

# Non Partisanship Political Participation Muhammadiyah Citizenship Model

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## **Abstract**

This article systematically reviews the relationship between organizational non-partisanship and political participation in Muhammadiyah to formulate the movement's implicit model of citizenship. The review addresses a recurring paradox: Muhammadiyah formally refuses affiliation with political parties, yet its members, leaders, educational institutions, welfare networks, and policy bodies remain deeply involved in Indonesian public life. A qualitative conceptual systematic review was conducted on 18 analytical sources published no later than 2020, consisting of peer-reviewed articles, academic books, and official Muhammadiyah documents. Sources were coded by actor level, form of participation, citizenship claim, institutional boundary, democratic contribution, and reported tension. The synthesis identifies three differentiated arenas of citizenship. First, organizational non-partisanship protects Muhammadiyah from becoming an electoral vehicle and preserves institutional credibility across changing governments. Second, individual political participation recognizes members as autonomous citizens who may vote, join parties, contest office, and hold diverse political preferences. Third, collective civic participation is exercised through education, health care, philanthropy, policy advocacy, interfaith engagement, and humanitarian action. These arenas are mutually dependent but not automatically harmonious. Personalization of organizational authority, partisan spillover, elite capture, representational ambiguity, and uneven inclusion repeatedly test the boundary between institutional independence and political agency. The article proposes a differentiated citizenship model in which political restraint at the organizational level expands, rather than reduces, civic and political agency at other levels. Its democratic value depends on transparent actor differentiation, protection of organizational symbols, internal deliberation, and accountability for members who enter public office.

**Keywords:** Muhammadiyah; non-partisanship; political participation; citizenship; civil society; political khittah; Indonesia.

## **INTRODUCTION**

Religious organizations in democratic societies participate in politics through more channels than party endorsement or electoral competition. They educate voters, produce public knowledge, deliver welfare, shape moral language, lobby governments, mobilize volunteers, train leaders, and provide social identities through which citizens interpret public obligations. These activities are political in consequence even when organizations formally reject party affiliation. The case of Muhammadiyah is therefore analytically important because it combines a strong norm of organizational non-partisanship with an extensive history of political consciousness, member participation, public advocacy, and institution building. The central question is not whether Muhammadiyah is political, but how political agency is allocated among the organization, its leaders, its members, and its network of autonomous bodies and service institutions.

Muhammadiyah was established as a reformist Islamic movement whose primary organizational fields were religious renewal, education, health, social welfare, and

community development. Historical studies show that its public orientation was never detached from wider struggles against ignorance, colonial domination, social exclusion, and institutional backwardness (Alfian, 1989; Al-Hamdi, 2020). Its schools and associations generated disciplined collective action and a modern organizational culture, while its members entered nationalist, parliamentary, and party arenas through different historical arrangements (Nakamura, 2012; Suwarno, 2020). This background complicates any description of Muhammadiyah as simply apolitical. The movement's institutional form was non-party, but its reformist programme created citizens, leaders, social capacities, and public claims with unmistakable political effects.

The relationship became more explicit through a succession of political *khittah*. These organizational guidelines were produced after experiences in which proximity to party politics generated both influence and organizational strain. The formulations associated with Ujung Pandang in 1971, Surabaya in 1978, and Denpasar in 2002 established that Muhammadiyah should not become an affiliate or organizational instrument of a political party, while politics itself remains a legitimate sphere of worldly responsibility that must be guided by morality and public benefit (Nashir, 2008; Pimpinan Pusat Muhammadiyah, 2010). *Khittah* therefore functions as a rule of institutional location. It places the organization outside direct party competition without locating its members outside citizenship or public responsibility.

A frequent conceptual error is to equate non-partisanship with neutrality, abstention, or political passivity. Non-partisanship refers more precisely to the absence of binding organizational affiliation with competing parties. It does not require indifference toward constitutional order, injustice, corruption, religious freedom, public services, or social inequality. Muhammadiyah's post-authoritarian activity demonstrates this distinction. Its elites expressed varied positions on Islamic parties, the Jakarta Charter, terrorism, democracy, and state-religion relations, while the organization continued to address policy and national questions through leadership statements, congresses, universities, councils, and civil society networks (Al-Hamdi, 2012, 2013, 2015; Pratama, 2020). The evidence points toward an institution that restrains its collective electoral identity while sustaining issue-based political engagement.

The second conceptual error is to treat Muhammadiyah as a single political actor. The legal organization, the Central Board, regional leaders, individual public figures, ordinary members, autonomous organizations, universities, hospitals, philanthropic agencies, and professional networks do not possess identical mandates. An individual member may join a party or contest public office without converting that choice into an official organizational endorsement. A university may conduct policy research without speaking for every member. A leader's public statement may carry organizational authority, personal influence, or an ambiguous mixture of both. Much of the controversy surrounding Muhammadiyah and electoral politics arises when these actor levels are conflated.

Citizenship offers a more productive analytical lens than neutrality because it directs attention to rights, membership, agency, obligation, and public participation. Political participation includes voting, party activity, campaigning, office-holding, protest, and

policy influence, while civic engagement also includes volunteering, association, service provision, deliberation, and community problem solving. The distinction is not absolute; civic practices can prepare political capacities, and political decisions shape civic institutions. Muhammadiyah's schools, hospitals, universities, women's and youth organizations, disaster agencies, and philanthropic networks create spaces in which citizens acquire organizational skills, social trust, professional ethics, and public responsibility (Fuad, 2002, 2004; Latief & Nashir, 2020). These are forms of citizenship production even when they do not resemble party mobilization.

The movement's citizenship orientation is also connected to its acceptance of the Indonesian constitutional order. The formulation of the Pancasila state as *Dar al-'Ahdi wa al-Syhadah* describes Indonesia as a consensual national covenant and a field for ethical contribution (Pimpinan Pusat Muhammadiyah, 2015). This perspective moves public commitment beyond a tactical accommodation to the state. Citizenship becomes a religious and civic responsibility to protect common institutions, improve public welfare, and demonstrate the social value of Islam. Studies of pluralism and interreligious relations further show that this responsibility can extend to cooperation and public benefit across religious boundaries, although internal diversity and practical inconsistency remain significant (Burhani, 2011; Biyanto, 2020).

Existing scholarship provides important components of this picture but remains fragmented. Historical studies trace changing relations with political movements; elite studies analyze political attitudes; civil society studies assess institutional capacity; official documents establish normative boundaries; and studies of education, pluralism, and global humanitarianism reveal non-electoral forms of public participation. Few works integrate these strands into a systematic account of how non-partisanship and participation coexist as a citizenship model. The gap is conceptual rather than merely descriptive: the literature needs a framework capable of distinguishing actors, arenas, rights, institutional safeguards, and democratic outcomes.

This article addresses that gap through a conceptual systematic review of literature published no later than December 31, 2020. It asks four questions. First, how does Muhammadiyah define the institutional meaning of non-partisanship? Second, how are political rights and participation distributed among the organization, leaders, members, and service institutions? Third, which non-electoral practices constitute Muhammadiyah's civic model? Fourth, what tensions and safeguards shape the democratic credibility of this arrangement? The article argues that the literature supports a differentiated citizenship model composed of organizational non-partisanship, individual political autonomy, and collective civic participation. The model explains how restraint at one actor level can preserve and expand agency at other levels, while also identifying the risks that arise when organizational and personal mandates are blurred.

## METHOD

This study used a qualitative conceptual systematic review. The method is appropriate because the object of inquiry is a dispersed institutional logic rather than the measurable effect of a single programme. The review reconstructs concepts, actor distinctions, mechanisms, and tensions across historical, political, sociological, and organizational

literature. It follows systematic principles of transparent scope, explicit inclusion criteria, structured extraction, and comparative synthesis, while recognizing that books and official organizational documents are essential sources for a topic that cannot be adequately studied through journal databases alone.

The temporal boundary was December 31, 2020. This cut-off permits examination of the major Reformasi-era literature while maintaining consistency with the wider research series in which the article is situated. Search terms combined Muhammadiyah with political khittah, non-partisanship, neutrality, political participation, civil society, citizenship, democracy, moral politics, party relations, pluralism, public policy, education, and humanitarian engagement. English and Indonesian terms were used. Bibliographic metadata and DOI records were checked where available, and reference lists of relevant works were examined to identify historically important books and institutional publications.

Sources were included when they contributed directly to at least one of six analytical domains: the historical relationship between Muhammadiyah and political organizations; official khittah and political guidance; member or elite political participation; civil society and democratic capacity; public service as civic infrastructure; or pluralist, humanitarian, and transnational engagement. General studies of Indonesian Islam were retained only when they provided a clear framework for interpreting Muhammadiyah. Sources published after 2020, journalistic commentary, duplicate publications, and texts that mentioned Muhammadiyah without substantive analysis were excluded from the analytical corpus.

The final corpus contained 18 sources: twelve peer-reviewed articles, four academic books, and two official Muhammadiyah publications. Official texts were treated as normative primary documents that state how the organization defines itself; they were not treated as evidence that practice always conforms to doctrine. Academic studies were evaluated according to relevance, methodological clarity, source transparency, and the specificity of their evidence. Historical books, elite interviews, case studies, and organizational analyses were not assigned a single numerical quality score because they answer different kinds of questions.

A structured extraction matrix recorded publication year, source type, historical period, unit of analysis, definition of political engagement, actor level, form of participation, citizenship implication, institutional safeguard, democratic contribution, and reported tension. Coding distinguished four actor levels: Muhammadiyah as an organization, formal leadership bodies, individual members or elites, and semi-autonomous institutions or organizations. It also distinguished electoral participation, party participation, policy advocacy, public service, associational participation, deliberative education, interfaith cooperation, and transnational humanitarian engagement.

The synthesis proceeded in three stages. Descriptive mapping first established the composition and temporal distribution of the corpus. Thematic coding then identified recurring patterns concerning boundaries, rights, civic institutions, moral advocacy,

pluralism, and representation. Finally, conceptual integration connected the themes into a differentiated citizenship model. Rival interpretations were retained where the literature disagreed or where official norms and empirical practices diverged. The review does not fabricate PRISMA identification or exclusion counts that cannot be reconstructed from the available search record; its transparency rests instead on an explicit corpus, traceable references, and clear analytical decisions.

## RESULTS AND DISCUSSION

### 1. Characteristics of the Analytical Corpus

The corpus spans more than three decades of scholarship, from Alfian's study of political behavior under colonial rule to five works published in 2020. Earlier studies establish the historical and civil-society foundations of the problem, while the post-2010 literature gives greater attention to elite attitudes, formal khittah, pluralism, global engagement, and organizational debates under democracy. The concentration of sources in 2020 reflects renewed interest in Muhammadiyah's political consciousness and changing public role rather than an abrupt transformation of the movement itself.

The sources differ in unit of analysis. Historical works examine the movement across regimes or local settings; elite studies focus on political attitudes after 1998; civil society studies assess organizational capacity; official publications articulate normative positions; and studies of education, pluralism, and humanitarian engagement illuminate non-electoral citizenship. This heterogeneity is analytically useful because the citizenship model is distributed across multiple institutions and practices. It also requires caution: statements about a national organization cannot automatically be inferred from one locality, one elite group, or one institutional programme.

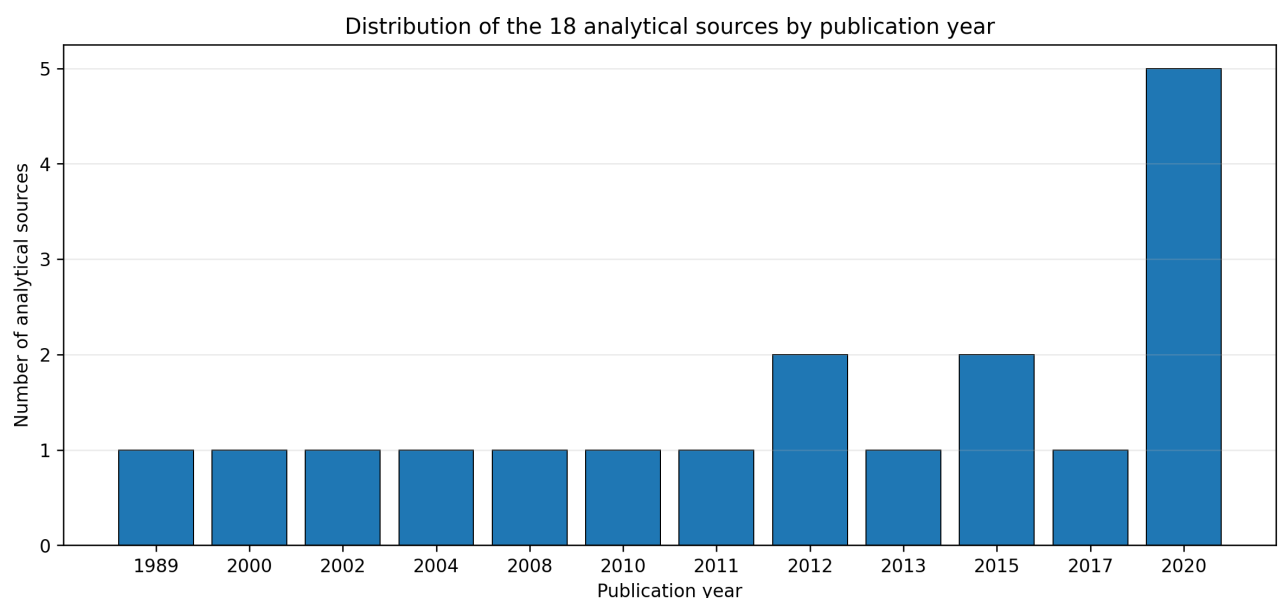


Figure 1. Distribution of the 18 analytical sources by publication year

Table 2. Core corpus and principal analytical contribution

| Source                 | Type              | Primary focus                    | Contribution to review                                          |
|------------------------|-------------------|----------------------------------|-----------------------------------------------------------------|
| Alfian (1989)          | Book              | Colonial and nationalist periods | Political behavior and organizational-party relations.          |
| Hefner (2000)          | Book              | Democratization                  | Civil Islam and Muslim associational contribution to democracy. |
| Fuad (2002)            | Article           | Civil society                    | Institutional potential and organizational limits.              |
| Fuad (2004)            | Article           | Education                        | Modern education as social and civic transformation.            |
| Nashir (2008)          | Book              | Khittah                          | Interpretation of Muhammadiyah political guidance.              |
| PP Muhammadiyah (2010) | Official document | Organizational doctrine          | Compilation of ideology, khittah, and movement strategy.        |
| Burhani (2011)         | Article           | Interfaith relations             | Doctrinal boundary and practical coexistence.                   |
| Al-Hamdi (2012, 2013)  | Articles          | Reformasi elites                 | Variation in elite political attitudes.                         |
| Nakamura (2012)        | Book              | Local-longitudinal               | Movement, community, and politics across regimes.               |
| Al-Hamdi (2015)        | Article           | Constitutional debate            | Elite views on the Jakarta Charter.                             |
| PP Muhammadiyah (2015) | Official document | State-citizenship                | Pancasila state as national covenant and field of witness.      |
| Argenti (2017)         | Article           | Moral politics                   | Non-party influence through ethical public engagement.          |
| Al-Hamdi (2020)        | Article           | Political consciousness          | Reformist and liberation roots of political awareness.          |
| Biyanto (2020)         | Article           | Pluralism                        | Interfaith and pluralist civic practice.                        |
| Latief & Nashir (2020) | Article           | Global engagement                | Humanitarian and transnational civil-society activism.          |
| Pratama (2020)         | Article           | Internal democracy               | Congress debate and organizational political contestation.      |
| Suwarno (2020)         | Article           | Parliamentary democracy          | Local historical relationship with politics.                    |

## 2. Non-Partisanship as an Organizational Citizenship Boundary

The first theme is that non-partisanship is an organizational boundary rather than a universal prohibition on politics. The literature traces this boundary to historical experience. Muhammadiyah members and leaders participated in nationalist and party formations, and the organization maintained changing relations with Islamic political organizations across colonial, parliamentary, Guided Democracy, New Order, and Reformasi periods (Alfian, 1989; Nakamura, 2012; Suwarno, 2020). These relationships generated influence but also exposed the organization to factional conflict, dependence on political elites, and neglect of its religious and social mission.

The khittah formulations responded by distinguishing Muhammadiyah's organizational identity from party identity. Ujung Pandang and Surabaya emphasized the absence of organizational affiliation, while Denpasar articulated a broader position in national and state life (Nashir, 2008; Pimpinan Pusat Muhammadiyah, 2010). Politics remained part of *al-umur al-dunyawiyah* and therefore open to ethical reasoning, participation, and institutional engagement. The boundary is consequently selective: it restricts the use of

the organization as a vehicle for electoral competition but does not deny the legitimacy of politics or the responsibility to influence public affairs.

This distinction gives non-partisanship a citizenship function. By refusing a binding party identity, Muhammadiyah can include members with different political preferences and maintain relationships with successive governments without becoming structurally subordinate to one coalition. The organization presents itself as a common civic association rather than a partisan constituency. This arrangement can protect plural membership, preserve continuity across electoral cycles, and support criticism of different governments. Its credibility, however, depends on consistent enforcement. Selective tolerance toward favored candidates or parties would transform a formal rule into an instrument of internal power.

Non-partisanship also protects collective resources. The Muhammadiyah name, emblem, educational network, facilities, charitable assets, and religious authority are products of collective membership. Their conversion into partisan capital would allow particular actors to appropriate resources that belong to a wider constituency. The *khittah* can therefore be understood as a constitutional rule of organizational citizenship: members possess political rights, but no member has an unrestricted right to convert shared institutions into an electoral machine.

### **3. Political Participation as an Individual Civic Right**

The second theme is the recognition of individual political autonomy. Official guidance and historical practice do not require members to withdraw from elections, parties, legislatures, or public office. Members participate as citizens according to personal judgement, competence, and responsibility, while remaining subject to ethical expectations and organizational rules concerning the use of Muhammadiyah's identity (Nashir, 2008; Pimpinan Pusat Muhammadiyah, 2010). The resulting arrangement separates organizational endorsement from individual choice.

Elite studies after 1998 demonstrate that Muhammadiyah contains genuine political diversity. Leaders differed in their assessment of Islamic parties, the Jakarta Charter, state ideology, terrorism, and the appropriate relationship between Islamic norms and democratic institutions (Al-Hamdi, 2012, 2013, 2015). Such variation is not merely a leadership problem; it is evidence that non-partisanship creates an internal space in which political citizenship is not monopolized by one organizational line. Members may share a religious and associational identity without sharing a party identity.

The same differentiation permits political recruitment. Muhammadiyah's educational and organizational networks produce people with administrative experience, public communication skills, policy knowledge, and social legitimacy. Some enter parties, parliament, bureaucracy, electoral commissions, universities, or advocacy organizations. Their participation can extend the movement's public values into state institutions, but their accountability changes once they act in another institutional role. A member who

becomes a legislator is accountable to law, voters, party rules, and public ethics; Muhammadiyah membership does not automatically authorize the individual to claim organizational representation.

Political participation also includes voting and public deliberation. The citizenship model implied by the literature is incompatible with abstention as an organizational ideal. Citizens are expected to evaluate candidates, policies, and constitutional consequences rather than merely follow elite instructions. Yet the literature offers limited empirical evidence on ordinary members' voting behavior or political literacy. Most studies focus on elites, formal documents, or historical relationships. This gap means that claims about a distinct Muhammadiyah voter cannot be made confidently from the reviewed corpus. What can be established is an institutional norm of political freedom bounded by non-appropriation of collective authority.

#### **4. Civic Infrastructure and the Production of Participatory Capacity**

The third theme is that Muhammadiyah's citizenship model is produced through civic infrastructure. Fuad (2002) identifies the movement as a major civil society organization whose educational, social, and religious institutions create organized space outside the state and market. Schools, universities, hospitals, orphanages, philanthropic bodies, women's organizations, youth associations, and professional networks do more than deliver services. They recruit volunteers, form committees, train administrators, circulate public norms, and connect local communities to national institutions.

Education is especially significant. Muhammadiyah's modern educational programme combined religious formation with general knowledge and organizational discipline (Fuad, 2004). Students encounter rules, schedules, associations, debate, service activities, leadership structures, and national curricula. These experiences can cultivate capacities relevant to citizenship: literacy, confidence, cooperation, procedural knowledge, and the ability to act through institutions. The political significance of education is therefore indirect but durable. It enlarges the population capable of participating in public life without turning schools into party branches.

Welfare and health institutions similarly produce a public-goods orientation. They make citizenship tangible through access to care, assistance, disaster response, and social protection. Philanthropic and humanitarian programmes connect moral obligation with organized delivery, demonstrating that participation is not limited to voice or representation but includes responsibility for the conditions under which others can exercise citizenship. Latief and Nashir (2020) show that this orientation expanded into global humanitarian and peace-related engagement, allowing Muhammadiyah to act as a transnational civic organization while retaining a national institutional base.

The civil-society literature also warns against idealization. Institutional size is not equivalent to democratic quality. Large organizations may become bureaucratic, hierarchical, dependent on state resources, or dominated by professional elites (Fuad,

2002). Service recipients may be treated as clients rather than participants, and organizational efficiency may reduce opportunities for deliberation. Civic infrastructure contributes to citizenship when it expands voice, competence, access, and accountability, not merely when it increases the number of institutions.

This finding broadens the meaning of political participation. Participation can be preparatory, associational, and problem-solving. A volunteer in a disaster programme, a student organization leader, a lecturer producing policy evidence, or a women's group organizing community health may not be participating in party politics, but each develops or exercises civic agency. Muhammadiyah's non-partisanship is sustainable partly because these channels provide meaningful public action outside the competition for office.

## **5. Moral-Policy Engagement and Public Accountability**

The fourth theme is engagement through moral and policy claims. Argenti (2017) describes Muhammadiyah's role in terms of moral politics: influencing public life through ethical criticism rather than becoming a party. The language of *amar ma'ruf nahi munkar* supplies a religious vocabulary for supporting justice, criticizing corruption, defending public welfare, and evaluating power. This mode of engagement treats political authority as morally accountable even when Muhammadiyah does not seek to control it directly.

Moral politics becomes more credible when connected to evidence and institutions. Universities, councils, research centres, professional associations, and leadership forums can formulate recommendations on education, health, religious affairs, social policy, and constitutional questions. This is a form of political participation because it seeks to shape authoritative decisions. It is also distinct from lobbying for narrow organizational advantage when arguments are framed in terms of public benefit and subjected to open reasoning.

The Pancasila formulation as *Dar al-'Ahdi wa al-Syahadah* strengthens this civic orientation by describing the state as a shared covenant and arena of constructive witness (Pimpinan Pusat Muhammadiyah, 2015). The implication is neither withdrawal from the state nor unconditional loyalty to government. Citizens and organizations honor the constitutional agreement by improving institutions, protecting plural society, and holding power accountable. This allows criticism to be presented as part of national commitment rather than evidence of disloyalty.

Policy engagement nevertheless creates proximity risks. Access to ministers, legislators, and public officials can improve influence, but it may also produce patronage, self-censorship, or competition for appointments. The literature indicates that Muhammadiyah's position alternates between critical distance and cooperative access. A citizenship model based on moral influence therefore requires transparent mandates, disclosure of interests, collective deliberation, and a willingness to criticize political actors with whom organizational leaders maintain personal relationships.

## **6. Pluralism, Peacebuilding, and Inclusive Citizenship**

The fifth theme extends citizenship beyond relations among Muslims and the state. Burhani (2011) shows that Muhammadiyah's interfaith position contains doctrinal firmness alongside practical questions of coexistence, cooperation, and institutional conduct. Biyanto (2020) documents efforts to promote and practice religious pluralism through dialogue, education, and social engagement. These studies indicate that non-partisanship can support a wider civic constituency because the organization is not required to define public partners through party alignment or a single electoral bloc.

Inclusive citizenship also emerges through service provision. Schools, hospitals, disaster assistance, and humanitarian programmes can serve people across religious and social boundaries. When access is based on need and professional responsibility, Islamic motivation becomes compatible with universal public benefit. Latief and Nashir (2020) further demonstrate that humanitarian engagement can project an Indonesian Muslim civil-society identity internationally, linking local religious commitment with global solidarity.

The reviewed literature does not establish uniform pluralism across all branches or members. Doctrinal debates, local majorities, leadership attitudes, and political polarization can produce inconsistent practice. Inclusive citizenship should therefore be treated as an organizational project requiring education and safeguards, not as an automatic outcome of modernism. The model's normative promise is strongest when religious identity motivates equal civic concern without demanding partisan or confessional conformity from beneficiaries and partners.

## **7. Representation, Personalization, and Partisan Spillover**

The sixth theme concerns recurring tensions. The most important is representational ambiguity. Prominent individuals may possess simultaneous identities as Muhammadiyah leaders, scholars, activists, candidates, party officials, or state office-holders. Public audiences may interpret personal statements as official organizational positions even when no formal mandate exists. Conversely, leaders may invoke personal status to avoid accountability while benefiting from organizational prestige. Clear communication about institutional capacity is therefore essential.

Partisan spillover is a related problem. Electoral competition can enter internal meetings, leadership selection, campus relations, charitable institutions, or professional networks through informal alliances. The *khittah* prevents formal affiliation but cannot by itself remove partisan preferences from organizational life. Pratama's (2020) study of congress debate illustrates that democratic procedures inside Muhammadiyah can become arenas for competing interpretations of organizational direction. Such competition is not inherently illegitimate, but it becomes damaging when party loyalty overrides organizational deliberation or when dissenting members are treated as less authentic citizens of the association.

Elite capture constitutes a third risk. The organization's social authority may be used to secure nominations, appointments, resources, or access for a small group. In this situation, non-partisanship can become symbolic while informal networks distribute political benefits. The problem is not that members enter politics, but that access and representation may be unequal and opaque. Democratic citizenship requires procedures through which members can evaluate public claims made in their name and distinguish organizational interest from elite interest.

Finally, non-partisanship may drift into excessive caution. Fear of appearing partisan can discourage timely positions on rights violations, corruption, exclusion, or democratic decline. The literature supports independence from parties, not silence regarding public power. The citizenship model succeeds only when organizational restraint is paired with substantive engagement. A movement that protects its neutrality but abandons vulnerable citizens would preserve form at the expense of civic purpose.

*Table 3. Thematic synthesis of Muhammadiyah citizenship*

| Theme                         | Core practice                                                                      | Citizenship contribution                                      | Principal risk                                        |
|-------------------------------|------------------------------------------------------------------------------------|---------------------------------------------------------------|-------------------------------------------------------|
| Organizational boundary       | No formal party affiliation; protection of collective symbols and resources.       | Autonomy and broad membership.                                | Selective enforcement or hidden alignment.            |
| Individual political autonomy | Voting, party membership, campaigning, office-holding, and political disagreement. | Political rights and plural preferences.                      | Personal claims presented as organizational mandates. |
| Civic infrastructure          | Education, health, welfare, philanthropy, youth and women's organization.          | Capacity, public goods, and associational citizenship.        | Bureaucratization, hierarchy, and clientelism.        |
| Moral-policy engagement       | Ethical criticism, research, policy advice, constitutional advocacy.               | Public accountability and issue-based influence.              | Patronage and excessive proximity to government.      |
| Inclusive citizenship         | Interfaith cooperation, universal service, peacebuilding, humanitarian action.     | Civic solidarity beyond partisan and confessional boundaries. | Uneven local practice and doctrinal tension.          |
| Representation safeguards     | Actor differentiation, authorization, disclosure, and accountability.              | Credible participation without organizational capture.        | Elite capture, partisan spillover, and ambiguity.     |

## Discussion

The thematic synthesis supports a differentiated citizenship model composed of three arenas: organizational non-partisanship, individual political participation, and collective civic participation. These arenas correspond to different rights and responsibilities. The organization has a duty to protect common resources, maintain broad membership, and avoid capture by electoral competitors. Individual members retain constitutional rights and moral responsibility to participate in politics. Collective institutions engage public problems through services, education, advocacy, and cooperation. The model is differentiated because no single actor level exhausts Muhammadiyah's political identity.

This formulation improves on the language of neutrality. Neutrality suggests that an actor stands equally distant from competing sides or suspends judgement. Muhammadiyah's literature instead shows selective distance. The organization distances itself from binding party affiliation but not from moral evaluation, national commitment, policy debate, or civic service. It may oppose corruption, defend constitutional principles, or advocate public welfare without endorsing a party. Non-partisanship is thus a rule governing organizational alignment, not a comprehensive theory of political silence.

The model also clarifies why organizational restraint can expand political agency. If Muhammadiyah adopted a single party identity, members who preferred other parties would face a conflict between associational belonging and political citizenship. Non-partisanship lowers that cost. It permits political pluralism within a shared religious organization and allows public institutions to serve citizens without screening them by party allegiance. In this sense, the boundary is agency preserving. It protects the freedom of members and the accessibility of institutions by preventing collective identity from being monopolized by one electoral project.

At the same time, the model rejects an individualistic understanding of citizenship. Muhammadiyah's public role is not reducible to the private choices of members. The organization produces civic goods and political capacities through coordinated institutions. Education, health care, welfare, philanthropy, research, interfaith cooperation, and humanitarian action shape the social conditions of citizenship. They expand knowledge, security, association, and public trust. The resulting influence is political even when it is not electoral because it changes who can participate, which problems receive attention, and what kinds of public responsibility are considered legitimate.

The differentiated model resembles the broader idea of civil Islam, in which Muslim associations contribute to democracy through plural organizations, public ethics, and participation outside state control (Hefner, 2000). Muhammadiyah's contribution, however, should not be romanticized. Civil society can democratize power, but it can also reproduce hierarchy, exclusion, patronage, and elite dominance. The reviewed literature shows both capacities. Organizational autonomy from parties is a favorable condition for democratic contribution, not proof that democratic practice has been achieved.

The citizenship perspective also separates participation from representation. A person may participate politically because he or she belongs to Muhammadiyah, yet this does not mean the person represents Muhammadiyah. Representation requires an authorized mandate, a defined constituency, and procedures through which claims can be accepted, contested, or withdrawn. This distinction is especially important in media environments that reduce complex institutional relations to personal labels. Describing a candidate as a Muhammadiyah figure may be sociologically accurate but institutionally misleading. The differentiated model therefore asks not only whether members participate, but also who is entitled to speak in the organization's name, through which decision, and for what duration. Clear representation rules protect both the organization and politically active members from unrealistic expectations.

The model further reveals an underdeveloped dimension in the reviewed literature: unequal access to political opportunity within the association. Most empirical studies examine male national elites, prominent intellectuals, or formal leadership controversies. They provide limited evidence about women, younger members, disabled citizens, rural branches, service workers, or beneficiaries of Muhammadiyah institutions. Yet citizenship is shaped by who acquires leadership experience, who controls networks, whose political choices are treated as legitimate, and whose public concerns reach organizational agendas. Future evaluation of non-partisanship should therefore ask whether it protects plural participation across gender, generation, class, and locality, or merely stabilizes competition among established elites.

A further implication concerns the relationship between internal democracy and external citizenship. Muhammadiyah cannot credibly promote accountability in the state if its own public positions are produced through opaque procedures. Internal consultation, contestable leadership, access to information, and reasoned disagreement are not secondary administrative matters; they are training grounds for democratic citizenship. Pratama's (2020) account of congress debate indicates that organizational assemblies can serve as arenas where competing visions are negotiated. The quality of these arenas determines whether *khittah* is interpreted as a shared constitutional rule or as a leadership instrument. Internal democracy does not require party-like factionalism, but it does require meaningful opportunities to question how collective authority is used.

The differentiated citizenship model is also suitable for comparative research. Other religious organizations may combine party distance, member participation, and civic service in different proportions. Some may maintain formal alliances with parties; others may prohibit political office for clergy or leaders; still others may rely more heavily on protest, lobbying, or welfare provision. Comparing these arrangements would show whether Muhammadiyah's model is distinctive and which institutional combinations best preserve autonomy without weakening political efficacy. The relevant outcomes include not only election results but also member pluralism, public trust, policy access, civic competence, and resistance to authoritarian pressure.

Four mechanisms connect the three arenas. The first is actor differentiation: statements and actions must be attributed to the correct institutional level. The second is resource protection: collective symbols, facilities, databases, and authority should not be appropriated for personal campaigns. The third is deliberative authorization: organizational advocacy requires transparent procedures that connect leadership statements to reasoned institutional decisions. The fourth is accountability after participation: members who enter public office should be evaluated by legal integrity, public performance, and ethical conduct rather than protected by organizational solidarity.

These mechanisms also explain the model's main vulnerabilities. Personalization weakens actor differentiation; informal campaigning weakens resource protection; closed leadership networks weaken deliberative authorization; and patronage weakens accountability. Partisan spillover can then transform diversity into factionalism. The

appropriate response is not to prohibit members from politics, because prohibition would contradict citizenship and drive participation into less accountable channels. The response is to strengthen boundaries, disclosure, conflict-of-interest rules, and internal civic education.

The synthesis generates four propositions for future research. Proposition 1: organizational non-partisanship strengthens member political freedom when institutional rules prevent the use of collective authority by particular candidates or parties. Proposition 2: the political significance of Muhammadiyah depends more on the quality and accessibility of its civic infrastructure than on direct electoral mobilization. Proposition 3: individual political participation contributes to the movement's citizenship model only when public office-holders remain accountable to constitutional and public standards rather than claiming automatic organizational legitimacy. Proposition 4: moral-policy advocacy is democratically credible when it combines critical distance from government with transparent, evidence-based deliberation.

The model therefore contains a productive tension rather than a settled equilibrium. Muhammadiyah seeks to be sufficiently distant from parties to remain autonomous, sufficiently open to allow member participation, and sufficiently engaged to influence public life. Too much proximity risks capture; too much distance risks irrelevance; too much internal control risks suppressing citizenship; and too little control risks appropriation of the organization. The practical meaning of khittah lies in managing these tensions rather than eliminating politics from organizational life.

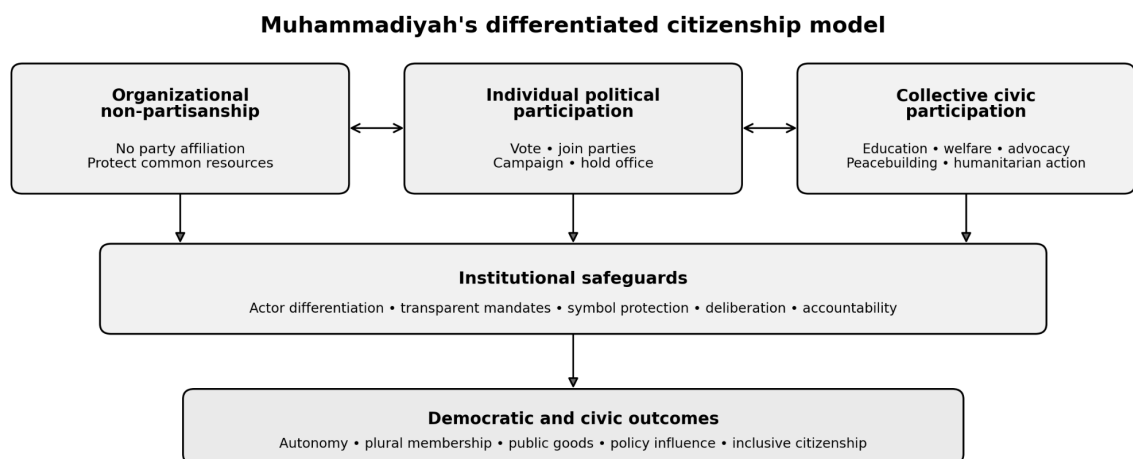


Figure 2. Muhammadiyah's differentiated citizenship model

Table 4. Citizenship arenas, rights, obligations, and safeguards

| Actor arena                  | Political/civic right                    | Primary obligation                                             | Safeguard                                                   |
|------------------------------|------------------------------------------|----------------------------------------------------------------|-------------------------------------------------------------|
| Muhammadiyah as organization | Institutional independence from parties. | Protect common assets; formulate issue-based public positions. | Khittah, collective authorization, equal distance in rules. |

| Actor arena                                  | Political/civic right                               | Primary obligation                                                           | Safeguard                                                               |
|----------------------------------------------|-----------------------------------------------------|------------------------------------------------------------------------------|-------------------------------------------------------------------------|
| Formal leaders                               | Exercise delegated organizational authority.        | Clarify whether statements are official or personal.                         | Mandate disclosure, conflict-of-interest procedures.                    |
| Individual members                           | Vote, join parties, campaign, and hold office.      | Do not appropriate organizational symbols or claim automatic representation. | Political freedom combined with ethical accountability.                 |
| Autonomous organizations                     | Develop constituency-specific civic programmes.     | Coordinate mandates while retaining programmatic initiative.                 | Clear constitutional relation to the parent organization.               |
| Universities and service institutions        | Research, educate, provide care, and engage policy. | Serve public needs and protect professional standards.                       | Institutional neutrality in elections; transparent policy advocacy.     |
| Public office-holders with Muhammadiyah ties | Participate fully in state institutions.            | Serve citizens broadly and accept performance-based criticism.               | No immunity through organizational identity; disclosure and evaluation. |

### Practical and Scholarly Implications

For organizational governance, the review indicates that non-partisanship should be translated into operational rules. Muhammadiyah bodies need clear standards concerning campaign activity in organizational facilities, use of names and symbols, endorsement procedures, conflicts of interest, public statements by office-holders, and temporary leave for leaders who contest elections. Rules should apply consistently across parties and candidates. Selective enforcement would undermine both independence and internal equality.

For civic education, Muhammadiyah institutions should teach the distinction among organizational identity, personal political preference, and public responsibility. Political literacy should include constitutional rights, critical evaluation of candidates, policy analysis, media literacy, and the ethics of disagreement. Members should be encouraged to participate without treating party choice as a measure of religious authenticity or organizational loyalty.

For members in public office, the model implies a shift from symbolic representation to performance accountability. Public officials with Muhammadiyah backgrounds should not be evaluated merely by proximity to leaders or capacity to channel resources toward affiliated institutions. More appropriate criteria include integrity, competence, protection of rights, evidence-based policy, and service to the wider public. Organizational networks may provide ethical support, but they should not function as protection from legitimate criticism.

For scholarship, future studies should examine ordinary members and local institutions rather than relying predominantly on national elites. Comparative research could measure how branches interpret khittah, how members vote across party lines, whether service institutions cultivate civic skills, and how gender and generation shape political opportunity. Longitudinal and multi-level designs are needed to test whether

differentiated citizenship actually reduces polarization and improves public accountability.

A practical measurement agenda can translate the model into indicators. Organizational non-partisanship can be assessed through consistency of rules, disclosure of endorsements, and protection of facilities and symbols. Individual autonomy can be assessed through diversity of party preference, freedom from internal coercion, and access to political education. Collective civic participation can be assessed through policy outputs, volunteer involvement, beneficiary inclusion, and responsiveness to rights violations. Democratic credibility can then be evaluated through transparency, representation, conflict-of-interest management, and the conduct of office-holders associated with Muhammadiyah. These indicators would move debate beyond competing labels such as neutral, independent, or political by examining how the citizenship arrangement actually operates.

### **Limitations**

This review has four limitations. First, the corpus is systematically bounded but not bibliometrically exhaustive. Internal circulars, regional publications, speeches, and unpublished organizational records may contain additional evidence. Second, the source base is weighted toward national elites, formal documents, and historical interpretation; ordinary members' political behavior is under-researched. Third, the corpus combines normative texts and empirical studies with different evidentiary status. Official claims describe intended boundaries but cannot demonstrate compliance. Fourth, the review ends in 2020 and therefore does not assess later electoral cycles or organizational decisions. The differentiated citizenship model should be treated as an analytical reconstruction to be tested, not as a claim that all parts of Muhammadiyah operate uniformly.

### **CONCLUSION**

This systematic review examined how organizational non-partisanship and political participation coexist in Muhammadiyah's model of citizenship. The evidence does not support the view that khittah removes politics from the movement. It reallocates political agency. Muhammadiyah as an organization declines binding party affiliation; members retain individual rights to vote, join parties, contest office, and disagree politically; and collective institutions participate through education, welfare, advocacy, pluralist cooperation, and humanitarian action.

The article's central contribution is the differentiated citizenship model. Its three arenas are connected by institutional safeguards: accurate attribution of actors, protection of collective resources, transparent authorization of public positions, and accountability for members who enter political office. Under these conditions, non-partisanship can preserve associational autonomy and political pluralism while enabling substantial participation. Without them, the same arrangement can produce personalization, elite capture, partisan spillover, and representational confusion.

Muhammadiyah's experience demonstrates that political participation need not be organized through a single party identity. Citizenship can be exercised through electoral

choice, professional public service, associational work, moral criticism, policy expertise, and the production of public goods. The democratic significance of this model lies not in political distance alone but in the capacity to combine independence with responsibility. Non-partisanship becomes meaningful when it protects the freedom of citizens and the integrity of common institutions while sustaining a clear commitment to justice, constitutional life, and public welfare.

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