

STATE OF MUSLIM IN FOREIGN COUNTRIES: NON- MUSLIM VIEW TO MUSLIM IN THEIR COUNTRIES

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Abstract: *Life as a Muslim in a country where the majority of people aren't Muslim often time face various challenges, starting from social life, culture, or religion. This research aims to analyse many challenges that Muslim face in a non-Muslim country, like religion discrimination, lack of praying facilities, and difficulties in doing religious practices freely. This study uses qualitative methods by conducting interviews with informants in America and Europe. This research shows that there is a significant gap due to stereotypes towards Islam. Apart than that, challenges like finding halal foods, availability place to pray in the public, and demands for adaptation to local culture are the issues that they often face. However, diaspora Muslim community shows their adaptability skills through a strong community connection.*

Keywords: *Muslim, Foreign, Islamophobia*

INTRODUCTION

The spread of Islam is not only focused on the realms of Islamic beliefs, but Islam also spreads to other domains, for example the educational, social, and political realms. This what makes Islam easily accepted by all groups

In early days of the spread of Islam, the people from Arab spreads Islam through trades, they trade to other countries at the same time while doing da'wah. The preachers who brought Islam in a manner that is polite and accommodating to the local culture, making the process of spreading Islam more easily accepted by various groups

Islam not only spread through trades, but also occurred in process of political means which made Islam spread more widely

However, this distribution process did not occur smoothly, there were several obstacles that occurred in the distribution process and in this research, we want to discuss about the obstacles or problems a Muslim face carrying out their worship, especially in a foreign country where the majority of the population are non-Muslim, so that we can study and find out more about the process of Islamic development in countries where the majority are non-Muslim.

In this research we have gotten several people from various countries who have filled out the questionnaire that we provided and sent it through Reddit and Discord platforms

Muslim in America

Muslims in America are divided into several groups, they are:

1. *Indigenous*, they are the people that are born in America, grew up there and have American citizenship and are muslim
2. Muslim Immigrants, they are people who emigrated from their home country and then settled in America
3. *Bilali*, they are a group of black Muslims

4. *Sojourners*, they are Muslims who don't live there, which means it is only temporary. They usually stay there only for work or activities. Most of them are diplomats, students, businessmen, or people with other matters¹

An argument that became the main basis for describing the migration of Muslims in America is when one source states that the first Muslim population came to America around 1875 and 1912 from remote areas of Syria, John L. Esposito also stated that the first arrival of Muslims in America was when European nobles brought slaves from Africa, but it turned out that one-fifth of the slaves were Muslim, however After arriving in America, some of the Muslim slaves chose to apostatize and leave their religion, thus becoming Christians.²

Another opinion says that Muslims came to America after the center of Muslim power in Spain fell into the hands of Christians. In 1492, Muslim throughout the Iberian were forced to choose the unfavorable choice of conversion, migration, or the death penalty. This was because of Fernando's husband and wife to Aragon and Isabela had succeeded in uniting the two Christian kingdoms, and they also succeeded in seizing the last territory in Granada in 1492, this incident forced the Muslims to leave and migrate to the Caribbean islands and some of them even managed to make it to the United States.³

The Emergence of Islamophobia

The main problem that rises Islamophobia in the United States was the Incident of the World Trade Center (WTC) that happened in New York, September 11 2001. This incident was said to be an event that had been planned by George W. Bush to legitimize his anti-terrorist policies, which scapegoat Muslims and stereotype

¹ Vita Fitria "*ISLAM DI BARAT (Dinamika Minoritas Muslim mayoritas Non-Muslim di Amerika Serikat)*", page. 2-3

² Subehan Khalik, "*Sejarah Perkembangan Islam di Amerika* ". Fakultas Syariah dan Hukum Universitas Islam (UIN) Alauddin Makassar. (Desember 2015), hal. 317-318

³ ahmat, "*Perkembangan Islam di Amerika Serikat*". Fakultas Adab dan Humaniora UIN Alauddin Makassar (2013), page. 33

them as terrorist, after this incident, America uses this opportunity to spread anti-Islam propaganda to various countries.⁴

According to Ulil Abshar Abdallah, violence and discrimination have reached 1717 cases, and most of these cases occurred in Muslim women wearing hijabs in the United States with 372 cases of sexual harassment, this is because hijab is worn by Muslims, therefore people after the WTC incident assume that women wearing hijabs have potential close ties to terrorism.⁵

Halal Foods

Predictions stated that halal foods in America will increase by 9.33 percent in 2030, this is with evidence over the last two decades ago, halal foods in the United States of America are increasing over the time.

A Muslim researcher from the United States named Dr. Abdelhadi Halawa, stated that in the early days of Muslims coming to America, they not only brought Islamic traditions, but also brought their traditional halal foods.

This increase of halal foods was also triggered by the habit of non-Muslims in America eating more at halal restaurants, because they consider that halal products are more natural, pure, health, ethical, and hygienic.

A participant in the Community Engagement Exchange (CEE) also said that many non-Muslim people do not like pork, so they like to go to a halal restaurant more because they don't serve pork in there.⁶

⁴ Subehan Khalik, "*Sejarah Perkembangan Islam di Amerika*" Fakultas Syariah dan Hukum Universitas Islam Negeri Alauddin Makassar, Vol. 4, No. 2, Desember 2015, page. 319

⁵ Subehan Khalik, "*Sejarah Perkembangan Islam di Amerika*" Fakultas Syariah dan Hukum Universitas Islam Negeri Alauddin Makassar, Vol. 4, No. 2, Desember 2015, page. 321

⁶ Kristina, "*Studi: Tren Konsumsi Makanan Halal di AS Diprediksi Terus Meningkat*", [detikhikmah.com](https://www.detik.com/hikmah/khazanah/d-7255665/studi-tren-konsumsi-makanan-halal-di-as-diprediksi-terus-meningkat/amp), <https://www.detik.com/hikmah/khazanah/d-7255665/studi-tren-konsumsi-makanan-halal-di-as-diprediksi-terus-meningkat/amp>, Accessed on November 11, 2024, at 11:26 WITA

Nowadays, searching for halal food places or supermarkets in America is easier, this was stated by a doctoral student majoring in Islamic and Arabic Studies named Halim Miftahul Khoiri at Georgetown University, Washington, D.C.

Currently in the Falls Church, Virginia, there is a halal supermarket called “Halal Depot” owned by a Muslim named Nadim Azimi. This business starter when Nadim found it was difficult to find halal foods, because of his anxiety, he then decided to open a Halal Depot which began operating in January 2024 in order to meet the halal food needs of other muslims.

However, according to sources, there is no need to worry anymore about the difficulty of finding halal products, because many public minimarkets already provide labelled halal products, A study from the Pew Research Center said that the number of Muslims in America reached a total of 1.1 percent in 2017 and is expected to reach 8.1 million people in 2050.⁷

Islam in Europe

At first, Islam came to Europe from eastern, North African immigrants. They are job seekers and some of them were also brought by local government to work in Europe. In this early period, Muslims in Europe still had many obstacles, whether due to differences in religion, race, habits, and language.

In the early days of Muslim’s arrival in Europe, America, and Australia, their economic and social status was also marginalized because in general they were only lower class workers.

⁷ Dhania Iman, Ariadne Budianto, dan Ronan Freeka Azanur, “Mahasiswa Muslim Indonesia di AS: Berburu Makanan Halal Tidak Sulit,” *Indonesia di Amerika*, 21 Maret 2024. <https://www.voaindonesia.com/a/mahasiswa-muslim-indonesia-di-as-berburu-makanan-halal-tidak-sulit-/7535951.html>. Accessed on November 11, 2024, at 11:230 WITA

Islamophobia in Europe

After many Muslims have settled in Europe, many people there experience *xenophobia*. This is due to feelings of hatred, fear, and anxiety about differences in ethnicity, religion, language, nationality, and so on. This has led to groups of people who have this *xenophobic* feeling, for example in Germany.

Xenophobia itself is a term used for people or groups who have excessive fear of foreigners or people outside the group, who are considered different or unknown. Whether in terms of physicality, culture, religion, ethnicity, and so on. The term is taken from the Greek, *phobos* which means fear and *xenos* which means foreigner. This phobia is sometimes equated with a form of racism.⁸

The phenomenon of *xenophobia* is not only happening in Germany, but also in other countries such as America. Plus, their ideology makes things worse. In Denmark, there are secular rightists and even atheists.

This group really hates the growth of Islam, their hatred is even clear when they ask Sweden and Denmark to abolish Islam.

There are ideological, hateful and religious dimensions, which are all mixed into an *Islamophobia*, this is what finally made Rasmus Paludan and his friends burn the Koran so that it makes Islamophobia a problem, this makes Sweden and Denmark a hassle.⁹

Difficulties in Halal Food

According to estimates, Muslims in the European continent will increase in the future, this has resulted in increased demand for halal meat products in the UK

⁸ Dr. Rizal Fadli. "*Kerap Disamakan, Ini Beda Xenophobia dan Rasisme*". 27 Januari 2023. <https://www.halodoc.com/artikel/kerap-disamakan-ini-beda-xenophobia-dan-rasisme>. Accessed on November 11, 2024, at 20:00 WITA

⁹ Sudarnato Abdul Hakim. "*Awal Mula Kehidupan Muslim di Eropa Hingga Muncul Islamofobia*". 18 Agustus 2023. <https://www.uinjkt.ac.id/id/awal-mula-kehidupan-muslim-di-eropa-hingga-muncul-islamofobia>. Accessed on November 11, 2024, at 19:12 WITA

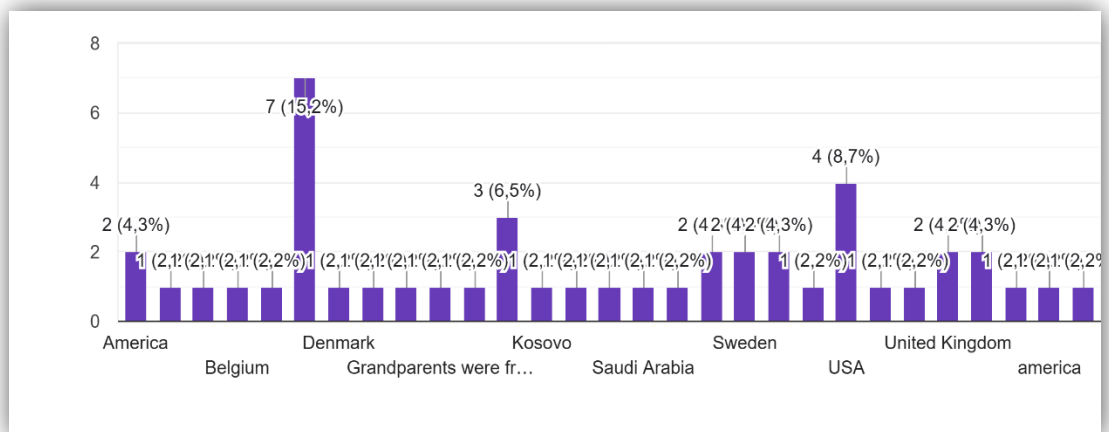
region, the problem is that in Europe there is no official standard for halal labeling. This halal issue has received attention from stakeholders, both food industry entrepreneurs, governments, and schools. However, halal food is still considered a form of discrimination against non-Muslim communities.

The issue of halal meat is also a problem. When after the Belgian authorities in Flanders in January 2019 strictly prohibited Muslims who wanted to slaughter animals in a religious way. The reason is simply because it contradicts their views on the right to life of animals. According to the law, which is supported by right-wing nationalists, the animals to be slaughtered should be stunned before slaughter, which is contrary to Islamic law.¹⁰

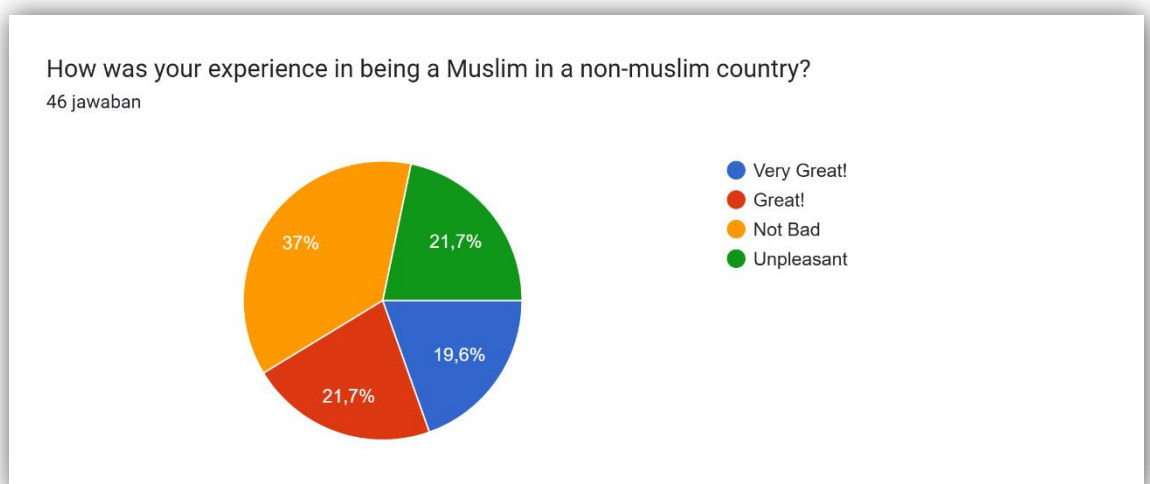
Quantitative Methodology in Local Societies.

Then, how does this theory actually prove the existence of religious inequality in various continents or is it a fear that Muslims will experience to visit various regions? This research can be proven using Quantitative methods as a basis for calculations for the general public in assessing the level of welfare of life out there. Of course, as a Muslim, this needs to be considered. Then actually, how the results of the data shown in this method become a consideration for Muslims, if it can be classified, there are various continents that are the pioneers of the most respondents where two of these continents are Europe and North America.

¹⁰ Rita Pawestri Setyaningsih, *"Tinjauan Buku: Isu Halal Internasional dan Regional: Perspektif Hubungan Internasional,"* Jurnal Kajian Wilayah 12, no. 2 (2021): 121-134, page.127-128



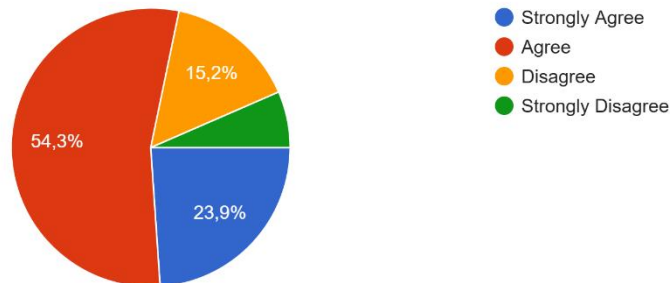
Referring to the content of the survey where respondents gave answers based on their experiences. Then what exactly is the experience felt by the respondents as Muslims in Europe? Precisely in Canada, the respondents felt that the country was the most comfortable place to be a Muslim, Of course, it has become the scope for a Muslim in life such as eating halal food or finding a place of worship that can be used. just like in the US, but there are differences experienced by women living in the United States which are a caution for the surrounding Muslim community.



Then in the survey results, the data provided shows that most or average Muslims living on the continent, still get privilage to live prosperously, but this certainly does not rule out the possibility that there are still people who have *Islamophobia*.

Do you feel safe and comfortable when you're doing your prayer in your country?

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Based on the data that has been attached, this states that there are not a few people who are prosperous out there and indeed that this is based on how people live their lives. Then how exactly can this data address the rampant *Islamophobia*? This clearly must be emphasized in spreading goodness through various media and having a positive impact as a Muslim.

Conclusion

The conclusion of this article is to discuss the challenges faced by Muslims living in non-Muslim majority countries. The purpose of this research is to identify the main problems experienced by Muslims such as discrimination, difficulties in worship, limited worship facilities, and difficulty in obtaining or finding halal food. Muslims also face increasing Islamophobia or hatred towards Muslims after the September 11, 2001 tragedy that occurred in the United States, while in Europe, Muslims face xenophobia or hatred towards people who are considered different, for example, some European countries prohibit the slaughter of animals according to Islamic signs, Although there are many challenges for Muslims in non-Muslim majority countries, Muslims in these countries can adapt, such as creating strong communities and building halal food businesses. Despite this, *xenophobia* remains a serious problem, affecting the daily lives of Muslims in these countries.

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