

The Muslim Ban: The Way to Trumping Up Islamophobia

Boukhalfa Ali¹, Faiza Meberbeche Senouci²

¹ Abou Bekr Belkaid University, Tlemcen, Algeria, boukhalfali.16@gmail.com

² Abou Bekr Belkaid University, Tlemcen, Algeria, senoucif@hotmail.fr

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Abstract:

Ever since his inauguration on January 20, 2017, the administration of President Donald Trump (1946—; served January 20, 2017— January 20, 2021) issued a series of executive orders, in what became known as the Travel Ban, aiming at banning temporally the entry of immigrants and non-immigrants from several Muslim-majority countries. This led to an uptick in the anti-Muslim sentiments in the United States and increased the sufferance of American Muslim citizens who have relatives and ties to the countries listed by the Ban. In addition, having been proven to be controversial, the issuance of the Muslim Ban was met with a hostile reception from the U.S. lower courts, arguing that the Ban violates the provisions of the First Amendment to the U.S. Constitution. Therefore, this paper sheds light on Trump's motives behind issuing the Muslim Ban, its constitutionality, and its effects on American Muslim families and individuals.

Keywords: American Muslims; Islamophobia; Muslim Ban; Travel Ban; American Immigration Policy.

Corresponding author: Boukhalfa Ali,

1. INTRODUCTION

Following the terrorist attacks of September 11, 2001, on the American Soil by a group of terrorists who belong to al-Qaeda under the leadership of Osama Bin Laden, a great wave of hatred and rancor towards Muslims, best known as Islamophobia, swept the USA from coast to coast. This manifested in the violations of economic and political liberties along with the social discrimination Muslims had undergone in the United States.

Their situation became more sensitive following the passage of the Patriot Act six weeks after the attacks on the World Trade Center. The USA PATRIOT Act, signed into law by George W. Bush (1946; served 2001-2008) on October 26, 2001, was designed to provide his administration with the required jurisdictions and powers to wage the war on terror (Benson, Brannen, & Valentine, 2009, p. 294). As a result, people's civil rights, namely those of the Muslim Americans, had been abused by the American government in the name of protecting the U.S. national security from being jeopardized by terrorism. However, Islamophobia remained palpable in American society even during the 2016 presidential campaign where Republican candidate, Donald Trump, showed more hatred towards Muslims when he called for "a total and complete shutdown of Muslims entering the United States" (United States District Court, 2017, p. 2). Therefore, once in office, President Donald Trump quickly moved to implement his ideas concerning reducing and blocking the inflow of immigrants from certain predominantly Islamic countries, through the Muslim Ban.

1.1 The Problem of the Study

The Problem of the study is stated as follows:

To what extent did Islamophobia play a key role in shaping Trump's immigration policy?

1.2 The Purpose of the Study

This study aims at investigating the circumstances that surrounded the passage of the Muslim Ban and its effects on Muslim Americans and their families. Also, it aims to explore Trump's motives behind adopting such a tough policy towards Muslim immigrants from certain nationalities.

1.3 The Study Methodology

This study requires relying on the descriptive approach in which the phenomenon is described, which is considered one of the starting points for analyzing the phenomena by identifying their most important characteristics in order to reach conclusions that help to understand their nature. It also

relied on a set of scientific tools and auxiliary approaches, such as the historical curriculum by invoking the historical development of the phenomenon and tracing its course and developments that affect the nature of its current state.

2. Islamophobia in America

2.1 Islamophobia Following 9/11

Having been shocked by the horror of the attacks on the World Trade Center, a wave of hatred towards Muslims pervaded the country. Few Americans, in fact, knew about al-Qaeda, and only a few more knew about its leader, Osama Bin Laden. This incident, undoubtedly, led the Americans to question the motives of these Islamist groups that pushed them to attack their nation. Probably, most of them raised the question: “Why do they hate us?” (Kaplan, 2006, p. 1) Some attempted to find a conclusive answer to that question; however, President George W. Bush provided the Americans with the answer when addressed the joint session of Congress on September 20, 2001, stating that “they hate what we see right here in this chamber — a democratically elected government. Their leaders are self-appointed. They hate our freedom — our freedom of religion, our freedom of speech, our freedom to vote and assemble and disagree with each other” (Holloway, 2008, p. 8). This declaration, indirectly, helped in fueling feelings of hatred against Muslims in the United States. Besides, in his attempt to clarify things about Islam and Muslims, President George Bush stressed that Muslims, throughout the world, are not the enemy of the United States, maintaining that Americans respect Islam which is practiced by millions in America. Rather, the enemy of the United States is the network of radical terrorist groups and the governments that supported them, he said.

Following the incidents of September 11, 2001, Muslim immigrants in the USA became the subject of deep social anxiety known as Islamophobia. Statistics showed that Muslim immigrants in the United States were a minority and their number was estimated at 6,000,000 in 2010 (Moore, p. 91). This minority had an unpleasant experience due to the violation of its economic and civil rights, along with social discrimination.

This discrimination stemmed from the distorted picture of Islam and Muslims that used to circulate in America. Americans began to look at the Muslim minority in the USA from the sphere of otherness due to the impact of stereotypes broadcasted by media as well as literature. In this regard, several polls had been conducted between 2001 and 2009 that reflected Americans' misunderstanding and misconceptions regarding Islam. For instance, a 2003 Pew poll revealed that around 45% of Americans considered that Islam encourages violence among its believers more than any other religion. Another survey, conducted in 2009, showed that 36% of Americans could not recall a basic fact about Islam (Moore, p. 91). So, fear of Islam among Americans was so noticeable that voters in Oklahoma in the elections of 2010 voted to ban sharia law from being used in judicial matters, along with efforts to obstruct building mosques and other Muslim centers across the United States of America (Khan, 2012, p. 124).

The misconceptions about Islam can be ascribed in a large part to the media coverage of the events following the attacks on the World Trade Center along with the stereotypes that prevailed in the U.S. society and pop culture. A stereotype is an overall image or idea that one or a certain group of people may have on another person or another group of people who belong to the same ethnic or religious group (Sandoval, 2016, p. 1). The media managed to propagate two main stereotypes regarding the Muslim-Arab: terrorist males, and veiled and oppressed women. Mostly, Muslim men were portrayed in traditional Arab dress. Most important, nearly all the terrorists were portrayed as Arabs even though Arabs represent only 20% of the worldwide Muslim population. Muslim women, for their part, were portrayed as being oppressed by the Muslim society and thus mostly pictured wearing veil, burqa, or niqab (Moore, p. 91). Such stereotypes contributed massively to draw a bad image about Islam's unfair treatment of women. These stereotypes, however, were far away from reflecting the existing reality on the ground.

As a matter of fact, American Muslims are different in their countries of origin, their racial and ethnic make-up, and their political beliefs. Besides, American Muslims are from around eighty nationalities

with different cultural backgrounds, yet three major ethnicities make up the origins of the American Muslims. According to the Council on American-Islamic Relations (CAIR), South Asians constitute 33% of the Muslim Americans, African Americans constitute 30%, and Arabs constitute 20% of the American Muslims; other ethnicities comprise Iranian, African, and Bosnian/European Immigrants (Moore, p. 91-92). To put it in a nutshell, Arab immigrants in the USA represent a minority within the Muslim community. Therefore, media stereotypes did not account for the pluralistic feature of the Muslim community in the United States of America.

Having been under the shock of the horrifying attacks on the twin towers of New York, Americans regarded Islam as a religion that preaches violence and destruction, without considering the fact that the horrific attacks on the twin towers of New York had been undertaken by hijackers who were essentially terrorists and extreme radicals. On the other hand, instead of probing into the reality and the deep conception of Islam and the message of Prophet Mohammed, most of the Americans made a conclusion about Islam through the terrorist attacks, thereby associating it with violence and destruction. In this respect, and in order to clear up things to his fellow Americans, Armstrong wrote “When the Prophet Muhammad brought the inspired scripture known as the Koran to the Arabs in the early 7th century A.D., a major part of his mission was devoted precisely to bringing an end to the kind of mass slaughter we witnessed in New York City and Washington” (2001, para. 2). Armstrong clarified that, in Koran, Muslims cannot initiate hostilities and can only defend themselves. So, Islam is a religion of peace, as the word Islam in itself means “surrender”, the Arabic word for “salam” or peace. Therefore, misunderstanding Islam and blaming all Muslims for the wrongdoing of the extremists and radical groups was a big mistake.

The U.S. Constitution guaranteed individuals' basic rights under the Bill of Rights. The Fourth Amendment provided that law enforcement officers or government agents can conduct searches and arrests after getting arrest or search warrants from the courts. In addition to that, the court should receive conclusive evidence that shows the need for issuing such

warrants. Also, the Fifth Amendment stipulated that no person can be deprived of life, liberty, or property without due process of law (Benson et al., 2009, p. 1618). These rights had been adjusted following the Americans' discovery that the Federal Bureau of Investigation (FBI) was conducting widespread surveillance on American citizens due to their anti-government positions or their political convictions. Hence, to cure the situation, the Foreign Intelligence Surveillance Act (FISA) had been passed in 1978 which separated the domestic investigations from foreign intelligence gathering so that investigation methods were limited and watched by the courts whereas the surveillance of foreign agents would continue without restrictions. But these protections will change after the attacks on the twin towers of New York.

Effectively, in the wake of the horrific attacks of September 11, 2001, all bets were off and Congress enacted the USA Patriot Act that gave more powers to law enforcement meant to fight against terrorism. Consequently, law enforcement officers were allowed to carry out searches on individuals without being obliged to show that a crime had been committed. They could demand an individual's records from banks, video stores, brokerages, travel agencies, libraries, doctors, telephone services, and places of worship without the person's knowledge just after telling the FISA judge that such search might be of use in antiterrorist efforts. Likewise, individuals' homes and businesses could be searched without showing probable cause. Also, Sneak and Peak searches wherein the person being searched is unaware of the search had been conducted by the government agents. Further, under the Patriot Act, government agents could surveil the telephone and internet of a person, thereby obtaining records showing communications coming into and going out of the phone or the computer in question. To get permission for this, Government investigators have only to maintain that the surveillance might be relevant in a terrorist investigation. Similarly, investigators could obtain permission for roving wiretaps from FISA courts. However, it is notable to mention that, before the USA Patriot Act, wiretaps were permitted in specific cases and on specific telephones; roving wiretaps were extended to any computer or telephone used by a suspect without any particular target.

The government may now spy on web surfing of innocent Americans, including terms entered into search engines, by merely telling a judge anywhere in the U.S. that the spying could lead to information that is 'relevant' to an ongoing criminal investigation. The person spied on does not have to be the target of the investigation. This application must be granted and the government is not obligated to report to the court or tell the person spied upon what it has done. Nation-wide roving wiretaps. FBI and CIA can now go from phone to phone, computer to computer without demonstrating that each is even being used by a suspect or target of an order. (Nafeez, 2002, p. 268)

In a nutshell, the USA Patriot Act trampled upon individuals' civil liberties whose personal freedom had been abused at the whims of the U.S. agencies. Also, these tough measures helped in intensifying rancor against Muslims, namely American ones.

Indeed, anti-Muslim backlash increased significantly following the attacks of September 11, 2001, and witnessed different forms. People with a Middle Eastern look or with Arabic or Islamic-sounding names became scapegoated by the Americans' vengeance and hysteria towards Muslims. This manifested in the murder of Balbir Singh Sodhi, a forty-nine-year-old, who was the first victim of the backlash due to his traditional look that resembles that of Osama bin Laden. He was shot on September 15, 2002, as he was planting flowers at his gas station. Human Rights Watch was told by police officials that, hours before the murder, Sodhi's alleged killer, Frank Roque, was in a local alcohol bar wherein he bragged his intention to kill the ragheads responsible for September, 11. Moreover, Frank Roque allegedly shot at two Lebanese gas station clerks as well as into the home of an Afghani American (Human Rights Watch. 2002, p. 18). Other forms of the backlash towards Muslim Americans included threatening emails and phone calls. In effect, many Arabs and Muslim American organizations received phone calls and emails that comprised threats to their lives. Some of these messages were revealed by the American Arab Anti-Discrimination Committee: "I now enjoy watching Arabs and Muslims die" and "you should act as Americans, not terrorists" (Bakalian & Bozorgmehr, 2009, p.

3). On the other hand, on September 21, 2001, three Arab Americans were banned from boarding a Northwest Airlines plane in Riverside, California, on the pretext that passengers did not feel comfortable traveling with Middle Eastern men. Another aspect of sufferance, the application for a mortgage of an Arab American in Sunrise, California, was refused from the company on the ground that he was a terrorist, though he previously benefitted from a loan from the same company before September 11, 2001 (Bakalian & Bozorgmehr, 2009). All in all, Muslim Americans suffered a lot following the attacks on the twin towers of the World Trade Center and Pentagon. Their sufferance was expressed succinctly by the *New York Times* that wrote: “Since the attacks, people who look Middle Eastern and Muslim, whatever their religion or nation of origin, have been singled out for harassment, threats and assaults” (Bakalian & Bozorgmehr, 2009, p. 2).

The backlash towards Muslim Americans was in different forms: institutional, social, and economic. Institutionally speaking, besides the USA Patriot Act that gave many powers to the government agents at the expense of individual civil liberties, the Clear Law Enforcement for Criminal Alien Removal (CLEAR) Act, passed in July 2003, complicated the sufferance of Muslim Americans via giving the local law enforcement the power to enforce the federal immigration laws. This, coupled with the USA Patriot Act, ushered in proliferating surveillance of the Muslims who became under surveillance in mosques, on the internet, in their workplaces, their accounts, and even through library records. Additionally, following the first anniversary of September 11, the Immigration and Naturalization Service (INS) amended the existing registration and fingerprinting program and became called the National Security Entry-Exit Registration System (NSEERS). The latter would be applied to those who were concerned with the previous registration programs; that is, nonimmigrants from Iraq, Iran, Libya, Sudan, and Syria (Homeland Security Department, 2016). In November 2002, INS announced that only males who are sixteen years old or older from the above countries would be concerned with the registration program. Accordingly, men concerned with this program had to report to the INS offices for multi-phase registration comprising questioning, photographing, and fingerprinting. However, this program failed as it

ushered in many unnecessary deportations and the harsh methods used on the participants while registering. These biased policies and measures resulted in the deterioration of the relationship between the U.S. Government and the Muslim Community due to the bad impact it had on their lives. Besides, civil liberties of Muslim Americans eroded because of the CLEAR and USA PATRIOT Acts which caused feelings of anxiety, isolation, and ostracism amongst Muslims in the USA and thus helped only to detach them from the American mainstream.

2.2 Islamophobia in the 2016 Presidential Campaign

The backlash towards Muslim Americans remained palpable among the Americans till the era of President Donald Trump. Before his election, Trump had repeatedly promised to ban Muslims from entering the United States on grounds of preserving the U.S. National Security. This manifested in his call for “a total and complete shutdown of Muslims entering the United States” (United States District Court, 2017, p. 2). As a matter of fact, since the early days of the 2015 campaign to win the Republican Party’s ticket to be its nominee in the 2016 United States presidential elections, almost all the Republican candidates portrayed immigrants negatively as if they were responsible for the issues the United States was facing. However, the hatred against immigrants showed by the candidate Donald Trump was remarkable as he portrayed them in the worst possible way. This manifested in his call, on December 7, 2015, for “a complete and total shutdown of Muslims from entering the United States,” and three months later declared that “I think Islam hates us,” and stressed that “We can’t allow people to come into this country who have this hatred of the United States...and people who are not Muslims” (Maltz, 2018, p. 2). He went beyond in his rancor towards immigrants when he not only called for the United States to substantially reduce the inflow of immigrants but also called for the European countries to reduce or stop immigration altogether (Kaba, 2019, p. 319). This mirrored the upcoming radical change in the U.S. immigration policy under his administration following his success in the 2016 elections and becoming the 45th U.S. President.

3. Trump’s Immigration Policy

3.1 The Muslim Ban

Donald Trump's approach to the U.S. immigration policy is very different from that adopted by his predecessors in terms of the level of attention he gave to the topic as well as the negative measures and their effects on the whole country. Broadly speaking, among other things, His approach is based on building a great wall along the Mexican-American borders because he saw that the United States had become a dumping land for everybody else's problem (Boghani, 2019, para.1). Also, his approach rests on hiring 15,000 border and interior enforcement officers, and eliminating the so-called "sanctuary cities"; that is to say, cities that decline to cooperate proactively with the enforcement officers to detain illegal immigrants. Most importantly, his approach aims at banning Muslim individuals from entering the United States through issuing three executive orders aiming at initiating a travel ban on immigrants, visitors, or refugees from certain Muslim-majority countries (Pierce, Bolter, & Selee, 2018, p. 3).

Effectively, once in office, President Donald J. Trump swiftly moved to implement his promise of initiating a travel ban through issuing, on January 27, 2017, the Executive Order 13769 dubbed "Protecting the Nation from Foreign Terrorist Entry into the United States", or rather the Muslim Ban. The latter temporally banned, for 90 days, the entry of people from seven Muslim-majority countries including Libya, Somalia, Sudan, Syria, Iraq, Iran, and Yemen (Muslim Public Affairs Council, 2019), reduced the number of refugees admitted to the United States, and suspended the entry of Syrian refugees. The revised version of the Ban, Muslim Ban 2.0, issued on March 6, 2017 –Executive Order 13780– removed Iraq from the list after the agreement between the Iraqi government and that of the United States that Iraq would accept the deportations of the Iraqis; as a result, thousands of Iraqis were detained within weeks (Muslim Public Affairs Council, 2019). Thereafter, President Trump issued the Muslim Ban 3.0 (Presidential Proclamation 9645) on September 24, 2017, which brought a slight change in the list of the concerned countries with the ban. Consequently, individuals from most or

all nationals of Chad, Libya, Iran, Syria, Somalia, and Yemen were indefinitely banned from entering the United States; however, it limited the number of individuals from Venezuela and North Korea (Muslim Public Affairs Council, 2019).

As a matter of fact, individuals from these countries had been subjected to restrictions under the Visa Waiver Program (VWP) which allowed people from certain nationalities to enter the United States as temporary visitors for business or pleasure without being in need of applying for a visa for a limited period of time (Congressional Research Service, 2020). The VWP did not explicitly ban the entry of individuals from the above countries as they were able to apply for a visa via the regular consular process, but it created a discriminatory framework that paved the way for Donald Trump to fulfill his campaign promise of the Ban Travel. Consequently, immediately after the issuance of the Travel Ban, Muslim visa holders, as well as lawful permanent residents outside the country, were affected by the order, whereas those inside the United States were confined to stay within the nation's borders.

President Trump went further in reshaping the U.S. immigration policy when he suspended the U.S. Refugee Admission Program for 120 days and put a cap on the number of arrivals allowed in the fiscal year 2017. In another important step, Executive Order 13769 (Muslim Ban 1.0) tasked the Department of Homeland Security along with the Attorney General to collect and publish, every six months, statistics about foreign nationals charged with terrorism-related offenses (Guild, Bigo, & Carrera, 2017, p. 1). Besides, the first Executive Order comprised a number of other restrictive measures that were removed later from the next versions. To put it in a nutshell, Donald Trump's new immigration policy brought radical changes that had impacted the whole country, mostly in a negative way. This leads to raise many questions about his motives that lie behind his radical measures towards immigrants from Muslim-majority countries.

3.2 Trump's Motives for Issuing the Travel Ban

The main reason behind the issuance of the Travel Ban, according to President Donald Trump, was to protect the United States from foreign terrorist entry. To express well this purpose, there are no better words than those of Donald Trump who stated the following:

In order to protect Americans, the United States must ensure that those admitted to this country do not bear hostile attitudes toward it and its founding principles. The United States cannot, and should not, admit those who do not support the Constitution, or those who would place violent ideologies over American law. In addition, the United States should not admit those who engage in acts of bigotry or hatred (including “honor” killings, other forms of violence against women, or the persecution of those who practice religions different from their own) or those who would oppress Americans of any race, gender, or sexual orientation. (Trump, 2017, para. 4)

Therefore, Executive Order 13780 provided that “it is the policy of the United States to protect its citizens from terrorist attacks, including those committed by foreign nationals” (U.S. Department of Homeland Security, 2018, p. 1). This came to implement Trump's contemptuous perspective of Muslims as he accused Muslim and Middle Eastern immigrants of terrorism. Most important, he falsely claimed that the majority of the individuals convicted of terrorism in the United States hail from abroad. Furthermore, he had repeatedly portrayed immigrants “as criminals, invaders, threats to women, and even subhuman” (Srikantiah & Sinnar, 2019, p. 199). Therefore, the measures he took aimed chiefly to bar such immigrants from admission to the United States lest they infest it.

The Muslim Ban gained considerable media coverage which led to more focus on the religious identity of the Ban rather than its underlying purpose, particularly collecting data on foreigners. As a matter of fact, any country that declines to deliver data about its citizens intending to travel to the United States could be added to the list. Hence, the Ban's ostensible aim is to combat nations that sponsor terrorism while its covert aim is to harvest personal data on nationals from around the world, thereby using it later by

U.S. intelligence agencies in different matters that may go beyond the battle against terrorism (Guild, Bigo, & Carrera, 2017, p. 2). Section 3 of the Executive Order alluded to this when provided that:

The Secretary of Homeland Security, in consultation with the Secretary of State and the Director of National Intelligence, shall immediately conduct a review to determine the information needed from any country to adjudicate any visa, admission, or other benefits under the INA (adjudications) in order to determine that the individual seeking the benefit is who the individual claims to be and is not a security or public-safety threat. (Trump, 2017, para. 6)

So, the adjudication aims to make sure that the applicant is not a security or public-safety threat through a correlation of travel he had undertaken as well as his profile generated by an algorithm called “threat assessment” (Guild, Bigo, & Carrera, 2017, p. 2). These tough measures resulted from the experience of the Americans with many nationals from *predominantly Islamic countries*. For instance, Mahmoud Amin Mohamed Elsassian is a Sudanese national who entered the United States in 2012 as a family member of a lawful permanent Sudanese resident. However, in 2016, he was found guilty of trying to provide ISIS with material support, thereby sentencing him in 2017 to eleven years in prison (U.S. Department of Homeland Security, 2018, p. 3). Such cases provided President Donald Trump with a trump card as well as the required background to advance his immigration policy.

4. Discussion

When contemplating the aforementioned evidence, it becomes clear that Muslims were the main target of the Travel Ban. Despite its long-celebrated promise of inclusion and diversity, Trump’s Muslim Ban came to prove that the United States is no longer a tolerant country following the alarming rise in anti-Muslim backlash, violence, attacks on mosques, harassment, discrimination, and bullying of Muslim children, particularly after Trump announced of his candidacy. Furthermore, it is undoubted that the American Muslim citizens were singled out for unusual and

concentrated harm from this harsh policy despite their American citizenship. Their citizenship did not shield them from being badly affected by this policy. In effect, lawful American Muslim citizens who have relatives and ties to the banned countries were obliged to be separated from their family members and loved ones who live in their native countries concerned with the Muslim Ban. This is because the Ban suspended the entry of both immigrants and visitors into the United States, thereby denying reentry to visa-holders hailing from the seven countries (Ayoub, & Beydoun, 2017, p. 224). Hence, the Ban's manifest endorsement of anti-Muslim feelings ushered in an uptick in anti-Muslim harassment, discrimination, and bigotry.

The Muslim Ban triggered a wave of protest and resentment among Muslim Americans and civil rights advocates who considered it unconstitutional due to the fact it went against the provisions of the first amendment to the U.S. Constitution that guaranteed American citizens their basic rights. These consist in the right to practice their religion, the freedom to speak freely, the freedom to assemble for a common purpose, and the right to petition the government on a cause that is close to their hearts. More precisely, the First Amendment forbade Congress from enacting any law that may abridge the establishment of religion or any of the aforementioned rights. It literally provided that:

Congress shall make no law respecting an establishment of religion, or prohibiting the free exercise thereof; or abridging the freedom of speech, or of the press, or the right of the people peaceably to assemble, and to petition the Government for a redress of grievances. (Arnold, 2018. p. 90)

So, it is clear that the freedom of expression is so glorified by the Americans and their founding fathers that the U.S. Constitution preserved it in its first Amendment. Therefore, the Muslim Ban went against the provisions of this amendment as it violated Muslims' freedom of religion and barred them from entering the country on that account. The Muslim Ban, in fact, punished around six million Muslim Americans on account of their religion, not because they committed crimes, violent acts, or broke law

and order. Besides, the Muslim Ban suspected a whole community and entire countries of being a serious threat to the U.S. national security which is, relatively or in a large part, baseless argument. Accusing people may cause a detrimental effect on their lives; therefore, it must be done on the basis of founded evidence, not on the basis of suspicion. Thus, this Ban did nothing but incarnate religious discrimination within American society.

The Muslim Ban had negatively impacted the American Muslim citizens and their life as a whole. To start with, the ban ushered in substantial chaos in the U.S. travel industry as companies were coerced to adapt their practices and policies to the new reality imposed by the Ban. Moreover, the Ban resulted in a controversy that pervaded many parts of the country due to the questionable separation of many families as well as the constitutionality of the Executive Order itself. In this respect, several legal cases were successfully waged in the U.S. lower courts, thereby leading to a ruling by the court of appeals, on February 9, 2017, which was in favor of maintaining the decision of the lower courts. The first plaintiffs in the matter were the state of Washington and the state of Minnesota. Consequently, Donald Trump revoked the original Executive Order and replaced it with another one, on March 6, 2017, called Executive Order 13780, mostly referred to as the Muslim Ban 2.0. The latter came with some changes which consisted in dropping Iraq from the list of countries targeted by the Ban, explicitly exempting legal permanent residents along with those who have already obtained a visa to enter the United States, and lifted the indefinite restriction on the admission of Syrian refugees. Besides, the Order did not comprise preferences as to the religious minorities. However, despite these changes, the new version of the Travel Ban was also met with a hostile reception from the lower federal courts. In this respect, district courts in both the state of Hawaii and Maryland ruled for the prohibition of enforcing the Ban across all parts of the United States; most importantly, these rulings were approved by the U.S. Courts of Appeals for the ninth and fourth circuits, respectively.

The Travel Ban's saga knew another episode when the President issued a third version, but this time was styled as the "Presidential

Proclamation 9645”. The latter targeted nationals from countries refusing to provide and share information about their citizens with the United States, declining to cooperate with the U.S. government on immigration issues, or having links to terrorism. This new iteration of the Muslim Ban dropped restrictions on Sudanese nationals, while it maintained them for nationals from other countries. In addition, it came with restrictions imposed on Chad, Venezuela, and North Korea. Further, the new iteration of the Ban did not stop the admission of refugees. However, just like the previous versions of the Ban, opponents of the Ban filed legal challenges to Trump’s actions. This was the case in Hawaii and Maryland where district judges, who already concluded that the second iteration of the Ban was altogether illegal, were once again hostile to Trump’s proclamation and banned the enforcement of its terms either partially or in whole. However, on the 4th of December, the Supreme Court ruled in favor of the Proclamation through staying the local courts’ orders and declaring that the proclamation terms could be enforced (Kaba, 2019, p. 4). This served to heat discussions between opponents and proponent of the Ban over its constitutionality.

Effectively, on June 26, 2018, the Supreme Court ruled in favor of keeping the Muslim Ban in effect, indefinitely barred the admission to the United States of immigrants and certain nonimmigrants from Iran, Libya, Somalia, Syria, and Yemen as well as a limited number of nationals from North Korea and Venezuela, whereas Chad was dropped from the list of banned countries of the 10th of April 2018 (Muslim Public Affairs Council, 2019, p.6). The Supreme Court handed down that decision on the ground that the waiver program will prevent the Muslim Ban from being a complete ban. Again, unsatisfied by the decision of the Supreme Court, many lawsuits were filed on account of the Arbitrary and capricious way the U.S. government had followed in implementing the waiver process claiming that the latter is nothing but another unlawful ban (Muslim Public Affairs Council, 2019).

The Muslim Ban had a dramatic impact on American families. In effect, shy of the first anniversary of the Supreme Court’s June 2018 decision that made Trump’s Muslim Ban effective, the U.S. State

Department published a report that portrayed the negative and devastating effects of the Ban on the American families. The report revealed that Trump's administration not only separated families at the southern borders but also banned many individuals from joining their families and loved ones in the United States by enforcement officials, responsible for implementing the Muslim Ban in the U.S. embassies around the world. It is quite absurd to imagine that an American citizen who is married or engaged to a woman abroad cannot join him just because the U.S. government considers letting nationals into the United States from her country may endanger America's national security. This case along with others, estimated at 3,882 individuals, represented the victims of the Muslim Ban, according to the State Department's report. Furthermore, the Ban had separated around 1,545 children from their American parents and 3,460 parents from their American children (Patel, Panduranga, & McBrien, 2019, para. 2). Overall, the report revealed that 42,650 people, including tourists, business people, students, parents, children, and siblings, were banned from entering the United States because their country of origin was on the list of banned countries. This reflected the negative repercussions of the Muslim Ban on American families.

The Muslim Ban had also contributed to reducing drastically the number of visas delivered by the U.S. embassies in the countries concerned by the Ban. The percentage was estimated at 50% after being 80% in the targeted countries. In this respect, nearly all individuals from the targeted countries longing to be admitted to the United States may achieve so if they get a waiver that shows and asserts that they may go through unpleasant and undue hardships if they do not get a visa. Besides, the waiver must show that they do not pose a genuine threat to the U.S. national security and that their entry would be beneficial to the United States. It is notable to mention that few people had been excepted from the ban, namely those dual citizens who travel to the USA on the passport of a non-banned country. Trump's administration, however, maintained that the waiver process guarantees the flexibility of the Ban and ensures that it is humanely applied. Yet, the State Department revealed that the visa applicants who benefited from the waiver

process were only 5%, which is very few comparing to the considerable number of applicants. For instance, less than 30% of children of American citizens had received waivers, and only 13% of spouses of American citizens had also received waivers (Patel, Panduranga, & McBrien, 2019, para. 6). This is inhuman; further, it is absurd that thousands of American families were torn just because their countries of origin are on the list of the banned countries. It is also so harmful that Trump's administration cannot grasp that separating and tearing families is harder than any other "undue hardships" one may encounter. This leads to the fact that politicians and policymakers must take into account all possible impacts while making laws that may drastically affect the lives of many people.

5. CONCLUSION

During his presidential campaign, Donald Trump showed unprecedented bigotry and hatred towards Muslims more than any other candidate of his party. This ensured his campaign momentum and raised his popularity among American voters. Capitalizing on Islamophobia was the heart of his campaign that, unexpectedly, enabled him at the end to defeat Hillary Clinton, the Democratic candidate, and become the 45th President of the United States. Right after his inauguration, he moved directly to fulfill his promise of "a complete and total shutdown of Muslims from entering the United States" through the issuance of the Muslim Ban. The latter embodied Trump's strategy of "structural Islamophobia", which refers to "the fear and suspicion of Muslims on the part of institutions—most notably government institutions" (Ayoub, & Beydoun, 2017, p. 217). It, therefore, troubled many American families as they were torn and separated just because their countries of origin were on the list of the Muslim Ban. Last but not least, the Muslim Ban, along with other bad policies and stances, proved that Trump was swimming against the tide and led to a sharp decline in his popularity which caused him by the end his office in the White House, thereby leaving it to a new president, Joe Biden.

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