

The Spiral of Violence: A Critical Analysis of The Genealogy of Islamophobia

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Abstract: The rise of terrorism by extremist groups with religious backgrounds and the development of Islamophobia in the West after 9/11 are essential issues that need to be addressed. After the WTC incident in 2001, the US declared a "war on terror," which has implications for the bad sentiment of Western society towards Islam, which has led to many acts of discrimination and violence against Muslims in the West. There are still few studies that analyze the relationship between religious fundamentalism-extremism and the development of Islamophobia in the West. This study uses a qualitative approach with secondary data analysis from various sources related to the topic discussed. It was found that propaganda and hateful rhetoric, as well as acts of violence by extremist Muslim groups, helped trigger and strengthen Islamophobia in the West. From the perspective of the spiral of violence theory, the 9/11 terrorist act also gave birth to other violence in the form of military attacks and discrimination against Muslims. Acts of terrorism by Muslim fundamentalists and Islamophobia in the West influence each other in an ongoing cycle of violence. Efforts to prevent terrorism and deradicalization, as well as religious tolerance education, are needed to break this cycle of violence. We recommend further research with a quantitative approach to empirically analyze the impact of acts of terrorism on incidents of Islamophobia.

Keywords: *Spiral of Violence; Genealogy; Islamophobia; fundamentalism.*

INTRODUCTION

Acts of terrorism that have plagued the last few decades have become a topic that is always hotly discussed. Since the bloody tragedy (WTC) of September 11, 2001, America has been aggressively campaigning for the war on terrorism to this day. However, in practice, the U.S. military invasions of Afghanistan and Iraq to combat two terror organizations, ISIS and al-Qaeda, have kept the conversation about acts of terror intertwined with Islam.

This is quite understandable because both organizations use black flags with white monotheism. The flag then shaped the perception of the international community, which implicitly considered that Islam was a religion of terror. Alternatively, in other words, the

terror organization fought by the United States is a representation of Islam. This has led to various controversies and debates in multiple circles around the relationship between religion, violence, and politics.

On the global scene, Our World in Data recorded 4916 acts of terrorism from 1970 to 2021. (Terrorism Deaths, n.d.) The U.S. State Department, in its latest report, noted that the number of terrorist organizations with an Islamic identity dominated the overall data, with 58 terror organizations, 48 of which identified as Islamic. (Atmaja et al., 2023) In Indonesia, terrorism crimes reported by the Database Application Criminal Acts Cases recorded at least 1411 acts of terror committed by 723 perpetrators. (Database Application Criminal Acts Cases - CDS, n.d.) Counting since 2000, suicide bombing cases in Indonesia are lined up like long threads prepared to sew torn clothes here and there: Bali Bombing (2002), JW Marriot Bomb (2003), Bali II Bombing (2005), Ritz Carlton Bomb (2009), Adz-Dzikra Mosque Bomb Cirebon (2011), Sarinah Bomb (2016), Mapolresta Solo Bomb (2016), Kampung Melayu Bomb (2017), Surabaya and Sidoarjo Bombing (2018) and lastly, two years ago in the Makassar Cathedral Church Bomb case (2021). (Putri, n.d.)

Various acts of terror that spread in parts of the world and Indonesia in particular, ironically—by avoiding generalizations—departed from religious fervor. Islam is accused of being a religion that legitimizes acts of terror. However, a questionnaire survey conducted by John L. Esposito and Dalia Mogahed in 2006 on views that reflect Muslims around the world shows that claiming terror groups as representatives of Islam is extremely difficult. Their vision and mission are shared by less than 1% of the world's total Muslim population of about 1.5 billion individuals. The majority strongly called for rejecting violence and a greater priority for peace. (Esposito & Mogahed, 2008)

However, this view has been challenged by various parties because the number of 1% is precisely the most vocal in the public sphere and represents Islam in the global eye. Although they make up only 1% of the total 1.5 billion Muslim population, their influence in international discussions takes center stage, given the enormous impact they have made in disrupting global public discourse.

Among the examples of religious-based acts of terror, on November 9, 2017, a massacre was carried out by a militant group affiliated with ISIS to Friday prayer worshippers at al-Rawḍah mosque in Sinai, Egypt. The human tragedy claimed at least 305 victims, 30 of whom were children. ("Pembantaian di masjid Sinai, Mesir," 2017) In 2020, on another continent, an act of terror with religious motives was marked by the beheading of Samuel Paty in France. (Saputra, 2021)

From the above examples, many orientalist and researchers have launched claims linking Islam to violence. These claims are often based on their observations of Quranic and Hadith verses about war. Concepts such as Jihad and Shahid have dominated much of the background ideology of extreme Muslim groups (Wibisono et al., 2019). Slightly different from the view that Islam inspires terrorism, Manal Omar, in his book *Islam is The Religion of Peace*, says:

A series of violent acts that occurred in several parts of the Muslim world does not mean that these events are a reflection of the religion adhered to. Terrorism events are the product of complex socio-political situations and conditions, which among them are the effects of the legacy of colonialism and the contestation of interests of superpowers that leave traces of hostility everywhere. On the other hand, religion may have a hand in the conflict, not because of its doctrinal factors but because of how it is manipulatively interpreted and misused (Atmaja et al., 2023).

Supporting the above view, Dom Helder Camara, in his theory Spiral of Violence, has a postulate that "violence gets violence," or violence gives rise to other violence. This theory suggests that injustice is the root or primary source of violence. This theory can be explained by the work of three forms of violence: personal, institutional, and structural, namely injustice, civil rebellion violence, and state repression. All three are related to each other; violence will only lead to violence against others.

In Islamic treasures, historically, the emergence of Kharijites as a manifestation of fundamental religious understanding was motivated by socio-political crises. Looking at the background of fundamentalist scholars who are synonymous with understanding religious texts rigidly and textually, such as Ibn Taymiyyah (1263-1328), al-Maudūdī (1903-1979), and Sayyid Qutb (1906-1966) also lived amid socio-political and economic crises.

From here, it is clear that the socio-political crisis—without ignoring the scholars who took a moderate stance—has a vital role in giving birth to Islamic fundamentalism. Fundamentalist figures, such as Ibn Taymiyyah, lived amid the Mongol invasion. Contemporary fundamentalists also live amid Western colonialism. In many cases, religious fundamentalism finds a warm welcome in the hearts of Muslims who feel oppressed and backward. Furthermore, this understanding has developed into the 'ideological foundation' of the terrorism movement, which has implications for the birth of a new discourse: Islamophobia.

According to Reuters, the conflict that broke out between Israel and Palestine on October 7, 2023, has increased Islamophobia in the US. The Council on American-Islamic Relations (CAIR) received 774 complaints about incidents motivated by Islamophobia and bias against Palestinians and Arabs. CAIR also cited the assault of an 18-year-old Palestinian man in Brooklyn, death threats against a mosque, and the fatal stabbing of a 6-year-old Muslim boy in Illinois. According to U.S. authorities, the victims were targeted because they were Palestinian Americans. (US Antisemitic, Islamophobic Incidents Surge with War, Advocates Say | Reuters, 2023.)

Studies on Islamophobia, although many are scattered, often do not look at the background of fundamentalist clerical figures as formulators of Islamic extremism who live amid a comprehensive socio-political crisis. Likewise, discussions about fundamentalist propaganda in recruiting the masses do not get a decent portion of various studies on this topic. The study of Islamophobia is also often related to the perspective of non-Muslims towards Muslims, while in its development, Islamophobia also grows within Muslims themselves. Therefore, this article was created to fill the gap in the discussion on Islamophobia.

METHOD

To analyze the matter described above, the author uses a qualitative-descriptive research method and library research in this paper. Data analysis begins with careful and repeated reading of all data collected from various studies, field notes, and other written documents. Homework is done carefully to understand the substance and meaning of the raw data available. After reading and understanding all of the data, researchers conducted open coding. Labels or codes can be keywords, phrases, or short sentences representing the data unit. In the initial coding process, the focus was given to what aspects emerged from the data according to the principles of grounded analysis without trying to categorize or connect between codes. Open coding aims to identify various concepts, ideas, or themes emerging from the analyzed data.

After several codes or concepts were identified through open coding, researchers grouped the codes into categories or larger groups based on the similarity of ideas or meanings. This stage aims to organize the codes that were initially scattered into concept units that are more structured and systematic, making it easier to interpret and form theories that emerge from the data. The categories that have been formed will then be analyzed more deeply to produce meaning, explanation, or theory according to the research objectives.

The primary source used to dissect fundamentalism-extremism is the tafsir *Fi Zilāl al-Quran* by Sayyid Qutb; this source was chosen because the works that discuss *Hakīmiyyah Ilāhiyyah* (God's Power Authority) which later developed into the 'ideological foundation' of extremist groups boil down to the tafsir book. Meanwhile, to describe Islamophobia, data is collected from reports of research institutions that focus on studying Islamophobia. As for secondary sources, this article uses journals, articles, and books related to the topic of this study. The data are then collected and organized to form an argument.

FINDING AND DISCUSSION

The Social-Political Crisis Gave Birth to Fundamentalism-Extremists.

Walter Laqueur, in his book *The Age of Terrorism*, elaborates on what is referred to as "religious terrorism." According to him, terrorism that is often associated with religion is right-wing terrorism; this movement is more inspired by the ideology of nationalism than by religion. Laqueur pointed out that the main reason behind these acts of terrorism is not religion itself, but rather nationalism ideology or political views. Religion is nothing but used as a vehicle or justification for goals that are nationalist-political. (Campbell et al., 1987)

The Khawārij sect initiated Islam, religious fundamentalism in the concept that the authority of power was only in the hands of Allah (*Hakīmiyyah*), which emerged at the end of Caliph Ali's reign due to the socio-political crisis of the time. During the time of Caliph Ali, a great conflict broke out between Ali's and Mu'awiyah's groups. Differing views on several central issues triggered this conflict: the assassination of Caliph Uthman bin Affan and the continuation of the leadership (caliphate) after that.

Ali's group insisted that the first step was to appoint a new caliph to replace Uthman. They believed that the election of a caliph should be the top priority before solving the issue of Uthman's assassination. The group is of the view that the leadership seat within the Muslim community should be restored immediately to maintain stability.

On the other hand, the group led by Mu'awiyah argued that the issue of Uthman's assassination should be prioritized and resolved first before the election of a new caliph. They argued that the murder of Uthman was a crime to be punished, and justice should be served before the election of the caliph.

The political conflict became a bloody tragedy in the early history of Islam; Muslims fought each other and claimed many lives from both sides. From here came the Khawārij, who defected from Ali's camp; they came out as a group stricken with disappointment over the bloody conflict. With the slogan '*Lā ḥukma illa li Allah*,' they argued that Ali and Mu'awiyah had disbelieved and legalized his blood. Ali was killed, and Mu'awiyah survived because he was heavily guarded.

The explanation above shows that the socio-political crisis gives rise to religious fundamentalism, synonymous with a rigid and textual reading of religious texts. From here, the estuary of the concept of '*Taḥkim*' becomes a vicious romance that is often ridden by the

legitimacy of Muslim 'unscrupulous' acts of terror caused by injustice or socio-political crises, even today.

In the context of modern history, the concepts of *hakimiyyah* and religious fundamentalism were repopularized by Abū al-A'lā al-Mawdūdī (1903-1979), who later developed the idea by Sayyid Qutb. al-Mawdūdī, who lived amid colonial perniciousness and Western hegemony, the laws that prevailed in his native India—before Pakistan seceded—were the product of an identically secular British colonial. Meanwhile, the condition of Islam at that time, after the fall of the Islamic Caliphate in Turkey in 1924, was devastated. Western colonialism and hegemony intensively secularized (distanced religion from people's lives) in its colonized countries. When Arab countries achieved their independence, that reality split Muslims into two streams: *first*, nationalist groups that adopted secular principles. *Second*, groups that want the application of Islamic sharia as the law of the land. Amid such conditions, al-Mawdūdī views *hakimiyyatullah* as the law of the land as a solution in line with religious values and to eradicate the influence of secularism introduced by Western colonialism. (Abul A'la Maududi, n.d.) In his book, *Nazriyyāt al-Islām al-Siyāsiyyah*, al-Mawdūdī says:

The primary basis of political support in Islam is to remove all power, including legislation, from human hands, both individually and in groups. It is not permissible for any of them to command things to their fellowmen and be obeyed or to establish laws for men that must be obeyed and followed. The authority belongs to God alone, and no one is with Him (al-Mawdudi, 1979).

In the context of modern history, Islamism—in the simple sense that all problems cannot be solved except by the formalization of Islam—occurred amid a situation of socio-political crisis due to the pertinence of Western colonialism. Muslim countries at that time were politically marginalized societies. In his lecture on December 30, 1996, Abdurrahman Wahid gave an interesting opinion about the conflict of religious-based violence in Indonesia. According to him, the violent acts that occurred had no theological basis but were a matter of political economy.

Social, cultural, and political crises have significantly shaped puritanical attitudes towards religious texts. The background of Ibn Taymiyyah (1263-1328) at that time lived amid the Mongol invasion of Islamic territory; the figure was then synonymous with a figure who consistently campaigned for a single truth, rejecting pluralism and textual interpretation. He believed that the Muslim way of life at that time had 'deviated' from the teachings God had ordained because of the dominance of 'outside traditions' embedded in various aspects of life, both social, cultural, and political. Ibn Taymiyah campaigned for a return to the Qur'an and Hadith and rejected heresy and khurafat.

Five centuries later, Muhammad bin 'Abd al-Wahhab (1703-1787) re-popularized the idea. The Wahhabi movement also has the same view; they consider that today's society has deviated and called for a return to the Quran and Hadith. However, this movement was limited to purification efforts in aspects of beliefs and rituals and began to penetrate intellectual and political dimensions.

Ahmet T. Kuru, in his book *Islam, Authoritarianism and Underdevelopment*, argues that Sunni Muslims were partly responsible for the spread of intolerant Salafi-jihadist ideas. Because this group tends to interpret religious sources (Quran and Hadith) rigidly and textually, some orientalist also accuse Sunnis of responsibility despite Wahhabism controlling the two Muslim holy cities, Makkah and Medina, and the escalation of the spread of this idea quickly propagated. Ahmet T. Kuru emphasized that no one allowed this idea to rule the two

holy cities, which allowed this idea to take root in the two cities was none other than the British colonial legacy (Kuru, 2019).

Next, at the beginning of the 20th century, came Sayyid Qutb (1906-1966), who later became the 'ideological father' of fundamentalists and inspired terrorist groups in various parts of the world. Sayyid Qutb's propaganda, which was filled with tremendous emotional turmoil due to injustice, proved to be effective, and extremist groups adopted his ideas. For example, Šāliḥ Sariyyah, who was influenced by Sayyid Qutb, in his *Risālah al-Īmān* says:

The governments that exist today throughout the Islamic world are infidels, no doubt. The people living in these countries are ignorant (Sirriyah, n.d.).

From here, various profiles of fundamentalist figures have the same background, namely experiencing injustice/violence, to make religious texts legitimize the use of violence. As Dom Helder Camara postulates in his Spiral of Violence theory, "violence gets violence." An example of an emotional and reactive expression inspired by Sayyid Qutb is propaganda, which in turn implies a mistake in interpreting the terminology of Jihad, where Islam must be displayed with blood and sword.

Fundamentalist-extremist propaganda group

Sayyid Qutb believes that *jāhiliyyah* does not represent a specific period in the past. According to him, *jāhiliyyah* is dynamic, so there is a tendency to describe social reality in this age or the future as described in the pre-Islamic *jāhiliyyah* society: the period before Islam came. Historians agree that the *Jāhiliyyah* in the period before Islam came did not mean that they lacked noble values or rejected knowledge but pointed to their lives of strife, murder, revenge, or the like (Qutb & Husin, 1986). Sayyid Qutb explains this in his Tafsir:

Indeed, ignorance is not a specific period from a historical period. However, *jāhiliyyah* is a *manhaj* that reflects man's devotion to man. Today, this feature is depicted in all concepts on Earth without exception. Society's concepts today come from humans in terms of paradigms, principles, parameters, norms, laws, legislation, rules, and customs (Qutb & Husin, 1986).

The term *jāhiliyyah*, which is usually interpreted as a time of ignorance or barbaric life, actually means that at that time, the Arabs had no authority over laws, prophets, and scriptures. This definition was chosen because it cannot say that a society that is cultured and able to read and write, like the people of southern Arabia, is called a society of ignorance and barbarism. The ignorant terms in the Qur'an appear four times (Qs [3:154, 5:50, 33:33, 48:26] because of his strong desire to turn people away from pre-Islamic religious ideas, especially about idolatry. (Ruggles, 2021)

Sayyid Qutb's view of the concept of *jāhiliyyah* is hazardous despite his approach that tends to do *takfīr*, which is an act of disbelief against individuals or groups considered not to follow the correct understanding of Islam. The concept of *jāhiliyyah* in Sayyid Qutb's view not only refers to the pre-Islamic period in Arabia but is also understood as a contemporary condition that still exists in modern society.

In Qutb's thought, a society that does not fully apply Islamic laws is considered ignorant. This means that many modern Muslim countries, which may use secular laws or political systems that do not conform to their views of Islam, can be regarded as "ignorant" or in a state of ignorance.

Fundamentalist-extremist groups often use their view of spreading ignorance or infidel in all directions as legitimacy for their attacks. Therefore, Sayyid Qutb's views on *jāhiliyyah* and his takfir approach have become a topic of debate in studying extremism and radicalization in the Islamic world. Al-Qardhāwī says:

In Sayyid Qutb's view, all people on earth are ignorant people. This radical worldview rejects anyone and anything around it, which in turn will disbelieve the whole society and humanity in general. That is because he considered them to have aborted the '*Hākimiyyatullah*,' submitted to a law other than His own, and lawed with the law of men (al-Qaradawī, 2011).

The concept of *Jāhiliyyah*, carried by Sayyid Qutb, is based on *Hākimiyyah*. This concept is almost always the source of radical Islamic currents. Simply put, this understanding is to "perceive" (monotheism) Allah by applying the law and leaving the law of all things only to Him. All the laws in the Islamic Sharia that apply to all converts come from Allah, nothing else.

This concept of *hākimiyyah* led Sayyid Qutb to believe that the current situation had been cut off from Islam in the time of the Prophet *Ṣallallāhu 'alaihi wa sallam*. For him, Islam could not be implemented except through the takeover of power. Furthermore, Sayyid Qutb placed the concept of *hākimiyyah* as part of faith. This then makes him put the law to achieve control as *fard 'ayn*, which is an individual responsibility that every Muslim must fulfill.

Those who do not glorify Allah *Ta'ālā* with *hākimiyyah*, whenever and wherever are polytheists. They do not escape this polytheism by simply believing that there is no god but Allah and performing the rituals of worship. So, in this case, they are like the status of good people who are not yet considered Muslims. Indeed, people are only considered Muslims when they perfect the chain of Islam. That is, combining faith and *shī'ar* with tawhid *hākimiyyah* and refusing to acknowledge laws, statutes, regulations, norms, or traditions not sourced from God. This is the only thing called Islam (Qutb & Husin, 1986).

This belief then led Sayyid Qutb to give a comprehensive labeling that society is currently ignorant of. In Sayyid Qutb's view, *jāhiliyyah* refers to a state of non-monotheism and non-submission to the true principles of Islam. According to him, this happens because power is not in the control of Muslims. Thus, according to Sayyid Qutb, the main task of Muslims is to regain power and implement Islamic laws so that society can get out of the state of ignorance and return to the pure teachings of Islam (Said, 2019).

In many cases, propaganda is used by individuals to promote views or ideas in persuasive and often unobjective ways. The repeated repetition of information then forms an individual or communal mindset, which, in the context of spreading radical ideas, has implications for the outbreak of terror acts.

In his Tafsir Fi Zilali al-Qur'ān, Sayyid Qutb consistently repeats the word '*Jāhiliyyah*' to promote his fundamental beliefs. Usamah Sayyid al-Azhary claimed that he had counted the word *jāhiliyyah* in the tafsir *Fi Zilāl al-Qur'ān* and found that this word was repeated 1740 times with an average of nine repetitions on each page (al-Azhary, 2015).

As mentioned earlier, *hākimiyyah* is at the root of various radical schools of Islamic thought. Those involved with this idea almost always distort the interpretation of Qur'anic verses. One verse that is often the basis of this understanding is its interpretation of God's Word: "*Those who do not obey the law sent down by Allah are unbelievers.*" (QS. Al-Māidah:44)

This verse was later used as a legitimacy for acts of terror that plague the corners of the world today. Several points must be considered regarding why Sayyid Qutb's understanding is rapidly propagating: First, mixing up creed and jurisprudence. In his book *Fī Zilāl al-Qur'ān*, Sayyid Qutb says:

The boundaries of the creed are broad and constantly expanding to cover all aspects of human life. In Islam, the problem of *hākimiyyah* with all its branches is a matter of creed, just as the question of morality globally is also a question of creed (Qutb & Husin, 1986).

Incorporating morality into the context of creed is a severe mistake. This action has the potential to result in the disbelief of individuals who may have poor morals. In the understanding of Sunni, the concept of creed focuses on belief in the heart, including belief in the oneness of God and prophethood. It has nothing to do with a person's behavior. They separate aspects of belief in the heart (creed) and practical deeds (deeds). This understanding makes the reality of Islam today more formal-symbolic (Maram et al., 2023). The boundaries of faith become so foggy that all attributes become the yardstick of the judgment of faith, and the world is seen as black and white (Maram, 2023).

Second, adding to the points of creed, Sayyid Qutb mixed up believing in the authority of Allah the Exalted in determining the law for man (*hākimiyyah*) with the application of jurisprudence in reality. He gave rise to a new concept called *tawhid hākimiyyah* with his opponent, *Shirk Hākimiyyah*. In his book *Fī Zilāl al-Qur'ān*, he says:

The issue of *tashrī'* (sanctions) is a matter of *hākimiyyah*, and the issue of judges is a matter of faith (Qutb & Husin, 1986).

This is to emphasize that the issues of *tashrī'* and *hākimiyyah* are matters of religion and faith (Qutb & Husin, 1986).

All the views of Sayyid Qutb are sourced from a statement by Hasan al-Banna, who spread the seed of this sprocket where he said: "The power in our books of Fiqh is classified into the problem of the faith of the tree (*ushūl*), not into the problem of the branch (*furū'*)."
Abdullah Diraz, in the book *Kunūz al-Sunnah* explains the Hadith narrated by 'Abd Allah ibn 'Umar, in full as follows:

عن عبدالله بن عمر بن الخطاب رضي الله عنهما—وقال له رجل: ألا تغزو؟ فقال: إني سمعت رسول الله—صلى الله عليه وسلم—يقول: "بني الإسلام على خمس: شهادة ألا إله إلا الله و أن محمدا رسول الله، وإقام الصلاة، وإيتاء الزكاة، والحج، وصوم رمضان." أخرجه الخمسة إلا أبا داود.

From Abdullah bin Umar bin Khaththab (may Allah be pleased with him), when someone asks: Did you not go to war? He replied: I have heard the Prophet *Ṣallahu 'alayhi wa Ṣallam* say: "Islam is built on five things. (1) The testimony that there is no God but Allah, and Muhammad the Messenger of Allah, (2) established prayers, (3) issued zakat, (4) performed Hajj, and (5) fasted Ramadan". (narrated by five imams of Hadith except for Abu Daud) (Diraz, n.d.).

The question that someone addressed to Ibn 'Umar was in the sense of, "What makes you perform Hajj and Umrah every year but are reluctant to go to jihad in the Way of Allah *Subḥanahu Wa Ta'ālā* when you understand very well the virtues of jihad in the sight of Allah?" Many scholars explain that Ibn Umar wanted to affirm that jihad is not *farḍ 'ayn* (individual obligation) but *farḍ kifāyah* (communal obligation).

However, that is not enough to explain why Ibn 'Umar abandoned the virtue of jihad just like that, considering that he was one of the Companions who greatly exemplified the Prophet *Ṣallahu 'alayhi wa Sallam* in every aspect of his life. Imam Bukhari, in the tafsir of Surat al-Baqarah, narrated that Ibn 'Umar, when there was a slander of 'Ibn Zubayr,' was visited by two men, they complained about the same thing: "People have fallen a lot. Moreover, what prevented you from going into battle, you, Ibn Umar, a companion of the Prophet *Ṣallahu 'alayhi wa Sallam*?" Ibn Umar replied, "What prevents me from going into battle is that Allah forbids the blood of my brother." They answered, "Did Allah *Subḥanahu Wa Ta'ālā* not say: (*And fight them until there is no slander*)." Ibn Umar replied, "We fight so that there is no slander, then religion is for Allah, but you fight for slander, then religion is for other than Allah."

From this narration, it can be understood that: (1) The question posed to Ibn Umar was not jihad against the infidels but a war between Muslims. (2)_ Ibn Umar did not see it as a war in the way of Allah; he saw it as a slander to be avoided.

From Extremism to Islamophobia.

The concept of Islamophobia gained prominence after the report titled "Islamophobia: A Challenge for Us All," which defined it as "unfounded hostility towards Islam and practical consequences of such hostility in unfair discrimination against Muslim individuals and communities" (*Islamophobia*, n.d.). This extends beyond fear or hatred and manifests in various forms of discrimination, including policies, gestures, and discriminatory practices.

The term Islamophobia has re-emerged as a discourse since the bloody tragedy that targeted the WTC on September 11, 2001 (Dauda, 2020). Since then, America has been aggressively campaigning for the war on terrorism to this day. However, in practice, the U.S. military invasions of Afghanistan and Iraq to combat two terror organizations, ISIS and al-Qaeda, have kept the conversation about acts of terror intertwined with Islam. This has led to the widespread belief that all Muslims are potential terrorists, contributing to the rise of Islamophobia.

The US response echoed the Global War on Terror campaign and the Bush Doctrine, which legalized aggressive military action. This approach targeted key terrorists and those who protect them. In practice, the targets of the US military action are almost all elements of the Muslim community around the world. This gives the impression that terrorism is inherently linked to Islam, an impression that is amplified and perpetuated.

Needless to say, since the WTC case of September 11, 2001, anti-Islamic attitudes have flourished on the European continent. Acts of violence carried out by terror groups against America gave birth to violence and discrimination against Muslim communities in various regions. According to FBI statistics, hate crimes against Muslims in the United States skyrocketed after September 11, 2001, and are still on the rise. Zahra Jamal, associate director of Rice University's Boniuk Institute for Religious Tolerance in Houston, said that in a survey, 62% of Muslims reported feeling faith-based hostility, and 65% felt disrespected by others. Hussam Ayloush, executive director of the Los Angeles branch of CAIR, said the Muslim community continues to face hatred, oppression, and discrimination. He stated this is the result of stereotypes perpetuated by Islamophobia and the media in the years since the 9/11 attacks (*Decades after 9/11, Muslims Battle Islamophobia in the US*, n.d.).

The United States has adopted the following definition of Islamophobia: a fear, prejudice, and hatred toward Muslims or non-Muslims that manifests in provocation, hostility, and intolerance. This is carried out through threats, harassment, abuse, incitement,

and intimidation, targeting both Muslims and non-Muslims in the online and offline world. Motivated by institutional, ideological, political and religious hostility that transcends into structural and cultural racism which targets the symbols and markers of being a Muslim (Awan & Zempi, 2020).” The forms of violence caused by Islamophobia are manifested in various patterns: verbal violence, physical violence, shootings, killings, destruction of Islamic symbols, or bombings (Dauda, 2020).

Naved Bakali divides Islamophobia into two types: structural Islamophobia and individual Islamophobia. Structural Islamophobia refers to policies and legislation that portray Muslims as outsiders or 'the Other.' Individual islamophobia includes intolerance, prejudice, and bias by individuals and private institutions that are supported by assumptions and preconceptions about Muslims and Islam (*Islamophobia in American Society, Culture, & Politics*, n.d.).

There are many cases of structural Islamophobia in Europe in the form of policies that harm Muslims. For example, the French government implemented a regulation banning the use of hijab in public spaces. This systematically reinforces the stigma that Muslim identity is not in line with Western secular culture and values (*France to Ban Wearing Islamic Abayas in Schools*, 2023). Meanwhile, individualized Islamophobia can be seen in acts of intimidation, verbal abuse, and physical attacks against Muslims by specific individuals or groups motivated by prejudice and hatred of Islam. One man threw a brick and set fire to an Islamic Center in Missouri (*Office of Public Affairs | Missouri Man Sentenced for Setting Fire to Islamic Center | United States Department of Justice*, 2023). Just one day after a gunman opened fire on two mosques in New Zealand, killing at least 50 people, there was also an attack on a veiled woman in New York (*Polisi New York Selidiki Penyerangan Terhadap Wanita Muslim*, n.d.).

In the latest humanitarian tragedy, according to a *Reuters* report, the conflict that broke out again between Israel and Palestine on October 7, 2023, has increased Islamophobia in the US. The Council on American-Islamic Relations (CAIR) received 774 complaints about incidents motivated by Islamophobia and bias against Palestinians and Arabs. CAIR also cited a spate of cases of assault on an 18-year-old Palestinian man in Brooklyn, death threats against a mosque, and the fatal stabbing of a 6-year-old Muslim boy in Illinois. According to U.S. authorities, the victims were targeted because they were Palestinian Americans (*US Antisemitic, Islamophobic Incidents Surge with War, Advocates Say | Reuters*, 2023).

In today's modern era, where social media and cyberspace have erased geographical boundaries and significantly influenced the formation of 'public rationality,' media framing Islam as a religion of terror has contributed to the cycle of violence. Gabriel Ahmanideen, in his research on the 'anti-mosque movement' (Nationwide Anti-Mosque Activity, n.d.) in the West, explains that this group uses social media to recruit and perpetuate Islamophobia. Everything that symbolically signifies Muslim identity, such as headscarves and mosques, is considered terrorism. This has successfully given birth to anti-Muslim extremism, as happened in the Christchurch mosque shooting tragedy and various other cases (Ahmanideen & Iner, 2023).

Looking at modern reality, it is not surprising that Islamophobia does not only occur in non-Muslim communities. It also happens within the Muslim community itself. This internalized Islamophobia within the Muslim community adds another layer of complexity to the whole issue. Distorted meanings, sentiments, and stigmas towards Islam contribute to the perpetuation of Islamophobia both externally and internally. The findings of research conducted in Indonesia show that the majority of Muslims (92%) show no signs of Islamophobia (Sukabdi et al., 2023). However, a small minority within the Muslim community

(8%) have biases and prejudices against other Muslims based on their religious beliefs or practices.

Feelings of alienation and discrimination against Muslims are currently one of the main components—not saying the only one—in nourishing fundamentalist-extremist ideas within the Muslim community. The campaign to fight terrorism with an aggressive military approach by the United States has proven to solve nothing. It has even created an endless circle of violence and harmed the discourse of global peace.

CONCLUSION

Socio-political crises have played a significant role in giving rise to religious fundamentalism and extremism in Muslim societies historically as well as in the contemporary context. Figures such as Ibn Taymiyyah, al-Maudūdi, and Sayyid Qutb emerged and propagated radical ideologies in response to injustice, oppression, and crisis in their societies. Extremist propaganda builds on fundamentalist ideology by distorting religious concepts, labeling violent societies as ignorant (*jahīliyyah*), and promoting terror to achieve political goals. Sayyid Qutb's broad concepts of *jahīliyyah* and *hakīmiyyah ilāhiyyah* (God's sovereignty) were highly influential in creating the 'ideological foundations' of Islamic extremist groups.

Terrorist attacks by extremist Islamic groups have fueled Islamophobia and anti-Muslim hatred in the West, especially after 9/11. Structural and individual manifestations of Islamophobia have emerged. Governments adopt discriminatory policies while individuals commit hate crimes targeting Muslim identity and symbols. Islamophobia and Islamic fundamentalist extremism reinforce each other, leading to a spiral of violence. Terrorist acts committed by extremist groups have implicatively created Islamophobia, which can trigger further radicalization. To break this cycle of violence, prevention efforts are needed, as well as instilling religious tolerance.

In short, religious extremism and Islamophobia have a symbiotic relationship of mutualism in perpetuating the spiral of violence. Addressing the root causes of fundamentalism, demonstrating the actual teachings of Islam, and fostering an inclusive society are crucial to breaking this cycle.

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