A Qur'anic Approach to the Formulation of Political Participation in an Illegitimate Political System

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ABSTRACT: Original Paper

In both theory and practice, political participation is considered to be one of the most significant political challenges. The Qur'an is the main religious source that makes it possible for political explanations to be given in respect of such issues. This study aims to formulate the types of political participation in an illegitimate political system in order to identify acceptable types in the light of the teachings of the Qur'an. The hypothesis of this research, carried out with the method of thematic interpretation, is that from the Qur'anic perspective, in an illegitimate political system, diverse types of positive and negative participation are authorised, depending on the circumstances, from participation in power structures to conflicting with the aim of reducing or eliminating oppression. In this regard, seven types of positive and negative political participation in an illegitimate political system have been identified in the Qur'an; positive political participation such as criticism and objection, guidance through dialogue and debate, and participation through *taqīyah* (religious dissimulation); negative political participation such as non-cooperation, civil disobedience, declaration of aversion, and struggle and overthrow. Based on this, the article concludes that according to the Qur'an, various types of positive and negative political participation are permissible in confronting an illegitimate political system. The Qur'an describes the behavior of the prophets and Qur'anic figures in the

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confrontation with an illegitimate system as a wide range of minimal to maximal participation with the aim of eliminating oppression.

KEYWORDS: Political participation, Illegitimate political regime, Critical participation, Suppressive participation, Political-thematic interpretation of the Qur'an, Political theology.

1. Introduction

Political participation has always been a significant challenge in both theoretical and practical contexts. The complexities and nuances of political systems and their impact on societies require a comprehensive understanding of the various forms of participation that can be considered acceptable. The interpretation and application of religious texts have been significant in shaping political explanations and approaches towards such issues. In this regard, the Qur'an, as the main religious source in Islam, offers valuable insights that shed light on the types of political participation in an illegitimate political system that align with its teachings.

This study aims to explore and formulate the types of political participation that are permissible within an illegitimate political system, based on the teachings of the Qur'an. Through the method of "thematic interpretation", the hypothesis of this research is that the Qur'an authorizes diverse forms of both positive and negative political participation in such systems, depending on the circumstances. These forms range from participation within power structures to engage in conflicts aimed at eliminating oppression.

The Qur'an provides a rich description of the behaviour of prophets and other Qur'anic figures in their confrontations with illegitimate systems, showing various types of authorized participation. The teachings of the Qur'an encourage believers to adopt different strategies, depending on the specific circumstances. By providing guidance on the types of participation allowed, the Qur'an serves as a valuable resource in understanding and addressing the challenges of political participation within an illegitimate system that will be examined in detail.

1.1. Literature review

There are few articles about political participation from the perspective of the Qur'an, such as the article on the right of citizens to participate and political freedom with an emphasis on the Holy Qur'an (Seyyedbagheri 2019, 41-65), which observed political participation and its role in freedom

in three stages. Another article is political participation in the Islamic utopia from the perspective of the Qur'an and traditions (Yazdani 2018, 48-73). In addition, the books named "political participation in Shia political jurisprudence" (Izdehi 2016), "the index of political participation in the model of Islamic progress" (Kholusi 2015), and "the strategies of Shia political jurisprudence to expand political participation" (Rahmani 2014) provide a jurisprudential description of political participation. However, in this study, an attempt has been made to collect and analyse all relevant verses with a comprehensive view of the Qur'an in order to obtain the Qur'anic perspective on the types of political participation in the face of illegitimate political systems.

1.2. Theoretical Framework: Types of Political Participation

Political participation is primarily of a positive nature. Although some have considered any voluntary and conscious political action effective in the political destiny of the individual and society as political participation, even if it is negative, (Reynolds 1979, 180; Majdi Nasab 2014, 55). Political participation in the positive dimension refers to legitimate political behaviors that include the following: 1.Voting 2. Campaigning 3. Supporting parties or candidates 4. Membership in political associations 5. Membership in pressure groups or political subcultures 6. Political party membership 7. Attitudinal and behavioural affiliation with (and not necessarily membership in) political factions 8. Any questions, criticisms, objections, and advice regarding the political system.

The negative dimensions of political participation can also be observed in the following examples: 1. Following extremist ideas 2. Acting violently 3. Murder or political assassination 4. Rebellion, because this type of illegitimate behavior is a form of political participation that, if it is widespread, is more influential and decisive than voting for the political policies of the government (Reynolds 1979, 180).

On this basis, some have divided forms of political participation into two types: conventional and non-conventional. Conventional political participation is such as election campaigns, and non-conventional political participation includes legal and illegal actions. As Begley also mentions six types of political participation: cognitive, expressive, organizational, electoral, governmental, and guerrilla (Majdi Nasab 2014, 55). Dahl also classifies political participation based on legality and illegality into peaceful political participation and non-peaceful political participation (Mosaffa 2016, 56). In this study, by accepting the division of political participation into positive and negative, positive political participation means peaceful

participation based on cooperation and interaction. Negative political participation is based on conflicting, struggling, and subverting.

1.3. Research Methodology

This is a library research conducted with the method of inferential thematic interpretation. There are several definitions for thematic interpretation among experts (Sobhani 2006, 1:11). In the method of thematic interpretation, the commentator does not examine the Qur'anic verses in order from beginning to end, but rather tries to focus his research on one of the subjects dealt with in the Qur'an and explain and study it (al-Ṣadr 2019, 12). Some scholars have said that thematic interpretation is a method that discusses various issues of the Qur'an (which have unity of meaning or unity of purpose) by collecting scattered verses in the surahs of the Qur'an (ʿAbd al-Sattār 1997). Marefat also considers thematic interpretation as an answer to various issues from the perspective of the Qur'an; whether the issue is taken from the Qur'an or from the realities of life and social needs. This second type can be considered as making the Qur'an speak, which is also stated in the words of Imam Ali[1] (Marviyan 2007).

Selected definition of thematic interpretation in this research using Jalili's definition (1993, 170) is that thematic interpretation is an effort to understand methodically the opinion of the Qur'an on issues arising from human knowledge that the Qur'an is expected to have a word about, through collection of related verses that are united in terms of meaning or purpose.

In the method of thematic interpretation, it is also possible to use narrations, history and sciences related to the verses in order to explain the issue (Javadi Amuli 1995, 40-50; al-Nahāwandī 1979, 1:28).

2. Concepts and Terminology

2.1. Political Participation

There are different definitions and views of political participation among political science thinkers, arising from different intellectual and theoretical origins (Feyrahi 1998, 44; Mosaffa 2016, 9; Alikhani 1998, 61). However, there are commonalities in some components. Political participation is associated with important theories that limit and expand the scope of political participation. Elitism theory limits and restricts significant political

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1. *dhālika al-Qur'ān fastanṭiqūh* (al-Raḍī 2000).

participation to the elites and considers the masses as mainly inactive or as tools of the elites. Pluralism theory views political participation as key to political behavior because it is an important factor in explaining the distribution of power and determining policy. This view can be useful if it is separated from its absolute pluralistic and epistemological content, which is unacceptable from the Islamic point of view, and if it is limited to political processes. Political participation is also important in Marxist theories, but the disadvantages of this approach are the class nature and the extreme attention to structures and the neglect of the objectivity of the agent.

Lucian Pye (1991) defines it as any voluntary action, successful or unsuccessful, organized or unorganized, periodic or continuous, which involves the use of legal or illegal methods to influence the choice of public policies, the administration of public affairs, the selection of political leaders at any level of local or national government. In Rush's definition, political participation is the involvement of an individual in various levels of activity in the political system, ranging from no involvement to holding an official political position (Rush 1998, 123).

The definition chosen in this research is that political participation is the active and often conscious participation of members of society, individually or collectively, in the public arena and the process of social influence and the exercise of power, decision-making and implementation in a supportive, controlling and competitive manner. On this ground, first, most of the unconscious actions are removed; second, passive actions are eliminated. In addition, the desirable and ideal political participation from the religious point of view is an activity that considers the overall material and spiritual well-being of society and does not reduce it to a specific form and dimension, especially material well-being. This research also takes into consideration the relationships and the relations of exercising power in the society and towards the government.

2.2. Illegitimate Political System

The political systems may be illegitimate in terms of behavior or the origin of the ruling, or both, meaning governments that have rebelled against the divine governance and opposed the just rule or usurped the power unjustly.

Wilāyat Ṭāghūt is a theory in Shia jurisprudence according to which any government that is not headed by an infallible Imam cannot be considered legitimate and obedience to it is not allowed (Tabataba'i 2006, 493). Illegitimate political systems in the Qur'an are introduced with titles such as the unjust government, the infidel government (Q. 4:141), the

government of the cruel, the rule of the hypocrites, the arrogant rule (Q. 35:43; 71:7; 2:34; 28:39), and the rebellious rule (*ṭāghūt*). The word *ṭāghūt*, which is somewhat a collection of the above titles, is mentioned 8 times in the Qur'an (Q. 2:256; 2:257; 4:51; 4:60; 4:76; 55:60; 16:36; 39:17). Although the word *ṭāghūt* has various examples that include all non-divine and evil manifestations, one of the most important examples of it is governance, which the majority of commentators have acknowledged (Tabataba'i 1996, 2:76).

3. Qur'anic Approach to Forms of Political Participation

Political participation based on the validity of the political system can be divided into political participation under the legitimate political system and the illegitimate political system, including both positive and negative participation. However, these two types do not have a single judgment in the Qur'an. In this section, we are going to examine how the Qur'an suggests participating in the illegitimate political system.

3.1. Positive political Participations

3.1.1. Criticism and Protest

The first action of socio-political activists is to criticize and protest against the illegitimate political system. The Qur'an well describes the critical confrontation of the prophets with the rulers in various verses. For example, it gives a clear and accurate account of Moses' and Aaron's critical dealings with Pharaoh. In the verse (Q. 20:47), Moses' and Aaron's criticism (by divine command) of Pharaoh's political behavior in persecuting the Children of Israel is expressed in gentle and benevolent but clear language.

So go ye both to him, and say, 'Verily we are messengers sent by thy Lord: Send forth, therefore, the Children of Israel with us, and afflict them not: with a Sign, indeed, have we come from thy Lord! and peace to all who follow guidance[1] (Q. 20:47).

According to the Qur'an, the first steps of political participation, even with regard to an oppressive system, should be with words of peace and encouragement.

But speak to him mildly; perchance he may take warning or fear) Allah[2] (Q. 20:44).

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1. فَأْتِیاهُ فَقُولا إنّا رَسُولا رَبِّكَ فَأَرْسِلْ مَعَنا بَنِي إِسْرائیلَ وَ لا تُعَذِّبْهُمْ قَدْ جِئْناكَ بِآیَةٍ مِنْ رَبِّكَ وَ السَّلامُ عَلى مَنِ اتَّبَعَ الْهُدى (طه/47)

2. فَقُولا لَهُ قَوْلاً لَیِّناً لَعَلَّهُ یَتَذَكَّرُ أَوْ یَخْشى (طه/44)

While the protest should be mild, it should also be clear and firm. In verse 47, the choice of the word *fa'tīyāh* instead of *idhhabāh*, which indicates the greatness of the prophecy and the inferiority of Pharaoh's reign, shows this point (Tabataba'i 1996, 14:158; al-Zuḥaylī 1997, 4:1523; al-Ṭanṭawī n.d., 9:110). Additionally, the phrases "verily we are messengers sent by thy Lord" and "with a Sign, indeed, have we come from thy Lord," ironically criticize Pharaoh's claim to be their Lord.

Another example is Abraham's clear and logical criticism of Nimrod's claim to divinity and his arrogant and exploitative political system. In verse Q. 2: 258, the Qur'an recounts Abraham's critical political action against Nimrod:

> *Hast thou not turned thy vision to one who disputed with Abraham about his Lord, because Allah had granted him power? Abraham said:"My Lord is He Who Giveth life and death." He said:"I give life and death". Said Abraham:" But it is Allah that causeth the sun to rise from the east: Do thou then cause it to rise from the west." Thus was he confounded who (in arrogance) rejected faith. Nor doth Allah Give guidance to a people unjust[1] (Q. 2: 258).*

All the exegetes considered the person before Abraham to be Nimrod (al-Balāghī 1999, 1:230; Tayyeb 1999, 3:24; Husseini Hamedani 1984, 2: 316). In this critical confrontation towards reforming participation, Abraham challenged and defeated Nimrod's alleged political domination with strong logic (Husseini Hamedani, 1984, 2:318).

3.1.2. Guiding through Dialogue and Debate

Another way to participate in political life in an illegitimate system is to guide and invite people to come to know the Truth and Justice. In this type of participation, people are invited to the truth and justice through dialogue, argument, and debate so that preparations are gradually made for the establishment of a faith-based political system. The debates of the Prophets with the leaders, nobles, and political elites who were adherents of the illegitimate system and their invitation to acknowledge the right is one of the manifestations of this type of political participation in the Qur'an.

Abraham's debates with various individuals and elites (Hassanpourdehnavi et. al. 2019), especially Nimrod, belong to this category. The verse Q. 2:258 depicts Abraham's reasoned debate with the tyrant of time. Abraham speaks of death and resurrection by God, while Nimrod arrogantly and ignorantly calls himself the killer and the reviver.

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1. أَلَمْ تَرَ إِلَى الَّذِي حَاجَّ إِبْرَاهِيمَ فِي رَبِّهِ أَنْ آتَاهُ اللَّهُ الْمُلْكَ إِذْ قَالَ إِبْرَاهِيمُ رَبِّيَ الَّذِي يُحْيِي وَ يُمِيتُ قَالَ أَنَا أُحْيِي وَ أُمِيتُ قَالَ إِبْرَاهِيمُ فَإِنَّ اللَّهَ يَأْتِي بِالشَّمْسِ مِنَ الْمَشْرِقِ فَأْتِ بِهَا مِنَ الْمَغْرِبِ فَبُهِتَ الَّذِي كَفَرَ وَ اللَّهُ لا يَهْدِي الْقَوْمَ الظَّالِمِينَ (البقرة/258)

Abraham replies that God makes the sun rise from the east; if you can and you are right, make it rise from the west. However, this demand cannot be answered by Nimrod.

The debate of the Prophet Moses and Aaron with Pharaoh is another example mentioned in several places in the Qur'an. The verses Q. 26:23-48, narrate a serious and challenging conversation between Moses and Pharaoh, which shows the courage of Moses and his theoretical and practical proofs (miracles) against Pharaoh's arrogance and threats. The verses Q. 7:104-107 and Q. 20:49-56 likewise provide another account of Moses' debate with Pharaoh.

The Qur'anic record of the Prophet's invitation to the elites and nobles of Makkah (Orujlu 2005) is very remarkable. In addition to the call of the heads of the Banī Hāshim tribe by divine command (Q. 26:214), the debate with the political leaders and social elites (Nazimian Fard 2017) was also considered to be a positive political participation of the Prophet.

Some of the Prophet's efforts in this regard included the debate with Abdullah ibn Zabʿarā (Q. 21:101-102) and Abdullah ibn Abī Umayyah (Q. 17:90-93) beside the Kaaba and in front of a group of Quraysh tribal leaders such as Abū al-Bakhtarī, ʿUtbah ibn Rabīʿah, Abū Sufyān, ibn Wāʾil, Abū Jahl and etc., as well as the debate with Umayyah ibn Khalaf and Walīd ibn Mughayrah, some of which are reflected in the Qur'an (Majlisī 1983, 9:269-280). Some exegetes have considered verses (Q. 36:78-79) about the Prophet's conversation with Umayyah ibn Khalaf:

And he makes comparisons for Us, and forgets his own (origin and) Creation: he says,"Who can give life to (dry) bones and decomposed ones (at that)?" Say,"He will give them life Who created them for the first time! For He fully knows all[1] (Q. 36:78-79).

It is also said that verses (Q. 19: 66-67) are meant to answer Umayyah ibn Khalaf and some others. His endeavors in this respect were so great that God warned him against getting himself into trouble and described him as an eager leader. In this way, debating and inviting to the right can be considered as one of the types of political participation under the illegitimate system, which the Prophet of Islam experienced in many positions, and he challenged the opinions of the opponents by raising doubts.

3.1.3. Taqīyah

Taqīyah is another type of positive political participation, which means

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1. أَوَ لَم يَرَ الإنسنُ اَنّا خَلَقنهُ مِن نُطفَة فَاذا هُوَ خَصيمٌ مُبين وضَرَبَ لَنا مَثَلاً ونَسِيَ خَلقَهُ قَالَ مَن يُحيِ العِظمَ وهِيَ رَميم قُل يُحييهَا الَّذى اَنشَأَها اَوَّل مَرَّة وهُوَ بِكُلِّ خَلق عَليم (يس/78-79)

caution and fear, and is the verbal noun derived from *ittiqā'* (al-Rāghib 1991, 881). It means to avoid, to keep, and to hide (Ibn Manẓūr, 1993). It is defined as hiding one's religion or refraining from expressing it in cases where a person is in danger of personal or financial loss (Sarakhsī 1999, 24:45; Rashīd Riḍā 1990, 3:280) or showing oneself to be of the same religion as others in order to save one's life. The political action of *taqīyah* can be explained in two kinds of silence and influence. Two verses of the Qur'an refer to the type of silence and concealment which, according to some Islamic traditions, is divided into two types of *khufiyyah* and *mudārātīyah* (Mohsenzadeh and Rezaei Isfahani 2013; Arabi, 2014: 275-287), which is mentioned by some commentators, jurists and theologians. One is the verse Q. 3:28, which states:

> Let not the believers take for friends or helpers unbelievers rather than believers: if any do that, in nothing will there be help from Allah **except by way of precaution**, that ye may guard yourselves from them. But Allah cautions you (to fear) Himself; for the final goal is to Allah[1] (Q. 3:28).

Another one is the verse Q. 16:106, in which the first sentence is about *taqīyah* of ʿAmmār Yāsir (feigning disbelief) in front of the polytheists in order to be free from torture, which was approved by the Prophet (al-Wāḥidī 2008, 190).

> Any one who, after accepting faith in Allah, utters Unbelief, except under compulsion, his heart remaining firm in Faith, but such as open their breast to Unbelief, on them is Wrath from Allah, and theirs will be a dreadful Chastisement[2] (Q. 16:106).

The Hadith of *rafʿ*, the Hadith of *lā ḍarar*, the evidences of the *tawrīyah*, the hadiths related to *kitmān*, and *ikrāh* are among the most important narrative evidences of *taqīyah* (al-Kulaynī 1987, 5:280; 292-294; al-Majlisī 1983, 5:303; al-Anṣārī 1991, 40). Moreover, consensus and reason also imply it. *Taqīyah* is divided into obligatory, forbidden, recommended, undesirable, and permissible according to the jurisprudential ruling. The history of Shiism is also full of political participation based on *taqīyah*.

Participation in governing institutions to support the right is another type of political participation based on *taqīyah* in an illegitimate system, which can be called influence, and the Qur'an has references to it. The verse Q.

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1. لا يَتَّخِذِ الْمُؤْمِنُونَ الْكافِرينَ أَوْلِياءَ مِنْ دُونِ الْمُؤْمِنينَ وَ مَنْ يَفْعَلْ ذلِكَ فَلَيْسَ مِنَ اللَّهِ في شَـيْءٍ إِلاَّ أَنْ **تَتَّقُوا مِنْهُمْ تُقاةً** وَ يُحَذِّرُكُمُ اللَّهُ نَفْسَـهُ وَ إِلَى اللَّهِ الْمَصيرُ (آل عمران/28)

2. مَنْ كَفَرَ بِاللَّهِ مِنْ بَعْدِ إيمانِهِ إِلاَّ **مَنْ أُكْرِهَ** وَ **قَلْبُهُ مُطْمَئِنٌّ بِالْإيمانِ** وَ لكِنْ مَنْ شَـرَحَ بِالْكُفْرِ صَـدْراً فَعَلَيْهِمْ غَضَـبٌ مِنَ اللَّهِ وَ لَهُمْ عَذابٌ عَظيمٌ (النحل/106)

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40:28 speaks of the believer in Pharaoh's family who kept his faith secret:

> *A believer, a man from among the people of Pharaoh, who had concealed his faith, said:" Will ye slay a man because he says, 'My Lord is Allah? when he has indeed come to you with Clear Signs from your Lord? And if he be a liar, on him is (the sin of) his lie: but, if he is telling the Truth, then will fall on you something of the (calamity) of which he warns you: truly Allah guides not one who transgresses and lies[1](Q. 40:28).*

Many commentators have considered him as the one who secretly informed Moses that they intended to kill him according to Q. 28:20 (Tayyeb 1999, 11:371). This verse specifies the presence and *taqīyah* of this believer in Pharaoh's court and his help to Moses and informing him of the political news of Pharaoh's court:

> *And there came a man, running, from the furthest end of the City. He said:" O Moses! the Chiefs are taking counsel together about thee, to slay thee: so get thee away, for I do give thee sincere advice"[2](Q. 28:20).*

Most commentators have considered the man in the verse to be the believer of Pharaoh's family whose name was Ezekiel or Ḥabīb Najjār (Fayḍ Kāshānī 1998, 2:924; al-Ṭabrisī 1993, 8:139; Ibn ʿĀshūr 1999, 24:183). There are various reports about his name, occupation, and relationship with Pharaoh (Samarqandī 1993, 3: 204; al-Baḥrānī 1987, 4: 257).

In fact, by praising this person and his action, these two verses approve this kind of political participation in the illegitimate and oppressive political system and prescribe it in order to reform the thoughts and behaviour of the agents of the illegitimate system and support the right. The Qur'an talks about the participation of the believer in the decision-making of the Pharaoh political system not to kill Moses after his mission was revealed to them. In the history of Shi'ism, we can also give an example of Ali ibn Yaqṭīn who, with the coordination of the Imam of his time, was involved in the government structure with *taqīyah* (al-Kashī 1988, 203).

Thus, according to the Qur'an, political participation based on *taqīyah* is recommended. As some commentators have also paid attention to it and have given hadiths about *taqīyah* under the verse (Sabziwārī Najafī 1986, 6:212) such as, "*taqīyah* is my religion and the religion of my fathers" (al-Barqī 1952, 1:255; al-ʿĀmilī 1988, 16:210), "One who does not practice *taqīyah* has no religion" (al-ʿĀmilī 1988, 16:210), and "*taqīyah* is God's

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1. وَ قالَ رَجُلٌ مُؤْمِنٌ مِنْ آلِ فِرْعَوْنَ يَكْتُمُ إيمانَهُ أَ تَقْتُلُونَ رَجُلاً أَنْ يَقُولَ رَبِّيَ اللَّهُ وَ قَدْ جاءَكُمْ بِالْبَيِّناتِ مِنْ رَبِّكُمْ وَ إِنْ يَكُ كاذِباً فَعَلَيْهِ كَذِبُهُ وَ إِنْ يَكُ صادِقاً يُصِبْكُمْ بَعْضُ الَّذي يَعِدُكُمْ إِنَّ اللَّهَ لا يَهْدي مَنْ هُوَ مُسْرِفٌ كَذَّابٌ (غافر/28)

2. وَ جاءَ رَجُلٌ مِنْ أَقْصَى الْمَدينَةِ يَسْعى قالَ يا مُوسى إِنَّ الْمَلَأَ يَأْتَمِرُونَ بِكَ لِيَقْتُلُوكَ فَاخْرُجْ إِنِّي لَكَ مِنَ النَّاصِحينَ (القصص/20)

shield on earth, for if the believer of Pharaoh's family had shown his faith, he would have been killed (al-Ṭabrisī 1993, 8:521).

Mohammad Darwazah, one of the Sunni commentators, also refers to the views of the Shi'ite scholars on *taqīyah* and their arguments on this verse, in spite of the criticism on it, but in the end, he accepts *taqīyah* towards the unbelievers as well as towards the wicked Muslims. At first, he considers it specific to the Sharia of Moses and does not accept its extension to Islam (Darwazah 1963, 4:368-370), but later, according to the totality of the verses and traditions and the logic of the discussion, he validates it and recognizes it as acceptable for evildoers and persecutors, but rejects its development by the Shia, which seems to be due to a political and not a scientific attitude. That is, the difference is in the examples.

It can thus be said that, according to the thematic interpretation of the Qur'an and Shiite discourse, both types of *taqīyah*, i.e. silence and influence, are acceptable in situations where no other type of participation is possible. It is up to the leaders and elites of the religious community to determine which type of political participation should be adopted in each situation.

3.2. Negative political participation

3.2.1. Non-cooperation

The non-cooperation and non-willingness to engage with the illegitimate political system can be considered as one of the types of negative political participation according to the Qur'an. This notion is stated in the verse Q. 11:113:

> *And incline not to those who do wrong, or the Fire will touch you; and ye have no protectors other than Allah, nor shall ye be helped[1] (Q. 11:113).*

The verb *tarkanū* derived from *rukūn* means to be willing and calm (Ibn Manẓūr 1993, 13:185). The verse forbids a little desire for oppressors and cooperation with them, which means disobeying their social system in general. Under this verse, some commentators have mentioned the story of Ṣafwān Jamāl renting his camels to Hārūn Abbāsī, that Imam Ṣādiq forbade this work due to tacit cooperation and implied consent to the continuation of the tyrants' political system (Tayyeb 1999, 7:135).

3.2.2. Civil Disobedience

Another form of political participation is civil disobedience, which

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1. وَ لا تَرْكَنُوا إِلَى الَّذِينَ ظَلَمُوا فَتَمَسَّكُمُ النَّارُ وَ ما لَكُمْ مِنْ دُونِ اللَّهِ مِنْ أَوْلِياءَ ثُمَّ لا تُنْصَرُون (هود/113)

means defying government authority as a sign of moral protest (McLean & McMillan 2011, 563). The Qur'an refers to some examples of civil disobedience, such as Abraham's non-attendance at the annual feast mentioned in verses Q. 37:88-89:

Then did he cast a glance at the Stars. And he said," I am indeed sick (at heart)[1] (Q. 37:88-89).

According to all interpretations, Abraham declared his illness by looking at the stars in response to his people and refused to go to the annual celebration (Najafī 1999, 16:356). Some have said that he spoke ambiguously, some have considered it an expedient lie, and some have thought it to be true (Qorashi 1998, 9:159; Tabataba'i 1996, 7:228). Others have also regarded it as *taqīyah*, and some have viewed it as a sickness in his faith against the religion of his people (Mudarrisī 1998, 11:249-250), which seems more acceptable. In any case, Abraham's absence can be considered as a kind of negative struggle and civil disobedience, considering his next action in breaking the idols.

Another instance of civil disobedience in the Qur'an can be seen in the command not to refer to the illegitimate political system in matters of social life. The verse Q. 4:60 is explicit in this regard:

Hast thou not turned thy though to those who declare that they believe in the revelations that have come to thee and to those before thee? Their (real) wish is to resort together for judgment (in their disputes) to the Tagut (Evil), though they were ordered to reject him. But Satan's wish is to lead them astray far away (from the right)[2](Q. 4:60).

The verse considers the reference to the *ṭāghūt* to settle disputes and enmity as a great misguidance, the will of the devil, and against the divine order. *Ṭāghūt* comes from the root "Ṭ,Gh,W" or "Ṭ,Gh,Y" which means to go beyond the limit. It is an infinitive meaning rebellion, but it is used in the sense of the active participial adjective (rebellious), indicating exaggeration (Ibn Manẓūr 1993, 9:15; al-Ṭabrisī 1998, 2:313). The word *ṭāghūt* is believed to be Arabic, Jewish, Christian or Abyssinian. *Ṭāghūt* has three examples: 1. Deniers and disobedient to God's command and the rules of religion, 2. The usurpers of the right of the legitimate ruler and the infallible Imam, 3. Tyrants and trespassers.

This verse was also cited by Imam Ṣādiq (PBUH) in the famous narration

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1. فَنَظَرَ نَظْرَةً فِي النُّجُومِ فَقَالَ إِنِّي سَقِيمٌ (الصافات/89–88)

2. أَلَمْ تَرَ إِلَى الَّذِينَ يَزْعُمُونَ أَنَّهُمْ آمَنُوا بِمَا أُنْزِلَ إِلَيْكَ وَ مَا أُنْزِلَ مِنْ قَبْلِكَ يُرِيدُونَ أَنْ يَتَحَاكَمُوا إِلَى الطَّاغُوتِ وَ قَدْ أُمِرُوا أَنْ يَكْفُرُوا بِهِ وَ يُرِيدُ الشَّيْطَانُ أَنْ يُضِلَّهُمْ ضَلَالاً بَعِيداً (النساء/60)

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of ʿUmar ibn Ḥanzalah. The cause of revelation of the verse is said to be to refer the conflict between a Muslim and a Jew to a Jew or a non-Muslim and the non-acceptance of the authority of the Prophet by the Muslim (Fayḍ Kāshānī 1998, 1:466, al-Ālūsī 1994, 3:66; al-Rāzī 1999, 5:416). Moreover, there are also various narrations on the prohibition of referring to a tyrannical or usurping ruler for judgment (al-Baḥrānī 1987, 2: 116). Staying away from the *ṭāghūt* is also emphasized in verse 16:36. Furthermore, verse Q. 2:188 advises the believers not to take their disputes to the unjust ruler:

> And do not eat up your property among yourselves for vanities, nor use it as bait for the judges, with intent that ye may eat up wrongfully and knowingly a little of (other) people's property[1] (Q. 2:188).

In a narration, Imam Ṣādiq has said about the meaning of this verse that God knows that unjust rulers will appear in the society, and the address in this verse is directed to them, not to the rulers of justice. If you have a claim against someone and invite him to go to one of the faithful judges, and if he does not accept and does not consent except to refer to unjust rulers, he will be one of those who take the conflict to the *ṭāghūt*, which is forbidden in the verse (al-Kulaynī 2008, 1:168).

3.2.3. Declaration of Aversion

One of the types of political participation in the destiny of society from the perspective of the Qur'an is aversion (*tabarrī*), which is expressed in two ways: public declaration of this aversion or emigration from the illegitimate political system. It also has an affirmative place in Shi'ite and Islamic theology. *Tabarrī* is an infinitive that comes from the root of "B,R,ʾ", meaning to stay away from something with which proximity is abhorrent, to loathe (al-Rāghib 1983). The derivatives of this root are repeated 30 times in the Qur'an. A surah of the Qur'an begins by stating that God and His Prophet abhor polytheists, hence named *barāʾat*. The Qur'an has used *tabarrī* almost in its literal meaning, which is to loathe and stay away from God's enemies and false followers.

A. Public and verbal declaration of aversion

Examples of this type of aversion can be found in Abraham's explicit and determined aversion to Babylonian society and in the Qur'an's aversion to polytheists. The verse Q. 60:4 praises Abraham's political perseverance and presents him and the community of believers as a model for everyone for their reasoned and faithful persistence against the polytheistic political

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1. وَ لا تَأْكُلُوا أَمْوالَكُمْ بَيْنَكُمْ بِالْباطِلِ وَ تُدْلُوا بِها إِلَى الْحُكَّامِ لِتَأْكُلُوا فَرِيقاً مِنْ أَمْوالِ النَّاسِ بِالْإِثْمِ وَ أَنْتُمْ تَعْلَمُون (البقرة/188)

system:

> *There is for you an excellent example (to follow) in Abraham and those with him, when they said to their people: We are clear of you and of whatever ye worship besides Allah: we have rejected you, and there has arisen, between us and you, enmity and hatred for ever[1]... (Q. 60:4).*

Other verses also indicate this issue, such as Q. 43:26, where Abraham addresses Āzar as a representative of the political system and the people of his land, and declares his aversion to them and breaks relations with them. In verse Q. 6:78, after protesting against the polytheists and logically refuting their views, he expresses his aversion to them. Other examples of aversion to the polytheists include Hūd's aversion (Q. 11:54), the Prophet of Islam's (PBUH) aversion (Q. 26:216; 6:19; 10:41), Noah's aversion (Q. 11:35), and God's and His Messenger's aversion (Q. 9:1,3).

B. Emigration from the illegitimate political system

Another type of aversion is in the form of emigration from the center of the illegitimate political system. Two prominent examples are the emigration of the Prophet Abraham from Babylon and the emigration of the Messenger of Islam from Mecca to Medina, which is reflected in the Qur'an. The emigration of Abraham from Babylon to Syria and Jerusalem together with Lūṭ and Sārah (Sabziwārī Najafī 1998, 4:509) is recorded in verses Q. 29:26 and 21:71. The Qur'an praises the Prophet's emigration as well. According to commentators, verse Q. 9:40 describes and praises God's help in the Prophet's emigration from Mecca to Medina. Some verses implicitly refer to the emigration of the Prophet and explicitly praise and even command this kind of political action. 10 of these verses can be listed in the Qur'an, each referring to an aspect of the emigration in the way of God:

- Q. 2:218, referring to the divine mercy of immigrants;
- Q. 3:195, referring to the cleansing of sins and their entry into heaven;
- Q. 8:72, 74-75, referring to God's help to the immigrants, their true faith, and their closeness to each other;
- Q. 9:20, referring to giving the immigrants the highest degree of reward;
- Q. 16:41, referring to the worldly and hereafter rewards for the immigrants;

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1. قَدْ كانَتْ لَكُمْ أُسْوَةٌ حَسَنَةٌ في إِبْراهيمَ وَ الَّذينَ مَعَهُ إِذْ قالُوا لِقَوْمِهِمْ إِنَّا بُرَآؤُا مِنْكُمْ وَ مِمَّا تَعْبُدُونَ مِنْ دُونِ اللَّهِ كَفَرْنا بِكُمْ وَ بَدا بَيْنَنا وَ بَيْنَكُمُ الْعَداوَةُ وَ الْبَغْضاءُ أَبَدا (الممتحنة/4)

- Q. 16:110, referring to God's forgiveness for the immigrants;
- Q.22:58, referring to the granting of divine sustenance to the immigrants;
- Q. 4:100, referring to emigration to join the Islamic army, which is a superior, praised, and highly rewarded political act.

Moses' emigration from Egypt can also be included in this category (Q. 28:21). However, because of his political silence after leaving Egypt, this emigration carries less political significance.

3.2.4. Struggling and Overthrowing

Another type of negative political participation in the Qur'an is conflictual and protesting political action. The first stage of this is protest against oppression, which is permitted in the Qur'an as a minimum confrontation against the oppressors.

> *Allah loveth not that evil should be noised abroad in public speech, except from one who had being treated unjustly; for Allah is He who heareth and knoweth all things[1] (Q. 4:148).*

According to the interpretations, this verse includes both the cry of a lawsuit and the recounting of the cruelty of the oppressors, and this action is excluded from the prohibition of backbiting (Tayyeb 1999, 4: 253; Ibn ʿĀshūr 1999, 4: 294).

Other verses that express this political action are the verses about enjoining good and forbidding evil, which include both protest and conflict. These verses in the Qur'an do not explicitly refer to violent action against an illegitimate political system. However, in theology and jurisprudence, one of their examples is rebellion against the oppressive Muslim ruler, which of course has its supporters and opponents. According to the predominant opinion, the enjoining the good and forbidding the evil has stages, the last stage of which is the uprising and overthrow of the illegitimate system. This matter is repeated 9 times in the Qur'an and those who do so are praised (Q. 3:104; 3:110; 3:114; 7:157; 9:71; 9:112; 22:41; 31:17).

Imam Hussein (PBUH) said the following about the reason for his uprising. "I rose up only to reform my grandfather's nation and to enjoin what is good and forbid what is evil" (Majlisī 1983, 44:329). This statement fully indicates the permissibility of uprising against a tyrant. He also said to Ḥurr ibn Yazīd Rīyāḥī and his army:

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1. لا يُحِبُّ اللَّهُ الْجَهْرَ بِالسُّوءِ مِنَ الْقَوْلِ إِلاَّ مَنْ ظُلِمَ وَ كانَ اللَّهُ سَمِيعاً عَلِيماً (النساء/148)

Whoever sees a tyrannical ruler who considers what is forbidden by God to be lawful, who breaks God's covenants, who opposes the Sunnah of his Prophet, who behaves aggressively among God's servants, but he should not express his opposition to him by his speech and his behavior, it is appropriate that God should take such a person to the place (hell) where the oppressors go, and he has a common fate with them (Majlisī 1983, 44: 382).

In addition, the uprising of Abdullah ibn Ḥanzalah in the incident of al-Ḥarrah in 62 AH, which has been praised by scholars, is also one of the examples of the legitimacy of uprising against the unjust ruler.

Furthermore, Abū Ḥanīfah considered the scope of enjoining good and forbidding evil up to the stage of rebellion, so he supported the rebellion of Zayd ibn ʿAlī and Ḥasanīyān (al-Jaṣāṣ 1984, 1:81). Therefore, from the verses of enjoining good and forbidding evil, it can be understood that after going through the steps and when it is convenient, one should violently fight against the illegitimate political system.

In this regard, the contradictory behavior of the prophets and Qur'anic figures in the face of the illegitimate system is noteworthy. The subversive purpose of these conflicts towards the government is evident that is why they all faced harsh responses from the regime. In general, the Qur'an introduces one of the purposes of sending prophets to avoid and oppose the tyrants, which although the tyrant has a general meaning, one of its most obvious examples is the illegitimate political system.

For We assuredly sent amongst every People a Messengers, (with the Command), Serve Allah, and eschew Evil[1] … (Q. 16:36).

Abraham's conflict with Nimrod and the pagans under his rule is one of the examples of confrontational political participation in the illegitimate system in the Qur'an. Abraham exerted all his efforts to overthrow the system of polytheism and tyranny and did not give up on any possible action until he was arrested, tried, and thrown into the fire. That is why the name of Abraham appears 69 times in 25 surahs of the Qur'an, and one surah of the Qur'an was named after him. This point is well recognized from Nimrod's dream and its interpretation by interpreters (al-Ṭabrisī, 1993, 4: 96), which caused him to do such acts as killing newborn boys out of fear of being overthrown (Majlisī, 1983, 12:42). Breaking the idols was Abraham's first act of confrontation. According to the Qur'an, he even informed the pagans and agents of Nimrod of his intention to do so.

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1. وَ لَقَدْ بَعَثْنا في كُلِّ أُمَّةٍ رَسُولاً أَنِ اعْبُدُوا اللَّهَ وَ اجْتَنِبُوا الطَّاغُوت … (النحل/36)

And by Allah, I will certainly plan against your idols, after ye go away and turn your backs[1] (Q. 21:57).

Then, in their absence, he cleverly broke the idols, and because of this act, he was finally thrown into the fire (Q. 21:51-70).

The conflict between Moses and Pharaoh is another example of the struggle to destroy tyrants. The verse Q. 28:4 considers Pharaoh as one of the corrupters and narrates his arrogant and superior behavior which goes as far as killing children, and mentions Moses' confrontation with him. The next verse tells of the end of Moses' confrontation as the leader of the oppressed against Pharaoh. This verse promises God's great will and grace in their political and economic salvation and victory.

Truly, Pharaoh elated himself in the land and divided its people into sections, depressing a group among them: their sons he slew, but he kept alive their females: for he was indeed an evil doer. And We wished to be Gracious to those who were being depressed in the land, to make them leaders (in faith) and make them heirs[2] (Q. 28:4-5)

The verse Q. 7:110 implicitly states the political objective of Moses to take the power out of the hands of the corrupt and establish a legitimate political system. However, Pharaoh and his entourage, in order to create a psychological war, distorted this objective and told the people that he wanted to drive you out of your land.

The conflict between the Prophet of Islam and the illegitimate political system of the Quraysh in Mecca is another prominent example in this regard. The use of the privative method in the Prophet's dealings is very evident. God commanded the Prophet and the believers to keep away from the infidels and not to consider the religion and norms of the polytheists as equal to their religion, and not to consider them as friends (Q. 73:10; 37:174; 15:94; 6:106; 7:199; 3:28; 4:144). Moreover, the Prophet's aversion to polytheism and his firmness and inflexibility regarding principles are expressed in Q. 109:1-6 and Q. 68:9. Figure 1 provides a brief overview of the types of political participation in the illegitimate regime.

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1. وَ تَاللهِ لَاكِيدَنَّ اَصْنامَكُمْ بَعْدَ اَنْ تُوَلُّوا مُدْبِرِينَ (الانبياء/57)

2. إنَّ فِرْعَوْنَ عَلا فِي الْأَرْضِ وَ جَعَلَ أَهْلَها شِيَعاً يَسْتَضْعِفُ طائِفَةً مِنْهُمْ يُذَبِّحُ أَبْناءَهُمْ وَ يَسْتَحْيِي نِساءَهُمْ إِنَّهُ كانَ مِنَ الْمُفْسِدِينَ وَ نُرِيدُ أَنْ نَمُنَّ عَلَى الَّذِينَ اسْتُضْعِفُوا فِي الْأَرْضِ وَ نَجْعَلَهُمْ أَئِمَّةً وَ نَجْعَلَهُمُ الْوارِثِينَ (القصص/5-4)
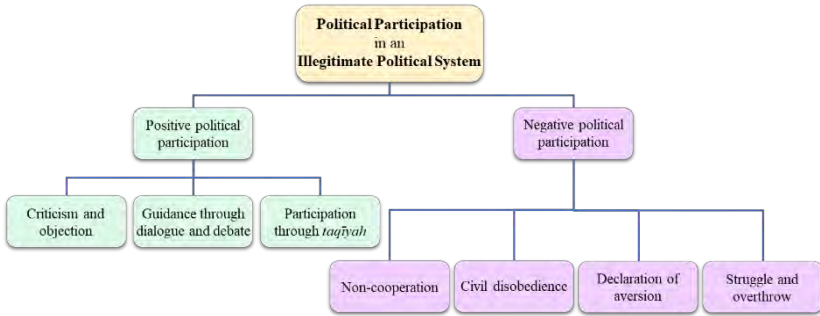
Figure 1. A brief overview of the types of political participation in the illegitimate regime

4. Conclusion

Political participation is one of the most fundamental political issues to be examined from the perspective of the Qur'an. The study of political participation in religious texts, especially in the Holy Qur'an, requires attention to a point that today's concepts such as political participation, which are discussed in the contemporary environment, cannot be completely taken from the concepts and terms of the past. There is no specific term and address for political participation in the Qur'an. However, there are some general addresses referring to political participation, either in the form of direct references, such as Jihad, enjoining good and forbidding evil, or in the form of implicit references.

The levels of political participation in the illegitimate political regime have been categorized as positive and negative, with the negative being possible in both peaceful and non-peaceful ways, all valid in various circumstances in accordance with the Qur'an. Seven types of positive and negative political participation in illegitimate political regimes were identified in the Qur'an. Positive political participations include criticism and objection, guidance through dialogue and debate, and participation through *taqīyah* (religious dissimulation). Negative political participations encompass aversion, non-cooperation, civil disobedience, and struggle and overthrow.

Accordingly, it is concluded that the Qur'an approves and recommends different types of positive and negative political participation under the illegitimate political system. The Qur'an's description of the prophets and Qur'anic figures in the confrontation with an illegitimate system is a multi-staged behavior in the pursuit of eliminating oppression, which includes a range of peaceful to violent behaviors in terms of methods and means in different situations.

Acknowledgements

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