TRACING THE LINKS BETWEEN ISLAMOPHOBIA AND NEOLIBERALISM

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The unreasonable feeling of fear of Islam and its adherents has harmed human rights. Many civilians experienced discrimination and were shackled to their freedom because of this and even lost their lives. This paper aims to reveal the reasons why this phenomenon persists to this day. This research is a literature study with a critical analysis method through Content Analysis. The results of this study indicate that the phenomenon of irrational fear of Islam and its adherents or known as Islamophobia can persist because it is supported by the ideology of neoliberalism. In the view of neoliberalism, Islamic teachings are a threat to it. For this reason, neoliberalism carries out a strategy called cultural cleansing. In practice, this strategy is implemented in two steps: (i) unifying culture and (ii) depletion of intelligence. Based on these two steps, the civilizing mission is realized, in which citizens will be classified into two: good and bad. In this context, a good Muslim will be considered bad by neoliberalism ideology and a bad Muslim will be considered good. Furthermore, this research can be a reference for policymakers and public education efforts related to the issue of Islamophobia.

INTRODUCTION

The term 'Islamophobia' originates from the essay of the French Orientalist, Etienne Dinet in 1922.[1] Thereafter, it was popularly used in the 1990s to describe discrimination against Muslims living in the West. For example, in 1994, the first non-Muslim British confession of Islamophobia was issued in a report published by Runnymede Trust entitled *"A Very Light Sleeper: The Persistence and Dangers of Anti-Semitism"*[2]. In the following years, the term 'Islamophobia' has become more frequently used.

Islamophobia is not merely a concept; but it literally happens in the society. The forms of discrimination experienced by Muslims around the world are highly diverse, either in verbal forms, in the form of government policies, or in the form of acts of violence. In 2011, an official ban on wearing *niqab* was imposed in France. Under the decree issued by Francois Fillon, the French Prime Minister at that time, women were banned from wearing *niqab* in any public place.[3] Not only banning *niqab*, but Islamophobia cases have even taken lives. In 2015, the public was shocked by the shooting of three Muslim youths in Chapel Hill, in the United States.[4] Two years later, Muslims were again shocked by the news of the shootings that took place in two New Zealand mosques.[5] This heartbreaking incident claimed at least 50 people who were praying there.

There is an opinion saying that Islamophobia is caused by studies conducted by Orientalists.[6] When conducting studies on Islam, the Orientalists instead use a Western perspective which is triggered by the spirit of missionary. This perspective results

in a wrong study about Islam itself leading to the perception that Islamophobia is sparked by studies from the Orientalists.[7]

Another opinion states that the trigger for Islamophobia is the commercialization of hatred against Islam.[8] This commercialization benefits from disliking for Islam in order to get money. The commercialization can be seen in the forms of *websites*, news *channels*, as well as newspapers in the West. Through these media, the issues of hatred against Islam are published so that they can foster the development of Islamophobia.

To Neoliberals, Islam is seen as a serious threat. Islamic teachings hinder the perpetuation of their power.[9] Because of this, Neoliberals form a dichotomy against Muslims through the use of *good Muslims* and *bad Muslims* terms. The *good Muslim* phrase is a portrait of a community which is cooperative with various Neoliberal discourses. Meanwhile, *bad Muslim* is the term used to indicate a reflection of impartiality towards Neoliberalism. Thus, there is a negative stigma that triggers hatred.[10] This pattern becomes the reason for the increase of Islamophobia.

In relation to the description above, this paper aims to critically examine and to describe Islamophobia and its relationship with Neoliberalism. Other factors that work side by side with Neoliberalism in supporting the growth and development of Islamophobia will be adequately presented. On the other hand, how Muslims express their attitudes in responding to the issue of Islamophobia which becomes an essential thing is also presented in this paper.

THE EMERGENCE AND DEVELOPMENT OF ISLAMOPHOBIA

The term 'Islamophobia' comes from the essay written by the French Orientalist, Etienne Dinet in 1922.[11] Thereafter, Islamophobia was popularly used in the 1990s to describe discrimination against Muslims living in the West. For example, in 1994, the first

non-Muslim British confession of Islamophobia was written in a report published by Runnymede Trust entitled *"A Very Light Sleeper: The Persistence and Dangers of Anti-Semitism".*[12] In the following years, the term has become more frequently used.

Islamophobia can be interpreted as hatred or fear against Islam from all non-Muslims as the hatred that has been going on in the Western world for the past few years. Islamophobia also means acts of discrimination, social exclusion, violence, and injustice against Muslims.[13] According to John L. Esposito, Islamophobia is a new form of racism in Europe and in the United States based on the existence of discrimination and intolerance against Islam and Muslims.[14] According to James Carr, Islamophobia is the behavior of isolating Muslims from the majority society which then triggers discriminative actions.[15] From these two views, it can be concluded that Islamophobia is a form of racism against Islam which is manifested by discrimination.

Islamophobia is not merely a concept; but it literally happens in society. The forms of discrimination experienced by Muslims around the world are diverse, both in the form of verbal and direct acts of violence. Every year, many reports published regarding violence against Muslims due to Islamophobia.[16] This oppression is experienced not only by individual Muslim, but it also applies to Muslims in large numbers. The developments of cases in violence due to Islamophobia can be tracked through reports published by several organizations.

OIC or the Organization of Islamic Cooperation is the second largest international organization in the world after the United Nations. Annually, this organization publishes a report regarding the actual development of discrimination acts related to Islamophobia. Besides the OIC, another institution that also publishes reports related to Islamophobia is the SETA Foundation for Political, Economic and Social Research. SETA is commonly known as a non-profit research institution dedicated to innovative studies on national, regional, and international issues. Every year this

institution reports the development of cases related to Islamo-phobia that occur in Europe under the heading *"European Islamo-phobia Report"* or commonly abbreviated as EIR. EIR is published periodically from 2015[17] to 2021.[18] Other organizations that also focus on the research related to Islamophobia are the Council on American-Islamic Relations (CAIR) and the Muslim Public Affairs Council (MPAC).

Cases of Islamophobia continue to happen every year. In 2003, teachers were prohibited to wear hijab in France. However, there were no written rules regarding this prohibition. In 2010 there was a massive phobia on the wearing of *niqab* in France.[19]. More-over, President Nicolas Sarkozy and leaders in both Houses of the French Parliament strongly supported the ban on the wearing of *niqab*. The reason behind this prohibition is that *niqab* threatens French secularism, women's rights, and public safety. The climax happened in 2011 when the ban of wearing *niqab* was officially imposed. Under the decree issued by the French Prime Minister, Francois Fillon, women were banned from wearing *niqab* in all public places.

Not only in the form of banning the wearing of *niqab*, Islamo-phobia also appears in many forms such as verbal insults, violence, and in many cases, Islamophobia can even take lives. In 2015, the public was shocked by the shooting of three Muslim youths in Chapel Hill in the United States.[20] Two years later, Muslims were again shocked by the news of the shootings that took place in two mosques in New Zealand.[21] This heartbreaking incident claimed at least 50 people who were praying there. Still in the same year, there was much discussion about the persecution of Uyghurs by the government of China.

The Uyghurs are Turkish Muslim minority living in their home-land in Northwest China. The discrimination against the Uyghurs includes physical and psychological abuses. There is injustice to Uyghur people in terms of job opportunities,[22] as well as access

to education.[23] In addition, the Uyghur people often experience persecutions.

Torture occurs in the form of arresting Uyghur people forcibly, then they are tortured in 'camps'.[24] If outsiders ask about these camps, the government of China will give an excuse that the camps are places for re-education, not places for torturing people.

Contrary to the claims of the Chinese government, in reality various acts of violence occurred in the camps where Uyghur Muslims are forced to consume pork and alcohol.[25] In addition, the reason for the discriminative acts against the Uyghur people is the existence of Islamophobia in the Chinese government, where the majority of the people are communists. Authorities also refer to internment camps for Uyghurs as hospitals.[26] The Chinese authorities believe that the Uyghurs are infected with an 'Islamic disease'. The Chinese government also covered up the existence of these camps to prevent international controversy about the discrimination against the Uyghur people.

Discrimination against Muslims is also experienced by Rohingya people in Myanmar. Acts of violence experienced by Rohingya Muslims began to appear in public in 2018. Canada found that the discrimination perpetrated by the Myanmar military against the Rohingya Muslims led to genocidal practices.[27]

Canada demands anticipatory steps to the UN. In the same year, a report published from the United Nations investigation section stated that genocide against the Rohingya people had occurred in Myanmar. This case was developing when in 2019 the International Court of Justice (ICJ) sued Myanmar for the acts of genocide. In 2020, the ICJ unanimously ordered Myanmar government to solve the genocide issue of the Rohingya people.[28]

Cases of Islamophobia continue to happen until 2022 as described in Figure 1. This graph is shown in the *Fourteenth OIC Report on Islamophobia in December 2020-January 2022*. From the graph, it is indicated that the forms of Islamophobia cases were various. There were verbal and physical violences, and
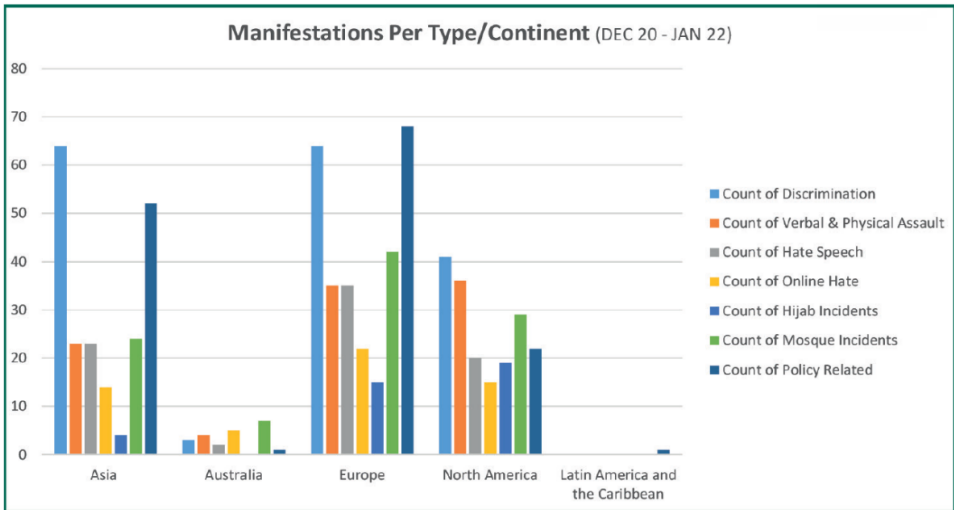
FIGURE 1. Number of Reports Related to Islamophobia Cases from December 2020 to January 2022 from the OIC in 2022.

discrimination involving police officers. The cases related to this last category have peaked in European countries. If compared to other continents, the lowest number of Islamophobia cases occurs in Latin America. From the description above, it is true to say that the cases of Islamophobia do not have a certain pattern. Oppression and discrimination against Muslims can happen anywhere anytime.

The increasing cases of Islamophobia certainly trigger criticisms from Muslims. As the primary target of harm, the Muslims do not just remain silent. Resistance has taken various forms. In the realm of written publications, many works by authors such as Ibrahim Kalin[29] and Ahmad Kabel[30] have been printed to clarify that Islam and Muslims are not as portrayed by those who support Islamophobia. Through their expertise in writing, they have produced many journals and books to correct people's perceptions of Islam. In addition to written works, there are also diplomatic efforts such as those by the Organization of Islamic Cooperation which led to the United Nations establishing March 15 as the World Anti-Islamophobia Day by.[31]

Not only opposed by the Muslims themselves, Islamophobia is also criticized by many non-Muslims, because it is considered an irrational issue. Most of them are scholars, writers, researchers who do not reject Islamophobia only limited to discourses, but they also express it in writings and printed books and research journals; for example, Karen Armstrong, who has published many books related to Islam. There is also Nathan Lean, who made statement in his book, entitled *Islamophobia Industry*, that hatred against Islam is not the fault of Muslims, but it is because of the existence of interests from certain groups. Also, James Carr in his book, *Experiences of Islamophobia,* explains that there is another factor that grows Islamophobia, namely Neoliberalism. Many non-Muslim researchers write their responses regarding the issue of Islamophobia, such as John L Esposito and Carr in journals. Therefore, it can be concluded that the issue of Islamophobia brings disturbing impacts not only to Muslims but also to all religious communities.

THE CHARACTERISTICS AND MANIFESTATIONS OF NEOLIBERALISM

Neoliberalism starts from liberalism. In 1776 Adam Smith promoted liberalism in his book *"The Wealth of Nations"*.[32] In his opinion, freedom in production and trade without government intervention is the best way to develop a country's economy. Smith believed that the doctrine of *invisible hands* (magic hands) would create balance by itself or automatically. Then this freedom would create a domino effect on freedom of business and competition, so that the capital owners compete to maximize profits.

The use of the word 'Neoliberalism' has appeared since 1930. Neoliberalism is an ideology that seeks to expand market reach and to support strong countries, owners and managers of companies, and capitalism.[33] In his book entitled *"A Brief History of*

Neoliberalism" (2005), David Harvey stated that Neoliberalism is an understanding that emphasizes guarantees for independence and individual freedom through free markets, free trades, and respect for private property systems.[34] By following Neoliberalism, it means individual freedom and the free market are above all, and it can even surpass the position of the government.

Furthermore, David Harvey's analysis states that the design of Neoliberalism is divided into two. First, Neoliberalism is defined as a utopian project to make the theoretical design for the reorganization of international capitalism happen. Second, Neoliberalism can be interpreted as a political project in order to rebuild the conditions of capital accumulation and to restore the power of economy elites.[35] Between these two interpretations, the design of Neoliberalism as a political project dominates more in practice. Neoliberalization has been less effective in revitalizing global capital accumulation, but it has done remarkably well in restoring, or in some cases, creating the power of economy elites, as it happened in Russia and China.

David Harvey then formulates the characteristics of countries that follow Neoliberalism. First, the countries apply privatization[36] and commodification.[37] Privatization of public assets has been a signature character of Neoliberalism to this day. This privatization includes strategic companies that serve the interests of people at large, such as national electricity providers, schools, and hospitals. In some Neoliberalist countries, public utilities have been privatized as it happened in the United States.[38] Privatization has penetrated the water supply, telecommunications, transportation, and social welfare sectors.39 The existence of privatization in a country indicates that the country supports strong private property rights.

Regarding privatization, another characteristic of Neoliberalism is financialization. Financialization is defined as a pattern of accumulation where profit which comes from financial flow is bigger than that of from trading[39] and commodity production.[40]

Everything that is done by the capital owners is only profit and money-oriented.[41] Various methods that are contrary to regulations are considered as if it is lawful to get money. This aspect expects the government to let the market work without distortion or "unregulated market is the best way to increase economic growth".[42] It means that private companies must be free from government intervention, regardless of any social impacts resulted.

A strong wave of financialization occurred after 1980, in the year when the ideology of Neoliberalism began to develop, for example in the United States. This was indicated by the total daily turnover of financial transactions in international markets, which had reached US$2.3B in 1983, and it increased to US$130B in 2001.[43] The high amount was obtained in various ways, even through activities that were contrary to the law of the state. An example of a fraud that occurred was developing capitalist countries carried out debt peonage,[44] corporate fraud, asset confiscation, which means the looting of pension funding, and it was worsened with the collapse of stocks and companies.

The next characteristic of Neoliberalism is crisis management and manipulation.[45] To the Neoliberals, crisis is seen as opportunities. Crisis is used as a way to collect money. However, this method of collecting money is not always done straightforwardly. They often commit fraud in the form of a 'debt trap' by giving sweet promises to borrowers to give them money as the guarantee for them who are "being used", but it is actually only an attempt to enrich themselves. For example, financial liberalization driven by the International Monetary Fund (IMF) can accelerate the largest peacetime transfer of assets from domestic to foreign owners in the last fifty years anywhere in the world, dwarfing the amount of transfers from domestic to the US owners in Latin America in the 1980s or in Mexico after 1994.[46] The danger of such characteristic of Neoliberalism is that it will inevitably widen the gap between the rich and the poor.

The fourth characteristic of Neoliberalism is state redistribution.[47] The country becomes the main agent of redistributive policies, after Neoliberalism is applied in the country. Redistributive policy is a policy to regulate the allocation of wealth, income, ownership, or rights from the upper to the lower class;[48] for example, to the Neoliberals, tax regulations greatly influence the privatization that is proclaimed. If the applicable policy obstructs the flow of capital, then the policy of the country must be replaced. All aspects that are possible to obstruct the flow of the capital must be abolished. These four characteristics determine how a country with a Neoliberal ideology is formed.

When observed, the four characteristics that have been described above seem to only benefit certain parties because the highest authority is no longer held by the state. The highest authority is held by the free market. This can happen because Neoliberalism upholds *the regime of right*.[49] This means that the right of every individual to make decisions is guaranteed. In fact, the state has no authority to interfere with this right. If the Neoliberals want to execute privatization and commodification, then it is legal for them to do so. The state has no right to forbid it. Likewise, if the Neoliberals want to manage, to manipulate crises, and to redistribute, the state does not have the right to interfere.

THE CORRELATION BETWEEN ISLAMOPHOBIA AND NEOLIBERALISM

James Carr, one of the scholars from Ireland, is quite intensive in analyzing the correlation between Islamophobia and Neoliberalism. Carr says that Neoliberalism has an influence in shaping people's perceptions about Islam.[50] In his opinion, Neoliberalism and public perception are associated with the discourse of *regime of truth* stated by Michel Foucault. The *regime of truth* is described

as a discourse that allows the authorities to build their own perceptions of truth in the society.[51]

What is stated by Harvey is in line with James Carr who also explains that Neoliberalism is a political project. Carr says, "Neoliberalism is a comprehensive political project that sees the market as the model for the state and for the overall organization of society."[52] The metaphor that Neoliberalism is a political project is not without reasons. Neoliberalism views the free market as an ideal example of how a country should be controlled. What is meant by the ideal condition is when individuals are given the authority to make decisions without any intervention from the government. Thus, Neoliberalism is explained as a political project to make the country run the way a free market promotes individual freedom.

In his opinion, James Carr describes Neoliberalism as a hegemonic ideology. The Neoliberals want everyone to follow their ideology. To them, the homogeneity of the Neoliberal mindset in society is an indicator of the success of that society.[53] This is in line with the statement from Prashant Waikar,

> Neoliberalism to sustain itself and indeed expand further, there is a need to locate and chastise belief systems as ideological others that are in need of liberation; that to maintain its dominance, Neoliberalism needs to stand against a constitutive other. This inferior 'other' itself becomes the target of the neoliberal impulse to neo-liberalize all in the name of 'progress and modernity'.[54]

In order to support itself and to grow bigger, Neoliberalism needs to place itself as an ideology that is more dominant and superior to other ideologies. Thus, Neoliberalism views other ideologies as inferior values. Thus, these inferior values must be replaced by the Neoliberalist ideology which is considered more superior.

Neoliberalism views that only with this ideology the society can be harmonious, and its welfare is guaranteed. The Neoliberals

consider that all values outside of Neoliberalism must be eliminated,[55] including values owned by races in the world other than western races. This is because Neoliberals want to create homogeneity of mindset in society. Meanwhile, Islam has principles and mindsets that are different from those of the Neoliberal. So, as stated by James Carr in his book, Islam is considered a threat to the development of Neoliberalism because the Muslims are considered threatening the safety and the continuity of homogenous norms of Neoliberalism.[56]

The opinion of Islam as a threat is explained more clearly by Runnymede Trust in 1997:

> Muslims and Islam are created as the enemy, an imminent threat to 'us' and our freedoms. Central to the discursive constructions of Muslims as 'other' are racialised assertions of the alleged temporally and spatially immutable, monolithic, character of Muslimness with its attendant misogyny, barbarism, atavism and hapless self-governance. These characteristics are deemed inherent in the faith of Islam and, by association, all Muslim people despite myriad subjectivities present in global Muslim majority and minority societies.[57]

Muslims are portrayed as enemies of the Neoliberalist freedom. This is because Islamic teachings are seen as restrictive, barbaric, atavistic, and have a bad government system because they do not prioritize individual freedom as desired by Neoliberalism.

The Neoliberals do not only want their ideology to go global, but they also want to perpetuate their power. The perpetuation of power is definitely part of the characteristics of Neoliberalism, namely financialization.[58] The perpetuation of this power will lead to the accumulation of the wealth of the Neoliberals themselves. The preservation of power is sought by strengthening the economic, business, and cultural sectors. An example of a country which becomes the object of the Neoliberalist ideology imposition

study is Iraq. This country is used as an experimental object of socio-economic, political, and cultural annihilation.[59] The object of the experiment is meant to infiltrate the idea of Neoliberalism into various aspects of its statehood.

The objects of Neoliberalism perpetuate its power in economic, business, and cultural aspects. In the economic aspect, the Neoliberals demand openness to international control of banking to non-Neoliberal countries. In business aspect, the Neoliberals want privatization and ease of international business control. The Neoliberals do not only want to control economy and business aspects, but they also want to implement cultural restraint through *cultural cleansing*.[60]

What is meant by *cultural cleansing* is eliminating other cultures in the world other than the Western culture which is considered supporting the growth and development of Neoliberalism. *Cultural cleansing* is defined as an effort to reset cultures so that all people use western cultures.[61] One of the Western cultures is how someone gets dressed, for example, how a Muslim woman wears a hijab. James Carr explains that the Western people view hijab as a form of oppression against women's rights and freedom to get dressed.[62] A hijab is seen as an entity that destroys the homogeneity of Western nations.

The efforts of the Neoliberals to carry out *cultural cleansing* are intensified through two steps. First, *unifying culture*,[63] which means the West wants to create a new cultural standard. This new culture will certainly support the development of Neoliberalism. Because the wearing of hijab is considered damaging the homogeneity of the West, the Neoliberals want to create a separated culture that prohibits the wearing of hijab. Thus, a perception that wearing hijab violates women's rights and freedom is promoted in the society.

The second effort related to the *cultural cleansing* is the *depletion of intelligentsia*.[64] That is, the assumption that Neoliberalism is an ideology that is followed by civilized people is spread. The

ideology of Neoliberalism is described as "*the liberating ideology of the civilized world.*"[65] It means that Neoliberalism is perceived as a foundation followed by people who think that they are *civilized.* On the contrary, people who do not follow Neoliberalism will be considered *uncivilized*,[66] the example of which are the Muslims.[67] Muslims are considered *uncivilized*, different, and unequal because they do not follow Neoliberalism.

The imposition of Neoliberalism is pursued through two ways, namely top and bottom lines. The top line is performed by utilizing the political power and military invasion.[68] This can be seen in the Iraqi invasion in 2003. Although there were specific reasons why the Iraqi invasion was carried out, some researchers believe that there were other motives behind the invasion.[69] One of them is the imposition of the Neoliberalist ideology.[70] If the top line is stimulated by military invasions, the bottom line is stimulated by education.[71] This education aims to integrate the values of Neoliberalism into the society, especially among the students through education at school.

To strengthen the ideology of Neoliberalism, people who practice it carry out a dichotomy against Muslims by limiting the identity of Muslims to only *a good Muslim* and *a bad Muslim.*[72] *Good Muslim* is defined as a Muslim with Neoliberal characteristics such as, a Muslim who is secular, liberal, does not call himself a Muslim, and follows Western values and viewpoints. Muslims with such characteristics are perceived not to bring Islamic principles and teachings in public, such as in economic, business, and political aspects. Meanwhile, *bad Muslims* is a 'label' given to the devout Muslims.

Bad Muslims themselves are seen as Muslim fanatics, opposed to liberal values, and do not approve atheism.[73] *Bad Muslims* are those who always carry the principles of Islamic laws in various public domains, such as in economics, business, and politics. Gradually, this dichotomy is used as a reference for the definition of *good Muslims* in the Western society. Thus, a perception that

good Muslims are those who are secular in society grows. Meanwhile, Muslims who wear Shariʻa-compliant dress and hold on to the principles of Islamic teachings anywhere and anytime will be considered a threat.

The existence of different points of view towards *good* and *bad Muslims* also constructs different treatments to them. Muslims who are considered *good Muslims* are then 'embraced' by the Neoliberals. 'Being embraced' here means being invited to work together. *Good Muslims* are then introduced through media as good Muslims, as the way Muslims should behave. Meanwhile, for *bad Muslims*, the Neoliberals give negative labels that fuel hatred.[74] This negative perspective towards Muslims labeled as *bad Muslims* contributes to the growth of Islamophobia.

The Western society's different treatments to the followers of Islam are reflected in everyday life. There are many prohibitions related to the implementation of activities related to Islam;[75] for example, the prohibition on the construction of mosques, the production of halal food, and the wearing of Islamic clothing (*sharʻi*).[76] In fact, in several European countries there is a ban to Muslim women[77] to wear hijas. The implementation of this restraint is supported by depictions as if Muslims experience oppression from their religion and need help if they want to be freed. Referring to the previous statement, the treatment that leads to Islamophobia is a manifestation of the idea of Neoliberalism itself. To be explicit, the linkages of Neoliberalism to the growth and development of Islamophobia can be seen in Figure 2.

Figure 2 is an interpretation from James Carr's explanation related to the relationship between Neoliberalism and Islamophobia. It can be seen that Islamophobia is the impact of the dichotomy of *good Muslims* and *bad Muslims.* This categorization leads to different treatment to the two labels. The *bad Muslims* label is associated with other negative labels that trigger public dislike; for example, the labels are fanatics, opponents to liberal values,
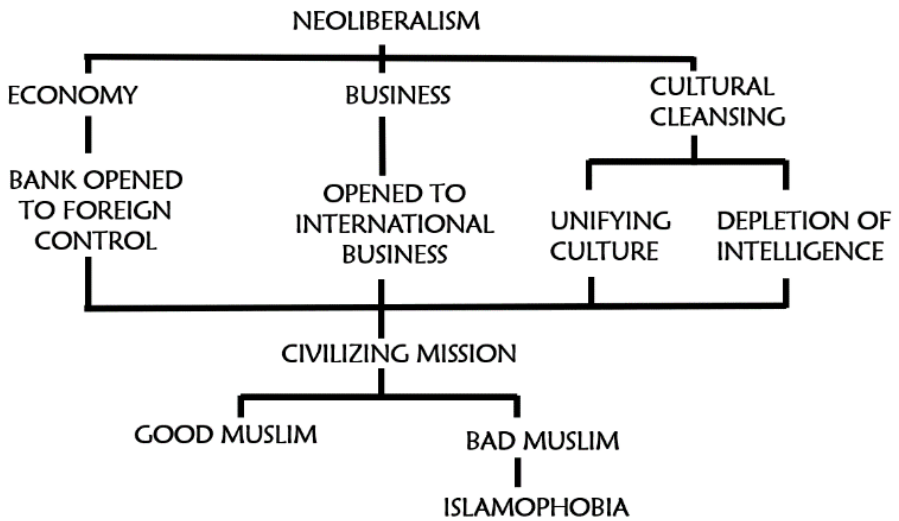
FIGURE 2. Neoliberalism's link to Islamophobia.

and atavistic labels.[78] This negative mark then fosters hatred that frames Islamophobia.

James Carr's argument that there is a connection between Neoliberalism and Islamophobia is in line with what has been stated by several other researchers; for example, Alana Lentin and Gavan Titley. In their book these two scholars state that the races existing in the world are against the ideology of Neoliberalism. Thus, the Neoliberals create certain schemes which then increase the issue of racism in the world.[79] Another figure who also agrees with James Carr is Ahmad Kabel. In his journal article, he states that Neoliberalism and Islamophobia relate to each other, especially in the educational aspect.

At schools, students are indoctrinated that Islam is a bad religion. Thus, there is a fear for the West against Islam.[80] Another researcher who also believes that Islamophobia and Neoliberalism are related is Prashant Waikar. He states that Western countries are currently trying to make other countries also adopt the ideology of Neoliberalism.[81] Thus, the argument that Neoliberalism

plays a pivotal role in the development of Islamophobia is also stated by several other researchers.

Besides its association with Neoliberalism, Islamophobia is also related to two other factors that contribute to its spread. These two factors are studies performed by Orientalists and the issue of Islamophobia commercialization in the media. Orientalism is the study of the East, including Islam, which is carried out by the Westerners.[82] Westerners who study the East are Orientalists. Orientalism is one of the tools of the Western world in expanding its ideology in the Muslim countries. The other two methods are missionary and colonialism.

In *Orientalism,* Edward Said states that there is a dichotomy performed by Orientalists against the Arab people.[83] The term of *good Arab* is used for Muslims who are willing to obey what the Western people ask for while the term *bad Arab* is used for Muslims who do not want to obey the Westerners.[84] This classification will certainly cause hatred of common people toward the Muslims who are labelled *bad Arab*. In *Liberalisasi Pemikiran Islam (Liberalization of Islamic Thoughts),* Edward Said concludes three points of all orientalism movements. First, Orientalism primarily reflects the experiences and perspectives of Western people rather than those of Eastern (Oriental) people. Second, Orientalism has produced wrong pictures about Arabic and Islamic cultures. Third, although the studies conducted by Orientalists appear objective and unbiased, they often serve political purposes.

Another issue which is related to Islamophobia is the commercialization of Islamophobia in the media. It is inevitable that media holds an important role as a tool used in spreading hatred against Islam. We cannot deny that it is very rare to find a media which can stand independently without being ridden by interests from certain parties because media is part of an industry which always has interests both in economic and political terms.[85] *Framing* also frequently happens in the media.[86] With media, the spread of any

information becomes easier. By using the media, the spreading of directed opinions to certain issues become subtler.

One of the media used to spread Islamophobia is *websites*. Nathan Lean mentions in his book that there are many deviations in news report about Islam in the media.[87] There are even some media platforms which only report negative news about Islam, which seem to be made on purpose such as the internet site of jihadwatch.org. This website is created by Robert Spencer. He made this website as a forum to foster hatred against Islam. In addition to that, this website also becomes a source of money for Spencer. Just imagine, in a year, he can get $2,000,000.[88] Similar websites, such as breitbart.com and several others also appear. The growing issue of Islamophobia is, in fact, being commercialized for profit.

The profit generated from the commercialization of Islamophobia-related issues is considered substantial. According to the research conducted by CAIR,[89] the *inner core*[90] of America Islamophobia network gained at least $119.662.719 of the total income from 2008 to 2011. This amount of money came from donors who support the spread of Islamophobia in the community. One of the biggest donors of Islamophobia spread came from Daniel Pipes. Through his forum called *Middle East Forum*, he donated $1,242,000 to Steven Emerson Investigation Project related to Terrorism for three years. The flow of funding from David Pipes is shown in the Table 1.

The amount of donations given by Daniel Pipes from 2009 until 2011 varied. But the donation was always above $500,000 every year. Besides Daniel Pipes, there are several other prominent figures who also become philanthropists for the Islamophobia network; for example, Foster Friess, Joyce and Aubrey Chernick, Pat Robertson, and Andy Miller. Those people donate funding to organizations connected with the enhancement of issues regarding Islamophobia either categorized as *inner core,* or as *outer core.*

Daniel Pipes's contributions on the funding of Islamophobia spread through Middle East Forum[91]

Organization	2009	2010	2011	Total
Middle East Media Research Institute	200,000	100,000	150,000	$450,000
Investigate Project on Terrorism	250,000	480,000	512,000	$1,242,000
Center for Security Policy	60,000			$60,000
Committee for Accuracy on Middle East Reporting	50,000		20,000	$70,000
David Horowitz Freedom Center	6,000			$6,000
Ameriacan Isalamic Forum for Democracy		10,000		$10,000
Endowment for Middle East Truth		75,000		$75,000
Total per Year	$566,000	$665,000	$682,000	$1,913,000

TABLE 1. Source: Corey Saylor, "The U.S. Islamophobia Network: Its Funding and Impact," Islamophobia Studies Journal 2, no. 1 (April 1, 2014), https://doi.org/10.13169/islastudj.2.1.0099.

The funding from donors is allocated to several aspects in order to promote hatred against Islam. Some activities such as publication through websites,[92] social movements,[93] books,[94] videos[95] and podcasts were carried out in order to implement the actions. The spread of hatred towards Islam was even spread through television programs such as Securing America TV[96] channel. Even in several national television shows, provocations against Muslims occur. This is indicated with the use of sensitive words such as *shariʿa, radical Islam, extremist Islam,* as well as *jihad.* These words appear frequently on CNN, Fox News, and also MSNBC.[97] It turns out that the promotion of Islamophobia has run massively and include several aspects.

The spread of Islamophobia in the media which is continuously done certainly may cause wrong perception against Islam. If examined more deeply, the spread of hatred against Islam has taken place for several decades.[98] Provocative issues spread through the media can be very effective. Even though the news presented often has negative intentions, it can still influence the perceptions of audiences.[99] Therefore, if news that incites hatred towards Islam is continually published, it will foster a deep-seated perception in the community that Islam deserves to be disliked.

THE ATTITUDE OF MUSLIMS IN THE WHIRLWIND OF ISLAMOPHOBIA

The ongoing spread of Islamophobia must be firmly addressed by Muslims. Here are five steps Muslims can take to avoid contributing to the spread of Islamophobic issues, namely, *learn more, educate others,*[100] *political contributions, media relations*[101] and *be patient. Learn more* here can be interpreted in two ways. First, it means understanding the discourse surrounding the emergence and development of Islamophobia. Muslims must analyze and build adequate literacy to address this issue. They should not be averse to understanding how the West perceives Islamophobia. It is important to study Western research to gauge the extent of Islamophobia's growth.

Learn more also has a meaning to produce experts. Hence, it is crucial to have experts who understand the patterns of Islamophobia. These experts can refute erroneous arguments about Islam. For instance, countering the claim that the Qur'an is a holy book teaching terrorism is not a simple task. It requires deep analysis to identify relevant verses and construct appropriate counterarguments.

Second, Muslims must *educate others.* The findings from studies on Islamophobia must be widely disseminated within communi-

ties[102] to rectify the misperceptions surrounding Islam. Muslims should strive to restore Islam's original image as a religion synonymous with peace and safety. This can be achieved through the publication of books and journals to educate others. Addressing Islamophobia can also take place within schools[103] and through seminars aimed at clarifying the true essence of Islam. Furthermore, it is essential to counter the negative portrayal of Islam propagated by Western sources online by publishing content that highlights its positive aspects on websites and other digital platforms.

The third action that can be done by Muslims to stop Islamophobia is to be performed through *political contributions.* This strategy is used by Muslims communities to defend Muslims rights through the government approach in regional[104] and national[105] levels. The Council on American-Islamic Relations (CAIR) and the Muslim Public Affairs Council (MPAC) actively engage with selected representatives in the US Congress to advocate for legislative agendas promoting equality and social justice for Muslims and all Americans, regardless of their religions or backgrounds. These organizations regularly produce papers addressing domestic and foreign affairs policies, providing valuable insights for government administrations, policymakers, think tanks, and media centers alike.[106]

Political contributions extend beyond policy issues to encompass legal aspects as well. CAIR and MPAC boast dedicated legal teams committed to advocating for and defending the rights of Islamophobia victims. According to CAIR, they have assisted over 25,000 victims of discrimination since their inception.[107] For instance, the California branch alone handles approximately 800 inquiries annually, seeking resolutions through mediation, negotiation, public pressure, or legal recourse. CAIR and MPAC consistently update their advocacy efforts and outcomes on their respective websites to keep the public informed.

Fourthly, Muslims can actively contribute to reducing Islamophobia through media engagement. Many Islamic groups maintain ongoing communication with both local and national media outlets to ensure the accuracy of portrayals of Muslims in the US media. Moreover, MPAC operates a dedicated entity focused on shifting negative perceptions of Islam and Muslims within the Hollywood film industry. Historically, Islam and Muslims have often been depicted in a negative light in American cinema, which has influenced global perceptions. MPAC has established connections with numerous Hollywood production companies, studios, and institutions, including BBC One, TNT, NICK, ABC, CBS, Paramount, Show Time, Walt Disney, HULU, NBC, Legendary, FX, National Geographic, Sundance Institute, and DreamWorks. Through these engagements, MPAC endeavors to promote a more positive and accurate representation of Islam and Muslims in media content.[108] With greater influence over media narratives, there's hope that animosity towards Islam will gradually diminish in the collective consciousness of communities.

Ultimately, one of the most important efforts Muslims can undertake is to practice patience. All the aforementioned endeavors are rooted in sincerity and patience, aimed at fostering a consistent demeanor of kindness, non-reactivity, and emotional stability. However, the essence of patience in this context lies in understanding the strategic approach and sequential stages required to effectively address Islamophobia.

CONCLUSION

Islamophobia and Neoliberalism share a connection, as Islam is perceived as a challenge to Neoliberal ideology. Neoliberals often create a dichotomy to mitigate judgments against Muslims in society, categorizing them as either *good Muslims* or *bad Muslims*. Those labeled as *bad Muslims* receive negative stereotypes, fueling

animosity. This dislike towards Muslims labeled as such further perpetuates Islamophobia within society.

Besides its connection to Neoliberalism, Islamophobia also correlates with two other entities: the studies conducted by Orientalists and the commercialization of Islamophobia itself. Hence, it is accurate to assert that the phenomenon of Islamophobia is shaped by actors associated with Neoliberalism, bolstered by Orientalist scholarship, and further perpetuated through its commercialization in the media.

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35. Ibid., 19.

36. Privatization is generally interpreted as actions that include the sales of state-owned companies to the role transfer of the public goods and services provision by the government to private parties. More specifically, privatization can be interpreted as the transfer of assets and/or service functions from the government to the private sectors, through the activity of shares selling of state-owned companies. The sales of these shares caused a change in the company's ownership structure. This understanding clearly places the aspect of ownership as an important element of privatization.

   Privatization is one of five neoliberal projects that were initiated for a long time, especially in the 1980s. The five Neoliberal agendas are (1) the liberation of international capital traffic barriers; (2) the absence of barriers to the movement of goods and labors between countries; (3) minimal regulation by the government; (4) revoking subsidies, directly or indirectly, to domestic industries; and (5) privatization. See Rama Primary, *Privatization Myth*, 2022, xx–1.

37. Commodification is defined as an act of treating something like a commodity or merchandise (See Christopher Chase-Dunn and Bruce Lerro, *Social Change: Globalization from the Stone Age to the Present*, 2016).

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43. Peonage is defined as a system of forced slavery as a substitute for paying off debts. The explanation is available in Lawrence Meir Friedman, *American Law*, 2nd ed. (Jakarta: Vintage, 2001), 275.

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47. Ibid., 173.

48. Ibid., 181.

49. James Carr, *Islamophobia, Neoliberalism and the Muslim 'Other* (Ankara: Insight Turkey, 2021), 84.

50. James Carr, *Experiences of Islamophobia : Living with Racism in Neoliberal Era*, (London & New York: Routledge, 2021), 15.

51. Ibid., 29.

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55. Ibid., 52.

56. Runnymede Trust (1997) in Carr, *Experiences of Islamophobia: Living with Racism in Neoliberal Era.*

57. Harvey, *A Brief History of Neoliberalism*, 161.

58. Ibid.

59. It is stated that *"In addition to the economic and political, building Iraq in neoliberal likeness 'also required cultural cleansing, [...] the degrading of a unifying culture and the depletion of an intelligentsia...' So, while the invasion enabled the imposition of neoliberalism from above, the aforementioned cultural cleansing would act as a reset for the Iraqi populace."* See Kabel in Carr, "Islamophobia, Neoliberalism and the Muslim 'Other'."

60. Carr, *Experiences of Islamophobia: Living with Racism in Neoliberal Era*, 29, 94.

61. Ibid.

62. Kabel, "The Islamophobic Neoliberal Educational Complex," *Islamophobia Studies Journal*, vol. 2, no. 2.

63. Ibid.

64. Ibid.

65. Prashant Waikar, "Reading Islamophobia in Hegemonic Neoliberalism Through a Discourse Analysis of Donald Trump's Narratives," 159.

66. Carr, "Islamophobia, Neoliberalism and the Muslim 'Other'," 92.

67. It is stated in Ahmad Kabel's journal article that "Neoliberalism from above is spread through hard power, military invasion." *Hard power* in Oxford Dictionary is interpreted as "a coercive approach to international political relation, especially one that involves the use of military power". It means that *hard power* is a forced approach related to international political relations, especially those related to the use of military force.

68. Raymond Hinnebusch, *The American Invasion of Iraq: Causes and Consequences*, 2007, 11.

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72. Ibid., 95.

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81. Hamid Fahmy Zarkasyi, *Liberalisasi Pemikiran Islam (Gerakan bersama Missionaris, Orientalis, dan Kolonialis)*, Seri Kajian Oksidental (Gontor: CIOS, 2008).

82. Edward Said, *Orientalism*, 307.

83. Hamid Fahmy Zarkasyi, op. cit., 66.

84. Yadi Hendriana,. *Jurnalisme Televisi Indonesia (Indonesian Television Journalism)*. (KPG, Kepustakaan Populer Gramedia bekerja sama dengan IJTI dan IKN, 2013), 85

85. *Framing* comes from the word *frame.* In terms used in media *frame* means a tool which build association between concepts. Information in news may strengthen links, but it depends on the frame to build association. See Mary Beth Oliver, Arthur A. Raney, and Jennings Bryant, ed., *Media Effects*, 4th edition, Routledge Communication Series (New York: Routledge, 2019), 53.

86. Lean and Esposito, *The Islamophobia Industry* (London: Pluto Press, 2012), 60.

87. Ibid.

88. CAIR stands for Council on American-Islamic Relations, an advocacy group and the national biggest Muslim civil freedom. See Corey Saylor, "The U.S. Islamophobia Network: Its Funding and Impact," *Islamophobia Studies Journal* 2, no. 1 (April 1, 2014): 100.

89. CAIR develops the Data Basis of Islamophobia in America by reviewing the material from "*Same Hate, New Target: Islamophobia and Its Impact in the United States* 2009-2010" and this report. Groups and individuals quoted in the report who are active (in supporting the spread of Islamophobia) for the last five years are recorded in the database and then are classified into one of these categories: (1) *Inner Core*: Groups or individuals whose main purpose is to promote prejudice or hatred against Islam and Muslims and regularly show Islamophobia themes. (2) *Outer Core*: Groups or individuals whose main purpose does not seem to promote prejudice or hatred against Islam and Muslims, but their works regularly indicate or support Islamophobia themes (3)

Of Concern: Groups or individuals who already use Islamophobia themes or support Islamophobia in America, but their works do not regularly show or

support Islamophobia themes. In this report CAIR does not discuss the groups placed in this category.

See Corey Saylor, "The U.S. Islamophobia Network," *Islamophobia Studies Journal*, 2014.

90. Ibid., 106.

91. Organizations which use websites as the media of spreading information among others are: David Horowitz Freedom Center (https://www.horowitzfreedomcenter.org), American Islamic Forum for Democracy (https://aifdemocracy.org), and Center for Security Policy (https://centerforsecuritypolicy.org).

92. Social movements conducted by several anti-Islam organizations, such as: David Horowitz Freedom Center (https://www.horowitzfreedomcenter.org), and American Islamic Forum for Democracy (https://aifdemocracy.org).

93. Organizations which publish books related to anti-Islam discourses, among others are: David Horowitz Freedom Center (https://www.horowitzfreedomcenter.org), Center for Security Policy (https://centerforsecuritypolicy.org).

94. Publication through videos on YouTube is one of the media in spreading anti-Islam committed by various organizations, such as: David Horowitz Freedom Center (https://www.horowitzfreedomcenter.org), and American Islamic Forum for Democracy (https://aifdemocracy.org).

95. Organizations that use Podcasts as a medium for disseminating information include: American Islamic Forum for Democracy (https://aifdemocracy.org).

96. Securing America TV is a channel created by Center for Security Policy as a media in spreading hatred against Islam (https://centerforsecuritypolicy.org/author/securing-america-tv).

97. Lean and Esposito, *The Islamophobia Industry* (London: Pluto Press, 2012), 69.

In another journal it is thus mentioned: "The media also plays on the Islamophobic narrative. According to Media Tenor International, news outlets such as Fox, NBC, and CBS described Islam primarily as a source of violence between 2007 and 2013". See Hasbi Aswar, "The Strategy of Muslim Communities in Encountering Islamophobia in The United States," *Afkaruna: Indonesian Interdisciplinary Journal of Islamic Studies* 17, no. 1 (8 July 2021): 87.

98. Anti-Islam organizations have been established for several decades. The examples are David Horowitz Freedom Center, established since 1988; Middle East Media Research Institute, established since 1997; Investigative Project on Terrorism, established since 1995; Center for Security Policy, established since 1988; Committee for Accuracy on Middle East Reporting, established since 1982; American Islamic Forum for Democracy, established since 2003; and Endowment for Middle East Truth, established since 2008. Since their respective establishments, the organizations have intensified the spread of Islamophobia leading to the existence of Islamophobic issues which have been going on for some decades.

99. Some factors are claimed to influence someone's acceptance towards certain information; for example: direct experience, knowledge from other sources, logic, and messages from the media. The consistent information presented in the media enables the audience's acceptance of information. See Catherine Happer and Greg Philo, "The Role of the Media in the Construction of Public Belief and Social Change," *Journal of Social and Political Psychology* 1, no. 1 (December 16, 2013): 326.

100. Imam Abdul Malik Mujahid. *Islamophobia, Melacak Akar Ketakutan Terhadap Islam di Dunia Barat (Tracking the Roots of Fear against Islam in the Western World)* (Bandung: Mizan, 2015), 134-136.

101. Aswar, "The Strategy of Muslim Communities in Encountering Islamophobia in the United States," *Journal of Islamic Studies*, 2021.

102. Op. cit.

103. Kazi Hossain, "What Teachers Can Do to Reduce It in the Classroom," *Multicultural Education*, 2017, 6.

104. Narzanin Massoumi, Tom Mills and David Miller, "Fighting Back: Challenging the State and Social Movement from Above," in *What is Islamophobia? Racism, Social Movement and the State* ed. Nazanin Massoumi, Tom Mills and David Miller (London: Pluto Press, 2017), 271-274.

105. To unify the approach, agenda, and vision of the Muslim community, Muslim groups form an umbrella organization called USCMO, the U.S. Council of Muslim Organizations. The founder members of USCMO are the American Muslims for Palestine (AMP), Council on American-Islamic Relations (CAIR), Islamic Circle of North America (ICNA), Muslim Alliance in North America

(MANA), Muslim American Society (MAS), Muslim Legal Fund of America (MLFA), Muslim Ummah of North America (MUNA), and The Mosque Cares (Ministry of Imam W. Deen Mohammed). USCMO is a coalition of a number of leading national and local Muslim organizations that seeks to promote effective communication and coordination between all American Muslim organizations and sponsor Muslim civic engagement for the good of the nation. See in CAIR-Ohio, "CAIR Columbus Joins 350 Delegates to Lobby Congress During National Muslim Advocacy Day on Capitol Hill," *CAIR*-Colugates-to-lobby-congress-during-national-muslim-advocacy-day-on-capitol-hill.

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