

Persecution of Muslim-Americans after 9/11 and Its Influence on Their Attitudes

Name of Author

Course

Name of Professor

Date of Submission

Outline

Topic: Persecution of Muslim-Americans after 9/11 and Its Influence on Their Attitudes

General purpose: Social isolation of Muslims and its impact on the society.

Specific purpose: persecution of Muslims in America after the 9/11 attacks greatly impacted their perception of the country and others in it.

Thesis: This paper reviews the cases, the extent of persecution faced by Muslim-Americans after the September 11, 2001 attacks, and the influence of such acts on their attitudes.

I. Introduction

A. Attention getter: As explained by Khan and Kathryn, animosity and severed relationships between Americans, American administrators and the Muslim world had existed even before the attacks in 2001 (2).

B. Reason to listen: According to Smith (587), hate towards America was mainly because it leads the West which is seen as a meddler in Middle East politics and economic affairs.

C. Thesis statement: This paper reviews the cases, the extent of persecution faced by Muslim-Americans after the September 11, 2001 attacks, and the influence of such acts on their attitudes.

D. Credibility statement:

1. In the traditional belief that violent Muslims hold the same beliefs as the rest of Muslims; especially with reference to the concept of Jihad and a holy war that must be fought (Gunaratna and Stefanie 353), many Americans and others meted out their anger on Muslim-Americans.

II. Background

According to Smith (587), hate towards America was mainly because it leads the West which is seen as a meddler in Middle East politics and economic affairs. Other major reasons for these perspectives include America's continued support for Israel in the Middle East and their extended antiterrorism campaigns across the world which appears to target Muslims.

III. Persecution of Muslim Americans after 9/11

a. *Negative Attitudes*

Muslim-Americans had to deal with extensive levels of negative and hateful attitudes from the rest of Americans who believed that the former were responsible for their dead relatives and losses in the 9/11 attacks.

b. *Discrimination, Harassment, and Dehumanization*

The overly anti-Muslim stereotyped community overlooks numerous issues while judging Muslims in relation to the 9/11 events and other situations.

c. *Political Disempowerment, Economic and Career Impacts*

Muslim Americans were generally depicted as having lost the political goodwill of the rest of the American society.

IV. Influence on Muslim-American Attitudes

- a) Many Muslim-Americans initially developed the responding attitudes of fear from the challenges and frustrations they experienced from the system.
- b) Many stopped voicing their concerns over various issues and participating in events in which they would conspicuously stand out.

c) A good number were afraid to leave their houses and others developed a sense of self-consciousness and caution with every word they spoke in public. Some of these trends have continued to exist long after 9/11.

V. Adjustments in Muslim-American Attitudes

Many latter adopted the trend of self-defense in teaching others the good side of Islam and maintaining their Islamic culture, practices, and religious activities like going to the Mosque

VI. Conclusion

The initial response, most Muslims were so frustrated that they went into hiding, withdrew from going to mosques, changed their dressing codes, and acted as though they were non-Muslims. However, these perspectives would soon change with most of them developing improved self-worth and standing up for their rights whenever necessary.

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Introduction

Occurring in a series of four coordinated and connected assaults, the Tuesday, September 11, 2001 Al-Qaeda sponsored attacks remain the biggest, most expensive, and most destructive in the history of terror attacks. In total, approximately 2996 people were killed and 6000 injured in the attacks. The economic damage of the infrastructural property attacked including planes and buildings was estimated at \$10 billion while the extended overall cost to the United States and other countries ran up to \$3 trillion (Burke and Cary 153). Immediately after the attack, many media outlets, political personalities, and key governmental officials set out to condemn the attackers. With the ultimate claim of the Al-Qaeda taking responsibility of the attack through Osama Bin-Laden, anger, frustration, and accusations were targeted at Islamic terror groups and Jihadists for not valuing the lives and property of Americans and others. In the traditional belief that violent Muslims hold the same beliefs as the rest of Muslims; especially with reference to the concept of Jihad and a holy war that must be fought (Gunaratna and Stefanie 353), many Americans and others meted out their anger on Muslim-Americans. Persecutions faced by Muslim-Americans included being placed under siege by security officers, drop in wage-limits, open discrimination in public affairs, harassment, and subjection to psychological torture among other challenges. *This paper reviews the cases, the extent of persecution faced by Muslim-Americans after the September 11, 2001 attacks, and the influence of such acts on their attitudes.*

Background

As explained by Khan and Kathryn, animosity and severed relationships between Americans, American administrators and the Muslim world had existed even before the attacks in 2001 (2). In many cases, these attitudes were reciprocal and both sides of the divide expressed

hate and discomfort with the other. According to Smith (587), hate towards America was mainly because it leads the West which is seen as a meddler in Middle East politics and economic affairs. Other major reasons for these perspectives include America's continued support for Israel in the Middle East and their extended antiterrorism campaigns across the world which appears to target Muslims. On the other hand, America's stance on democracy, immigration policies towards the Middle East, and the strictness in the hunt for terrorists has generally emerged discriminative and hateful towards the Muslim world in general (588). Although these perspectives existed long before 9/11, this event heightened them as America reconstructed its security system and policies to fight terror.

Persecution of Muslim Americans after 9/11

With a background link to the animosity existing between Americans and Muslims, Disha, James, and Ryan pointed out that any time a terror attack has been staged in the United States, stereotypes have led the larger part of the majority group to believe that the other Muslims in America support such attacks and approve of them (21). Because of this, they have endeavored to retaliate with a wave of varying negative attitudes and hate crimes that have persecuted involved Muslims in divergent ways.

Negative Attitudes

An analysis by Khan and Kathryn reveals that Muslim-Americans had to deal with extensive levels of negative and hateful attitudes from the rest of Americans who believed that the former were responsible for their dead relatives and losses in the 9/11 attacks (1). Their review of the Federal Bureau of Investigation (FBI) analysis and report on negative attitudes and hate towards Muslim Americans revealed that these limits increased by at least 1,700% after the bombing, a situation that left many Americans seeking opportunities for revenge and denying

Muslim Americans opportunities whenever they could. In essence, animosity and the potential of conflicts existed between other Americans and those perceived to be Muslim-Oriented including Arabs and other Middle Easterners. Although substantial declines in these attitudes have continued to occur, they still exist and many Muslim-Americans find it a challenge going about their day-to-day activities in the United States as they face the potential of suffering from the consequences of these challenging opinions.

The opinions of other authors like Kalkan, Geoffrey, and Eric do not reflect deferring perspectives in relation to these beliefs (2-4). In their reviews, they also indicate that negative attitudes directed towards Muslims were mostly incited by media results and political outrage towards Muslims and associated groups. They point out that a few factors that remain distinct about Muslims in the American society did and continue to fuel the existence of these attitudes after the 9/11 event to date. These encompass the distinctiveness of Muslims in terms of dressing, culinary trends, religious trends, culture, and their personal and communal stances on various issues like politics and terrorism. Thus, many non-Muslim Americans remain outstandingly prejudiced against Muslim Americans since the occurrence of 9/11 and express open biasness in their opinions towards this group.

Discrimination, Harassment, and Dehumanization

One other very worrying trend of persecution resulting from the 9/11 an attack is that of discrimination, harassment, and dehumanization of Muslim Americans in the American society. To begin with, the overly anti-Muslim stereotyped community overlooks numerous issues while judging Muslims in relation to the 9/11 events and other situations. One such outstanding case is that of Mohammad Salman Hamdani who died during the attacks in 2001. After the attack on the first tower, this man rushed to help those who had been injured in the crash unaware that another

attack was imminent and would happen soon. When the second attack came, he was buried in rubble and died as a heroic result of his well-intentioned good deeds. However, the authorities initially believed he was a terrorist until five months after the attack when conclusive investigations revealed he was not (Otterman 1).

On the other hand, a rise in the limits of harassment experienced by Muslim Americans at home and in public places has continued to exist in the society since the 9/11 attacks (Peek 60). The analyses of many professionals indicate that most law enforcement officers and immigration officers among other public officials developed negative attitudes towards Muslims in America and have continuously subjected them to unlimited personal and group torment to place them under siege. In the case of police, Muslim Americans in excess of hundreds of thousands have had to go through searches without warrants, unnecessary and intimidating interrogation on terrorism, rampant arrests, and general discriminated trends in the public sector. This has proved frustrating to many of them and made them subjects of dehumanized processes. In the view of many scholars, at least 75 percent of Muslim Americans, whether elitist or non-elitist, have either gone through these procedures or seen others go through the same processes.

A further review by Khan and Kathryn reveal that even Muslim American prisoners are not exempt from these discriminative, dehumanizing, and harassment trends. In many cases, they experience similar trends of hatred with most of the other prisoners either ganging up against them or simply avoiding their company and groupings. For cases of legal treatments in which prisoners are assigned tasks or subjected to punishments, it is common for these Muslim Americans to be assigned more difficult tasks and humiliating duties compared to the other prisoners. At times, they get harassed and given extreme illegal treatments by prison authorities.

In many media reports, individuals on the Internet and political leaders in public news continue to dehumanize the Muslim community in America and Elsewhere. One typical example of such a case is the reaction of Franklin Graham who in his response to the 9/11 attacks took himself out on all Muslims rather than the perpetrators of the crime. He is reported to have described Islam as a "*very evil and wicked religion*", thereby associating it with violence and terror. In general, many Muslim Americans continue to face discrimination, harassment, and dehumanization as a result of the occurrence of the 9/11 attacks.

Political Disempowerment, Economic and Career Impacts

Soon after the 9/11 events and in the durations that would last the aftermath, Muslim Americans were generally depicted as having lost the political goodwill of the rest of the American society. In the year 2004, the hotly contested political campaigns involving presidential aspirant John Kerry revealed this situation. In a popular media skit showing that the Muslim Americans were willing to offer him support for his political bid, Kerry reacted by showing outstanding limits of indifference and dissatisfaction at the thought. Perhaps indicating the extent of disempowerment American Muslims had experienced since the occurrence of 9/11. In general, the lasting years after 9/11 have seen the Muslim American community silent over political matters because they bear the view that their opinions are neither required nor accepted.

In the case of careers and economic impacts on Muslims, 9/11 brought a lasting nightmare that has haunted many Muslims since its occurrence. In summary, Muslim Americans suffered at least 10% drop in their economic potentials because of reduced career and business opportunities. In many cases, Muslim Americans rarely get hired when others are being hired. Their names get considered as options of last resort making them come last in the process of hiring while they easily get fired for minor reasons and mistakes at work. Typically, a group of

five individuals with similar qualifications with one Muslim among them may have the Muslim hired last or left out in case the available vacancies end at four. The names of Muslim Americans get discriminated upon openly while individuals also avoid Muslim American business deals and enterprises.

One example of this trend reported in the media is the case of Suriyah Bi who was a teacher at the Birmingham's Heartlands Academy. She taught young children, and as a result of her professional consideration for the children of 11 years of average, Suriyah Bi objected to these children being shown a traumatizing video of the 9/11 events. Apparently, this act landed her into trouble and she got fired by the school administration. She later went to court to pursue her rights for unfair dismissal from the institution of earning (Wade-Palmer 1). This is a clear indication of the limits of intolerance the non-Muslim community in America developed towards the Muslim-American community after the 9/11 occurrence. Perhaps, the employers acted in the belief that Suriyah Bi's reactions were meant to protect the Muslim ideology rather than the interest of the children's emotional security.

Influence on Muslim-American Attitudes

As a result of the outlined perspectives and attitudes, many Muslim-Americans initially developed the responding attitudes of fear from the challenges and frustrations they experienced from the system. Because of increased police presence and the probability of being profiled, many stopped voicing their concerns over various issues and participating in events in which they would conspicuously stand out. While a good number were afraid to leave their houses, others developed a sense of self-consciousness and caution with every word they spoke in public. Some of these trends have continued to exist long after 9/11. This trend of frustration would affect some to the extent they would ultimately withdraw from going to the mosque for prayers

for fear of being profiled to the point of changing their dress codes (Rabasa 6). In general, most Arabs and Muslims in America lived in a world of hiding where they would destroy all the physical evidence of Islamism in their homes for fear of victimization. This also affected their personal relationships as they became less trusting to people and revealed less and less information about their personal and religious identities. In the initial stages, many Muslim Americans became invisible and stopped talking about Islam altogether. They desired to be seen as non-Muslim to escape the discrimination they witnessed from the non-Muslim American society.

Adjustments in Muslim-American Attitudes

As Rabasa explains, these attitudes of fear and withdrawal from the society would soon go on a declining trend to allow the Muslim-American community a better chance of coping with the environmental challenges they faced. Many would soon notice that hiding, changing their dress codes, and disguising themselves as non-Muslims did not change people's opinions about them. That is the reason many later adopted the trend of self-defense in teaching others the good side of Islam and maintaining their Islamic culture, practices, and religious activities like going to the Mosque. Although the stereotypes on Islam and negative attitudes directed towards Muslim Americans continue to exist, Muslim Americans attempt to adopt a realistic perspective of remaining Muslims while they fight for their rights when anyone offends them as in the case of Suriyah Bi who chose to go to court when her employer fired her unfairly.

Conclusion

In conclusion, the bombing of the Twin Towers and other locations within America by Al-Qaeda on the 11th of September 2001 resulted in numerous challenges for Muslim Americans. Because the bombers were, or claimed affiliation to Islam, many Muslims were believed to

harbor similar intentions and opinions of harming the American community. Soon, the government, media, and political arena would open a war against perceived opponents of the American State. However, these responses would leave the rest of the Muslim Americans stereotyped and subjected to unwarranted persecutions. These included negative attitudes, discrimination, harassment, dehumanization, political disempowerment and the loss of career and economic opportunities. In the initial response, most Muslims were so frustrated that they went into hiding, withdrew from going to mosques, changed their dressing codes, and acted as though they were non-Muslims. However, these perspectives would soon change with most of them developing improved self-worth and standing up for their rights whenever necessary.

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