

# Islamophobia trends in the United States

MGA 60710 Geographical Information Systems  
Abeera Akhtar

## INTRODUCTION

Islamophobia is referred to as anti-Muslim hostility, or negative attitudes towards Islam and Muslims. It has increased over the years within the United States, as stated by a new report by the Institute for Social Policy and Understanding. According to the Pew Research Center, assaults on Muslims have surpassed 9/11 levels, and experts have attributed this increase to President Trump's anti-Muslim rhetoric, and the growing populism in the country.

This research in this paper aims to determine:

- 1) What is the relationship between percentage of Muslim population within a state and incidents of Islamophobia?
- 2) What kind of measures are being taken to counter Islamophobia and where?
- 3) What connection does state party orientation have with incidents of Islamophobia over the years?

## METHODS AND MATERIALS

### Data

This analysis aims to understand Islamophobia across the United States. The latest number of Muslims in the US was provided by the Pew Research Center. The data on the state voting was curated through the National Conference of State Legislatures. Data on incidents of Islamophobia, and events to counter them was available through Grinnell College's, "Mapping Islamophobia Project".

### Methodology

Choropleth maps are used to depict the percentage of Muslims in America by state, with points depicting incidents of Islamophobia and efforts to counter it. It is also used to depict the state voting patterns and how they connect with incidents of Islamophobia over the years.

A hotspot analysis is used to highlight areas with high and low levels of Islamophobia within the US.

## REFERENCES

Background Information:  
Easat-Daas, Amina (2019). "How to tackle Islamophobia - the best strategies from around Europe", The Conversation.  
Underwood, Alexia (2018). "What most Americans get wrong about Islamophobia", Vox

Data Sources:  
Spatial: US Census Bureau  
Muslim Population Data: Pew Research Center  
Voting Data: National Conference of State Legislatures  
Islamophobia Data: Mapping Islamophobia project, Grinnell College.

All figures are projected as North America Albers Equal Area Conic.

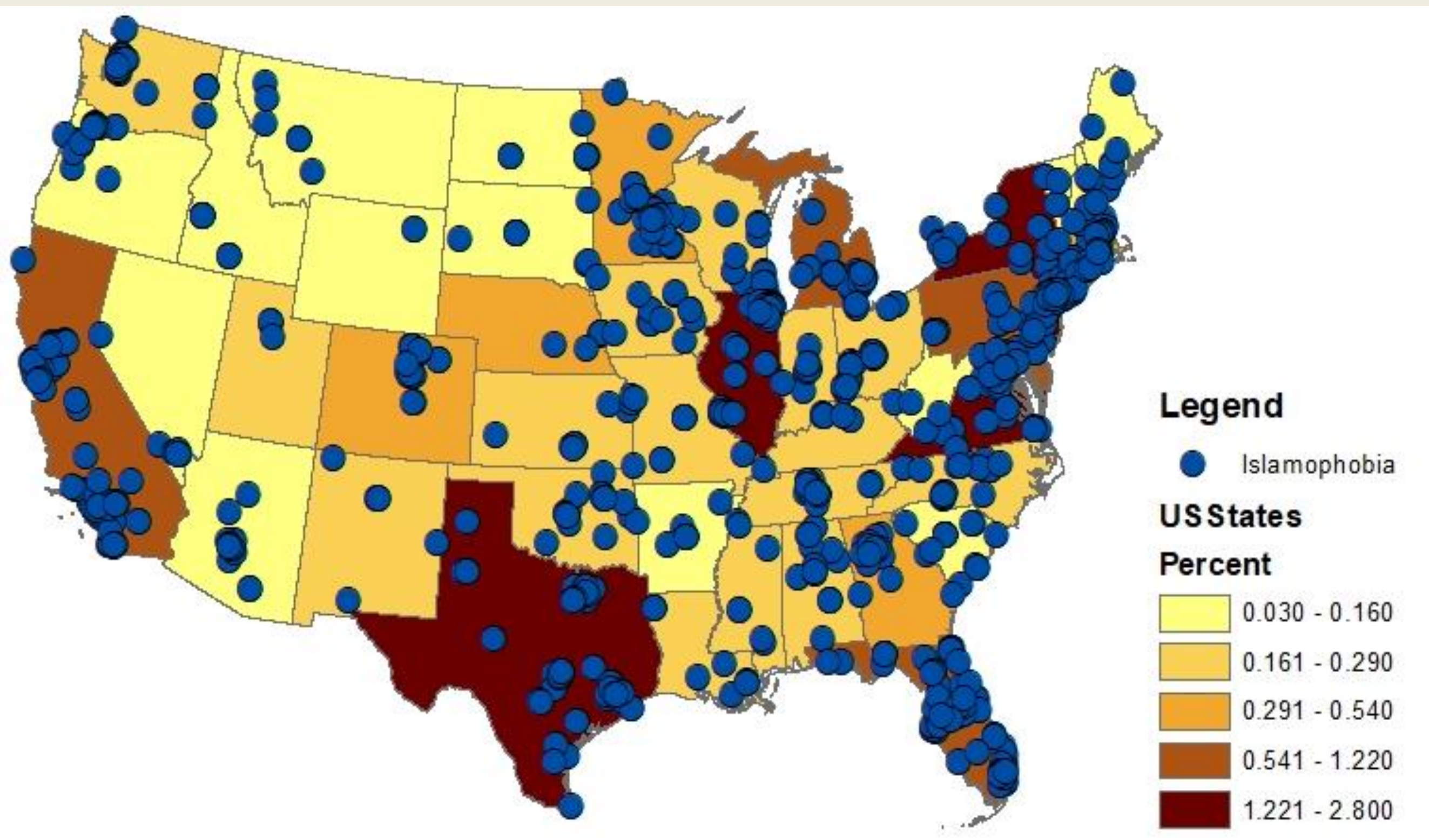
## DISCUSSION

Map 1 depicts that there are a greater number of Islamophobic incidents in areas with a higher Muslim population. Map 2 depicts how American Muslim communities are responding to the increased presence of anti-Muslim rhetoric and activities. As we see, the events to counter Islamophobia seem to almost mirror the areas of high Islamophobic incidents providing insight into how these communities are responding to such acts. Map 3 further highlights the hotspots where Islamophobia is high, and this corresponds to areas with a larger Muslim population, or proximity to areas with a high Muslim population. Yet, some areas such as Texas that seem to have high rates of Islamophobia are seen to be insignificant in the hotspot analysis which is an interesting observation.

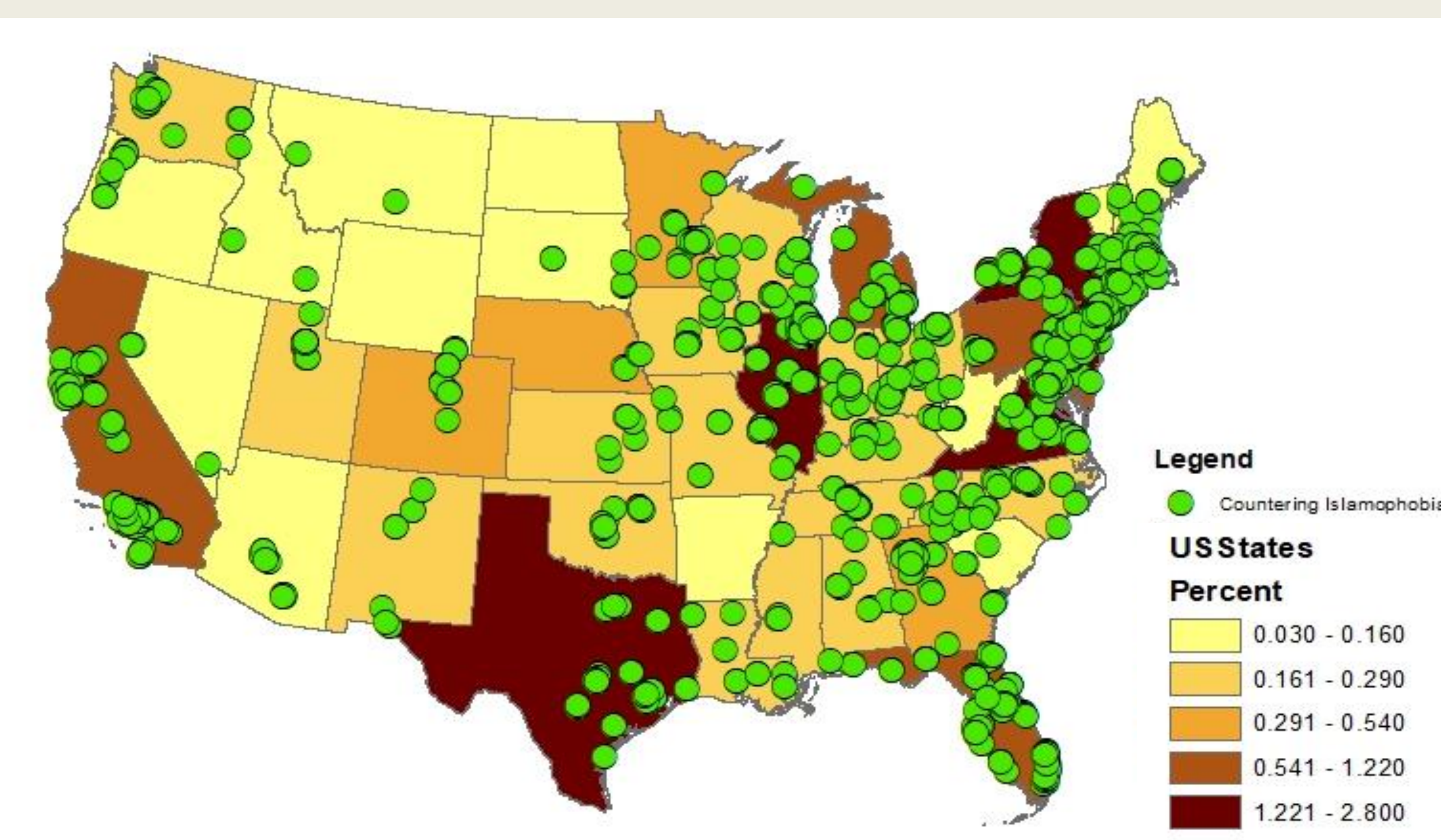
Table 1 depicts the most common acts of Islamophobia, while Table 2 depicts the most often used events to counter it. Islamophobic incidents are seen at a national level (political speech), community level (mosque attacks) and an individual level (discrimination), however, actions to challenge it is primarily at community level with activities such as community outreach and mosque open houses.

Maps 4 to 7 depict how incidents of Islamophobia have increased from 2008 to 2018. Given the anti-Muslim rhetoric over the years, this increase is expected however, there is a marked increase in 2016 particularly as the number of Republican states is seen to increase. Khaled Beydoun, author of, "American Islamophobia: Understanding the Roots and Rise of Fear", suggests that Trump's Muslim ban, and comments such as, "Islam hates us", has led to this rise in anti-Muslim incidents. This suggests a positive correlation with support for Trump and incidents of Islamophobia.

Map 1. Islamophobia Incidents 2008 - 2018



Map 2. Countering Islamophobia Incidents 2008 - 2018



Map 3. Hotspot Analysis of Islamophobia Incidents from 2008 to 2018 in the US.

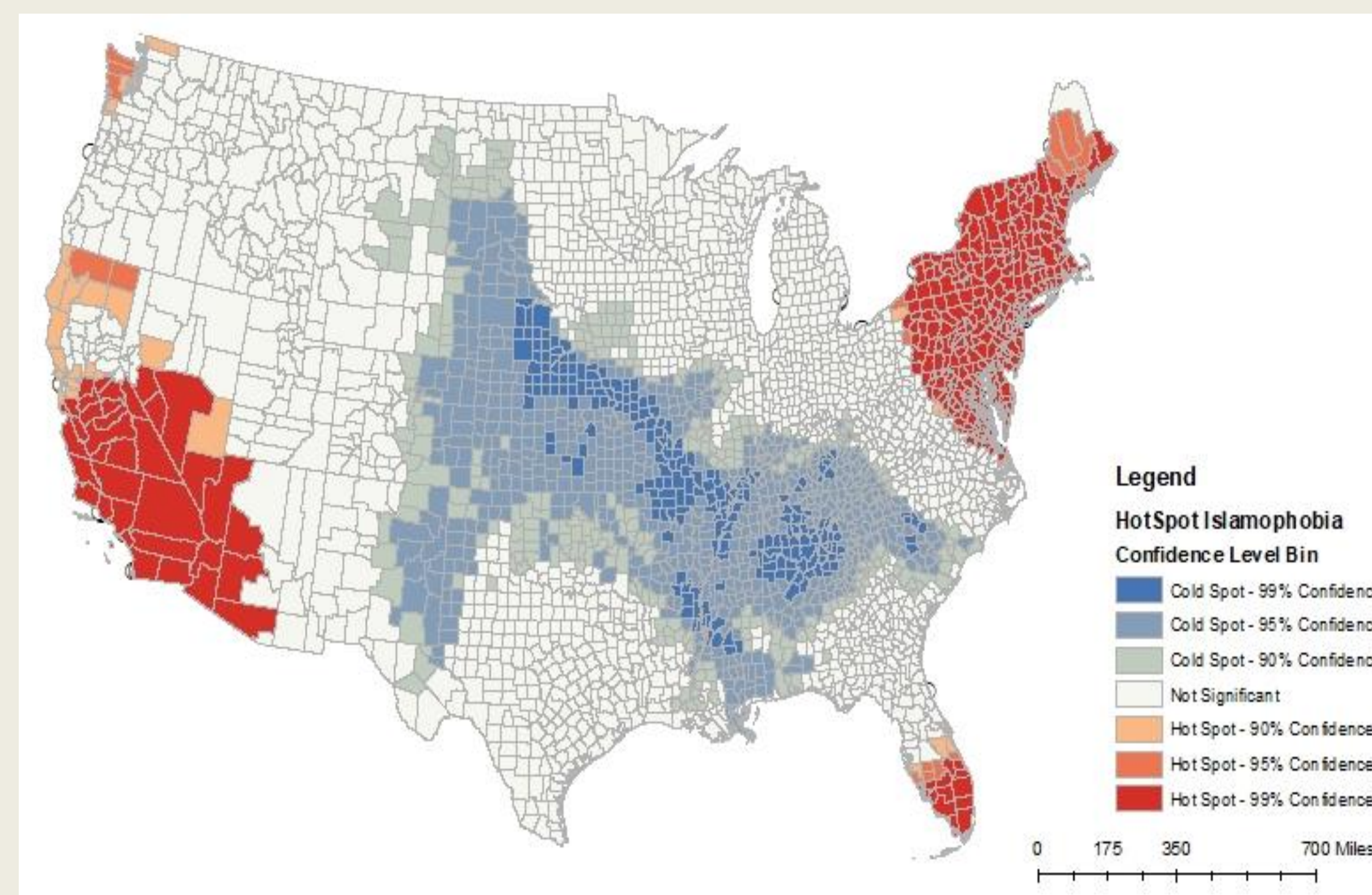


Table 1: Major incidents of Islamophobia

Incidents of Islamophobia
Violent Threats
Political Speech
Discrimination
Mosque
Political Outreach

Table 2: Major incidents to counter Islamophobia

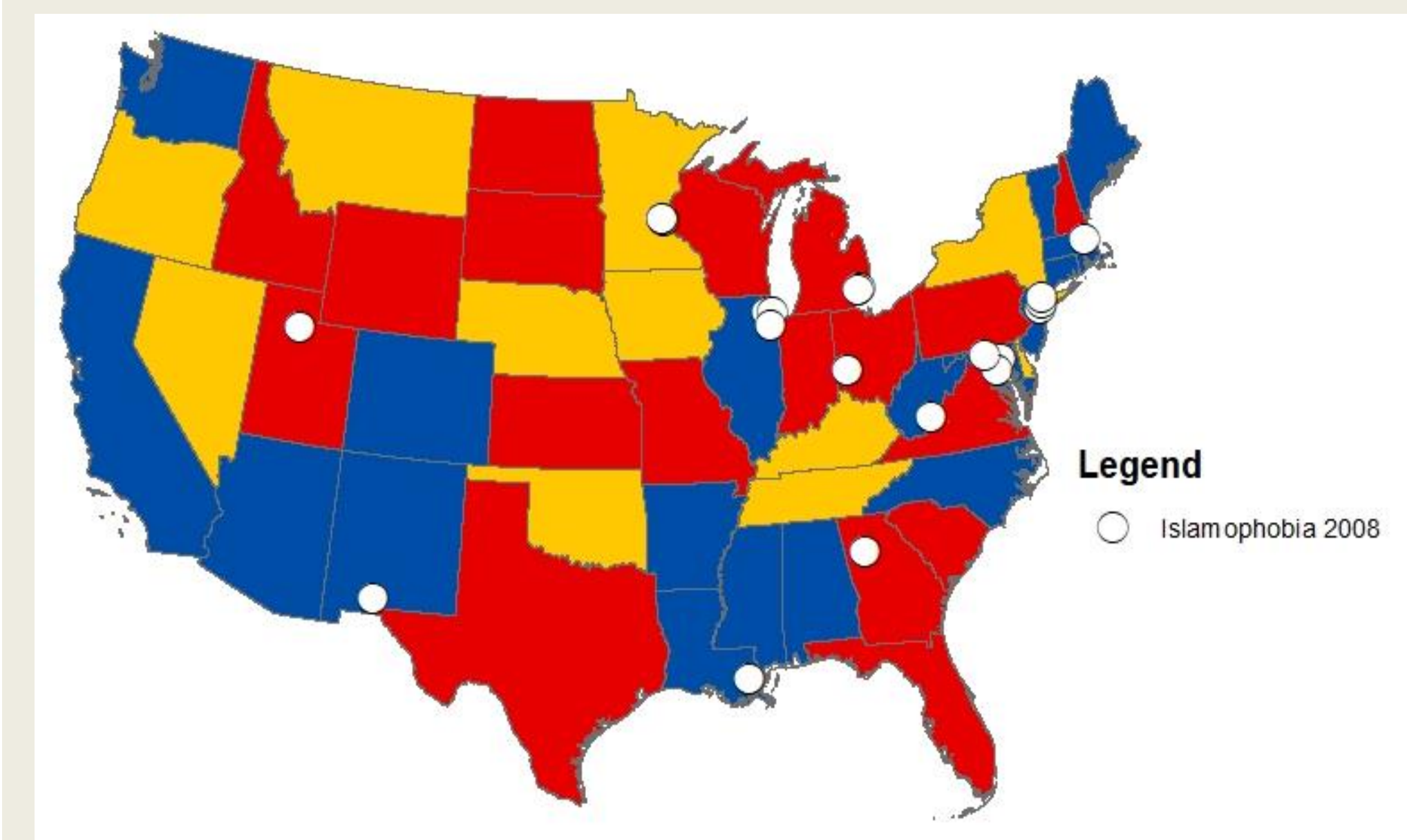
Countering Islamophobia Incidents
Community Outreach
Interfaith Effort
Mosque Open House
Political Activity
Political Outreach

## CONCLUSION AND POLICY IMPLICATION

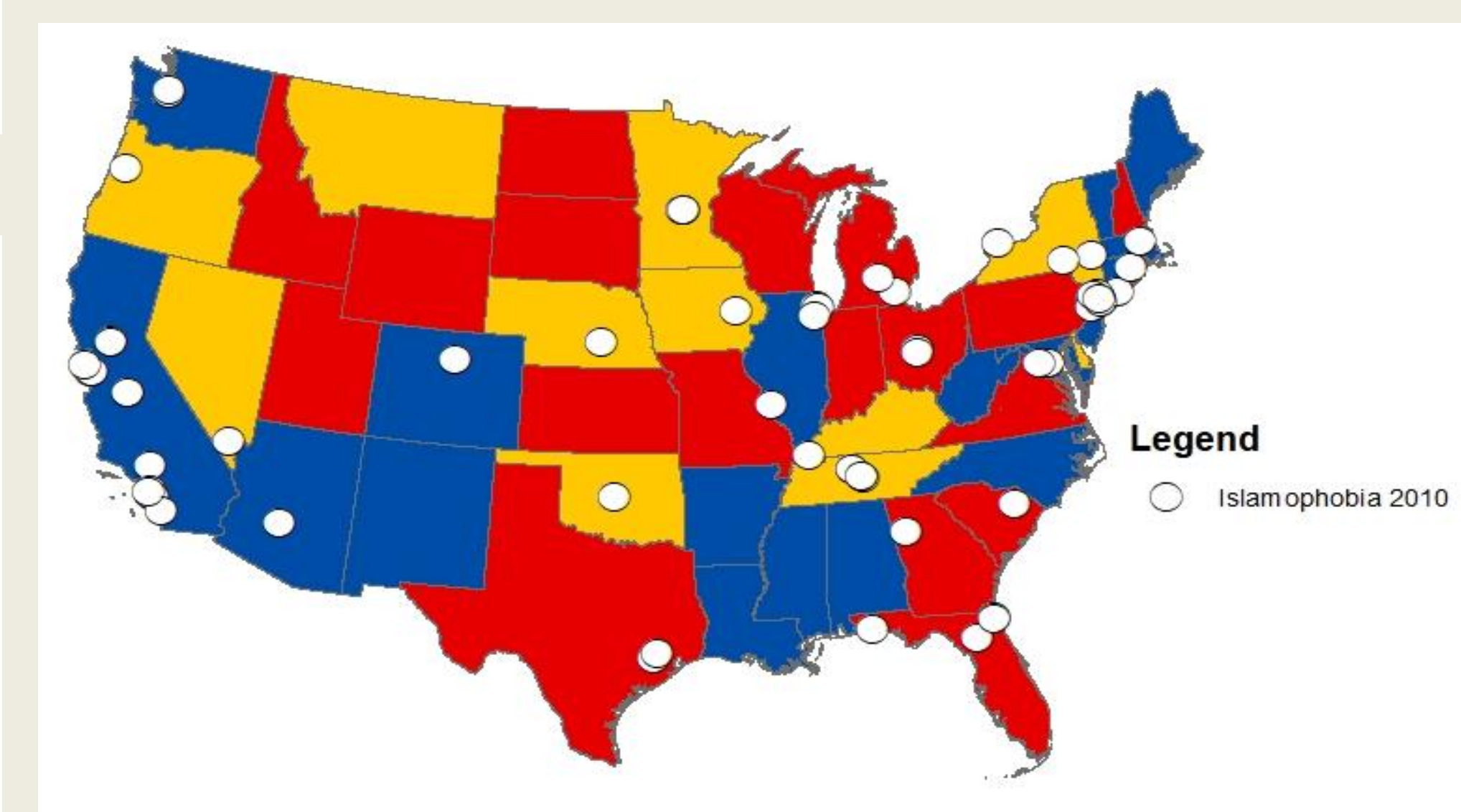
Islamophobia has increased in the United States however, so have efforts to challenge it. Yet, given that the anti-Muslim rhetoric is at a national level while community efforts are local, this may suggest why the anti-Muslim sentiment dominates. Hence, there is a need to push for positive Muslim sentiment at the national level.

This requires a four-pronged approach which involves: defining Islamophobia, documenting it, deconstructing its narrative, and then reconstructing positive narratives that reflect the reality, by national representatives with support from local communities.

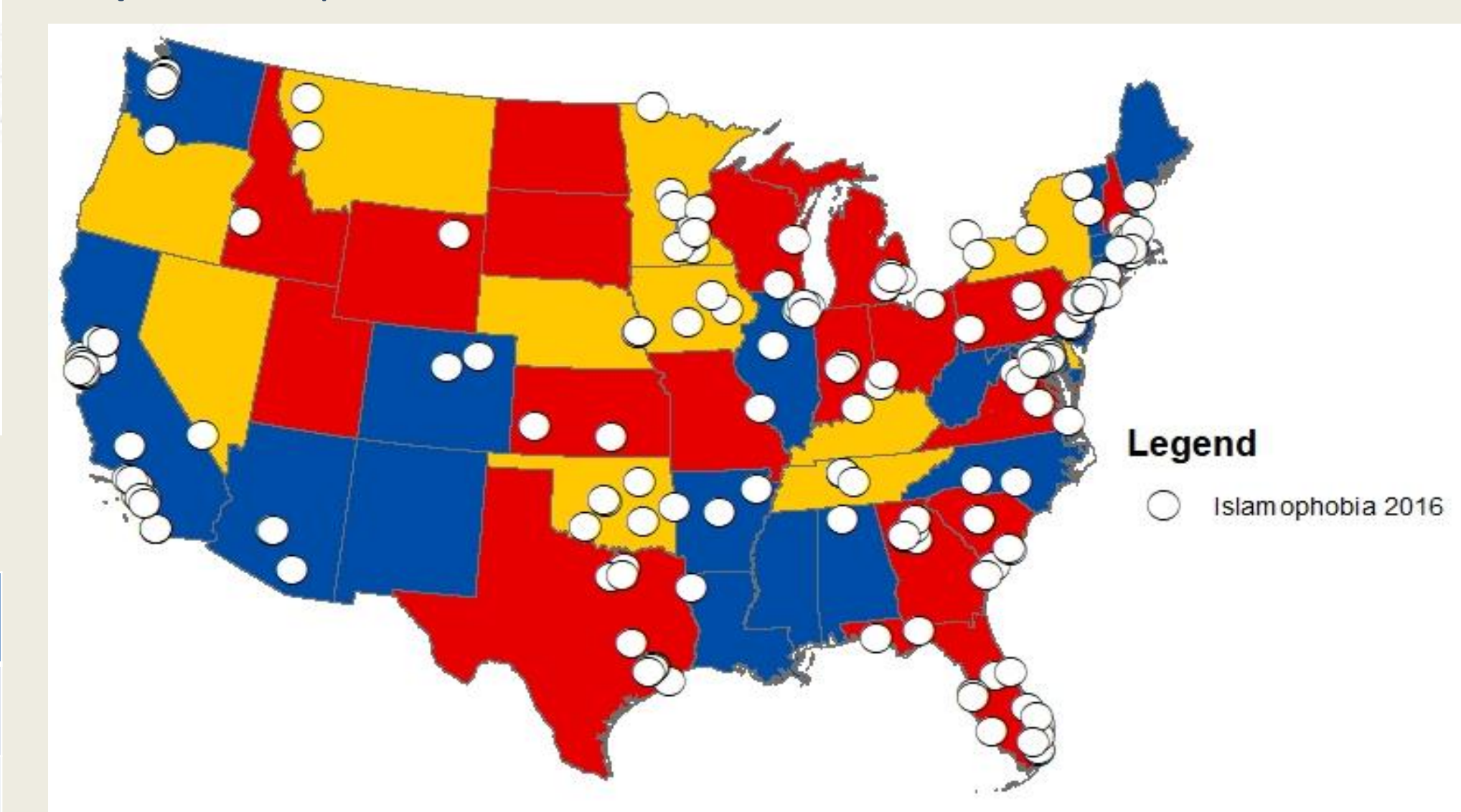
Map 4. Islamophobia 2008



Map 5. Islamophobia 2010



Map 6. Islamophobia 2016



Map 7. Islamophobia 2018

