

Dealing with Islamophobia: Expanding religious engagement to civic engagement among the Indonesian Muslim community in Australia

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The increasing Islamophobia in the Western world is worsened not only by global political issues but also by the stance of Muslims, who are perceived as exclusive and ethnocentric, particularly in the Australian context. This article outlines the strategies used by Indonesian Muslims in Australia to deal with the Islamophobic discourse, namely enhancing religious engagement to enhance solidarity and social cohesion between them and increasing civic engagement as an assimilation attempt with Australians. Religious engagement is carried out through enhancing Islamic lecture activities to promote a more moderate and open understanding of Islam. Meanwhile, civic engagement activities included increasing social involvement as a form of community service, collaborating more with other communities as a form of collective action, jointly proposing political policies as a form of political involvement, and working with Australians to create a better future as manifestations of civic engagement in the context of social change.

Contribution: Although Islamophobia is mostly a political issue, the Indonesian Muslim community in Australia views it as a chance to open up and demonstrate to the Australian community that they can work together in a broader kind of civic engagement.

Keywords: Islamophobia; Muslim community; Indonesian Muslim community of Victoria (IMCV); religious engagement; civic engagement.

Introduction

Following the devastating attack on a mosque and Islamic Center in Christchurch, New Zealand, in March 2019, Australian senator Fraser Anning made a stunning statement. Instead of expressing sympathy to the victims, he accused Muslim immigrants for disrupting New Zealanders' peaceful life (Guardian 2019). Anning considered the situation as acceptable for New Zealand's Muslim immigrants; therefore, he appeared to endorse the terrorist attack that killed 49 people. This statement sparked outrage from a range of parties, who saw it as a statement that worsened the situation and could lead to an increase in Islamophobia in the Australian and Western society, in general.

Although Islamophobia is frequently an accidental issue linked to political contestation, it has had a broader impact on inter-religious relationships in daily life, and the Australian setting is no different. Although it is regarded as a multicultural society and guarantees the freedom to express culture and religious ideas, which is protected by the state constitution, symptoms of Islamophobia continue to emerge.

Some of these symptoms can be observed in some significant cases that occur three consecutive years. *Firstly*, in 2014, an anti-Islam organisation in Australia called on food companies to refuse to comply with halal certification regulations. They argue that this certification may cause food prices to increase, and that the money spent on this halal certification is used to fund terrorism. *Secondly*, in 2015, several Australians protested against plans to build a mosque in the Bendigo area of Victoria. This rally was organised by multiple groups calling themselves True Blue Crew, Q-Society and the United Patriots Front. *Thirdly*, in 2016, several Australians sued an advertising company in Melbourne in commemoration of Australia Day because their billboard displayed two Muslim girls waving the Australian flag. *Fourthly*, some Australians, including lawmakers, have suggested a ban on wearing the hijab in public as it is perceived as causing public insecurity. As previously said, the culmination was a comment made by a senator who promptly blamed Muslim immigrants for terror attacks in New Zealand. Some of these

situations and phenomena demonstrate the rise and spread of Islamophobia.

This is quite challenging as the constitution of Australia governs the ethnicities, cultural and religious diversity. As with other communities, the Muslim community in Australia is rapidly growing, with the number of Muslims in Australia reaching 300 000 in the 2002 census, or roughly 1.5% of the total population of Australia (Commonwealth of Australia 2002). Immigrants from the Middle East and Asia, such as Lebanon, Turkey, Afghanistan, Bosnia and Herzegovina, Pakistan, Indonesia, Iraq, Bangladesh and Iran, make up the vast majority of them. A new generation of Australian-born Muslims, who account for around 36.5% of the entire Muslim community in Australia, has contributed to the increase in the number of Muslims in Australia, in addition to immigrants.

However, the distribution of Muslims in Australia is uneven, as the majority of the Muslim community in Australia is concentrated in two major cities, namely Sydney and Melbourne. The majority of Muslims in Melbourne include Bosnian, Turkish, Arabic and Albanian. The Albanian community was one among the first to establish mosques. Meanwhile, the Coburg Mosque or Fatih Mosque, which was established in 1976, is a larger mosque with a variety of activities.

The majority of Muslim immigrants, including the Muslim community from Indonesia, usually live in the similar area as a community. The similarity of national and religious identities encourages them to live side by side as a community. They also demonstrate their cultural and religious identity, which they brought from Indonesia, in the context of a larger association (Wahid & Ikeda 2010). However, the issue of identity has become an artificial battleground in the Australian community, which is perceived as promoting multiculturalism ideals (Muhtadi, Fakhruroji & Syarif 2016; Woodlock 2011).

It is undeniable that Muslim communities in non-Muslim majority countries often encounter a variety of issues and commonly stemmed from cultural differences and traditions, which may be addressed with effort and time. However, the discourse of Islamophobia in several Western countries has created additional obstacles for the Muslim community. Accidentally, this discourse has harmed relationships that have not even been properly established. However, it is important to note that in most cases, this discourse does not arise from citizens but rather from politicians, particularly in Australia. It is hardly unexpected that this circumstance makes it even more difficult for Muslims to assimilate with Australian citizens.

This article, therefore, aims to particularly describe how life is for the Indonesian Muslim community in Australia, how Islamophobic discourse emerged in Australia and how the Indonesian Muslim community takes strategic steps in dealing with Islamophobic discourses and issues in Australia.

As a result, this article describes how Indonesian Muslims in Australia, as a minority group, respond to the Islamophobic discourse through various cultural movements, specifically by reinforcing religious engagement as a means of strengthening their identity as Indonesian Muslims in the context of community. Furthermore, this effort is carried out by strengthening civic engagement through increased participation in public occasions to open themselves up to Australians. All of these measures are carried out as part of a strategy to secure their safety as a minority group and to blend with Australians so that Islamophobia among Australians can be gradually eliminated.

Literature review

Several studies on the lives of the Muslim community as a minority in Australia and the Western world have revealed a variety of analyses. Some of them emphasise the relationship between Muslim lives and the cultural background and daily life in Australia, among others, by describing the history of the relationship between Islam and Australia (see, e.g. Bouma 1994, 1997; King 2017; Mansouri & Vergani 2018; Rane et al. 2020; Saeed 2003). The analysis also highlights Islam as a minority community in the country and how the freedom of religious expression they have is maintained by the state (Arifin et al. 2019; McMichael 2002).

Meanwhile, other studies highlight the relationship between Islam and Australia as a reflection of the interaction between Islam and the Western countries as a whole (see, for example, Akbarzadeh & Yasmeen 2005; Jakubowicz 2007; Mansouri & Trembath 2005; Marzouki et al. 2020). Other studies have evolved by situating Islam in the vortex of Islamophobic discourse, which is considered a more political discourse but has a broader impact on the socio-cultural lives of Muslims in Western countries (Akbarzadeh 2016; Briskman 2015; Dunn, Klocker & Salabay 2007).

A more specific study on the life of Indonesian Muslims in Australia, for example, analyses the efforts in adapting to the socio-cultural environments of Australia, which has several similarities with Indonesia, namely as a multicultural country (Fakhruroji 2019b), and studies on efforts to strengthen religious identity among Indonesian Muslims in Australia through various religious activities (Fakhruroji 2019b; Muhtadi et al. 2016; Saeed & Akbarzadeh 2001). These facts and studies illustrate that the lives and growth of Muslims as a minority population in Australia are loaded with complexities. Not to mention the ethnic diversity and backgrounds of Muslims themselves, which will have ramifications for emergent patterns of interaction, both among Muslims of the same ethnicity, between ethnicities, and with Australians as a whole within the broader context of social relationship.

According to the multicultural paradigm, social conflict indicates that tolerance alone is insufficient to serve as the single 'tool' for cross-community social cohesiveness. Although tolerance can increase willingness to recognise other groups, it still keeps them in the position of 'outsiders',

resulting in psychosocial estrangement (Ibrahim 2004). As a result, if further triggering variables emerge that allow social opposition to occur, this gap will grow. This fact demonstrates that tolerance must be founded on pluralistic principles to effect unconditional acceptance of other groups or communities with equal rights.

One of the well-known outlooks of the relationship between humans in social life is the theory of social exchange, which believes that human involvement is based on activities, interactions and sentiments (feelings or emotions). Thus, a group is formed based on social exchanges, similar attitudes and complementary situations. According to this theory, interactions within a group occur in exchange for rewards and costs in each interaction. In other words, a person creates and maintains relationships between individuals because of the belief that the rewards they receive are still greater than the costs incurred.

This is what civic engagement means, which is a phenomenon that represents many sorts of involvement of specific individuals or groups in larger and more diverse social interactions. Civic engagement is a kind of evidence of an individual's or group's willingness to not only acknowledge the existence of other groups but also to work with other persons or groups to achieve greater goals as collaborative partners.

Adler and Goggin (2005) explore civic engagement in a variety of social phenomena. Firstly, civic engagement as a community service, which is a type of civic engagement that stresses voluntary service to a local community, either individually or as part of a specific group. Participation of individuals or groups in activities organised by the local community can strengthen the individual's or group's connectedness to the local community.

Secondly, civic engagement as a collective action, namely the type of engagement demonstrated in diverse activities in which people jointly play roles as citizens with equal positions for this collective action to have an impact on the larger community. This type of civic engagement stresses collaboration with other parties, both individually and in groups (Hollister, cited in Adler & Goggin 2005). This form of participation will give rise to equality in broader social interactions.

Thirdly, civic engagement as political involvement, namely engagement that is not simply individual or collective but also political. This can be accomplished through participating in political events or the governmental process. Fourthly, civic engagement as social transformation is a sort of engagement that outlines how individuals or groups actively participate in the life of the larger community and work together to shape the future.

According to Festinger (1989:93), civic engagement is related to the belief that joining a social (religious) organisation

creates the need for examining oneself. Their engagement in a wider group enables specific individuals or groups to determine whether their beliefs, ideas and considerations are related to social reality. Furthermore, civic engagement refers to a person's or a group's involvement in a larger organisation motivated by a desire to attain personal or group goals so that this organisation can lead them to reach the greater goals.

Method

This study uses the Indonesian Muslim Community of Victoria (IMCV) in Melbourne as a case in capturing the dynamics of response to the Islamophobia issue in Australia. The IMCV is seen as representative as it is the largest Indonesian Muslim community in Australia and is home to some smaller communities scattered around Victoria. As a case in point, the facts presented are only an overview of a larger phenomenon than how Muslim minorities in Australia respond to the issue of Islamophobia. Some of the questions directed towards their responses related to intercultural interactions between them and Australian citizens and government as well, their views on Islamophobia cases in Australia and their steps in dealing with the issue of Islamophobia in Australia.

Data were obtained through field studies by observation and in-depth interviews, with several IMCV members and sympathisers mostly consisting of students who were studying in Australia and several informants with permanent resident status. The field research was carried out for 1 month, namely at the end of 2018 before the COVID-19 pandemic hit the world. Moreover, informants involve various parties from various backgrounds, including academics and Indonesianists at several Australian universities, Australian alumni and several linked parties who are believed to be capable of supplying relevant information.

Results and discussion

Indonesian Muslim community in Australia

According to Saeed (2003), Australian Muslims have a significant historical relationship with Indonesia because Indonesian Muslims are among the propagators of Islam in Australia. However, immigration restrictions imposed later in 1901 forced many Indonesians to return home and just a few remained in Australia. At a later stage, Indonesians arrived in Australia in 1950 as part of the Australian government's educational scholarship scheme at various universities (Fakhrurroji 2019b).

Furthermore, Indonesia and Australia share fundamental commonalities in that both are multicultural countries. One of the benefits for Indonesian Muslims is that they are accustomed to living in a multicultural atmosphere with many religions and cultures. Through the phrase *Bhinneka Tunggal Ika* [unity in diversity], diversity has been a part of Indonesia's identity. More crucially, the qualities of this

variety influence the religious perspective of Indonesian Muslims, who are known to be more moderate (Safei 2021). It is crucial to remember, however, that relations between Indonesia's Muslim population and Australia's non-Muslim majority have had ups and downs. Indeed, these ties have deteriorated to their lowest point since 9/11 and the Bali bombings, which killed many Australians. As a result, Muslims in Australia, notably Indonesian Muslims, have come under the spotlight.

However, much like Muslim communities of other ethnic groups engage more domestically within their communities, the Indonesian Muslim community in Australia has distinct ethnic group boundaries. Not only that, but they engage on a smaller scale based on their ethnicities, even though they live and work in mixed-ethnic environments. This was revealed by one of the informants, an alumnus of Monash University, who stated that Indonesian Muslims in Australia are more comfortable mingling and socialising with fellow Indonesian Muslims as expressed below:

Indonesian people, including those who are Muslims, generally feel more comfortable hanging out with fellow Indonesians. Perhaps this is due to the similarity of culture and language so as to minimize misunderstandings in daily communication. However, it seems that cultural similarity is the dominant factor that causes them to interact more with their co-national.

According to him, there are plausible explanations for this that Indonesian Muslims seem to have a sense of inferiority; therefore, they feel inadequate in socialising and dealing with individuals outside their society.

Another informant expressed the same viewpoint, explaining that in some situations, the consideration of regional origin in Indonesia appears to be more important than others because of a longing for their hometown and culture, such as using the same local language in daily communication, which is a pleasure in itself. While association with Australian people can take place in a broader setting, such as school, campus and workplace. This as expressed below:

Most Indonesians prefer to speak their language, in fact they always try to find events where they can speak bahasa, even their local language. I also like that because there is a special feeling when speaking the local language in the context of Western society...

This is not surprising, considering that people generally feel more comfortable associating with those who share their feelings, values, instincts and language. This viewpoint is related to their homogeneity, which is seen to reduce misunderstandings in their daily interactions. The ties and interactions between them are more flexible because they are a homogeneous community. When group members share the same nationality, origin, or religion, this type of tight friendship becomes even more obvious. Because they are more intimate, warm, open and friendly, this type of emotional contact feels more satisfying to them.

At some level, however, this attitude of stressing ethnic or group identification also adds to the problem of assimilation of the Indonesian Muslim minority in Australia, namely further delaying the expected assimilation. This rationale is shared by both parties. From the Australian perspective, they have a less positive view regarding the existence of the Muslim population, particularly in light of the 9/11 tragedy and the Bali bombings, which left an imprint on Australians. Meanwhile, the Muslim population, notably those from Indonesia, places a premium on ethnic or group identity.

The situation becomes more challenging when it is worsened by political issues that do not promote assimilation. The Australian government's various policies and political decisions have also alienated the Indonesian Muslim community in Australia's assimilation process. One of the policies that are seen as complicating the process of assimilation of the Indonesian Muslim community with Australians is the formation of the Australian Federation of Islamic Councils, which is seen as a means of controlling the Australian government over various attitudes and comments from the community, imams and Islamic leaders in mosques who become catalysts in voicing the interests of the Muslim community in Australia.

As a result of the growing issue of Islamophobia, Indonesian Muslims in Australia employ a variety of techniques to make them feel secure. In this regard, Indonesian Muslims employ two techniques; firstly, strengthening the community by aiming to strengthen and motivate one another, one of which is carried out through recitation activities as religious engagement; secondly, increasing their participation in public activities organised by Australian citizens, organisations and government as a form of strategy that is civic engagement.

These engagement strategies were demonstrated by the IMCV, an organisation that serves Indonesian Muslim communities throughout Victoria. The IMCV was initially initiated by the Monash Indonesian Islamic Student Association (MIIS) that was established in the 1980s to provide housing for Indonesian students at Monash University, who at that time were awardees of the Australian Development Scholarship (ADS, now the Australia Awards).

It can be seen that the motivation for establishing IMCV was basically to foster relations between Indonesian citizens in Melbourne, especially Muslims. This illustrates that this community is an effort to maintain its Indonesian and Islamic identity as a minority group in Australia (Fakhrurroji 2019b). However, IMCV is not the only organisation that accommodates the religious activities of Indonesian Muslims in the state of Victoria. There are many religious recitation and discussion groups that can generally be categorised into three things, namely based on campus location, based on ethnicity or regional origin in Indonesia, and based on the location of the mosque.

Islamophobia as an emerging issue in Australia

As a multicultural country, Australia's Constitution guarantees its citizens to express their culture, religion and beliefs freely. Diversity has long been a characteristic of Australia as a country because Australians originate from hundreds of different countries. As a result, most Australians are by nature immigrants, and it is not unexpected that Australia has long been home to a wide variety of ethnic and cultural groups. In addition to being a melting pot of religions and cultures, Australia is a popular destination for asylum seekers fleeing conflict-torn countries.

This diversity appears to be one of the causes underlying their strong tolerance for one another. Australia even permits them to speak and learn in their native language. They are also free to practise their religious beliefs, including the freedom not to believe in any religion (Saeed 2003). Nonetheless, even though the Australian Constitution ensures and defends every citizen's right to choose his or her faith, frictions between groups of people still arise at times and in specific situations, although on a case by case and very limited scale.

One of the causes of inter-religious and cross-cultural conflict is poor interaction between religious believers or citizens, which has a negative impact on assimilation. Although the distribution is considerable, it does not imply that these various groups will be able to simply get along and assimilate into daily life and culture in Australia. According to some experts, the Muslim community's integration with Australian citizens and culture is frequently complicated.

James Fox, a professor at the Australian National University, discovered this. During the interview, he announced his intention to establish the university as an Australian hub for Islamic studies. This intention, however, is not supported, particularly by some Australian politicians who frequently make Islam the object of their political hostility. This is also underscored by Julian Millie, an anthropologist at Monash University, who disclosed that the difficulties of integration are increased by a few politicians who make Islamophobia a political commodity. However, most Australians, according to Millie, do not have the same mindset.

In addition to James Fox and Julian Millie, sociologist Michael Humphrey offers a more reflective account, demonstrating that the Muslim community in Australia is perceived as protective and antagonistic against all critical views of them. As a result, he concluded that the slowing of the assimilation process might also be attributed to the Muslim community's ethnocentric mindset, in which people prefer to mingle in their own ethnic and cultural surroundings. They prefer to use their native language rather than adapt to Australian culture, and as a result, they frequently struggle to blend in with Australians.

Moreover, Jakubowicz (2007) contends that discourses about Muslims created by third parties and Muslims themselves

can disclose bargaining and social cohesion processes. In fact, the mainstream Muslim community can play an important role in assembling the fragmented elements and offering something wider in Australia's multicultural society.

In such circumstances, Islamophobia discourse will be more easily exploited as a political commodity (Bouma 2011). Although it is acknowledged that Islamophobic discourse is more of an implication of global political discourse, a less constructive assimilation process can be a contributing element to the spread of Islamophobia. Thus, Islamophobia can be eliminated if the Muslim community in Australia can be more open in social interactions, understand religion more moderately, and establish a more inclusive Islam, particularly in the multicultural Australian context.

In practice, Islamophobia stems from the perception of Islam and the West as two homogeneous entities on a collision trajectory. Muslims are regarded as a major threat to Western liberal principles, and the Muslim community in the West is viewed as an internal enemy. Despite these circumstances, it appears that the majority of Australians are not hostile to Muslims. At all levels of the Australian community, there is a huge amount of tolerance towards Muslims among Australian citizens. Australians are the most tolerant and compassionate people in the world (Mansouri & Vergani 2018; Saeed 2003).

According to Briskman (2015), Islamophobia in Australia is relatively new, which may be linked in part to the increasing number of Muslim immigrants. Furthermore, this discourse arises as an implication of worldwide tendencies relating to global terrorism, which, once again, is associated with a large number of Muslim immigration. In a worldwide context, 9/11 was a watershed moment, not to mention previous instances such as the Bali bombings in 2002, Madrid in 2004, and London in 2005, which are commonly connected with immigrants or the Muslim community as the perpetrators of these acts of terrorism. As a result, Briskman has serious concerns about Australia's Islamophobic discourse. How is it possible in distant and seashore Australia, where Islamophobic concepts and practices had not previously existed, suddenly emerge?

Dunn et al. (2007) explain by revealing that anti-Muslim sentiment in contemporary Australia is reproduced through racialisation, which includes deliberately fostered Islamic stereotypes, perceptions of threat and inferiority, and fantasies that they are the others when dealing with Australians. This racism is distinctive from previous racism focused on the skin tone. Dunn et al. (2007) observed that the construction of Islam is a key strategy of reproducing racism. Furthermore, negative press behaviour is fuelling this, with disinformation about opposition to mosque construction and tougher asylum-seeking laws, as well as the perception of Muslims as the actors behind attacks and violence that has generally harmed Muslims in Australia.

This suggests that one of the aspects contributing to the growing phenomenon of Islamophobia is a lack of civic involvement among Muslims and Australians. The ethnocentric, exclusive and group-like mindset displayed by Muslim communities in Australia has been demonstrated to impede the process of assimilation; at a certain point, Islamophobic discourses and attitudes can be easily reinforced.

Religious engagement to civic engagement: Counter-Islamophobia strategy

It is hard to dispute that the issue of Islamophobia has increased public prejudices and stereotypes, which can generate discomfort in daily social encounters. As the potential for intimidation as a result of Islamophobia is immense, Indonesian Muslims are working together to strengthen their communities through increasing religious engagement. In this instance, the context of religious engagement is defined as religious commitment-related behaviour characterised through participation in religious services, prayers, religious singing or chanting and reading sacred texts (Richert & Saide 2020). It becomes a form of 'external' gauge that shows a person's religious devotion based on the types of religious rituals to which he or she adheres.

In the context of Islam, Fakhruroji (2019a, 2019c) describes religious engagement as involvement in religious activities (gatherings), prayer and worship (individual or group), interaction with religious texts and discourses, and religious study practices to acquire religious knowledge. In practice, religious engagement is characterised as manifestations of religious belief and empirically produced social practices (Fakhruroji 2019c). Thus, religious engagement is a socio-cultural dimension of religious practice that can be carried out and measured as part of religious commitment.

As a strategy for dealing with Islamophobic discourse, the Indonesian Muslim community in Australia, through IMCV, organises *pengajian* [Islamic lectures] and other religious events as a kind of religious engagement that explicitly attempts to encourage one another. Various *pengajian* are held depending on the campus location, ethnicity or the origin region of the congregation. Meanwhile, *pengajian* are held based on the mosque location, which is the category with the greatest number of congregation and is spread throughout the state of Victoria, including Pengajian Westall, Pengajian Brunswick, Pengajian Monash Indonesian Islamic Society (MIIS), Pengajian Young Indonesian Muslim Students' Association (YIMSA), Pengajian Footscray, Pengajian An-Nur Study, Pengajian Bundoora and Pengajian Al-Islah (Fakhruroji 2019b; Muhtadi et al. 2016).

These activities are functioned to strengthen cohesiveness among fellow Indonesian Muslims in Australia (Muhtadi et al. 2016) and also as an effort to maintain the Indonesian Muslims' identity (Fakhruroji 2019b) because, through it, Indonesian Muslims can focus more on strengthening the

cohesiveness of the community internally. As a result, it is clear that Indonesian Muslims are completely aware that the discourse of Islamophobia can cause disharmony. This discourse, however, motivates them to strengthen their community by being involved in religious events organised by Indonesian Muslim communities in Australia, which, in turn, can strengthen social cohesiveness among them.

According to McMichael (2002), one of the issues causing the delay in Muslim assimilation with Australians is the lack of civic participation between the two groups, which, at a certain point, might enable the Islamophobia discourse easier to proliferate. He explores intercultural interactions, knowledge of Islam and its relation to prejudice against Muslims in Australia. His study, in fact, shows that the more knowledge about Islam and more contact with Muslims, the lower the level of prejudice against Muslims. This applies to all ages, genders and levels of education. However, this does not mean that Australians are the only parties who must know more about Islam; instead, Muslims must also be actively open to interacting intensively with Australians.

Another study by King (2017) demonstrates that intensive interaction with Muslims is one of the components in the motivation of certain women in Australia to subsequently decide to embrace Islam. These women generally express that they adhere to their previous beliefs and then become interested after several interactions with Muslims, particularly in personal interaction, learning and understanding Islamic beliefs and practices, experiencing Islamic values and principles, and Islamic beliefs related to their previous beliefs. They do not, however, dispute that this decision has been met with hostility and rejection, particularly from family, co-workers and related matters to lifestyle and public spaces in their everyday lives.

One of the ways to broaden connection with Australians is to enhance civic engagement so that Muslims are no longer viewed as an exclusive and ethnocentric community. The type of interaction they show, particularly in the current Islamophobic discourse, should be more oriented towards promoting public engagement and social activities that are more diverse and multicultural. As Uslaner and Brown (2005) point out, civic engagement in all circumstances can have ramifications for strengthening public trust more widely.

As previously stated, the phenomena of civic engagement involve community service, collective action, political involvement and social change (Adler & Goggin 2005). Concerning this, Indonesian Muslims in Australia take part in social activities by attending a variety of local communities where they interact and bring advantages to the larger community. As an example, as part of their volunteer work, Indonesian Muslims constantly engage in a variety of public events such as festivals organised by different communities. Meanwhile, at the collective action level, civic engagement by Indonesian Muslims entails partnering with other citizens in organising events to demonstrate their identities as part of Australian citizens at this point, which is expressed below:

We realized that we had to blend in with Australians. This is an attempt to make them realize that the Muslim community is not a threat. Now, my family and I are more involved in social activities where we can mingle and get to know each other better. Hopefully this can change their view about Islam.

Furthermore, the Indonesian Muslim community in Australia, through IMCV, collectively encourages the recommendation of political policies, one of which is by holding a Muslim congress in Australia and New Zealand in September 2016 in Melbourne and recommends to maintain a harmonious life in Australia. This congress exemplifies the expectation that Indonesian Muslims in Australia may serve as an example and reflection for Muslims all over the world while also making a positive contribution to Australian society by displaying a peaceful Indonesian character. This congress is significant not only as a form of affirmation of the existence of Muslims in Australia, which is growing and continues to develop rapidly, but also as a negotiation for the identity of Indonesian Muslims not only in the Australian context but also in the context of other Western countries by presenting inclusive Islamic identity. As a result, globally, this congress delivers a vital signal to the world about Indonesian Islam's moderate style and respect for diversity.

Meanwhile, on the level of social change, Indonesian Muslims in Australia strive to actively engage in social life in a broader context and to collaboratively shape the future. This is accomplished, among other things, by inviting non-Muslim communities in Australia to visit local mosques and learn more about Islam. Similar to other Muslim groups, Indonesian Muslims employ a variety of languages during religious activities such as sermons.

This increased involvement shows a recognition of the need to take an active role in combating Islamophobic discourse. Thus, the strategy pursued by Indonesian Muslims in Australia is demonstrated not only by strengthening the community internally through increased religious engagement among them but also by increasing their roles in the public sphere in the context of civic engagement, which can act as a counter-issue to Islamophobia, which is intensifying globally.

Conclusions

Islamophobia is a menace to all citizens of the world, not just Muslims. However, according to the findings, Islamophobic discourse in the Australian context might be bolstered if proper assimilation attempts are not performed well. Muslim communities should respond to Western society's prevalent perception of them as an isolated and ethnocentric community by becoming more adaptable to the context of wider social engagement. In response to Islamophobia, the Indonesian Muslim community in Australia implemented two broad strategies: strengthening religious engagement as a means of increasing solidarity and social cohesion among them, and increasing civic engagement as a means of opening up to Australians and other communities in Australia.

Religious engagement is often shown through various pengajian to build a moderate understanding of Islam, which is subsequently demonstrated in everyday life in the context of social interaction. Because they may provide support to one another in coping with Islamophobic discourses, this varied pengajian also serves as a vehicle to develop solidarity and social cohesion among fellow Indonesian Muslims in Australia.

Furthermore, the context of engagement expands to civic engagement practices, which can be identified through a variety of phenomena, mainly, as community service, Indonesian Muslims in Australia participate in activities organised by local communities so that they can mingle and provide benefits to the larger community. As a collective action, Indonesian Muslims participate collaboratively with other citizens in organising activities. As a political involvement, through IMCV, the Indonesian Muslim community in Australia jointly encourages to recommend political policies by organising a Muslim congress in Australia and New Zealand in September 2016 at Melbourne. Finally, as a social change, Indonesian Muslims in Australia are more open, one of which is by inviting non-Muslim groups in Australia to get to know Islam better.

Recommendation

This research study only focuses on how the Indonesian Muslim community in Australia is dealing with the issue of Islamophobia, which is actually managed by expanding the context of their involvement in civic engagement. Therefore, future research needs to evaluate the development of civic engagement, especially in the context of wider social interaction so that it could complete this article.

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