

ANALYZING DE-ISLAMOPHOBIA FACTORS IN NEW YORK, USA

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Abstract

Recently, there has been a phenomenon of reducing the level of Islamophobia of the world community towards Muslims around the world, including Muslims in the United States. Allowing Muslims to carry out worship in public or open space, and the election of Muslim politicians in a government and congressmen are clear evidences to this phenomenon. This research aims to deeply analyze the de-islamophobia factors in New York City, The United States from 2017 to 2023. The phenomenon of Islamophobia, rising sharply since the 9/11 tragedy, has now begun to experience a significant decline, especially in the 2017-2023 period. A qualitative method was applied with literature studies. The data were taken from online books, online journals, and other relevant references such as online news. The study found various causes of the decline: socio-culture, demographic, and political events that contribute to the acceptance of Islam in the United States. Especially since Joe Biden was inaugurated as the U.S. President, the decline in Islamophobia is increasingly visible, particularly in the political fields.

Belakangan ini terjadi fenomena berkurangnya tingkat Islamophobia masyarakat dunia terhadap warga muslim diseluruh dunia tak terkecuali umat muslim di Amerika Serikat. Diperbolehkannya Muslim untuk beribadah di tempat umum atau terbuka, dan terpilihnya banyak politisi Muslim di pemerintahan dan kongres adalah bukti nyata fenomena

tersebut. Penelitian ini menganalisis lebih dalam terkait faktor de-islamophobia di kota New York, Amerika Serikat pada tahun 2017 hingga 2023. Fenomena Islamophobia yang melonjak tajam sejak tragedi 9/11 kini mulai mengalami penurunan yang signifikan, khususnya di rentang tahun 2017-2023. Metode kualitatif digunakan dengan pendekatan studi literature. Data diambil dari buku dan jurnal daring, maupun referensi lainnya yang relevan seperti berita daring. Penelitian ini menemukan berbagai penyebab penurunan tersebut, seperti pertimbangan sosial dan budaya, pergeseran demografis, dan peristiwa politik yang berkontribusi pada penerimaan Islam di Amerika Serikat. Khususnya sejak Joe Biden menjabat sebagai Presiden, penurunan Islamophobia semakin terlihat khususnya di bidang politik.

Keywords: *de-islamophobia; New York; United States*

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Introduction

The phenomenon of Islamophobia in the United States emerged as far back as in the 1970s, when it was known as Anti-Muslimism (Ciftci 2012, 294). The term Anti-Muslim originated in the 70s when there was a war in the Middle East in 1973 between a coalition of Arab countries against Israel supported by the U.S. The tension in the conflict caused the United States to be subject to an oil embargo by member countries of the Organization of the Petroleum Exporting Countries (OPEC), the majority of which were filled by Arab countries in the Middle East. The sanctions imposed by Arab countries have affected the Muslim community in the United States. They face discrimination in various forms, both physical and verbal violence (Putri et al. 2022, 10-12). This is because the American considered the Muslim community had lack empathy for the ongoing embargo.

Furthermore, the fundamentalist conflict in Iran in 1979 that resulted in the attack to the U.S. embassy also led to an increase in anti-Muslim Americans as they lost trust in the Muslim community in the U.S. In addition, The Gulf War in 1990 led to the onset of crimes against Arabs and Muslims, and hatred of the Muslim community in the United States became more widespread (Liu 2018, 3). The aftermath of these incidents,

coupled with the propaganda of right-wing politicians and the role of the media in distorting the image of Islam and Muslims, fueled anti-Muslim sentiments by promoting stereotypes that Muslims are dangerous and their adherents have terrorist tendencies. Ironically, this situation has led to the rise of domestic terrorism, done by white supremacists and anti-Muslim extremists in the United States (Beit 2016, 210).

Islamophobia in the United States peaked after the 9/11, an incident in which the twin towers of the World Trade Center (WTC) were destroyed in New York City. The term Islamophobia can be explained as a form of irrational fear of the religion of Islam. Generally, the term describes a situation where individuals dislike Muslims. Islamophobia is a new form of racism where the target of discrimination is a religious group. It was also found that individuals are more likely to have Anti-Muslim attitudes if they feel their culture or well-being is threatened by Muslims. Westerners view Muslims as fanatics, violent, and supporters of terrorism because they perceive them as a threat to their physical well-being and cultural values (Ciftci 2012, 293). The acts of Islamophobia in the U.S. are not only in the forms of verbal and physical violence, destruction of worship properties, and negative stereotypes received by the Muslim community, but also in the forms of increased discriminatory attitudes and prejudice against Muslims in various aspects of life such as in the scope of education, employment, and religious freedom (Putri et al. 2022, 4).

Many Muslims in the United States find it difficult to navigate society as a Muslim in the country. Muslim women feel harassed while wearing the hijab that some of them decide to stay at home, and some choose to leave their jobs for a while. Muslims in the United States, including immigrants from the Middle East, also suffer from severe psychological conditions such as being prejudiced, ambushed, insulted, intimidated, and accused as terrorist groups (Moordingisih 2004, 74).

Indeed, the phenomenon of Islamophobia in the United States would not occur if the government and the people stick to the laws or policies related to religion, as stated in the First Amendment of the United States, which mentions the aim to protect the rights to freedom of expression and religion from government interference. It prohibits any laws that create a national religion, restrict the free exercise of religion, limit freedom of speech or press, interfere with the rights to peaceful assembly, and prevent citizens from petitioning the government to redress

their grievances. It was in 1791 that this was incorporated into the Bill of Rights, the extent to which these rights are protected and interpreted by the Supreme Court. With regard to freedom of religion, the First Amendment grants it under two clauses. The first is the Establishment Clause which prohibits the government from instituting an official religion or favoring one over another through legislative action. The second is the Free Exercise Clause in which the government is not allowed to interfere with an individual's religion practices (Administrative Office of the U.S. Courts 1941).

However, after the 9/11 incident, there has been an unusual increase in the representation of Arabs and Muslims in U.S. media. Hatred and workplace discrimination against Arabs and Muslims in the United States showed 1600% increase between 2000 and 2001 (Alsultany 2013, 165-167). The Council on American-Islamic Relations (CAIR) then actively took various steps to counter the increasing suspicion toward Muslims. It deals with Islamophobia through providing support to victims of discrimination, providing education and awareness, voicing issues about Islamophobia, and advocacy and lobbying (CAIR 2023).

Various studies on Islamophobia have been conducted, such as (Helen 2023, 303; Gorman and Culcasi 2021, 11) who stated in their articles that Islamophobia was already present long before the 9/11 in America. In his article, Helen said that the manifestations of discrimination against Islam include the disenfranchisement of Muslim employees, unfair services, physical violence, and traumatizing Muslim employees especially Muslim women. Other articles (Dubosh et al. 2015, 145; Wright 2016, 49) discussed how negative stereotypes of Muslims and misinformation reported by the mass media have led to a negative response by law enforcement to Muslim citizens or immigrants.

Another study by (Considine 2017, 5) discussed the influence of race as a determinant factor in the persistence of Islamophobia. The article found that discrimination against Muslims often occurred not because of their criticism of Islam itself, but because of the physical differences and how they were perceived by the majority of U.S. society. It also found that Islamophobia was perpetuated by the construction of information and stereotypes that symbolize that those with *turbans*, beards, and Arab faces are terrorists. The article also observed that Islamophobia took place not only in the domestic sphere of society, but also in structural forms, such as strict vetting of those with Middle Eastern rice, discrimination in

employment, and deprivation of the right to vote. This finding is almost in line with (Dauda 2021, 260-84; Pratt 2015, 215) which found that Islamophobia that occurred throughout the world, poses a threat in preserving world peace. The factors that caused Islamophobia according to these articles are hatred toward Muslims, xenophobic attitudes, the development of right-wing extremist political groups and theoretical events carried out by some Muslim extremist groups.

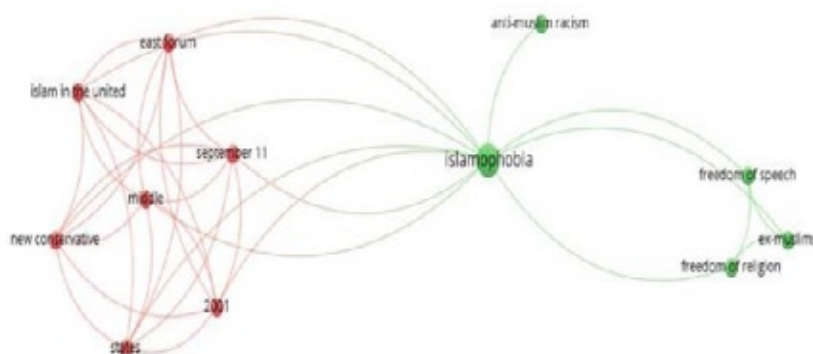
In the field of education, an article by (Mir and Sarroub 2019, 5-14), documented how Islamophobia is manifested in the American education system, its adverse effects on students, and how to combat it. The research also highlighted what policies should be adopted to combat Islamophobia in the American education system, given that the Muslim population in America is increasing day by day. Another study by (Kistoro et al. 2020, 236) explored the phenomenon of Islamophobia that disrupted the consistency of Muslim students, especially women, in wearing hijab during their learning activities in U.S. schools. Lastly, two studies by (Wekke, Hermawanto, and Ashrori 2016, 142) found that universities play an important role for their students, but Muslim minorities face unique and complex challenges.

Considering the findings of the aforementioned various literacy studies, it is obvious that they are limited to discussions related to the form of Islamophobia itself and its effects on Muslims in the United States. There has yet any discussions on the decline of Islamophobia in the United States. Therefore, the current researchers will explore the decreasing phenomenon of Islamophobia by answering these research problems: (a) why does Islamophobia decline in New York? And (b) what are the causal factors of that phenomenon?

The authors presented Figure 1, a map of Islamophobia research publication trends in the United States VOS Viewer. It shows the development of research through Scopus-indexed international publications from 2014 to 2023. Based on the map, some researchers are more interested in the increase in Islamophobia and its impact on the Muslim community in the U.S. This research, however, centers in New York City, focusing on finding out the factors of the decline in Islamophobia in the United States. Researchers used VOS Viewers software, and Scopus database to get novelty. Before conducting this research, our hypotheses regarding the decline of Islamophobia in New York is evident when Muslims are allowed to perform *Tarawih* prayers in

Times Square for the first time. In terms of politics, there has been an increase in the number of Muslim politicians entering the United States National Parliament.

Figure 1
Co-Occurrence of De-Islamophobia



Research Method

In this study, the researchers analyzed the rate of decline of Islamophobia in New York from three factors: socio-culture, demographic, and politic in 2017 to 2023. The researchers used a qualitative research approach by collecting various unmeasured data to describe the characteristics of political systems in several countries (Soegiyono 2013, 205-214).

The research uses secondary data taken from previous research journals, official organizational portals, and news portals. Library research is applied to collect and process the data. They are then analyzed using descriptive analysis method to describe existing political phenomena, both natural and man-made, with more attention to the characteristics, quality, and interrelationships among activities (Dewi & Priadarsini 2018, 5).

In reviewing this study, authors used comparative political theory. It is a theory that provides a comparison based on political processes, behaviors, and experiences that aim to analyze and compare the differences that exist in the political systems applied in various societies (Ayubi and Zahidi 2022, 121). In this case, the authors compare the characteristics of the government system of each political regime and

evaluates both the advantages and disadvantages of the two regimes in the decline of Islamophobia seen from three factors, namely socio-culture, demographic, and politic. The scope of this research is to examine the decline of Islamophobia between 2017 and 2023 in New York, United States.

Results and Discussion

Factors in the Decline of Islamophobia in the United States

Although Islamophobia is still a hot-button issue in the United States, the number of Americans who hold Islamophobic views has decreased (Nashih 2023). In this article, the researcher tries to describe the findings of the decline in the level of Islamophobia in the United States in the following categorization.

Socio-Culture

The decline of Islamophobia in the United States can be seen from a socio-cultural perspective. In this perspective, the model of *da'wah* carried out by Muslims in the United States can affect the positive perception of the U.S. population toward Muslims. The Indonesian Muslim community in America, for example, has succeeded in building good communication with various religious leaders in the United States and showed moderate Islamic teachings. This has changed the view of the U.S. general public toward Muslims. They realized that Muslims are not as described by most of white people in the country, that Muslims are not cruel and not associated with terrorism. In addition, it turns out that Muslims are just ordinary people and love peace. (Rafi'i et al. 2021, 3-10).

Today, it can be said that Islam is part of the United States itself. Even in New York, Islam has been a part of the area since the 1600s. This is evidenced by the establishment of mosques around the city of New York, which to date, has reached 300 mosques. After the 9/11, the growth of Muslims in New York City received great and significant attention. Many citizens started to be more curious about the religion of Islam. Not all people in the United States consider Islam as a terrorist religion that must be fought. The role of mass media and social media plays a pivotal role in the development of Islam in New York City. How people in the U.S. see and accept Islam also depends on the perspective conveyed by the content in mass media and/or social media (Konsulat Jenderal Republik Indonesia, 2020).

One of the reasons for the acceptance of Islam or Muslims is because of the openness of the U.S. citizens to differences. The United States' inception itself has also been a home for immigrants who came with their diversity of cultures, customs, and habits, thus, the people of the country in general, although not entirely, are very tolerant and open to Islam, just as they are open to adherents of other religions such as Christians and Jews. Another sign of the development of Islam in the United States is that the celebration of important days for Muslims has begun to be recognized in the country. This can be seen from the permission of Muslim employees to take leave days on Eid al-Fitr and Eid al-Adha by the company. In 2022, there was also an increasingly visible sign of the acceptance of Islam by the people of the United States both from ordinary citizens and the government authorities, namely by allowing the implementation of breaking the fast together and praying *Tarawih* in Times Square, which can also be called the center or heart of New York City as seen in Figure 2 (Arbar 2022).

Figure 2
Muslims Pray Tarawih in Times Square

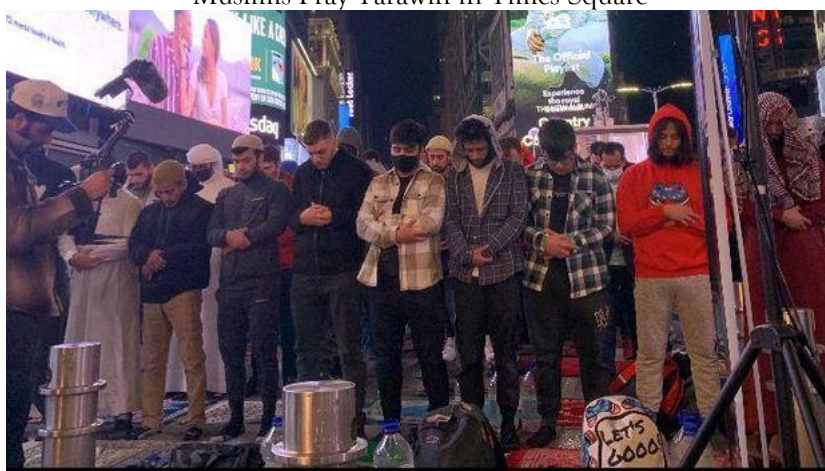


Figure 2 is an indication that the freedom of Muslims to worship openly is guaranteed, as well as an indication that the decline of Islamophobia is real. Another sign of the growth of Muslims in terms of socio-culture is the increasing number of Americans who are interested in consuming halal food products. Recently, many of the food industries in the United States have experienced a significant increase in interest in

halal products, even though the market for halal products still lower in number than organic and kosher products. Both Muslim and non-Muslim communities in the United States are increasingly realizing the importance of consuming halal food products that are processed in accordance with Islamic law and sharia. Hence, the existence of a private institution such as The Islamic Food and Nutrition Council of America (IFANCA) which concerns on non-profit halal certification in the United States becomes more noticeable.

The survey from the halal certification agency found that interest in halal products in the United States is growing rapidly and that the products are highly favored by consumers. There are 72% of Americans who regularly consume halal-certified food and 52% who are familiar with halal products. However, they find it difficult to get halal products in America. It implies that halal products, despite the increasing of people's interests in them, still short in numbers. The survey conducted by IFANCA also found that Americans who are familiar with halal products believe that halal-certified food products are more humane, fresher, and healthier than those without non-halal certification. In addition, Americans who are more knowledgeable about everything related to halal food products, compared to those who do not, tend to look for nutritional content and transparency of food ingredients when shopping for food in supermarkets or neighborhood markets (Konsulat Jenderal Republik Indonesia, 2020).

Traditional halal foods were originally embedded in the regional cultures of countries with sizable Muslim populations, such as the Middle East, South Asia, and Southeast Asia. This ethnic mixing in the United States influences the constant demand for halal food products (IFANCA 2022). Interest in shopping at stores that stock halal food products in America is not limited to Muslims. Even, non-Muslim Americans also have interest in purchasing halal food products due to quality, taste, or dietary preferences, which helps explain their widespread popularity. In line with the previous explanation, non-Muslim Americans' perception that halal meat, poultry, and seafood are processed and prepared according to strict guidelines that ensure higher standards of sanitation and food safety has resulted in increased consumer confidence in halal food products.

Demographic

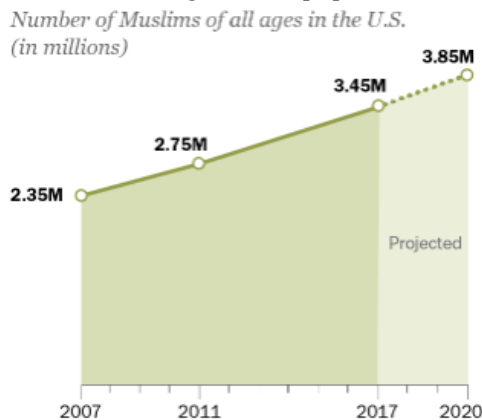
The decline of Islamophobia in the United States in terms of demographic began with massive migration from Middle East countries. In the late 19th century, Muslims began migrating to the United States. The first Muslim immigrants arrived on the East Coast from Syria and Lebanon in the early 1870s, followed by Muslims from Europe as well as Muslim colonists from the Indian subcontinent who arrived on the West Coast in the early 1900s (Harvad 2023). Over time, the migration increased the size of the Muslim population in the United States. There were approximately 2.35 million Muslim adults and children living in the United States in 2007, representing 0.8% of the total population. This was the total Muslim population when the Pew Research Center began measuring the size, demographics, and opinions of the community. Since then, the growth of Muslims in terms of demographics has been largely driven by two factors: continued Muslim immigration to the United States and the trend of Muslims having more children than other Americans of other faiths.

According to the Pew Research institute, there were approximately 1.8 million Muslim adults residing in the United States in 2011 and the total number of Muslims of all ages in the United States that year was 2.75 million. The number of Muslims living in the United States continues to increase as a result of immigration and natural population growth. This demographic factor surely influences the increase of halal products demands. Halal food appeals to consumers concerned with animal welfare because of the stringent requirements and certification process involved. These protocols align with ethical sourcing practices, which include compassionate animal care.

Due to the thorough production and certification process, products with halal certification are often associated with superior food safety and quality standards. Non-Muslim consumers tend to believe that halal food is pure, ethical, hygienic, and natural. Young U.S. millennials, in particular, have embraced halal cuisine as a more nutritious option to fast and packaged foods that are widely available. Therefore, by 2030, it is anticipated that sales of halal food will rise by 9.33 percent in the United States (Halawa 2018, 60). No wonder does non-Muslim Americans' trust in halal products increases—so does their trust in Muslims—which in turn lowers the level of Islamophobia there. They believe that Muslims are not violent but have a humane attitude, even toward animals.

Based on surveys and demographic research conducted by the Pew Research Center and various sources across the United States, there were an estimated 3.45 million Muslims of all ages living in the country in 2017. This represents approximately 1.1 percent of the total American population. However, the number of Muslims in the United States is very small compared to other Americans who follow other religions, such as Christianity or Judaism. Muslims are also spread across the country and do not live in cliques. There are Muslims in every state. For example, the capital city of Washington DC and New Jersey have many Muslim residents. The following Figure 3 shows the increasing number of Muslim Americans from 2007 to 2017 (Pew Research Center 2021).

Figure 3
Graph of the increasing Muslim population in the U.S.

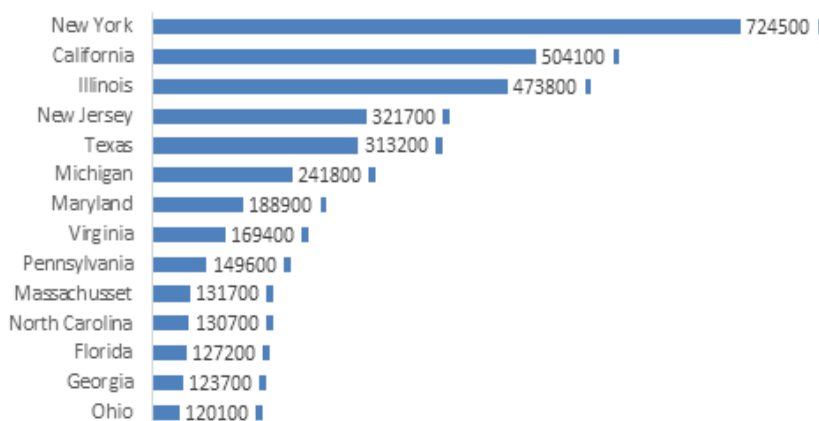


Source: 2007, 2011 and 2017 estimates based on analysis of Pew Research Center surveys and U.S. Census data. 2020 estimate based on projections conducted by Pew Research Center in 2015.

Based on the distribution of the Muslim population per state in the United States, New York stands in the first position as the state with the largest Muslim population in 2023. Until 2023, the population of Muslim Americans in New York has reached 724,500 people. In the second place, California has 504,100 Muslims population, followed by Illinois with 473,800 Muslims. By 2050, it is estimated that the number of Muslims in the United States will reach 8.09 million out of a total population in the U.S., 394.35 million, surpassing the number of Jews as the country's second-majority religion. Figure 4 is a graph of the Muslim population in the United States on a state-by-state basis in 2023 (Wisevoter 2023).

Most Muslims in the United States are of various races without a majority race, which is then divided into 25% black, 24% white, 18% Asian, 18% Arab, 7% mixed race, and 5% Hispanic. As explained earlier, this increase could be a sign that Islam will become the second largest religion in America by 2050.

Figure 4
Total Muslim Population by State



In recent years, the Muslim community in the United States has taken on many of the most important parts of public life in the country. This is evident from the increasing number of Muslims elected by the public to take pivotal positions such as in parliament or other government agencies both at the city and state levels (Nashih 2023).

In addition, the participation of Muslims in the United States in other lines of life is also increasing in number. For example, in the economic and education fields, many U.S. Muslims have begun to take a significant role (Konsulat Jenderal Republik Indonesia, 2020). Even in the security sector, the Muslim community has begun to participate in the police, military, and intelligence. There is also another reason for the increase in the Muslim population in the United States, which is due to the increasing racism and violence from white radical groups in the United States. This is also what began to open the eyes of other U.S. citizens, that radical groups are not always those from Islam religion, but can also be from the white supremacists (Sasongko 2022).

Based on the explanation above, the author finds that in terms of demographic, the decline in Islamophobia is marked by the growth of

Muslim migration to the United States. Moreover, the birth rate of Muslim communities there continues to increase every year and it is predicted that Muslims will become the second largest population in the United States by 2050. In line with this, the Muslim population in New York is also the largest among other states. With the increasing Muslim population, more and more government agencies in the United States are filled with Muslims. The decline of Islamophobia in the United States is also influenced by the increasing interest of the people there in halal products. Their trust in Muslims increases as they believe that Muslims are not barbaric and have humane and kind attitude even towards animals.

Politics

In the world of politics, Muslims in the United States have entered and been growing every year (Nashrullah 2020). The growth of the Muslim community in the United States and their involvement in politics can be correlated to the increase in Muslim population, political engagement, interfaith dialog, and responses to Islamophobia. The Muslim community in the United States has developed into a social force, which can influence U.S. politics both nationally and internationally. For example, in the city of Hamtramck, a Muslim politician named Amar Ghalib who serves as the mayor of the city has allowed the slaughter (*qurban*)-an Islamic ritual in Eid al-Adha-to be held there and allowed the people to decorate the city with Islamic murals (Dwiastono et al. 2023). Another example comes from U.S. congresswoman, Ilhan Omar, who often speaks out against Islamophobia in congressional meetings (Aljazeera 2024).

Figure 5
Diagram of Muslims in Congress in 2017-2018 (Diamant 2023)

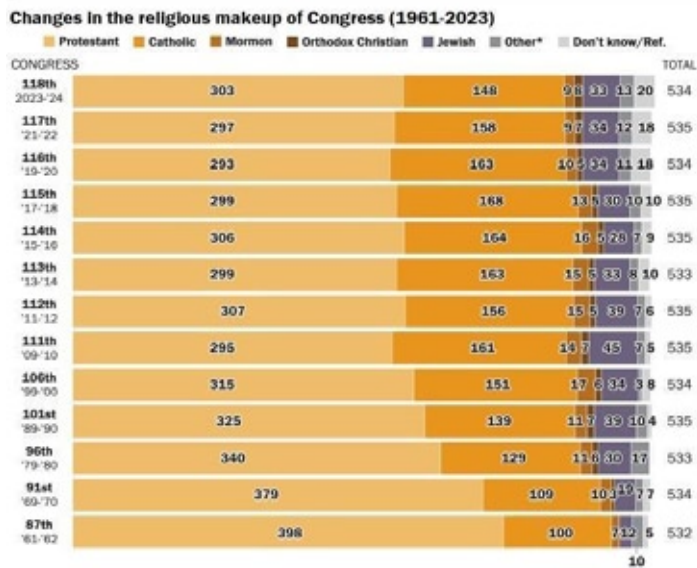


Figure 5 explains that from 2017 to 2023 the variety of religions in the congress showed an increase. The entry of various religions such as Buddhism, Hinduism, and Islam in 2017-2018 in the 115th congress was joined by 10 people. In 2019 to 2020 and 2021-2022, the number increased by 18 people each period. Furthermore, in 2023 to 2024, 20 people of the same category entered the 118th congress. Based on this calculation, the number of Muslims in congress is three people, they are Andre Carson, D-Ind; Rashida Tlaib, D-Mich, and also Ilhan Omar, D-Minn. Muslim members of congress are represented in proportion to their share of the U.S. population, which is around 1% or less, and all Muslim members of congress belong to the Democratic faction (Diamant 2023). Furthermore, another example of Muslims entering the political sphere can be seen in the election of the first Muslim to Congress in 2006, where voters elected a black Democrat known as Keith Ellison as the first Muslim member of Congress. Keith Ellison, a 19-year-old college student and a native Detroit, won with the help of Muslims from a coalition of liberal and anti-war voters (Miller 2006).

The number of American Muslims chosen in the 2022 elections set the highest record, with many significant politicians elected in last year's midterm elections, including Maryland's first black governor and first

Generation Z congressman. According to a report by the Jetpac Resource Center and the Council on American-Islamic Relations (CAIR), approximately 82 Muslim candidates won seats at the local, federal, state, and judicial levels in 25 states. These victories also came from red states, including Texas, Georgia, and Virginia, consisting of 20 incumbents and 17 new candidates. Congressmen like Ilham Omar, D-MN, as well as Rashida Tlaib, D-MI retained their positions in the U.S. House of Representatives, which includes city councils as well as local education.

Since the Council on American-Islamic Relations (CAIR) began keeping track in 2020, this represents the largest number of electoral victories for Muslims in the United States, with approximately 71 Muslim Americans elected that year. Some memorable records in history have also been made, with some states electing their first Muslim legislators including Maine, Illinois, Texas, and Ohio. Another state, Georgia, currently has the second highest number of Muslim legislators, shown by the election of the first Muslim woman for both the state senate and the state house. The widespread hatred and persecution faced by Muslim minorities also makes the victory even more important. In the 51st District of Illinois, Nabeela Syed (23 year-old), an Indian-American descent, created a history by unseating the Republican Party incumbent, Chris Bos. She became one of the first Muslims to be elected to the state legislature. She was one of candidates who made history in 2022 in states other than Illinois including Texas, Georgia, and Minnesota. Based on data obtained from The Muslim Community Network in the first half of 2022, more than 26% of Black Muslims and 32% of Asian Muslims in New York City witnessed or suffered hate crimes. Therefore, this victory is even more inspiring and is expected to keep moving forward (Cohen 2022).

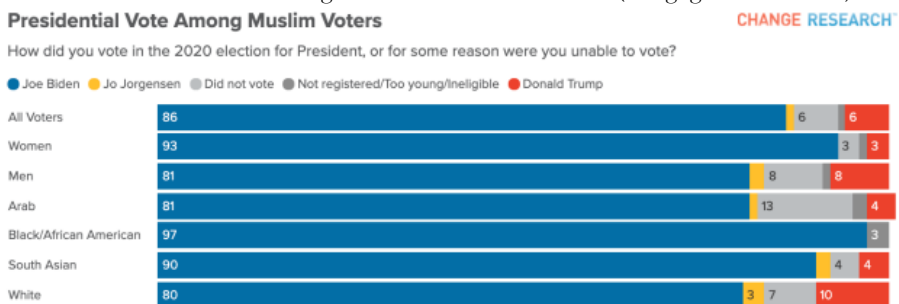
According to a report by the Council on American-Islamic Relations (CAIR) and the Jetpac Resource Center (JRC)—a charity that seeks to increase the presence of Muslims in American politics and government—more than 80 Muslim candidates were elected to city, state, judicial, and federal seats in more than 20 states in the United States. This shows that American Muslims have won the most elections since JRC and CAIR's monitoring began. The JRC also found that there has been an unprecedented number of Muslims seeking state legislative seats, with 17 new Muslim candidates winning their respective campaigns, 20 Muslim incumbents running for re-election, and 2 appointed lawmakers running

for full terms and becoming the first Muslims elected to their respective state legislatures (Molina 2022).

These historic achievements include (1) Zaynab Mohamed, a 25-year-old Democrat from Somalia, made History by becoming the first Muslim woman elected to the state senate in Minnesota; (2) four American Muslims won state legislative seats in Georgia, and these include Nabilah Islam who is the First Muslim woman elected to the Georgia senate, as well as Democrat Ruwa Romman, the first Muslim woman elected to the Georgia House of Representatives; (3) Salman Bhojani is a Democrat who won in House District 92 Tarrant County and Suleman Lalani is also a Democrat who won in House District 76 Fort Bend County; they are the first two Muslim legislators in Texas; (4) Munira Abdullahi, a Democrat who ran unopposed in Ohio by making history as the first Muslim woman elected to the state legislature; (5) Ismail Mohamed, a Somali-American, has been elected to serve as the first Muslim man in the central government office in the state of Ohio; (6) Mana Abdi, Ambureen Rana, and Deqa Dhalac, became the first Muslims elected to the Maine state legislature; (7) state senator, Kayes Jama was appointed to fill a vacancy in 2021 and then ran for a full term and is the first elected Muslim member of the Oregon state legislature; and (8) the state senator from Washington, Yasmin Trudeau, was elected as the first Muslim member of the Washington state legislature and she was appointed to fill a vacancy in 2021 and later ran for a full term (Molina 2022).

Figure 6

Presidential Vote Among Muslim Voters in 2020 (Emgage USA 2021)



Based on the percentage of Presidential elections in 2020 as shown in Figure 6, it is found that the majority of the Muslim community in the United States prefer to vote for Joe Biden. The decline in Islamophobia in the U.S. clearly increased during Biden era, where Muslims there trust their votes more for Biden's regime than, the previous president, Donald Trump . A comparison of the decline in the level of Islamophobia in New York between the two governing regimes, Trump and Biden, shows that the positive view of Muslims has continued to increase after Donald Trump's tenure in the White House ended. During Trump's leadership, his anti-Islamic personality has created an anti-Islamic policy called the Muslim Ban. When his era ended, the positive view of Muslims increased (Khan et al. 2021, 5-11). Unlike Trump, Biden tried to approach Muslim leaders all over the states in America. That definitely is a clear evident that President Joe Biden himself is more open to Muslims. Another comparison can be seen from the leadership styles of the two Presidents of the United States. Biden's leadership style is more appreciative and respectful of the plurality in the American society (The White House 2024). Meanwhile Trump's style was more racist toward Muslims. Consequently, both leadership styles affected the Islamophobia cases in the U.S.-during Trump's era, it escalated; conversely, the case diminished during Biden's period. On the political side, it can also be seen that many Muslims who are citizens of the United States prefer Joe Biden, who was nominated by the Democratic party, to Donald Trump, who was nominated by the Republican party (Aljazeera 2023). This is due to the policies implemented by the elites of the Democratic party which appreciate the diversity of all groups in the country, including Muslim citizens.

Another different is in the policy made by Biden and Trump. After he was inaugurated as the U.S. President, Joe Biden signed a proclamation to cancel the Muslim Ban that was previously launched by Donald Trump. Moreover, in President Biden's first year in the White House, he appointed several Muslim Americans to higher government positions. Some of them are Lina Khan as Chairman of the Federal Trade Commission, Sameera Fazili as Deputy Director of the National Economic Council, Reema Dodin as Deputy Legislative Affairs Director of the White House Office, and Rashad Hussain as International Ambassador for Religious Freedom. This was probably what ignited the interests of more and more Muslims to enter the world of U.S. politics,

and that led to the decreasing of the sentiment of Islamophobia because it could affect the trust of non-Muslim Americans toward Muslims. The comparison of the two eras of the America's President matches the theory of comparative politics which basically provides a comparison based on political processes, behavior, and experiences. The theory is used to analyze and compare the differences that exist in the political systems that apply in various societies (Al Ayubi and Zahidi 2022).

Conclusion

The decline in Islamophobia that occurred from 2017 to 2023 is analyzed through three factors: socio-culture, demographic, and politic. In *the socio-cultural factor*, the decline began with the openness of the United States citizens to differences. From this change of attitude, Muslim minorities used the opportunity to introduce Islam in terms of customs and culture. Until recently, tolerance towards Muslims has been increasingly visible with the permissibility to perform *Tarawih* prayers in the area of Times Square, New York in 2022. Moreover, there is significant increase of interest from non-Muslim Americans in halal food products. They believe that halal products are considered more humane and hygienic, even though in terms of sales, they are still far from kosher and organic food products. Another influential factor is *demographic*, shown by the growth rate of Muslims which is increasing every year. In 2017, particularly, Muslims population reached 3.45 million. Especially, in New York City, the total Muslim population is 724,500. The growth of the Muslim community is also influenced by the large number of immigrants who came to the United States, especially New York City.

The downsizing level of Islamophobia is also influenced by *political factor*. American Muslims begun to enter the political scope of the United States. This is evidenced by the first American Muslim, Keith Ellison, who was elected to congress for the first time in 2006. This win inspired other American Muslims that every year there has been Muslim representatives entering the world of U.S. politics both in the state and central government. From these three factors, it is significant to claim that the level of Islamophobia in New York has decreased in the last six years; the notable decline was seen since the start of Joe Biden's Presidential era. He directly revoked the Muslim Ban which was previously set by Donald Trump, the former President. This action creates peaceful and safe

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