

ISLAMOPHOBIA IS NOT A BARRIER TO THE RESURRECTION OF ISLAMIC CIVILIZATION IN THE UNITED STATES

Rukmini
UIN Alauddin Makassar

Abstract—The emergence of Islamophobia in the United States cannot be separated from the September 9/11 attacks as a negative effect of the western media coverage which at that time represented the attack as an act of terrorism masterminded by Muslims, so that the face of Islam at that time was always associated with violence and war. In the midst of the emergence of this Islamophobia trend, it actually attracts people's interest to study Islam and proves that Islam is a wrong religion and must be eliminated. In the midst of these efforts, it has turned out that ordinary people are interested in embracing Islam by seeing the perfection of its teachings. Islamic civilization in America is growing very rapidly and is even predicted to become the religion with the second largest adherent in America in 2050.

1. Introduction

Islam is a universal religion, a religion that carries the mission of *ramatan lil 'ālamīn*, a religion that creates the concept of life for mankind related to the order of the system of life, both in the concept of politics, economy, law and involves all aspects of life. Islam is viewed from the normative and even theological side, Islam is a guide and way of life so that it is able to fill the space and dimensions of human life in general. This makes Islam a fundamental philosophy of life so that Islam has received acceptance in various countries, including in New York, the United States.

Data shows, In 1971, in the United States there were about one million Muslims (0.5% of the population). In 1980, several authors and organizations made reliable interpretations using various statistical methods and demographic data to calculate the number of Muslims in the United States of America. On that basis it is estimated that their number is around three million people (1.5% of the population) with details: 880,000 people from Eastern Europe, 940,000 people from the Middle East, 94,000 people from the Sub-Saharan, 380,000 people from Asia, 13,000 people from the Caribbean, and 1,000,000 from African Americans. It can be said that Muslims are increasing every year by about 10% due to natural increase, immigration and conversion.¹

From research conducted by Michael Wolfe in 2006, it can be seen that the data on the number of Muslims at that time was around 7,000,000 people. According to him, every year about 100,000 Americans convert to Islam. In the results of his research, it was also stated that the number of adherents of the Islamic religion was in

¹ M. Ali Kettani, *Muslim Minorities in the World Today*, terj. Sarkowi Soejoeti. 2005. *Minoritas Muslim di Dunia Dewasa Ini*. Jakarta. Raja Grafindo Persada. h. 282-283.

the third largest position of the number of adherents of religion in the United States, namely (2.34%), Protestants (52%) and Roman Catholics (24%).² Imam Shamsi Ali said the number of Muslims in America increased after the September 11 attacks. Previously, the Muslim population was only estimated at 6-7 million people. It is now estimated at 8-9 million people.³

Shortly after the attack on the World Trade Center (WTC) building in the city of Manhattan, New Yourk, United States, Muslims and Islam became a byword for the attention of Western media coverage. Muslims, not only in America but also in other parts of the world, are constantly cornered with negative news that Islam has justified and advocated violence and terror, especially against non-Muslims.⁴

Almost completely at that time the Western media referenced the September 9/11 attacks as terrorist acts that were directly pinned on Muslims, especially American Muslims. The slanted image of Islam that continues to be exhaled by the media triggers violence against Muslims, both verbally and physically.⁵

Allegations after accusations are addressed to Islam and you Muslims as the perpetrators of the WTC attack, even as a certain diction and freiming in the United States political contestation, that when the twin towers collapsed, the Muslims who witnessed it immediately cheered with joy, but these accusations are not at all It can be proven, even Islamic organizations throughout the United States condemn and strongly condemn the perpetrators of the attack.⁶

The challenges faced by Muslims in America, although they are inseparable from the series of negative impacts of the September 9/11 events, Muslims are still experiencing growth, especially the number of converts to Islam which dramatically continues to increase in population. For example, the Muslim community living in the Denver, Colorado area, they are members of the Sunni mosque congregation who are members of the Colorado Muslim Society (CMS), their number is 20,000-25,000 worshipers.⁷

American civil rights organizations and defenders, including scholars and experts, both religious and secular, have found that there is a significant increase in Islamophobia in the United States. The highest indication of Islamophobia in the United States was clearly seen during the 2016 presidential election contestation. The

² Tribun Timur. Islam Akan Jadi Agama Terbesar di Amerika. (Hasil Penelitian), Tribun Timur, 27 September 2006

³ Yusran "Syamsi Ali Pembawa Suara Islam di Negara Amerika Serikat" Fajar Online. 09

⁴ Dampak dari peristiwa 9/11 September ini telah merubah peta kebijakan dan strategi luar negeri Amerika Serikat, dengan mengusung tema "perang terhadap terrorist" (*war on terrorism*) Amerika menggalang beberapa negara untuk terlibat menumpas aktivitas terorisme, bahkan menumbangkan Thaliban di Afghanistan dari kekuasaan serta Saddam Hussein dari rezimnya di Iraq. Lihat Angel M. Rabas, dkk, *The Muslim world after 9/11* (Santa Monica: RAND Corporatio, 2004), h. 1.

⁵ Rasha A. Abdulla, *Islam, Jihad, and Terrorism in Post-9/11 Arabic Discussion Boards* (Cairo: The American University Press, 2007), h. 1063.

⁶ Craig Considine, *Muslims in America: examining the fact* (Sama Barbar: ABC-CLIO, 2018), h. 175.

⁷ Salah satu data dari laporan CAIR menyatakan bahwa beberapa bulan setelah peristiwa penyerangan gedung WTC, ada 34,000 warga Amerika menyatakan keislamannya. Lihat Patrick D. Bowen, "Conversion to Islam in the United States: A Case Study in Denver, Colorad", *IMW Journal of Religious Studies* 1, no. 1 (2009): h. 42.

phenomenon of increasing Islamophobia is actually not only in the United States, but in general it has also spread and spread in the European Union.⁸

The fact that violence and anti-Muslim movements continue to increase, Zainab Arain, as research and advocacy manager of CAIR (Council on American-Islamic Relations), explained that there was an increase in crime and hatred against Muslims by 17% in 2017 and a very sad thing, only a third of cases of violence that occur can be processed by American legal entities.⁹

Rhetoric and hate speech often question the issue of Muslim immigrants, their existence as Americans, the threat of ISIS, as well as questioning whether the Muslim community actually accepts the views and actions of radical Islamic groups. In the 2016 presidential election, Americans who voted for Donald Trump were more of the view that Muslims were a threat to America.¹⁰

When Donald Trump was elected president in January 2017, a series of policies were issued, especially the immigration policy by prohibiting the entry of Muslim immigrants and immigrants (Muslim Travel Ban) into the United States. This prohibition is considered an Executive Order (Executive Order 13769) from Trump with the theme "safeguarding state sovereignty from foreign terrorists entering the United States", this order aims to protect American citizens from terrorist attacks that will be carried out by foreigners entering the United States. . This is considered a major discrimination against Muslims in America.¹¹

2. Method

In this study, the researcher used the literature review method and a qualitative approach. where, the data collection technique carried out by researchers is to collect data from various library sources, both from books, journals, and news released. the results of discussions with experts relevant to the theme of this research as well as observing various. After the data is collected, the researcher analyzes the data using data interpretation techniques and the researcher provides an adequate explanation in terms of theories that are relevant to the problems at hand.

3. Results And Discussion

According to the Runnymede Trust, the term Islamophobia is actually a term that means unfounded fear and hatred of Islam, Muslims or Islamic culture and

⁸ Christopher Allen, "Justifying Islamophobia: A Post-9/11 Consideration of the European Union and British Contexts", *American Journal of Islamic Social Sciences* 21, no. 3 (2004): h. 2.

⁹ Nusaibah Almuaalemi, "Islamophobia di AS Meningkat, Perempuan Muslim Dirikan Kelas Bela Diri". *Voa Indonesia*. 13/09/2020. <https://www.voaindonesia.com/5581705.html> (4 Desember 2020).

¹⁰ Craig Considine, *Muslims in America: examining the fact* (Sama Barbar: ABC-CLIO, 2018), h. 133.

¹¹ Perintah yang dikenal dengan Executive Order 13769 ini mencekal 7 negara muslim untuk masuk ke Amerika yaitu, Iran, Iraq, Libia, Somalia, Sudan, Syiria an Yaman. Perintah Trump ini juga meminta untuk memperketat pengeluaran jaminan visa bagi yang akan berkunjung ke AS serta memastikan setiap orang yang masuk tidak terlibat dengan jaringan kejahatan atau aktivitas teroris, terutama pasca penyerangan 9/11 September. Craig Considine, *Muslims in America: examining the fact* (Sama Barbar: ABC-CLIO, 2018), h. 120.

traditions.¹² Islamophobia is also defined into several components that characterize Islamophobia, namely:

- a. Islam is seen as a closed block and lacks flexibility, is static and does not respond to any changes. Separated from general cultural values that are not shared by other cultures.
- b. Islam is considered inferior to the West, brutal, irrational, primitive synonymous with violence, aggressiveness, threats, supporting terrorists and actively initiating clashes of civilizations.
- c. Islam is considered a political ideology used to gain political and military advantage.
- d. Western criticism of the Muslims was rejected and responded to in an uncontrolled way.
- e. Hostility and anti-Islam are considered normal and natural.¹³

There are two factors that support the rise of Islamic civilization in America, namely:

1. Perfection of Islam

Islam is the perfect truth. Unrivalled beauty. Unbeatable power. The shortcomings and ugliness of Islam are not in its values and teachings. But more on the behavior of its adherents through misrepresentation which is sometimes very sad and worrying.

So the development of Islam in America cannot be separated from the perfection of Islam. When Americans are able to penetrate the boundaries of misunderstanding, mainly because of media and political propaganda, they will discover the beauty of Islam. Beauty and strength in all its aspects

2. American Factor

The growth of Islam is also of course largely determined by the American factor. That between Islam and America there is a high level of unity, harmony and communality. Islam values freedom. Even Islam and freedom are like fish and water. No matter how big the fish is, if the water is dry, the fish will eventually die.

America at the same time money is a country that makes freedom as a pillar of the nation and state. America everywhere teaches freedom as the most basic basic human right.

¹² "it is important to consider the role of Islamophobia in the shaping of this historiography. The term "Islamophobia" refers to unfounded hostility towards Islam. It refers also to the practical consequences of such hostility in unfair discrimination against Muslim individuals (or those perceived to be Muslim) and communities, and to the exclusion of Muslims from political and social affairs". Lihat Ibrahim Abdurrahman Farajate, "History of Islam in the United States", *Pacific Coast Theological Society*. <https://www.sksm.edu/wp-content/uploads/2014/03/islamhistory.pdf> (01 Desember 2020).

¹³ Robin Rechadson, "Islamophobia: A Challenge for Us All", *The Runnymede Trust UK* (1997), h. 4.

The escalation of increasing hatred against American Muslims does not necessarily close the door to the development of Islam, even the Pew Center for Studies and Research released astonishing data that in 2040, Islam in America will become the second largest religion in the United States after Christianity. The data released by the Pew Research Center does not stop here, that between 2017 and 2050, the American Muslim population is projected to double from the previous number.¹⁴

Apart from the emergence of interference, discrimination by the Islamophobic community, it does not make all Americans view Islam as a terrorist religion that must be fought. Mass media and social media also play an important role in the development of American Islam. Acceptance of Islam by the people of the United States depends on the perspective they receive in the mass media or social media.

Framing on the face of Islam in the western media has also experienced significant changes in direct proportion to the increasing number of Muslim adherents so that Muslims in the United States are also beginning to be accepted in various walks of life. One of George W. Bush's speeches on a nationally broadcast TV program he said: "America counts millions of Muslims amongst our citizens, and Muslims make an incredibly valuable contribution to our country. Muslims are doctors, lawyers, law professors, members of the military, entrepreneurs, shopkeepers, moms and dads. And they need to be treated with respect. In our anger and emotion, our fellow Americans must treat each other with respect". He also emphasized that *"The face of terrorism is not the true faith of Islam. That's not what Islam is all about. Islam is peace. These terrorists don't represent peace, they represent evil and war. When we think of Islam, we think of a faith that brings comfort to a billion people around the world. and that's made brothers and sisters out of every race"*¹⁵. From this speech he explained that America has millions of Muslims among our citizens, and Muslims make a very valuable contribution to our country. Muslims are doctors, lawyers, law professors, members of the military, businessmen, shop owners, mothers and fathers. And they should be treated with respect. In our anger and emotions, fellow Americans must treat one another with respect. And emphasized that terrorism is not the true identity of Islam. Islam is peace. These terrorists do not represent peace, they represent crime and war. When we think of Islam, we think of a faith that brings comfort to a billion people around the world.

One of the Muslim figures who settled in America, he is also an influential figure in America and comes from Indonesia, Imam Shamsi Ali gave many testimonies about the story of Islamic guidance, came to people who had firmly

¹⁴ Menurut Pew Research Center, ada dua faktor utama yang menjadi pemicu lonjakan peningkatan tersebut, faktor pertama adalah gelombang imigrasi muslim ke Amerika Serikat terus meningkat dan mereka telah melakukan regenerasi secara tutun-temurun. Faktor kedua adalah populasi muslim Amerika yang ada saat ini rata-rata jauh lebih muda usianya apa bila dibandingkan dengan pemeluk agama lain. Hal ini menunjukkan bahwa mereka memiliki *fertility rate* yang paling tinggi. Lihat AJ. Willingham, "By 2040, Islam Could Be the Second Largest Religion in the US", (CNN), 11 Januari 2018. <https://edition.cnn.com/2018/01/10/politics/muslim-population-growth-second-religious-group-trnd/index.html> (05 Agustus 2020).

¹⁵ [Islam is Peace: Let's Remember George W. Bush's Words After 9/11 | Human Rights First](#)

proclaimed themselves as an openly Islamophobic community.

Imam Shamsi Ali once told a story in a discussion on the Kompas TV youtube channel. Belalu said that "I still remember an American diplomat who had served in Egypt, Lebanon and Tunisia. He came to the Islamic Center to convey his desire to convert to Islam because of the beauty of Islam in its spiritual aspect. What made the most impression on him at that time was the sound of the call to prayer. "That voice is still ringing in my ears. Long story short, the diplomat pledged the shahadah because of the beauty factor of the touch of the Islamic spirit through chanting the call to prayer during prayer. This is perhaps the secret why some feel disturbed, do not even want the call to prayer to echo. Because it is recognized or not, the reality can indeed be considered a threat to a group that is originally a phobic. Perhaps a somewhat extreme example in the minds of some people is the story below. A young, white woman, named Blue, about 24 years old came to my converts class several years ago. There was also another woman, also white, but who claimed to be a defender of women's rights. In fact, he firmly and proudly declares himself as "the feminist". On the sidelines of the dialogue between me and the discussion participants, there was quite an exciting dialogue about the position of women in Islam. What is interesting is the dialogue between the two women I mentioned earlier. The feminist: "Islam is discriminatory to women. Look at how Islam permits men to marry more than one," he said. Young woman: *"Listen, I am a second wife. But I don't feel at all as having a half husband. My husband is fully responsible and taking care of me"*. She continued: *"I dropped out from my HS because I was pregnant and no one wanted to be responsible for my kid. But my husband married me, and takes my kid as his own kid"*. *That's just an example I want to present here. A true story several years ago in New York. Perhaps the example is a bit extreme and heavy for women's feelings in particular. But therein lies the beauty of Islam in building and maintaining the wider community. That in judging Islam, consideration of the ego is not everything. There are social, moral and societal factors that are put forward"*.

The rise of Islamic civilization in America has made significant progress, the understanding of Islam is also getting wider, not only exclusive to adherents of Islam. The understanding of Islamic peace is also deeply felt by various levels of society in America. In government, society and even religious leaders in America. Apart from the emergence of Islamophobia. Islam has made a lot of progress.

4. Conclusion

Islam as a universal religion with a mission of ramatan lil 'ālamīn which does not have a barrier of exclusivity that is able to limit its development. Islam is inclusive which is able to be present in all segments and layers of the world's society, including in the United States. The United States as a country of immigrants that accommodates various ethnic groups, beliefs and religions of the world. The beginning of the first presence of Islam in the United States can not be agreed with certainty, but some scientists conclude that Islam was present there long before America was formed.

The United States with its liberal and secular ideology does not necessarily prevent the development of certain religions, in fact it is a gap that can be used by Muslims to expand the spread of Islam to remote areas of the country by establishing Islamic institutions and places of worship such as mosques and religious centers. - Islamic center.

The development of Islam in America faces various challenges and problems, one of which is Islamophobia. A movement and a wave of hatred against Islam driven by certain groups and anti-Islamic rulers, even though Islam continues to grow and is even projected to become the second largest religion in the United States which will have a population increase of two times.

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