in The Minnesota House of Representatives bringing a personal perspective on admitting immigrants and refugees' debate in the country (Burke & Stix, n.d).

“Ilhan is leading the charge to get more Muslims involved in local politics,” Muslims say (Burke & Stix, n.d).

2.2.4. Keith Ellison

“We’ve seen the consequences of anti-Muslim hate [...] The best defense against extreme ideologies is social inclusion and civic engagement.” Time will only tell what this new generation of American Muslims will achieve for all Muslims in America and, indeed, for all Americans,” Ellison says (Burke & Stix, n.d).

Keith Ellison became the first Muslim-American Congressman In 2006 (Burke & Camp; Stix, n.d), he represented Minnesota’s 5th District from 2007 to 2019 (Keith Ellison (Minnesota), n.d). On January 7, 2019 he took office of the Attorney General of Minnesota. On January 2, 2023, his present tenure will come to conclusion (Keith Ellison (Minnesota), n.d). He took the vow of the office on a Quran owned by Thomas Jefferson (Burke & Stix, n.d).

“Even though he’s not a religious leader, Keith Ellison has become a kind of de facto spokesman for American Muslims.” other Muslims’ declarations about Ellison, argue that he is the voice of Muslim-Americans (Burke & Stix, n.d).

2.2.5. Linda Sarsour

“I’m young, and I still have a lot of fight in me,” Sarsour says (Burke & Stix, n.d). Linda Sarsour is a Palestinian woman, she was born in Brooklyn, New York City to Palestinian immigrants. She married at the age of 17 in an arranged marriage and had had three children by the age of 24 (Linda Sarsour, n.d). In the aftermath of the 9/11 attacks, Lina started to translate for Arabic speakers rounded up by law enforcement, this step was the beginning of her public service career. Later she participated in the March of the Black Lives Matter movement. She co-established the Women’s March. She has faced criticism for her censuring of Zionism. Many Muslims declare that Sarsour is the needed and the wanted Leader for their community (Burke &

Stix, n.d). “She embodies an unapologetically American Muslim identity that is inextricably tied to other marginalized communities.” Argued by other Muslims (Burke & Stix, n.d).

2.2.6. Rashida Tlaib (D-Mich.)

She is a Palestinian progressive warrior of Palestinian immigrant parents (About, 2021). In November 2008, she was elected as a Rep officer in Michigan (Ballotpedia, n.d), in the midterm elections. Tlaib provides many transformative constituent services and fought the billionaires and organizations that attempted to contaminate her district. She is the current Congresswoman for Michigan’s 13th Congressional District, which encompasses the city of Detroit as well as numerous neighboring communities (About, 2021).

2.3. Analysis of the Questionnaire

2.3.1. Description of the Questionnaire

The Muslims Politicians' questionnaire was submitted to 18 Muslim people living in the United States of America whom we could reach. The Muslims whom we asked to answer the questionnaire were either from America or have been living there. We have done so because we believe that they are the most appropriate people to have insights into the American political system, society, and the statues of Muslim citizens there. It is important to say the subjects we could contact for our questionnaire are well-educated people.

Our questionnaire consists of 15 questions. We used such questions of personal information (like citizenship) about the subject because it is relevant to our research. The questionnaire is divided into two parts: the first part consists of 05 general questions whereas the second includes 10 questions directly related to our aim in the dissertation.

Q1: Are you a US-born citizen?

Table2.1. Number of US-born Respondents

	Yes	No
Number	5	13
Percentage	27.8%	72.2%

Are you a US-born citizen?
18 responses

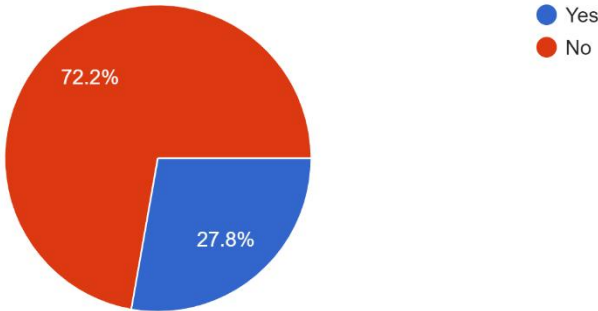


Figure2.1. Number of US-born Respondents

Q2: If not, do you hold the American nationality?

Table2.2. Number of Respondents who Hold the American Nationality

	Have	Have not
Number	11	3
Percentage	78.6%	21.4%

If not, do you hold the American nationality?

14 responses

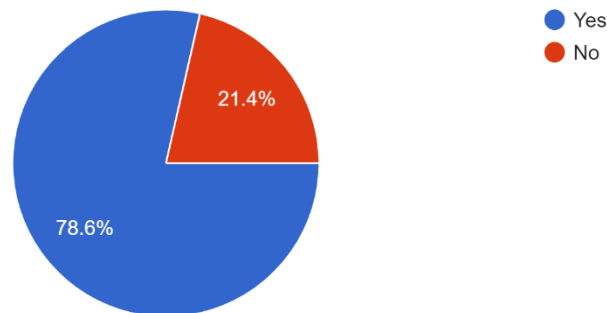


Figure2.2. Number of Respondents who Hold the American Nationality

Based on the results illustrated on the table1 and 2, as well as the graphs 1 and 2 above, we observe that: (27.8%) of the subjects are not USA-born citizens; however (72.2%) of subjects are USA-born citizens. Also, (78.6 %) of respondents hold the American nationality, while (21.4%) of our respondents did not hold the American nationality.

In the results shown above, we understand that Muslims could be, whether, native Americans who were born in the USA, or immigrants who could be naturalized or not. As a consequence, America is a democratic and welcoming country for people from all over the world.

Q3: How long have you been living or have lived in America?

Table2.3. Period of Respondents' Residence in the USA

	1to5years	5to10years	+10years
Number	2	4	12
Percentage	11.1%	22.2%	66.7%

How long have you been living or have lived in America?

18 responses

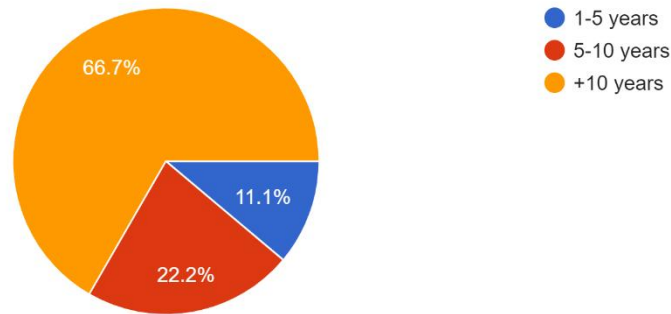


Figure2.3. Period of Respondents' Residence in the USA

According to the results demonstrated in table 3 and graph 3, we found that the majority of participants (66.7%) have been living in America for more than ten years. While nearly the quarter (22.2%) of the participants have been living in America from 5 to 10 years, (11.1%) of participants have been residing there from 1 to 5 years.

Based on the outcomes stated above, we realize that Muslims have existed in the USA for a long time, which made them present a considerable part of American society.

Q4: Do you practice all your civil rights as an American citizen(for example: voting)without constrictions?

Table2.4. Respondents' Practice of their Civil Rights (Voting)

	Yes	No
Number	16	2
Percentage	88.9%	11.1%

Do you practice all your civil rights as an American citizen (e.g; voting) without constrictions?

18 responses

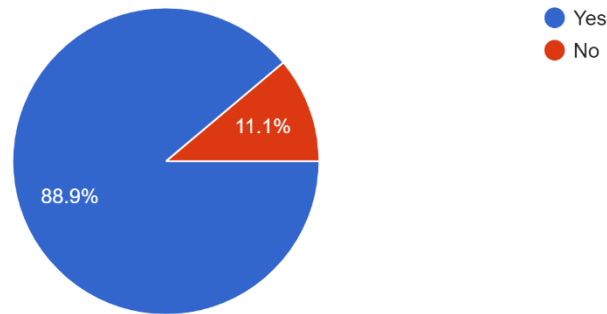


Figure2.4. Respondents' Practice of their Civil Rights (Voting)

This question aims at spotting the light on a particular aspect, which is the participation of American Muslims in the American political sphere. Which is are American Muslims able to practice their right of voting as native American citizens?

The results shown above demonstrate that the plurality of the respondents (88.9%) say that they are capable of practicing all of their civil rights without constrictions. Meanwhile, (11.1%) of our respondents say that they are not able to practice their civil rights independently.

Throughout the outcomes shown above, we deduce that America is a democratic country that gives the Muslim community the opportunity to practice their civil rights without constrictions.

Q5: Do you always vote regardless of the candidate's religion or only when there is a Muslim candidate?

Table2.5. Respondents' Way of Voting for Muslim and Non-Muslim Candidates

	I always vote regardless of candidates' religion	I only vote when there are Muslim candidates
Number	16	2
Percentage	88.9%	11.1%

Do you always vote regardless of candidates' religion or only when there are Muslim candidates?
18 responses

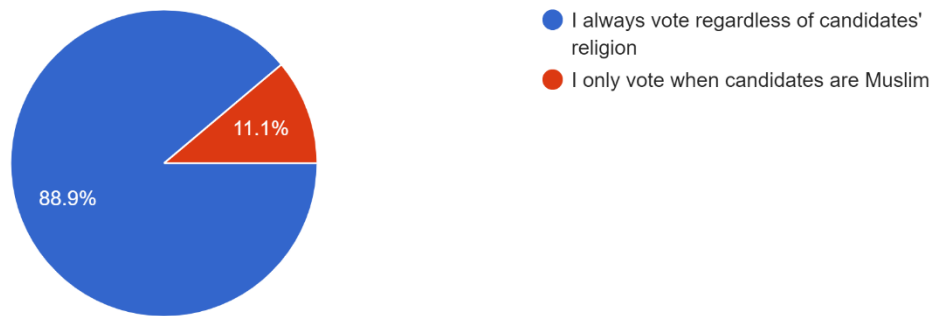


Figure2.5. Respondents' Way of Voting for Muslim and Non-Muslim Candidates

Based on the results illustrated in table 5as well as graph 5 above, we notice that (88.9%) of the subjects always vote regardless of the candidates' religion, on the other hand, (11.1%) of our subjects only vote when there is a Muslim candidate.

From the consequences above, we understand that American Muslims are capable to co-exist peacefully in American society, they are so far from the discriminatory and racist way of thinking.

Q6: Do you know any active American Muslim politicians in the government?

Table2.6. Respondents' Knowledge about Muslim Politicians in the Government

	Yes	No
Number	13	5
Percentage	72.2%	27.8%

Do you know (of) any active American Muslim politicians in the government?

18 responses

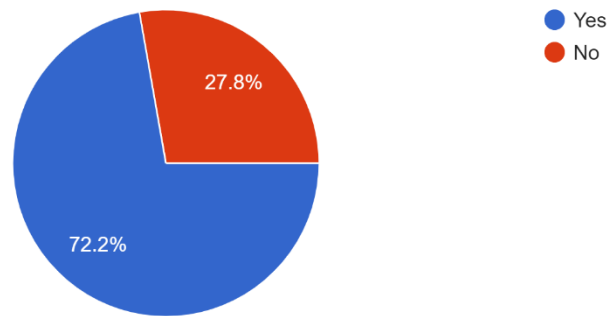


Figure 2.6. Respondents' Knowledge about Muslim Politicians in the Government

Built upon the answers to our questionnaire, most of our participants (72.2%) declare that they know active American Muslims politicians in the American government, otherwise, (27.8%) of our participants say that they do not know any active Muslim politicians in the American government.

According to the answers of respondents as well as the results in table 6 and figure 6 above, we notice that a considerable number of Muslims take a significant part in the American political sphere and they have taken privileged and descent political positions in the USA's government. Moreover, Muslim Americans are aware enough of American politics.

Q7: To what extent do you believe that Muslim politicians (can) influence the American state laws and constitution?

Table 2.7. The Extent to which Respondents believe Muslim Politicians Influence the Constitution and Law

	A little	Very much
Number	11	7
Percentage	61.1%	38.9%

To what extent do you believe that Muslim politicians (can) influence the American state laws and constitution?

18 responses

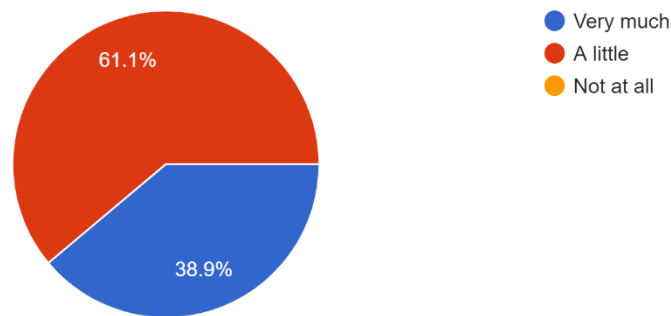


Figure 2.7. The Extent to which Respondents believe Muslim Politicians Influence the Constitution and Law

Q8: How do Muslim politicians influence American society, especially Muslims?

Table 2.8. The Influence of Muslim Politicians on American Society (Muslims)

	Positively	Neutrally
Number	14	4
Percentage	77.8%	22.2%

How do Muslim politicians influence the American society, especially Muslims?

18 responses

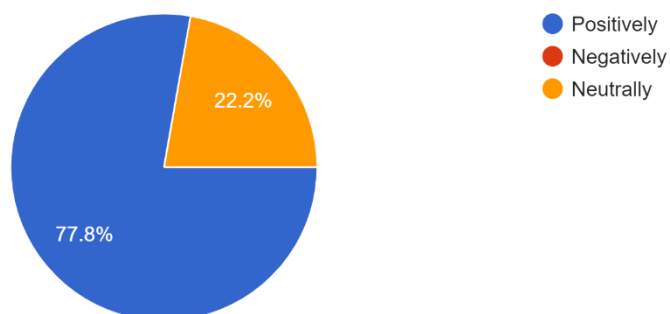


Figure 2.8. The Influence of Muslim Politicians on the American Society (Muslims)

These two questions form the basis of our research which is the influence of the American Muslim politicians on the American political framework, tables (7) (8) and graphs (7) (8) demonstrate this idea.

Depending on the results shown in table (7) and graph (7), we notice that (61.1%) of the respondents believe that Muslim politicians are able to influence the American law and constitution, Whereas, (38.9%) of our respondents believe that Muslim politicians are not able to affect the American state law and constitution.

Depending on the consequences shown in table (8) and graph (8), we observe that (77.8%) of the respondents say that Muslim politicians affect American society positively, Meanwhile, (22.2%) of respondents say that they influence the American society neutrally.

Based on the outcomes from the previous analysis we deduce that the American Muslim politicians influence and impact both American society and politics.

Q9: Did any Muslim politician(s) make or help in making laws that serve Muslims in America?

Table 2.9. The Help of Muslim Politicians in Making Muslim-serving Laws

	Maybe, I do not know	Yes
Number	11	7
Percentage	61.1%	38.9%

Did any Muslim politician(s) make or help in making laws that serve Muslims in America?
18 responses

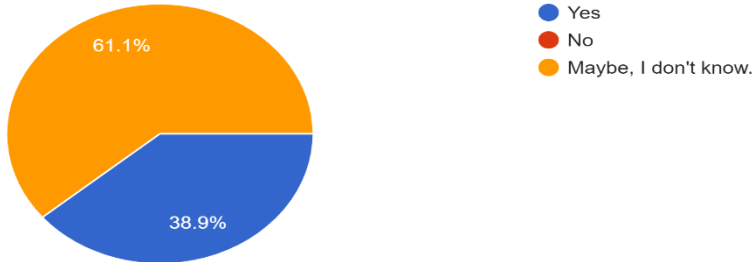


Figure 2.9. The Help of Muslim Politicians in Making Muslim-serving Laws

Based on the figure and table above, we notice that (61.1%) of our participants have no specific answer to this question, while (38.9%) say that Muslim politicians helped in making laws that serve Muslims in America.

Based on the results stated above, we realize that Muslim politicians do not have enough authority yet to produce laws that serve Muslims in America.

Q10: As a Muslim citizen, did/do you benefit from the presence of any Muslim politicians in the government?

Table 2.10. Respondents' Benefit from Muslim Politicians in the Government

	Yes	No
Number	8	9
Percentage	47.1%	52.9%

As a Muslim citizen, did/do you benefit from the presence of any Muslim politicians in the government?
17 responses

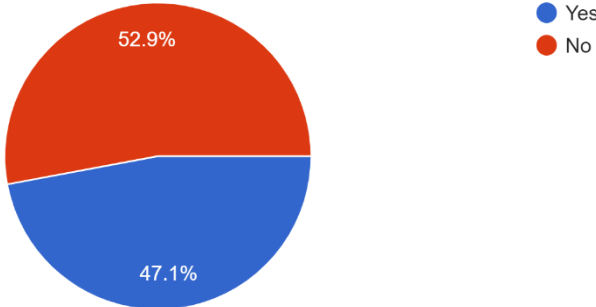


Figure2.10. Respondents' Benefit from Muslim Politicians in the Government

Depending on the above table and figure we perceive that almost half of the subjects (47.1%) say that they benefit from the presence of Muslim politicians in the government, on the other hand, (52.9%) of our subjects declare that the presence of Muslim politicians in the government did not serve them.

Based on the results illustrated above, we understand that the presence of American Muslim politicians could be beneficial for some Muslim citizens, and unbeneficial for others.

Q11: How satisfied are you with the contribution of Muslim politicians to making laws that serve Muslim citizens?

Table 2.11. Respondents' Satisfaction with Muslim Politicians' Contribution to the Government

	Slightly	Very	Extremely
Number	7	6	5
Percentage	38.9%	33.3%	27.8%

How satisfied are you with the contribution of Muslim politicians in making laws that serve Muslim citizens?

18 responses

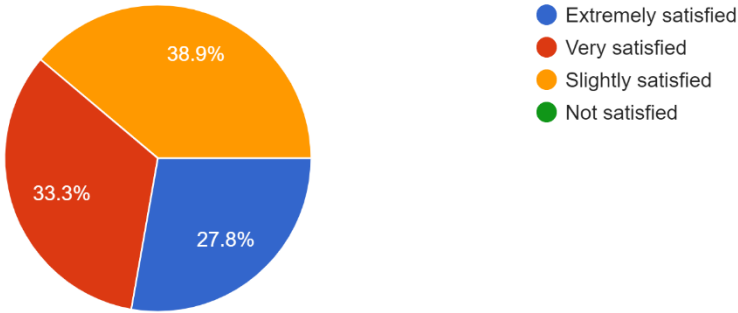


Figure 2.11. Respondents' Satisfaction with Muslim Politicians' Contribution to the Government

Built upon the answers to our questionnaire, (38.9%) of the participants are a little bit satisfied, meanwhile, (33.3%) of our participants are very satisfied; (27.8%) of the respondents are extremely satisfied.

Based on the previous consequences, we deduce that the majority of respondents are satisfied because the produced laws by the Muslim politicians in the American government served them as Muslim citizens in particular.

Q12: Do you think that Muslim politicians made more a significant contribution during Obama's presidency than other presidents' services?

Table 2.12. Muslim Politician's Contribution to the Government during Obama's Service Compared to other Presidents

	Yes	No	Maybe, I do not know
Number	4	4	10
Percentage	22.2%	22.2%	55.6%

Do you think that Muslim politicians made more significant contributions during Obama's presidency than other presidents' services?
 18 responses

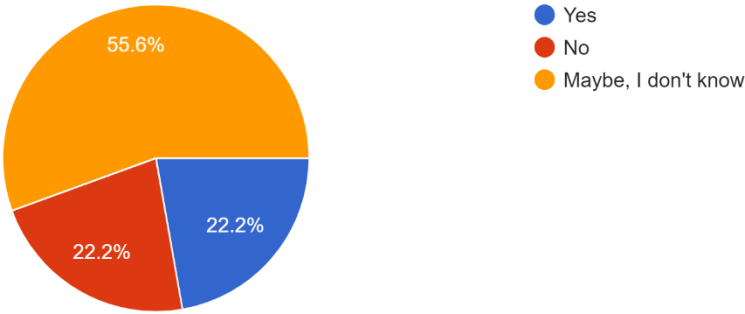


Figure2.12. Muslim Politician's Contribution to the Government during Obama's Service Compared to other Presidents

Referring to table (12) and figure (12) we observe that, (55.6%) of the participants think that Muslim politicians made a more significant contribution during Obama's presidency than other presidents' services. While the rest percentage of respondents is divided into two equal parts (22.2%). One part says that they do not see that American politicians made a more significant contribution during Obama's presidency than other presidents' services. The second part of the respondents says that Muslim politicians might make considerable participation.

Q13: Were there any laws that were particularly in favor of Muslim Americans during Obama's presidency?

Table2.13. Muslims' knowledge about laws that sustain Muslim Americans during Obama's Presidency

	Yes	No	Maybe, I do not know
Number	2	4	12
Percentage	11.1%	22.2%	66.7%

Were there any laws that were particularly in favor of Muslim Americans during Obama's presidency?
18 responses

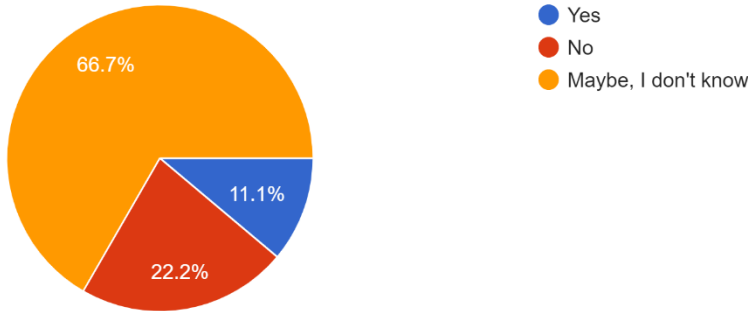


Figure2.13. Muslims' knowledge about laws that sustain Muslim Americans during Obama's Presidency

Referring to the statistics stated above in the table (13) and figure (13), (11.1%) of subjects say that there were laws particularly in favor of Muslim Americans pending Obama's rule; however, (22.2%) declare that there were not any particular laws in favor of Muslim American during Obama's service. While the rest of our respondents (66.7%) say that that may be there were such laws in favor of Muslim Americans, particularly during Obama's presidency.

The outcomes of the latter two questions are one of the most interesting ones in our research because these questions spot the light on the engagement of American Muslims in the American

political sphere during Obama's service. It is clearly noticed that this presidency period did not sustain, support, and serve the American Muslims.

2.3.2. Discussion of the Questionnaire Results

The questionnaire in hand confirms the hypothesis and validates the aims of the study. Muslim politicians, indeed, play a significant and influential role in the American political sphere. Most respondents practice their civil rights regardless of candidates' religions, they do not have a discriminatory and racist way of thinking.

One of the most important questions that serve our research which asks whether respondents know any active American Muslim politicians in the government, the answers strongly confirm and emphasize the aims of the study, which are that American Muslim politicians contribute to and influence the American politics, most subjects know at least three and up to ten, this must be because of their strong and positive influence and this is what is shown in the next point.

Not only that but also about a half of the respondents stated that they benefit(ed) from the presence of American Muslim politicians in the government, nearly three-quarters of participants are very satisfied with the contribution of Muslim politicians in making laws that serve Muslim citizens in America. In the last two questions, more than three-quarters of questionnaire takers for both questions, know or (are not sure) about (a) whether Muslim politicians participate in the American politics during Obama's presidency service, (b) the existence of any laws that serve Muslims particularly; however, less than the quarter of the participants say the opposite.

Conclusion

To conclude, this chapter demonstrates the strong contribution and participation of American Muslim politicians in the American political framework, throughout the respondents' answers to our questionnaire it becomes clear to us that Muslims occupy a great place in politics, they give a good image of Islam and Muslims community, not only that but also, they influence the American society positively, they coexist with others peacefully, far from discrimination. Questionnaire results have shown also, that a huge number of Muslim politicians have prestigious positions in the American government. Finally, the questionnaire's outcomes affirmed our hypothesis and validated the aims of the study.

General Conclusion

America as a melting pot country is a welcoming place for people from all over the world with their ethnic, racial, and religious diversities; these differences led to a big change in the landscape of the country. Muslims in America present an integral part of the country since they play a great role in all walks of life. This led us to pursue our investigation to know their role, especially in the political field because there have been many American Muslims who were elected, participated, and contributed in the political era of Barak Obama's presidency, this investigation was achieved through two aims. First, we identified the influence of the American Muslim politicians during Obama's presidency. Second, we showed how American society sees these politicians as a member of the community. We, as well as many other researchers on this topic, hypothesize that Muslims had a significant influence and impact on the political system pending Obama's service.

In the process of conducting our research we had a number of questions to answer in order to find the truth and achieve the objectives of this research which are: (a) how did Muslim Americans influence the American society? (b) How did American society react to those contributions? Asking the mentioned questions prove the following hypothesis that says that Muslims had a significant influence on the political system during Barack Obama's presidency.

In order to check the validity of this hypothesis, a questionnaire was submitted to 18 Muslims who are living in America or have been living there. These persons were asked to answer 15 questions linked to the core and offshoots of the study. Their answers were appreciable to this investigation as they helped for obtaining more essential results.

Built upon the investigation implemented in the theoretical part of this dissertation and the responses obtained from participants of the questionnaire, it can be said that this research realized its aims; answers its questions, and confirms its hypothesis. First, the contribution of American Muslims in the American political sphere, their establishment of many organizations,

and their framing of issues in the American system, as well as the answers to the questionnaire confirm the idea that American Muslim politicians had a significant and remarkable influence on the American community. Second, both observations and results show that since the American citizens see that Muslim politicians affect the society positively and they are satisfied with their presence and making laws, thus, the role of Muslims is seeming to be taken into consideration by the American community by convincing and attracting them and look to satisfy their desires and requests.

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Appendix: The Questionnaire

Dear Sir/Madam,

Thank you for accepting to answer to this questionnaire which forms an important part of our master dissertation. Our research investigates the influence of American Muslim politicians on the American constitution and state law during the service of former president Barak Obama.

Please, complete each question by either ticking the appropriate response to you or by typing your answer in the space provided. At the end of the questionnaire, you will be asked to submit your responses. Submission is considered as consent volunteering, but we ensure that all of your responses are confidential and will be used for the purposes of this research only.

Questions

1. Are you a US-born citizen?
2. If not, do you hold the American nationality?
3. How long have you been living or have lived in America?
4. Do you practice all your civil rights as an American citizen (e.g.; voting) without constrictions?
If not, why?
5. Do you always vote regardless of candidates' religion or only when there are Muslim candidates?
6. Do you know (of) any active American Muslim politicians in the government?
If yes, how many?
7. To what extent do you believe that Muslim politicians (can) influence the American state laws and constitution?
8. How do Muslim politicians influence the American society, especially Muslims? + - /
9. Did any Muslim politician(s) make or help in making laws that serve Muslims in America?
10. As a Muslim citizen, did you benefit from the presence of any Muslim politicians in the government?
11. How satisfied are you with the contribution of Muslim politicians in making laws that serve Muslim citizens?
12. Do you think that Muslim politicians made more significant contributions during Obama's presidency than other presidents' services?
13. Were there any laws that were particularly in favor of Muslim Americans during Obama's presidency?

ملخص

تبحث هذه المذكرة في موضوع مساهمة المسلمين في السياسة الأمريكية خلال فترة رئاسة باراك أوباما، وتناقش بشكل أساسي أنظمة الهجرة الأمريكية، الجماعات الدينية في الولايات المتحدة، ظهور الإسلام وأول المسلمين الذين يأتون إلى العالم الجديد، هيكل النظام السياسي الأمريكي، وعملية الانتخابات الرئاسية الأمريكية. وهي تقدم أيضا رئاسة باراك أوباما ، وتركز على مشاركة المسلمين في المجال السياسي الأمريكي خلال فترة حكم الرئيس السابق أوباما. الهدف الأساسي من هذا البحث هو التعرف على تأثير المسلمين على المجتمع الأمريكي بالإضافة إلى مشاركتهم في الإطار السياسي. يأتي هذا التحقيق للفت الانتباه لموضوع مساهمة المسلمين في السياسة الأمريكية، ويفتح أبواب المناقشات والمزيد من البحث في هذه القضية. تنتمي هذه الورقة البحثية إلى المنهج الوصفي التحليلي للبحث. تم التحقق من صحة هذه الفرضية باستخدام استبيان تم إرساله إلى مجموعة من المسلمين الذين يعيشون في الولايات المتحدة الأمريكية. تأتي مناقشة وتحليل نتائج أداة البحث هذه للتحقق من صحة الفرضية وإثبات أن المسلمين بالفعل يشاركون ويساهمون ويؤثرون وينخرطون في المجال السياسي الأمريكي بشكل عام وفي عهد باراك أوباما خاصة، بالإضافة إلى حصولهم على مناصب سياسية مهمة في الحكومات الأمريكية.

الكلمات المفتاحية: السياسة الأمريكية، باراك أوباما، مساهمة المسلمين، النظام السياسي، الجماعات الدينية.