



Breaking Barriers: The Fight Against Discrimination Among Indonesian Muslim Minority in America

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Abstract

Discrimination against minority groups based on race, religion, and other characteristics has a long-standing history in the United States. This study explores how Indonesian Muslims in major urban areas across the US confront and resist discrimination. Through phenomenological analysis, data were gathered from 16 Indonesian participants residing in eight different states. The findings reveal that Indonesian Muslims employ strategies such as staying calm, exercising self-control, seeking clarification, speaking up, and reporting incidents to authorities to combat discrimination. These coping mechanisms reflect the complexity of discrimination faced by this minority group and underscore the need for robust legal frameworks and collaborative efforts to promote tolerance and respect for diversity. The study offers valuable insights for activists, religious leaders, legal advocates, and academics working to foster an inclusive society. It also emphasizes the necessity for further research, particularly with larger and more diverse samples, to understand the long-term impacts and to develop targeted interventions that support Indonesian Muslims and other minority groups in the US.

Keywords: Discrimination, Indonesian Muslim Minority, America, Coping Strategies.

Introduction

The United States (US) has a long history of prejudice, systemic racism and discrimination affecting various ethnic, cultural, and religious identities. Among these, Indonesian Muslims, a rapidly growing group

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within the Asian American community, face distinct challenges. Despite being the 15th largest group of Asian Americans, Indonesian Muslims encounter unique forms of discrimination rooted in both race and religion. This study aims to explore how Indonesian Muslims navigate and fight against these challenges in major urban areas across the US.

While the “perpetual foreigner” stereotype often labels Asian Americans as outsiders, Indonesian Muslims experience additional layers of discrimination due to their religious identity. This dual bias not only affects their life satisfaction and social integration¹ but also exposes them to various forms of racial and religious oppression. This stereotype leads to social exclusion, discrimination, economic barriers, psychological impacts, and influences public policy, contributing to the broader context of discrimination faced by Indonesian Muslims.

Asian Americans and Muslims face significant discrimination in various sectors. Asian Americans report discrimination in job applications (27%), equal pay (25%), and housing (25%), with many experiencing racial slurs (32%), derogatory assumptions (35%), and feeling underpaid compared to Whites (40%)². This leads some to consider migration or avoid routine tasks to evade authorities. Similarly, Muslims encounter religious discrimination in public institutions (44%), job applications (33%), law enforcement (31%), and healthcare (25%).³ Interpersonal discrimination is also prevalent, especially in restaurants (49%) and workplaces (42%).⁴ A Pew

¹ Que Lam Huynh, Thierry Devos, and Laura Smalarz, “Perpetual foreigner in one’s own land: Potential implications for identity and psychological adjustment.” *Journal of Social and Clinical Psychology* 30, no. 2 (2011): 1bank33–162. <https://doi.org/10.1521/jscp.2011.30.2.133>.

² Harvard T.H. Chan School of Public Health, Robert Wood Johnson Foundation, and National Public Radio, *Discrimination in America: Experiences and Views of Asian Americans*, Harvard T.H. Chan School of Public Health, 2017, accessed February 3, 2014, <https://www.hsph.harvard.edu/wp-content/uploads/sites/94/2017/11/NPR-RWJF-HSPH-Discrimination-Asian-Final-Report.pdf>

³ Dalia Mogahed and Erum Ikramullah, “American Muslim Poll 2020: Amid Pandemic and Protest.” *ispu.org*, 2020. <https://www.ispu.org/american-muslim-poll-2020-amid-pandemic-and-protest/>

⁴ Mogahed and Ikramullah, “American Muslim Poll 2020: Amid Pandemic and Protest.”

Research Center survey found 82% of Muslims experience discrimination, with 56% facing it frequently, fostering mistrust⁵ and leading to physical and psychological issues.⁶

This study explores the personal experiences of Indonesian Muslims living in the US, who are the 15th largest group of Asian Americans and one of the fastest-growing.⁷ As of 2015, there are approximately 8 million overseas Indonesians living in other countries.⁸ However, there have been few systematic efforts to define, clarify, and explain the issue of discrimination among Asian, especially Indonesian Muslims living in the US. Despite the growing field in theology, religions, interfaith, and interreligious studies, little attention has been given to the way discrimination relates to Indonesian people living in the US.

Discrimination is unequal treatment of group members based on factors such as age, gender, religion, marriage status, sexual orientation, family status, race/ethnicity/nationality, disability, and community membership.⁹ It is a behavioral manifestation of negative attitudes, judgments, or unfair treatment.¹⁰ Discrimination can take various forms,

⁵ Alyssa Rippy and Elana Newman, "Perceived Religious Discrimination and Its Relationship to Anxiety and Paranoia among Muslim Americans." *Journal of Muslim Mental Health* 1, no. 1 (2006): 5–20. <https://doi.org/10.1080/15564900600654351>.

⁶ Pew Research Center. "Sharp Rise in the Share of Americans Saying Jews Face Discrimination." pewresearch.org, 2019

⁷ Jessica Barnes and Claudette Bennett, "Census 2000 Brief: The Asian Population: 2000" [census.gov](http://www.census.gov), US Department of Commerce, 2002. <https://www.census.gov/library/publications/2002/dec/c2kbr01-16.html>

⁸ "Memanfaatkan Diaspora Indonesia," *Tempo*, accessed December 2, 2022, <https://kolom.tempo.co/read/1002435/memanfaatkan-diaspora-indonesia>

⁹ Laurence Bond, France McGinnity, and Hellen Russell, "Introduction: Making Equality Count," In L. Bond, F. McGinnity and H. Russell (Eds.) *Making Equality Count: Irish and International Research Measuring Equality and Discrimination* (Dublin: The Liffey Press, 2010).

¹⁰ Kira Hudson Banks, Laura P Kohn-Wood, and Michael Spencer, "An examination of the African American experience of everyday discrimination and symptoms of psychological distress," *Community Mental Health Journal* 42, no.6 (2006): 555-70. doi:10.1007/s10597-006-9052; Laura Richman, Laura Kohn-Wood, & David R. Williams, "The role of discrimination and racial identity for mental health service utilization," *Journal of Social and Clinical Psychology* 26, no. 8(2007), 961–981.

including cultural, institutional, and interpersonal discrimination.¹¹ This study focuses on the Indonesian Muslim minority fighting against discrimination in the US, highlighting the importance of understanding and addressing discrimination in various contexts.

Religious discrimination occurs when individuals are treated in an unjust manner as a result of their religion, religious beliefs or practices, or their request for religious accommodation. Furthermore, it applies to how others are treated as a result of their lack of religious belief or practice. Not only does the law protect those who are discriminated against on the basis of their religious beliefs or lack thereof, but it also protects the rights of all individuals who adhere to religious, ethical, or moral principles. If someone has been denied employment, fired, harassed, or otherwise treated unfairly on the basis of their religion, beliefs, or practices, and they have requested that their religious beliefs and practices be accommodated, they may have been the victim of unlawful religious discrimination.

Discrimination based on race is a significant cause of trauma and poor mental health, with risk factors including colonization, marginalization, discrimination, and devaluation.¹² This is particularly true for historically discriminated groups like African-American, Hispanic, or Asian-American individuals.¹³ The negative effects of discrimination on health may be exacerbated by social disadvantage, as stigmatized groups may face barriers to quality education and wealth accumulation, making them more vulnerable to threats to their safety and health. This underscores the urgent need for comprehensive and effective strategies to combat

¹¹Rodney Clark, Norman B. Anderson, Vernessa R. Clark, and David R. Williams, "Racism as a stressor for African Americans: A biopsychosocial model," *American Psychologist*, 54, no. 10, (1999), 805–816. <https://doi.org/10.1037/0003-066X.54.10.805>; Shelly A. Harrell, "Multidimensional conceptualization of racism-related stress: Implications for the well-being of people of color," *American Journal of Orthopsychiatry* 70, no.1 (2000), 42–57.

¹² Yvette G. Flores, *Chicana and Chicano Mental Health: Alma, Mente y Corazón* (Tucson, AZ: University of Arizona Press, 2013).

¹³ Khan, Mariam, Misja Ilcisin, and Katherine Saxton. "Multifactorial discrimination as a fundamental cause of mental health inequities." *International Journal for Equity Health* 16, no. 1 (2017), 43. doi:10.1186/s12939-017-0532-z

discrimination and improve mental health outcomes.¹⁴

The purpose of this study is to explore how Indonesian Muslims minority fight against discrimination in the US, focusing on major urban areas with a significant immigrant and visible minority population. This study fills a significant research gap by exploring the underexamined discrimination faced by Indonesian Muslims in the US, focusing on their unique intersection of race and religion, employing a phenomenological qualitative approach, and describing their efforts in narrative and coalition building. The research was conducted in eight states across the US due to their accessibility. However, the study faces methodological challenges such as low base rates and a lack of longitudinal data. Governmental data in Indonesia is not widely shared, making further investigations difficult. Therefore, it is crucial to focus on specific issues with available data to offer valuable insights into the experiences of individuals facing discrimination.

Methods

This study investigates how Indonesian Muslims minority fight against discrimination, aiming to fill a research gap by examining their lived experiences. The qualitative method is employed to address the lack of empirical attention to this topic,¹⁵ as it is well-suited for capturing personal narratives.¹⁶ Researchers document and validate individual stories, focusing on experiences rather than generalizability.¹⁷ Sixteen participants of varying ages and lengths of residence were recruited. The qualitative approach used

¹⁴ Jennifer B. Ayscue and Gary Orfield. "School district lines stratify educational opportunity by race and poverty." *Race and Social Problems* 7, no. 1 (2015), 5–20.; David Williams and Chiquita Collins. "Racial residential segregation: A fundamental cause of racial disparities in health." *Public Health Reports* 116 (2001), 404–416. doi: 10.1093/phr/116.5.404.

¹⁵ Susan Morrow and Mary Lee Smith "Qualitative research for counseling psychology," In Steven Brown & Robert Lent (Eds.), *Handbook of counseling psychology*, 3rd ed. (Hoboken, NJ: John Wiley & Sons, 2000), 199-230.

¹⁶ Mark Hickson and Brennan Hickson, "The Qualitative Method in Communication Research," In Don W. Stacks, Michael B. Salwen, Kristen C. Eichhorn (Eds.). *An Integrated Approach to Communication Theory and Research* (3rd ed.), (New York, NY: Routledge, 2019), 43-55.

¹⁷ Irving Seidman, *Interviewing as Qualitative Research: A Guide for Researchers in Education and the Social Sciences* (Teachers College Press, New York: 2013), 54

purposive methods,¹⁸ making participant representativeness irrelevant.¹⁹ Major urban areas with significant immigrant populations were targeted for their accessibility and larger Indonesian communities, with logistical considerations such as interview feasibility and participant availability also influencing state selection.

Phenomenology is particularly suited for this study because it allows for an in-depth exploration of the lived experiences of Indonesian Muslims, capturing the essence of their encounters with discrimination. This approach emphasizes understanding the subjective meanings and personal narratives of participants, which is crucial for a group whose voices are often marginalized. By focusing on individual experiences, phenomenology provides a nuanced understanding of the complex realities²⁰ faced by Indonesian Muslims, highlighting the intersection of race and religion in their daily lives.²¹ This approach attempts “to reach some person”²² and to understand the meaning to experiences that are sometimes not easily comprehended or digested.²³ This method's flexibility and sensitivity to diverse realities make it ideal for uncovering the unique challenges and strategies of this community, offering insights that quantitative methods

¹⁸ Wilhelmina C. Savenye and Rhonda S. Robinson, “Qualitative research issues and methods: An introduction for educational technologists,” In Jonassen, David (Ed.) *Handbook of Research for Educational Communications and Technology* (New York: Routledge, 1996), 1055.

¹⁹ Magnus Englander, “The interview: Data collection in descriptive phenomenological human scientific research,” *Journal of Phenomenological Psychology* 43, no. 1 (2012), 13–35.

²⁰ Jean Clandinin. *Engaging in Narrative Inquiry* (Walnut Creek, CA: Left Coast Press, Inc., 2013), 230.

²¹ Waren Blumenfeld. *Homophobia: How We All Pay the Price* (Boston, MA: Beacon Press, 1992); Elia John P Elia, “Homophobia in the High School: A Problem in Need of a Resolution” *The High School Journal* 77, no. 1/2 (1993): 177–85. <http://www.jstor.org/stable/40364643>; John D’Emilio. *Basters, baiters, and bigots: Homophobia in American society*. (New York, NY: Harrington Press, 1985).

²² Stuart Murray and Dave Holmes, “Interpretive phenomenological analysis (ipa) and the ethics of body and place: critical methodological reflections.” *Human Studies* 37, no. 1 (2014), 15–30.

²³ Stuart Murray and Dave Holmes, “Interpretive phenomenological analysis (ipa) and the ethics of body and place: critical methodological reflections.”

might overlook.²⁴

Exploring the Daily Experiences of Indonesian Muslims Facing Discrimination in Various Public Spaces.

The study explores how Indonesian Muslims in the US combat discrimination. Participants shared their daily experiences of discrimination, including instances while wearing a hijab in public spaces. In-depth interviews also examined discrimination against other Asian Americans, using phrases like "because they are Indonesian American," "because of their race or ethnicity," or "because of their religion" to reflect participants' experiences of the discrimination.

The result of this study demonstrates that the analysis revealed the following five essences: a) Stay calm and carry on, b) Taking self-control, c) Clarification, d) Speaking up, and e) *Report to the authorities*. This next section will explain these themes in more detail and provide supporting experiences to describe how Indonesian Muslims minority fight against discrimination in the US. When possible, pseudonyms like P1, P2, P3, and P16 will be used to protect the identities of the respondents. Below are the detailed results of the interviews. Below is the **Table II** to illustrate how Indonesian Muslims minority fight against discrimination in the US.

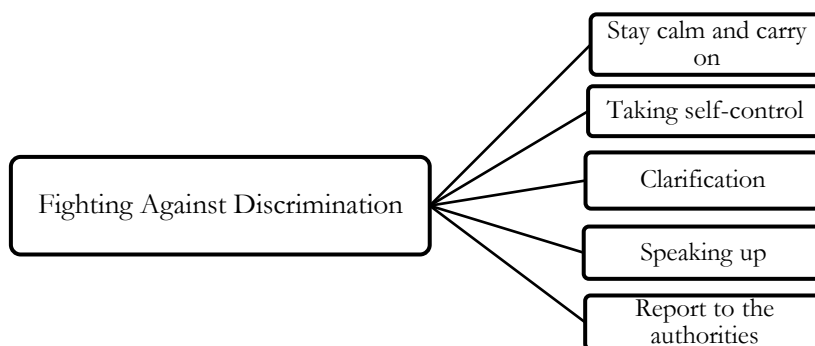


Table II. Indonesian Muslims minority fight against discrimination in the US.

²⁴ Nadiatus Salama and Nobuyuki Chikudate, "Religious Influences on the Rationalization of Corporate Bribery in Indonesia: A Phenomenological Study," *Asian Journal of Business Ethics* 10, no. 1 (2021): 85–102. <https://doi.org/10.1007/s13520-021-00123-0>

Regarding the topic about fighting against discrimination among Indonesian Muslims minority in the US, some respondents provided claim that discrimination cases are challenging issues. However, they always tried to fight those problems. As stated by P2:

I've experienced discrimination so frequently that it's hard to keep track of all the times it's happened. But I definitely always fight (P2).

Similarly, P3 argued that if there were something annoying him, he fought back with no doubt. *"If they say something offensive, I'll fight them back fearlessly! (P3)".* Below are the evidences of five themes of this study:

a) Stay calm and carry on

In this theme, a participant who described his encounter with a stranger who engaged in verbal harassment that reflected scapegoating of Asian and Muslim people provided another example, as follows:

When I was in line at the grocery store checkout, someone came up to me and said, "Are you a Muslim? I don't want people like you in this country, because it's against the law." I tried to stay relaxed and simply said, "Thank you. You think that way, but I have my own" (P5).

The humiliating and attacking words are often happens to Muslims in the US. They have experienced Islamophobia since September 11th, 2001 and are historical examples of how other Americans, motivated by racism and xenophobia, have scapegoated and discriminated against Asian Americans. Every participant shared personal experiences of discrimination based on stereotypes, expressing their distress and frustration. According to participants, the phenomenon of stereotyping has been present for a long time. However, they noted that it became significantly more intense and apparent following the events of September 11th.

Likewise, individuals may have learned that making fun of people from underdeveloped countries is socially acceptable because of the environmental discriminations that may occur on mass media.

When I am likely to be harassed, I will usually speak firmly but proportionately. For example, when there were White people who tried to make fun of me by speaking Arabic, I would promptly switch into English. That's how I deal with the White people here (P2).

P5 has also expressed feelings of intimidation. She was subjected to a physical assault when an unknown individual hacked up his spit and spat toward her.

When I was driving car to pick up my child, I stopped because someone was jogging across the street, but suddenly that person nagged and got angry while spitting on my car. I do not know whether it is because of the hijab I'm wearing or whether that person has a mental illness. My child wondered why we were being treated like that even though we did nothing (P5).

Similarly, P12 describes her discriminative experience related to unfairness in society. She claimed that:

When I went to the mall, there are some people who think that I couldn't buy a product just because the brand is too expensive. The staff followed me around the shop when was shopping in market.

Furthermore, she also provided more evidences:

When I was in public transportation, there were some people who refused to sit next to me or to give their seats to sit on.

Indeed, racist characterizations have persisted for centuries and generations to generations. This dark behavior is also widely accepted interpretations that human nature is the intrinsic desire to be hateful without a reason.

b) Taking self-control

This theme highlights the participants' efforts to stay under control despite their frustration with the environmental conditions. As P7 mentioned, she proactively worked on instilling self-control and pride in identity within the family context:

If someone treats me badly, I will stand up for myself. I'll be very angry. Finding the best way to teach my kids to be okay with their skin color is the hardest thing. I tried to explain it to my children through reading them books. I really hope they understand what I mean (P7).

Similarly, P5 recounts an incident in a public area where she faced verbal harassment. Demonstrating remarkable self-control, she chose not to escalate the situation, instead maintaining her dignity and composure. By calmly navigating the confrontation, P5 exemplified the strength and resilience inherent in taking self-control.

In this study, the theme of keeping “stay calm and carry on” and

“taking self-control” as separate themes are justified by their distinct psychological processes and different contexts of application. Participant narratives highlight unique experiences for each theme, providing rich qualitative data. This separation allows for a nuanced understanding of strategies and informs targeted interventions.

c) Clarification.

Through this theme, participants aimed to address and correct misconceptions that White people may have about people of color. They hope for mutual respect between people of different races. As P1 pointed out:

Those racist ideas will affect me if I'm scared, look bad, answer slowly, or don't look into his eyes. I told them, "Let's talk like humans, without even looking at skin color." Usually, after that, they will respect you.

P2 decided to fight discrimination due to the unfair stereotyping he experienced based on his ethnicity. He presented the following arguments:

An officer once came up to me and asked me some questions in Spanish. Perhaps because I look bad. I was born in Java, but I appear to be a Mexican. People thought I was an illegal immigrant from Mexico. I shouted at him to speak English! (P2).

Discussing “clarification” empowers individuals by allowing them to explain their narrative, assert their presence, and challenge stereotypes, fostering self-affirmation. It also builds mutual respect and understanding, potentially reducing future discrimination, while strengthening cultural and personal identity through the articulation of experiences and perspectives.

d) Speaking up

In this section, participants suffered from harsh treatment, P7 experienced the hatred. He claimed:

At that time, there were not many demands regarding Asian hatred, or #metoo, or #blacklivesmatter, or mental health issues because of racism. While on vacation with my children at Disney Land, my first child and I

were in a store when an unfamiliar white little boy approached us and shouted “chink-chang-chong” (in a Chinese accent). I was completely at a loss for what to do at the time. I’m merely pointing out that not all Asian people are from China, despite the fact that my face appears to be Chinese; some believe I’m Korean, Filipino, or another nationality. My son was mistaken for a Chinese national by that youngster. Perhaps all Asians are perceived to be Chinese in the local people’s mind. If that happened right now, I’d speak up

Naming someone else with “chink” or “gook” is racial slurs reference derogatory Asian labels. Similarly, calling people with “negro” is a verbal harassment or name calling for African Americans who dwell in the US. This hateful statement often happened regarding anti-immigrant rhetoric.

Meanwhile, another respondent bravely spoke up through social media to fight the discrimination she experienced.

I am quite active on social media, speaking out against racism, injustice, and discrimination (P8).

e) Report to the authorities

This theme discusses how participants took the necessary steps to report someone who discriminated against them, including reporting the incident to the relevant authorities and seeking legal recourse through the involvement of the police and legal institutions.

I suggest they not be silent if they experience such discrimination. I usually call 911 and make a report. In America, administrative records are excellent. So, from statistical data, we can see how many incidents range from low, moderate to high (P1).

Anyway, if their actions and words are too excessive, I will sue them in court. I’ve always said your abuse has to have a limit. I don’t have to get angry or bang the table. I said, wait, we’ll see in court (P2).

This remark implies the message that traditional Muslim dress is described as unusual or weird in this comment. The answer defends herself (along with her religion) by pointing out that people of other religions wear traditional costumes that they wear without fear of being questioned, interrogated, insulted, or attacked. For example, P2 claimed

such experience. He described a time when strangers stared at him or made a comment about how he was dressed:

That's common here. When I leave the house, I usually dress in a robe and a kufi hat, but that is considered strange. Sometimes, government employees are uncomfortable seeing me like that.

Therefore, P2, who always wore a Kufi hat, also had a similar feeling: He said:

Almost every time, they discriminate against us in different ways. In 2006, they searched for me. I took the case to court, and I won.

In this study, a small percentage of Indonesian Muslims believe that in similar situations, local communities would use force in the same way as they would on a person of color. Consequently, they will respond assertively if local individuals disrupt their peace.

Discrimination at work was the most likely to prompt action, whereas discrimination while looking for a job was the least likely to result in action. Regarding taking action, the findings of this study demonstrate that, oftentimes, the social groups that experience the most discrimination are also the least inclined to take action.

I have to fight. TV shows must be addressed. If we have different skin colors, it doesn't matter if we are black, white, or purple. This doesn't mean that we are fundamentally different (P7).

Similarly, P12 highlights the importance of building perspectives through discussion forums and educational environments, arguing that combating racism requires socio-political transformation and changes in thinking.

I built perspectives through various discussion forums, including in the educational environment. Because racism is a historical phenomenon rather than a natural phenomenon, I contend that it necessitates a process of socio-political transformation, which must include changes in one's own way of thinking. I also promoted the idea that we can fight racism (P12).

Responding to discrimination requires a range of resources, such as verbal abilities, confidence, and an understanding of one's rights and entitlements. These findings show that more marginalized groups who experience more discrimination may also have limited access to certain resources.

The Complexity of Discrimination and Resilience Strategies of Indonesian Muslims in the US

This study might be the first research about the complexities of Indonesian Muslims in the US as discrimination topics based on personal experience. This study could be groundbreaking. The lack of a narrative prevents people from learning about our numerous tales, which can provide them with further information concerning complicated discrimination and systematic racism. It is possible to generate the collective analyses that are required in movements for a more just future by uncovering buried stories and examples of intergroup solidarity and coalition formation.

Indonesian Muslims in the US report notable discrimination in their lives. Historically, racism has served as a major social determinant of injustices that disproportionately harm racialized people in our society. Throughout society, racism is destructive, undermining and demeaning everyone and everything. The findings of this study demonstrate that discrimination towards minorities continues to hurt each other, even the perpetrators of discrimination themselves.

The study contradicts the previous finding that social support consistently buffers the stress of discrimination, suggesting that traditional support networks may not always be effective for Indonesian Muslims due to their unique intersectional identities.²⁵ Minority groups should recognize that humans are multidimensional beings who have intersecting identities within themselves, learn how humans are affected by multiple systems of oppression, and establish horizontal approaches that strive for intersectional justice rather than single axes, vertical approaches such as #MeToo, #BlackLivesMatter, or #TransLivesMatter. Horizontal techniques, in which all lives are recognized and in which the multiple identities that people hold define them and are honored, are the most effective.

²⁵ Krysia N Mossakowski and Wei Zhang, "Does Social Support Buffer the Stress of Discrimination and Reduce Psychological Distress Among Asian Americans?" *Social Psychology Quarterly* 77, no. 3 (2014): 273–295. <https://doi.org/10.1177/0190272514534271>; Pratyusha Tummala-Narra, Margarita Alegria and Chih-Nan Chen, "Perceived Discrimination, Acculturative Stress, and Depression among South Asians: Mixed Findings," *Asian American Journal of Psychology* 3, no. 1 (2012), 3–16. <https://doi.org/10.1037/a0024661>

Belonging transcends race, nationality, gender, and religion. Everyone should strive for justice, care for each other, and work towards a better society. While no one can do it alone, each person plays a vital role—whether as youth workers, advocates, clinicians, educators, researchers, parents, or peers. Together, we can make a difference. However, everyone can work together to make a difference and make the world a better place.

Russell et al. note that individuals may face discrimination without recognizing it²⁶ due to a lack of awareness or misattributing the cause. Conversely, discrimination might be overreported when other factors are at play. To combat discrimination effectively, individuals must be knowledgeable, courageous, and active in addressing issues on personal and institutional levels. They should negotiate their identities, promote counter-stereotypes, and remain resilient against societal biases.

Many academics believe that widespread religious discrimination against Muslims has fostered a new collective identity among Arab Americans, prioritizing their Muslim identity. Muslim clothing often reveals their religious affiliation. Similarly, at the interpersonal level, Indonesian Muslims in American society face a wide range of painful and potentially criminogenic types of racial oppression. Although there has been considerable progress in combating overt racism since the 1960s, many non-White Americans “still encounter expressions of racial hatred, live in racially segregated neighborhoods, and endure widespread suspicion from people in positions of authority.”²⁷

Furthermore, race and religion play a crucial role in understanding discrimination in American society. Personal, institutional, and structural racial and religious discrimination expose Indonesian Muslims to various social-historical risk factors and immediate situational influences that can

²⁶ Helen Russell, Emma Quinn, Rebecca King O’Riain and Frances McGinnity, “The Experience of Discrimination in Ireland: Evidence from Self-Report Data.” In *Making Equality Count: Irish and International Research Measuring Equality and Discrimination*, 20-47. Dublin: Liffey Press, 2010.

²⁷ Carl Husemoller Nightingale, “*on the edge: A history of poor Black children and their American dreams*” (New York, NY: Basic Books, 1994), 10

lead to criminal behavior. Research has found links between religious and race-based inequality and violent crime, even homicide. Consequently, race and religion contribute to the negative experiences faced by Indonesian Muslims, which are unique to their society. Although the legacies of these experiences can be overcome, they often carry a significant and life-altering burden that others are not required to endure.

Participants' experiences of discrimination often intersect with various aspects of their ethnic and religious identity, including gender, socioeconomic status, and immigration status. For instance, women may face compounded discrimination due to both their gender and religious attire, while individuals with lower socioeconomic status might encounter additional barriers in accessing resources and support. Furthermore, recent immigrants may struggle with language barriers and a lack of familiarity with local anti-discrimination laws, making them more vulnerable to prejudice and less likely to seek help. These intersecting factors highlight the complexity of discrimination and the need for multifaceted approaches to address it effectively.

This study provides valuable insights for activists, religious leaders, legal advocates, and academics working to eliminate discrimination and promote respect and tolerance for different races and religions, both within and outside the Indonesian American diaspora. Policymakers and community leaders should develop robust anti-discrimination laws, invest in educational programs promoting cultural competence, and enhance support services for victims. Collecting data on Indonesian Muslims' experiences and fostering community dialogue can inform policy decisions and promote understanding. Collaborating with advocacy groups and adopting intersectional approaches will help create a more inclusive and equitable society.

Conclusion

In this study, the author investigates how Indonesian Muslims minority fighting against discrimination in the US. The results of this study have significant implications. Through applying phenomenological

approach, the themes identified in the research—such as staying calm and carry on, taking self-control, clarification, speaking up, and reporting to authorities—illustrate practical strategies that can be employed. These strategies not only empower Indonesian Muslims but also foster a more inclusive and just society. Therefore, the collaboration between minority and majority groups is not just beneficial but necessary for achieving lasting social change.

The study has limitations, including a small sample size that may not represent the entire Indonesian Muslim population in the US. The interpretative methodology and the researcher's proximity to the data could introduce bias. Future research should explore experiences across different socioeconomic backgrounds and use larger sample sizes to delve deeper into discrimination's various aspects and implications. Furthermore, future studies could develop innovative approaches to evaluate structural discrimination and investigate it across various dimensions, such as geographical scope, life stages, and contextual factors. Longitudinal studies can track discrimination experiences from adolescence to adulthood, while intersectional analysis can explore how gender, age, and socioeconomic status intersect with religious and racial discrimination. They can also build on this research by examining larger and more diverse samples, exploring the long-term impacts of discrimination, and developing targeted interventions to support Indonesian Muslims and other minority groups in the US.

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