

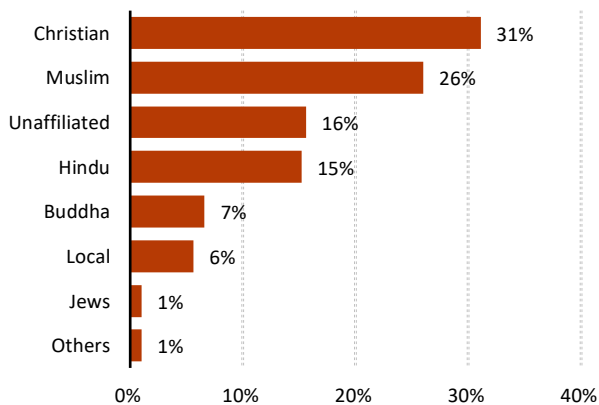
CHAPTER I

INTRODUCTION

A. Background

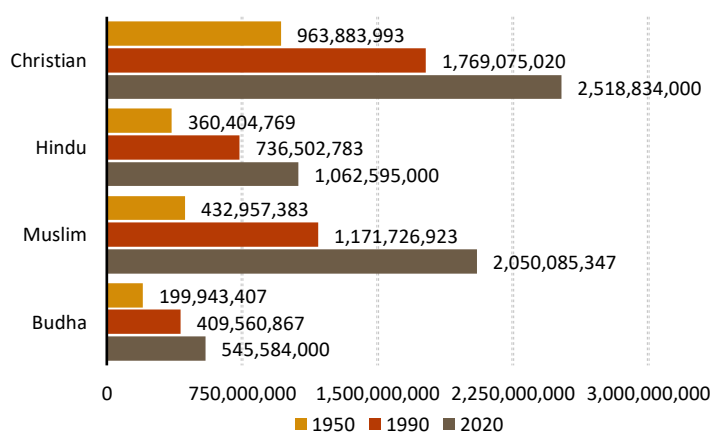
By 2015, Muslim population in South Korea has reached the number of 190.000 people (Tedjomukti, 2018). Mostly, they consist of non-Koreans. Today, the number of Muslim in the world has been significantly rising everywhere. In fact, Islam ranked second as the major religion in the world with Christianity in the first place. However, in the next few years, it is not impossible that Islam will become the world's first major religion. According to Pew Research Centre, Islam is a fast-growing major religion in the world today. The chart below shows the fact that the Muslim population in the world is now the second largest religious population in the world after Christianity (see chart 1. 1). Pew Research Centre has even predicted that the number of Muslim populations in 2050 will be as many as 2,7 billion people, or 29,7% of the world population.

Chart 1.1. Number of Religious Adherents in the World in 2020 (%)



Source: Pew Research Reports 2020

Chart 1.2. Number of Religious Adherents in the World in 1950s, 1990s and 2020



Source: TRT World

Looking back to the past years, the Muslim population in the 1950s (see chart 1.2) was only 432 million, or around 17% of the world's total population that almost touched 3 billion (Roser, Ritchie, & Ortiz-Ospina, 2019). However, until 2020, the number of Muslim populations has increased very rapidly, where the

Muslim population in the world has increased to the percentage of 26% of world population or around 2.05 billion people of the total world population that reaches 7.8 billion (Wormald, 2015). This figure has increased by 9% from the previous 17% (in the 1950s) to 26% of the total population in the world. Though the time span from 1950-now is not a short time, that does not undermine the fact that Islam is the fastest growing religion. Looking at a shorter range, the data from the 1990s until 2020 show that the Muslim population increased by more than 850 million people in just 30 years. This data shows a rapid increase when compared to the population growth of other religions.

With the development of the era, the society have been providing technology, information, transportation, ideas, etc. that are also developing and spreading from time to time. No wonder Islam can easily spread and develop everywhere. In fact, Islam is also spreading to countries that have never been in touch with Islam. However, Islam that has an identity that looks different (especially women with the hijab) may be considered strange by some people, leading believers to at times receive discriminatory treatment. Other than that, it is common for countries with Muslim minorities to find it difficult to get halal food and places to worship. One of these two things is the challenge for Islam to adjust to the local country it is entering. And one of the countries that Islam has begun to enter is South Korea.

According to Pew Research in 2015, as much as 24% of the world populations are Muslims. However, being the second largest religion in the world does not mean that Islam is the majority in a country. As in South Korea. Even though Islam is developing in South Korea, Islam is still a minority which is often considered 'outsider' by some of the Korean society, especially the old generation because South Korea is a homogenous country.

In its history, Islam in South Korea was introduced in the early 9th century in the era of the Silla dynasty. The arrival of Muslims at that time was enough to make Korean people interested and curious about Islam. That was the first time

Picture 1.1. Jang-ot (장옷)



Source: Devianart.com

the acculturation of Islamic culture happened in South Korea. Jang-ot (see picture 1), which is the Korean traditional clothing, is an example that is believed to be one of the results of cultural elements similar to Islamic teachings which oblige women to cover themselves (Bae, n.d.). But in 1427, Korea's contact with the Muslim world was cut off and Islam did not seem to survive. The disappearance of Islam and its culture in Korea is not without reason, but the isolationist policy of the Joseon dynasty under the leadership of King Sejong to limit contact between Koreans and people from foreign countries (Gana Islamika, 2018).

As time passes by, Islam is again introduced in South Korea in 1950 at which time the inter-Korean war was flaring up. South Korea, which at that time fought against neighboring North Korea, received voluntary assistance from Turkey (Gana Islamika, 2018). Turkey is known as a country with a majority Muslim population. Upon the entry of Turkish Muslims, the moment became a history of the return of Islam in South Korea which also encouraged the development of Islam in South Korea.

The spread of Islam in South Korea continues year after year. By the 1960s, South Korea's Muslim population had reached more than 3,000 people. Entering 1967, Islam has become known, and in that year the Korean Muslim

Federation (KMF) was founded in Seoul. The establishment of KMF not only brought opportunities for Muslims to disseminate the word of Allah and the Prophet Muhammad in South Korea through Qur'an as the holy book and guidance, but also became a way to build the first official mosque for Muslims in Korea. In 1976, the first Korean mosque was finally built in the capital city of South Korea, Itaewon, Seoul. By that time, Muslims in Korea have reached the number of almost 15.000 people and keeps increasing (Aktual, 2016). The mosques in Korea have also increased in other regions.

Not only in that period where the number of Muslims in South Korea increases, the Gulf War or Iraq War is one of the momentums which there is mobility and interactions between Korea and Iraq as Islamic country. South Korea, where the most common religion is Buddhism and Christianity has grown rapidly, has managed to send 3,600 troops to help reconstruction in Iraq between 2004 to 2008 (Yeo, 2021). Before the 3,600 troops were deployed, all soldiers received lessons on Arabic culture and cultures to help them fit in in Iraq. In between 2004 to 2008, the 37 soldiers then volunteered to learn more about Islam at the Seoul Mosque and then converted out of faith. Many of the 37 converts had some background in Arab culture, including having studied Arabic in college and travel to the Middle East (The Star, 2004). The period of sending Korean troops for peace in the Gulf War resulted in interaction and mobility between South Korea and Iraq, whose population is a Muslim majority.

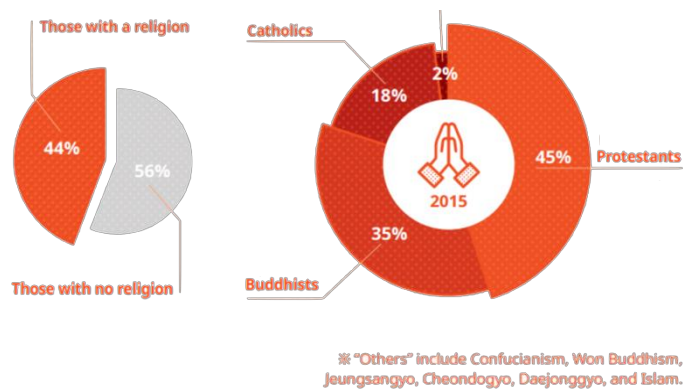
In 2006, the Korea Islam Herald detailed records of the names, gender, ages, and nationalities of the 80 people who converted to Islam in South Korea. Some 37 people among them are males (which was the troops) and 43 females; 71 of them are South Korean and nine are not; three of them are from the US, and there are one Russian, one Vietnamese, one Canadian, one Pakistan, one Filipino, and one Indonesian (Song, 2015).

However, the Korean society's view of Islam has been subjected to severe shocks. For example, the incident of South Korean hostage crisis in Afghanistan by the Taliban in 2007 became a turning point in the development of the spread of Islam in South Korea. Since this incident, most media in South Korea have

described Islam as a bad religion (Gana Islamika, 2018). Korean societies are biased against Islam because of what they see in the media. Because of that, the first thing Koreans know about Islam is terrorism. However, it did not decrease the Muslim population in South Korea. In fact, a lot of Koreans are curious and interested in learning Islam, some even come to the Central Seoul Mosque and Islamic information center to learn more about Islam.

By 2015, there are 143,500 migrant Muslims residing in Korea, which is 1 in 10 foreigners (out of 1.756.000 foreigners). If you include Korean Muslims 56000, the total number of Muslims in Korea in 2015 is nearly 200.000 people. The number is so small compared to other religions that the Ministry of Culture still classifies Islam as an 'other religion' (see chart 1.3.). The number of Muslims

Chart 1.3. Size of Religious Group in South Korea



Source: Statistic Korea, 2015

in percentage is less than 1% of the total population in South Korea, even until the latest data (Hye, 2021). However, the number of Muslim Population in South Korea increased more than 54 times in 50 years from 3,700 in 1965. The number grows each year, especially the foreign Muslims that stays in South Korea (Jung, 2015).

The mobility seems to have an impact on the structure of the Korean society. Korean society is now more open to foreigners including Muslims and there is also the possibility to meet Muslims even if they just cross paths. From what they see (such as the behavior, attitudes of Muslims, how Muslims do not eat pork, how they worship and dress, etc.), it is possible that they are curious

about Islam. Moreover, from things that are happening around their environment, they can conclude that the portrayal of Islam on the media is sometimes not true.

With such circumstances, currently many Koreans are curious about Islam. The number of Muslims who come to live or just travel makes Islam gradually become known in South Korea. However, Muslims in South Korea is faced with obstacles such as non-halal food, unavailability of praying rooms, etc. when Islam was not really known in South Korea. Until in 2015, South Korea's food agency finally declared that the government would manage slaughterhouses for chickens and cattle that follow halal guidelines (Salama, 2015). Not only that, these days, Muslims can find praying rooms a little easier even in airport and travel destination. Muslims in South Korea can now be more relaxed to live in South Korea.

There are lots of researchers who have done their research regarding the increased number of Muslims in any part of the world, but not so much with researches in South Korea because the development of Islam in South Korea is considered new. However, the writer found two of many studies regarding the increase of Muslim in South Korea. One of them is from a thesis titled “The Development of Islam in South Korea (1950-2006)” that belongs to Siska Nurmalasari. She analyzed about the impact of the entry of Islam on the lives of South Korean people in the social, economic, and political fields. The study shows that the entry of Islam into South Korea has had an impact on social and political-economic life in South Korea, which can be seen from several bilateral relations with Islamic countries that began to tighten when Islam began to emerge in South Korea. With the help from various Islamic countries, Muslims in Korea no longer feel worried about being a minority. This study is in line with the writer's thesis study of the increase of Muslim population in South Korea.

Other than that, a journal entitled “Muslim Communities in South Korea: Studies on the Korea Muslim Federation (KMF) 1967-2015 AD” by Siti Umayyatun explains the dynamics of Muslim communities in South Korea which growth is mobilized by the Korea Muslim Federation (KMF) organization. The journal focuses on KMF that has a mission in “trying to change the image of

Islam from violence to peace”. The journal concluded that the Muslim community in South Korea which was re-organized by the Korea Muslim Federation (KMF) is experiencing a dynamic growth. This journal is somewhat similar to this thesis, but the difference is that this journal uses KMF as the study case.

Therefore, from the two previous studies, the writer hopes to further analyze the factors affecting the increase of Muslim population in South Korea, not only through the Korean Muslim Federation.

B. Research Question

Based on the background explained, the research question can be formulated as **“How does Korea respond to the growth of Muslims in South Korea?”**

C. Theoretical Framework

In analyzing the question contained in this thesis, the writer uses the framework of globalization and international cooperation to answer the research question.

1. Globalization

Globalization is a process that unites various world entities from territorial boundaries. The process of removing these boundaries can have certain indirect impacts on existing structures in the international sphere (Gills & Thompson, 2006). Globalization is a time when there is an increasing relationship between people, ideas, goods, and other things that transcend national boundaries. The focus of globalization is on how geographical and national barriers are transcended with the help of technology, media and so on.

According to Waters, globalization is a social process where geographical boundaries are not important to socio-cultural conditions, which are ultimately assimilated into one's consciousness. For Lodge, globalization is defined as both fact and process. The fact is that people and nations are becoming more intertwined than they have ever been. The worldwide flows of trade, investment, and capital, which are linked to the degradation of the ecosystem on which all life depends, are the measures of interdependence. Globalization is a process that involves both technology and human aspects.

Globalization is also defined as the existence of interdependence between one nation and another, between one human and another through trade, travel, tourism, culture, information, and extensive interactions so that state boundaries are getting narrower. This definition of globalization has also been conveyed by experts such as Scholte, who said that globalization is a process of individuals, groups, communities, and countries interacting with each other, relating, depending on and influencing one another, which crosses national borders. Other than that, Nye and Keohane classify the dimension of globalization as follows:

1. **Economic globalization** refers to the long-distance movement of commodities, services, and capital, as well as the information and assumptions that accompany market trade.
2. **Military globalization** refers to long-distance dependency networks involving the use of force, threat, and promise of force. The "balance of terror" between the United States and the Soviet Union during the Cold War is a notable example of military globalism.
3. **Environmental globalization** refers to long-distance transfer of materials in the atmosphere or oceans, or biological substances like viruses or genetic materials, that have an impact on human health and well-being. For example, like the COVID 19.
4. **Social and cultural globalization** includes the movement of people, ideas, information, and pictures. For instance, the spread of religions or scientific knowledge. Individuals' consciousness and views toward culture, politics, and personal identity are all influenced by social globalization at the deepest level. The movement of ideas is becoming increasingly independent of other types of globalization in the modern day, as the Internet cuts costs and globalizes communications (Held & McGrew, 2003).

In its application to this thesis, the writer points out that the process of globalization in influencing the increase of Islam in South Korea includes the dimension of 'Social and cultural globalization'. Globalization has given Islam the opportunity and the stage to disseminate da'wah widely. Globalization also

makes some people more open minded in accepting a culture that is different from their own.

2. Transnational Mobility

The concept of “mobility”, according to Ionesco, Mokhnacheva and Gemenne covers various forms of human movement and encompasses the ability to migrate as well as the possibility of migration (Koehn, 2018). Mobility does not only occur from one area to another, but also occurs in bigger form such from one country to another as globalization has removed national boundaries and also removed the barriers between high moving costs, regional topography and transportation. The loss of barriers between it encourages people to carry out transnational mobility. In the new millennium, the movement or mobility of people between countries, both permanent and temporary, has been one of the central dimensions of globalization. In other words, globalization has removed the barriers for people to move between countries and even between continents (Haryono, 2017).

In line with Ionesco et al., Lindley added that migration requires “a stay of some substantial duration”; “rather than just visiting, the migrant is establishing some kind of a [open-ended or temporary] regular life in the place of destination” (Lindley, 2014). The point is, mobility of the population is divided into two. The first type is permanent mobility, which is the movement that carried out by the people is intended to move and stay in other places. Meanwhile, the second type is non-permanent (circular) mobility, this movement is intended only temporarily, usually to work and earn money or it can also be for the purpose of conducting research.

The key sign of a Globalization is in the form of a very fast and rapid increase or development in all movements, ranging from the flow of money or trade, democratic values, cultural products, and media. However, the most important of all these conditions of movements is the flow of human mobility that eventually affects other aspects. Korea, which has been treated as a relatively homogenous entity, often represented by the myth of single ethnicity, has recently emerged as another hub in global migration. While the drastic increase in the

number of people migrating in and out of South Korea is remarkable, it is also worth noting “a shift in Korea’s stance from being predominantly a migrant-sending to a migrant-receiving country”. Transnational mobility also brings interactions from one another that eventually possible for changes to be happen. As for example seen in the background, the mobility of Korean troops in the period of Iraq war, makes the possible changes for non-religious people to become Muslims.

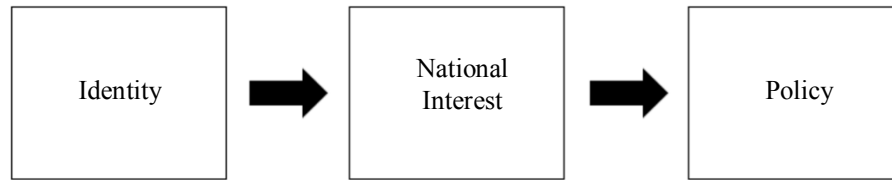
3. Constructivism

Constructivism, according to Alexander Wendt, is a structural philosophy predicated on the idea that agents are socially connected. Ideas, norms, and identities—the three elements of constructivism—are non-material elements that might influence an actor's behavior in international relations. Identity is the basis of interest, which will determine action. This explains that the interests of the state are formed according to the identity of the country, where the identity itself is formed by the actors within the country through existing ideas, ideas, and norms. So that the construction of the social world that comes from humans (actors) is not given, and is something that is outside of scientific research and theoretical explanations of its laws. Constructivism assumes that the social world is intersubjective, because it gives meaning to humans who contextually construct, understand, and live in it. Thus, the social world in which there is an element of IR is not permanent but keeps changing according to the same understanding of each actor (Bakry, 2017).

Social facts are the result of human-made constructions whose existence depends on the actions of humans themselves. Likewise, facts about phenomena or issues in IR which are the result/output of human construction and depend on human actions. So that the international system is not given but can be changed from the understanding of each actor. Constructivism sees actors in the international system as being in their environment, influencing and changing them. Thus, the behavior of countries in IR is shaped by various socially constructed factors such as the identity, attitudes and beliefs of decision makers (Wendt, 1992).

According to Alexander Wendt, constructivism is a structural theory that has assumptions, namely (1) the state is the main actor in IR and the unit of

Picture 1.2. The Policy-Making Process in Constructivist Theory by Alexander Wendt



Source: Research Gate 2013

analysis in international political theory; (2) the main structure in the international system is intersubjective, not material like neo-realists and neo-liberals; and (3) the identity and interests of the state are built on the social 'construction' they have built, and are not given. From the three points above, a country will form ideas/ideas in understanding the phenomenon of IR based on the structure in which they interact with each other, and act on the presumption of the construction they have created (Bakry, 2017).

In addition, the constructivist theory is built based on four assumptions according to Joseph Grieco, namely: (1) a form of interest, whether individual, group, or state is not given, but is formed from the identity of the actors and how other people see the actors; (2) the factor of ideas/ideas—culture, science, religion, and normative beliefs—as forming identity; (3) individual elites both within a country become the most important actor to influence the perspective and behavior of people in a country in the international system, and; (4) the role of communication or interaction between elites and the networks in which they operate in the context of forming and changing identities to strengthen ideas and beliefs (Grieco, Ikenberry, & Mastanduno, 2015).

From the explanation above, it can be understood that the phenomena that occur in International Relations (IR), are the result of human construction in viewing the international world and are not given. The policy-making process carried out by IR actors according to a constructivist approach is precisely because of the national interest that is motivated by their respective identities.

By using constructivism, the writer can analyze how the Korean government and the society adapt to accept Islam and Muslim in South Korea and what kind of responses and changes has Islam brought to South Korea. As seen on picture 1.2. of how policy is made in constructivist theory, the writer can put an example of how Islam as the identity can show off South Korean national interest such as how South Korea sees at Islam more in the economic field. Within that, Korea then saw Muslims as a potential market. As a result, there have been proposals and policies regarding halal tourism which have been heard a lot in recent years.

D. Hypothesis

RQ: How does Korea respond to the growth of Muslims in South Korea?

The response of Korean to the growth of Muslims in South Korea can be hypothesized as:

1. With the increase of Muslims in Korea, the Korean government and society began to open up and create tolerance for diversity and religious differences. It also has an impact on the openness of the perspective of the Korean government and society towards Muslims and Islam due to the large number of direct (Muslim tourists, Muslim residents, and Korean Muslim) and indirect (social media) mobility. As well as how Islam and Muslim influence Korean in making policies.
2. Within the increase of understanding of Korean society towards Islam, society and government sees the urgency of Muslims and becomes aware of the needs of facilities for Muslims as a form of openness to Islam.
3. With the open perspective of the Korean community and government as well as the provision of facilities for Muslims, it shows that Korea accepts the arrival and presence of Muslims in Korea.

E. Purposes of Writing

1. To analyze the way of how globalization and transnational mobility can construct new point of view towards Islam and Muslim in South Korea that affects to the increase of understanding and awareness towards Muslim and Islam.

2. To provide an overview of how the response of Korean towards the growth of Muslims in South Korea.

F. Research Method

1. Data collection technique

The writer will use qualitative method that emphasizes the library research technique to gather the data which is through collecting secondary sources of data such as journals, books, news, report, and other resources such as the internet media as well as other related sources, to look for the information to support the data of this undergraduate thesis to be able to complete the research.

2. Data analysis technique

This study uses explanative analysis technique which is by collecting data as many as possible. Data related to the object of analysis will be explained systematically to show the relation among variables and finally show the answer.

G. Scope of Research

The research is limited to find out the response of Korea in facing the growth of Muslims in South Korea. The important events are highlighted since the beginning of entrance of Islam in Korea to now, where Korean and Muslim became more interconnected in accepting and combining each other's culture. This limitation is to enable the writer to stay focused and to facilitate research and data collection.

H. Organization of Writing

In this research, the writer divides the topics into several chapters in which each of chapter will influence each other systematically. Therefore, the following is the order in which the writing in this undergraduate thesis is organized:

CHAPTER I explains the introduction of the research which covers the background, research question, theoretical framework, hypothesis, method of research, scope of research and organization of writing.

CHAPTER II explains how Islamic da'wah in Korea is spread in time of series and how Islam is acquiring exposure in South Korea.

CHAPTER III analyzes the response of how Korea sees the growth of Muslims in South Korea and what things have been transformed (halal food, praying room, etc.).

CHAPTER IV covers the overall conclusion of the writings.