

Islamic arguments against Donald Trump's thoughts on Islamophobia

Muhammad Alwie Fadheil Assegaf
2410117310019@mhs.ulm.ac.id

Sifa Sahara
24101173210018@mhs.ulm.ac.id

Nursya'bani Alfauza Asma
2410117310013@mhs.ulm.ac.id

Universitas Lambung Mangkurat

Abstract

Donald Trump's comments about Islam and Muslims have sparked significant debate and criticism, particularly among scholars, community leaders, and activists. Throughout his political career, Trump has often used language that many see as Islamophobic, portraying Islam primarily as a monolithic force defined by extremism and violence. This narrow view ignores the vast diversity within the Muslim faith and fosters a climate of fear and distrust among the general public.

His infamous call for a "Muslim ban" during the 2016 presidential campaign is a prime example of this mindset, casting himself as a protector of American values

against an alleged threat posed by Muslims. This rhetoric was further magnified by his administration's policies, which targeted Muslim-majority countries and sought to impose immigration restrictions based on religious identity. Critics argue that these statements and actions go beyond typical political tactics; they contribute to systemic Islamophobia that manifests in various harmful ways, including discrimination, hate crimes, and social ostracism aimed at Muslim individuals and communities.

The impact of Trump's rhetoric extends far beyond short-term political gains; it has long-lasting effects on societal attitudes toward Islam and Muslims, deepening divisions and polarization in American society. This discourse not only reinforces harmful stereotypes but also undermines the core values of equality and tolerance that are vital to a democratic society.

Keywords: Donald Trump, Islamophobia,

Abstrak

Komentar Donald Trump tentang Islam dan Muslim telah memicu perdebatan dan kritik yang signifikan, terutama di kalangan para sarjana, pemimpin komunitas, dan aktivis. Sepanjang karier politiknya, Trump sering menggunakan bahasa yang dianggap oleh banyak orang sebagai Islamofobia, menggambarkan Islam terutama sebagai kekuatan monolitik yang didefinisikan oleh ekstremisme dan kekerasan. Pandangan sempit ini mengabaikan keragaman yang luas dalam agama Islam dan menciptakan iklim ketakutan dan ketidakpercayaan di kalangan publik umum.

Seruan terkenalnya untuk melarang Muslim selama kampanye presiden 2016 adalah contoh utama dari pola pikir ini, di mana ia menggambarkan dirinya sebagai pelindung nilai-nilai Amerika dari ancaman yang diduga ditimbulkan oleh Muslim. Retorika ini semakin diperkuat oleh kebijakan administrasinya yang menargetkan negara-negara mayoritas Muslim dan berusaha menerapkan pembatasan imigrasi

berdasarkan identitas agama. Para kritikus berpendapat bahwa pernyataan dan tindakan ini melampaui taktik politik biasa; mereka berkontribusi pada Islamofobia sistemik yang terwujud dalam berbagai cara yang merugikan, termasuk diskriminasi, kejahatan kebencian, dan pengucilan sosial yang ditujukan kepada individu dan komunitas Muslim.

Dampak retorika Trump melampaui keuntungan politik jangka pendek; ini memiliki efek jangka panjang pada sikap masyarakat terhadap Islam dan Muslim, memperdalam perpecahan dan polarisasi dalam masyarakat Amerika. Diskursus ini tidak hanya memperkuat stereotip yang merugikan, tetapi juga merusak nilai-nilai inti kesetaraan dan toleransi yang penting bagi masyarakat demokratis.

Keywords: Donald Trump, Islamophobia

BACKGROUND

Donald Trump's rhetoric regarding Islam and Muslims has become a hotbed of debate, drawing widespread criticism from Islamic scholars, community leaders, and activists. Throughout his political career, Trump has often used language that is seen as Islamophobic, portraying Islam as a singular entity synonymous with extremism and violence. This oversimplified view not only overlooks the diversity within the Muslim faith but also creates an atmosphere of fear and mistrust among the general public. One notable example is his call to "ban Muslims" during the 2016 presidential campaign, where he positioned himself as a protector of American values against a perceived threat from Muslims. This narrative was further reinforced by policies specifically targeting Muslim-majority countries and restricting immigration based on religious identity.

Critics argue that Trump's statements and actions are not just political strategies; they also contribute to the rise of systemic Islamophobia manifested in

various forms, such as discrimination, hate crimes, and social ostracism against Muslim individuals and communities. This rhetoric cannot be separated from the broader historical context of Islamophobia in the United States, where Muslims are often stereotyped as violent or intolerant. The impact of Trump's statements extends beyond short-term political gains; they have long-lasting effects on societal attitudes toward Islam and Muslims, further deepening polarization within American society. Scholars emphasize that this discourse not only reinforces negative stereotypes but also undermines the principles of equality and tolerance that are foundational to a democratic society. Therefore, arguments from the Islamic community regarding Trump's views on Islamophobia highlight the urgent need for a deeper understanding of Islam that can challenge these harmful narratives and promote inclusivity.

INTRODUCTION

Donald Trump's remarks and policies regarding Islam and Muslims have generated considerable controversy, attracting sharp criticism from Islamic scholars, community leaders, and activists. Many view his language as Islamophobic, depicting Islam as a monolithic entity primarily linked to extremism and violence. This overly simplistic perspective not only ignores the rich diversity within the Muslim faith but also fosters an atmosphere of fear and distrust among the general public.

One significant example is Trump's proposal for a "Muslim ban" during his 2016 presidential campaign, where he positioned himself as a guardian of American values against a perceived threat from Muslims. This narrative has been reinforced by policies targeting Muslim-majority countries, effectively limiting immigration based on religious identity.

Critics argue that Trump's statements and actions go beyond mere political maneuvering; they contribute to a rise in systemic Islamophobia manifested through discrimination, hate crimes, and social exclusion of Muslim individuals and

communities. This rhetoric is part of a larger historical context in the United States, where Muslims are frequently stereotyped as violent or intolerant.

The consequences of Trump's comments extend far beyond immediate political advantages; they have long-term effects on how society views Islam and Muslims, deepening divisions and polarization within American culture. Consequently, arguments from the Islamic community against Trump's stance on Islamophobia underscore the urgent need for a more nuanced understanding of Islam that can challenge these harmful narratives and foster inclusivity.

RESEARCH METHODS

In writing this article, a literature study method is employed, which is a research approach focused on the collection and analysis of literature sources related to the topic being investigated. This process involves reviewing relevant journals, studying and understanding previous research, as well as referring to reference books and other sources as citations. Through this approach, the author can develop a deeper understanding of the issues discussed and identify the contributions of existing research within a broader context.

RESULTS AND DISCUSSION

Islamophobia is the fear, prejudice, or hatred towards Islam and Muslims. During his presidency, Donald Trump was often accused of spreading Islamophobia through his statements, policies, and actions that were seen as discriminatory against Muslims.

The most notable example is the "Muslim Ban" (2017), where Trump banned travel to the United States from several Muslim-majority countries. He also once said that

"Islam hates us" and repeatedly linked Islam with terrorism, reinforcing negative stereotypes about Muslims.

His actions and expression were often seen as part of a campaign that worsened religious tensions and strengthened Islamophobic sentiments in American society and around the world.

A LONG HISTORY OF ISLAMOPHOBIA

9/4/2010 — Trump Suggests the U.S. is at War with Muslims

Five years before announcing his candidacy, Trump discusses the Park51 Islamic Community Center in Manhattan on The Late Show. Host David Letterman asks, "Does this, in fact, suggest that we are officially at war with Muslims?" to which Trump responds, "Well somebody knocked down the World Trade Center... somebody's blowing us up. Somebody's blowing up buildings, and somebody's doing lots of bad stuff."

3/30/2011 — Trump States there is a "Muslim Problem"

In an interview with Fox News, Bill O'Reilly asks Trump if there is a "Muslim problem" in the world. Trump responds, "Absolutely. I mean, I don't notice Swedish people knocking down the World Trade Center. There is a Muslim problem in the world, and you know it and I know it."

4/12/2011 — Trump Doubles Down on Claim that there is a "Muslim Problem"

In an interview with CBN, Trump took remarks he made in his interview with Bill O'Reilly a step further, saying that the Quran "teaches some very negative vibe [sic] ... when you look at people blowing up in the street in some countries in the Middle East ... when you look at 250 people who die in a supermarket while shopping there's a lot of hatred there someplace."

3/13/2012 — Trump Supports Surveillance of Muslims

Trump tweets, “NYC’s top cop acted wisely and legally to monitor activities of some in the Muslim community. Vigilance keeps us safe.”

5/16/2015 — Trump: Under Obama, Muslims Can Immigrate to the U.S., Christians Can’t

In May of 2015, Trump attended the Iowa National Security Action Summit where an attendee asked him what he believed was “the most prominent lie that the American public is being propagandized in regards to national security.” Trump’s response included a mention of immigration. He said: “Muslims can come in but other people can’t; Christians can’t come into this country but Muslims can. Something has got to be coming down from the top... the Muslims aren’t in danger but the Christians are.”

RESEARCH RESULT

Apakah anda kenal dengan Donald Trump?

Pertanyaan 1	Jumlah Responden
Ya	17
Tidak	1

Seberapa setuju Anda dengan pernyataan bahwa kebijakan Donald Trump memperburuk Islamofobia di Amerika Serikat?

Pertanyaan 2	Jumlah Responden
Sangat Setuju	6

Setuju	4
Netral	2
Tidak Setuju	2

Apakah Anda setuju dengan kebijakan "Muslim Ban" yang diberlakukan oleh Donald Trump?

Pertanyaan 3	Jumlah Responden
Sangat Tidak Setuju	13
Netral	1
Tidak Setuju	4

Menurut Anda, apakah retorika Donald Trump terhadap Islam dan Muslim mempengaruhi pandangan masyarakat terhadap komunitas Muslim?

Pertanyaan 4	Jumlah Responden
Sangat Mempengaruhi	12
Cukup Mempengaruhi	5
Tidak Tahu	1

Seberapa sering Anda mendengar Donald Trump membuat pernyataan yang dianggap bernada Islamofobia?

Pertanyaan 5	Jumlah Responden
Sering	7
Kadang-Kadang	8
Jarang	2

Tidak Pernah	1
---------------------	----------

Menurut Anda, apakah kebijakan Donald Trump terhadap negara-negara mayoritas Muslim lebih didasarkan pada alasan keamanan atau prasangka terhadap Islam?

Pertanyaan 6	Jumlah Responden
Prasangka Terhadap Islam	12
Alasan Keamanan	2
Keduanya	2
Tidak Tahu	2

ANALYSIS OF RESULTS

1. Anti-Muslim Rhetoric

Trump's rhetoric, which frequently framed Muslims as potential security threats, fueled fear and stigma against Muslim communities. The discourse analysis suggests that this language reinforced harmful stereotypes, making negative perceptions more pervasive.

2. Social Media as an Influencing Factor

Social media played a critical role in spreading anti-Muslim sentiment. Research indicates that every time Trump posted a controversial tweet related to Islam, there was a noticeable spike in hate crimes targeting Muslims. This demonstrates how social media can amplify divisive rhetoric.

3. Social Impact

The rise in Islamophobia has had a real impact on the everyday lives of Muslims in America, with many experiencing discrimination in their workplaces, schools, and social settings. The hostile climate fostered by negative rhetoric has compromised the quality of life and social integration for many in the Muslim community.

4. Public Policy

Policies like the travel ban targeting majority-Muslim countries intensified this hostile environment, reinforcing pre-existing biases and institutionalizing discrimination. Such policies further marginalized Muslim populations and deepened public mistrust.

DISCUSSION

Donald Trump's rhetoric has significantly contributed to the rise of Islamophobia in the United States. By frequently framing Muslims as potential security threats, he has fueled fear and stigma against Muslim communities. His use of terms like "radical Islamic terrorism" generalizes and demonizes an entire faith based on the actions of a few, creating an "us versus them" mentality that fosters distrust and hostility.

Social media has played a crucial role in amplifying this anti-Muslim sentiment. Research shows that every time Trump posted a controversial tweet about Islam, there was a noticeable spike in hate crimes targeting Muslims. His tweets not only reflect his views but also influence public perception and behavior, leading to real-world consequences for Muslim individuals and communities.

The impact of rising Islamophobia is evident in the everyday lives of Muslims in America, many of whom face discrimination in workplaces, schools, and social

settings. This hostile environment has compromised their quality of life, leading to feelings of isolation and fear.

Public policies during Trump's administration, such as the travel ban on majority-Muslim countries, have further intensified this hostile climate. These policies reinforce existing biases and marginalize Muslim populations, legitimizing public mistrust and institutionalizing Islamophobia.

Overall, the combination of anti-Muslim rhetoric, the influence of social media, the social impact on Muslim communities, and discriminatory public policies has created a complex landscape of Islamophobia in America. Addressing these issues requires fostering dialogue between communities, advocating for civil rights protections, and promoting responsible media representation. It is essential for Muslim communities and their allies to work together to challenge harmful narratives and create a more inclusive society that celebrates diversity rather than fears it.

CONCLUSION

Islamic arguments against Donald Trump's views on Islamophobia are rooted in core principles of justice, compassion, and respect for diversity. These teachings oppose rhetoric that incites division and fear, instead advocating for understanding and unity among all people.

In this context, it is crucial for Muslim communities to actively engage in dialogue with the broader society to dispel myths and misunderstandings about Islam. This engagement can take various forms, such as interfaith initiatives, community service programs, and educational efforts aimed at fostering mutual respect and understanding.

Moreover, it is equally important for allies—both individuals and organizations—to stand in solidarity with Muslim communities in the fight against Islamophobia. By

amplifying Muslim voices and supporting initiatives that promote inclusivity, allies can help create an environment where diversity is valued rather than feared.

On the other hand, addressing systemic issues related to Islamophobia requires collective action on multiple levels—within local communities, national policies, and international relations. Advocating for policies that protect civil rights and promote social justice is essential in combating discrimination and building an inclusive society.

Ultimately, overcoming Islamophobia requires a commitment to empathy and education. This involves recognizing our shared humanity and rejecting narratives that seek to divide us based on religion or ethnicity. By grounding discussions in Islamic values—such as justice (*adl*), compassion (*rahmah*), and unity in diversity—advocates can counter harmful narratives promoted by figures like Donald Trump.

In summary, although the rhetoric surrounding Islamophobia may continue to present challenges, the resilience of Islamic values offers a powerful counter-narrative that emphasizes peace, coexistence, and respect for all individuals. Through this lens, we can work toward a more just society where every person is equally valued, regardless of their beliefs or background.

SUGGESTION

Education and Public Awareness

Increasing education about Islam and Muslim cultures in schools and communities can help reduce misunderstandings and negative stereotypes. Educational programs that involve direct interaction with Muslim communities can build bridges of understanding and empathy.

Interfaith Dialogue

Encouraging interfaith dialogue between Muslim and non-Muslim communities can strengthen social relationships and reduce tensions. Activities such as discussion forums, seminars, and cross-cultural events can create spaces for the exchange of ideas and experiences.

Public Policy Advocacy

Promoting the establishment of policies that protect civil rights and combat discrimination is crucial. Civil society organizations should collaborate to advocate for policy changes that uphold social justice and equality for all individuals, regardless of their religious background.

Responsible Media Use

Media plays a significant role in shaping public perception. Journalists and content creators should commit to presenting accurate and positive representations of Muslim communities while challenging negative narratives circulating in society.

Strengthening Muslim Communities

Muslim communities should be encouraged to strengthen internal support networks, including programs that help members feel safe and integrated into the broader society. This can include social, educational, and advocacy activities.

Addressing Islamophobia on Social Media

Developing online campaigns that oppose Islamophobia and promote positive messages about Islam can help reduce the spread of hate on social media. The use of hashtags, inspirational videos, and educational content can reach a wider audience.

Engagement of Community Leaders

Community leaders, including religious figures, politicians, and influencers, should actively participate in opposing Islamophobia. They can use their platforms to voice messages of tolerance, inclusion, and unity.

By implementing these steps, we hope to create a safer and more inclusive environment for all individuals, regardless of their religious background. Addressing Islamophobia requires a collective effort from all elements of society to build understanding, appreciate differences, and celebrate diversity.

BIBLIOGRAPHY

Hidayah, N. (2024). Advokasi Council On American-Islamic Relations (Cair) Dalam Menangani Diskriminasi Muslim Di Amerika Serikat Pada Era Kepemimpinan Donald Trump (Doctoral dissertation, FISIP UNPAS).

Yansah, A., & Mulia, H. R. (2023). Donald Trump, Kebijakan Pembatasan Imigran Muslim, dan Islamophobia dalam Perspektif Sejarah Demokrasi Amerika Serikat. CONTEMPLATE: Jurnal Ilmiah Studi Keislaman, 4(1), 65-80.

Zulian, I. (2019). Analisis Pengaruh Islamophobia Terhadap Kebijakan Luar Negeri Amerika Serikat Di Pemerintahan Donald Trump. Jurnal PIR, 3(2).