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The American University in Cairo
School of Global Affairs and Public Policy

Islamophobia in South Korea with a Focus on Muslim Migrants

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A Thesis Submitted to
The Middle East Studies Center

Under the Supervision of Dr. Robert Mason

Fall 2017

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Abstract

Much academic research has analyzed the issue of Islamophobia and how Muslims are often represented in a negative or stereotypical way in Western countries. There is little research focusing on this phenomenon in East Asia, and specifically, in South Korea. This thesis attempts to fill this gap by shedding light on this particular topic in South Korea, in explaining why Islamophobic attitudes were particularly pervasive among certain sectors including right wing politicians and Protestants in the country between 2014 and 2016. Despite the visible presence of a Muslim minority since the 1990s in South Korea a decade before 9/11, the debate that Muslims could be a potential security or cultural threat and thus should be assimilated into the relatively homogenous Korean society has prevailed. This case study is important because Islamophobic sentiments, such as negative perceptions and prejudices against Islam and Muslims, have recently spread in the South Korean society affecting the Muslim minority in the aftermath of 9/11, and following an incident where Korean citizens were kidnapped by the Taliban in Afghanistan in 2007. This phenomenon has been further fueled by a series of interconnected terror attacks throughout the world mainly conducted or inspired by ISIS since 2014. The research for this thesis is based on an in-depth discourse analysis of the roots of Islamophobic discourse in South Korea with special reference to securitization theory, which posits that the analysis of issues through the frame of security contributes to the creation of hostile public discourse and places national interests above other issues like tolerance and acceptance. It also investigates how security and political discourses regarding Muslims have been formulated, followed by an analysis of the social discourse, media coverage, and online discourse. This thesis deals with online discourse by exploring the nature of Islamophobic attitudes via a case study on Twitter and the religious discourse by looking in detail at Christian-Muslim relations.

CHAPTER 1: INTRODUCTION

Unlike many Western countries, South Korea has not had a significant history of cultural polarization and discrimination (Baker, 2006). It has generally been described in academia as a mono-ethnic society which has seen almost zero immigration throughout its long history (S. Kim, 2010). However, both rapid economic growth and the impact of globalization have moderately-transformed South Korea from a mono-ethnic to a diverse ethnic labor market during the second half of the 20th century (Kang, 2010). The continuing influx of Muslim migrant workers into South Korea, who are currently estimated around 135,000, resulted significantly from a huge demand for blue collar labor in industries such as manufacturing, and the repercussions of interactions with other countries mainly from Asian countries with large Muslim populations. A steady flow of Muslim migrants arriving in South Korea mostly from Indonesia (24,789), Uzbekistan (23,865), Bangladeshi (8,076), and Pakistan (3,825), has contributed to this growth (S. Her, 2015). Current estimates for the total number of Muslims in South Korea are around 145,000, who are working mainly in manufacturing industries (Ahn, 2015 & Baker, 2006). Muslim groups from foreign countries are generally divided into three blocks: those that are mainly Muslim migrants (135,535) from predominantly Islamic countries, marriage-migrant Muslims (5,553), and converted Muslims who are mostly married to foreign Muslim migrants (2,703) in the country (Ahn, 2015). There are 1.42 million foreign residents among the total population of 50 million in South Korea (Ministry of Justice, 2013).

The emergence of a heightened awareness about foreigners has slowly followed this observed migration pattern: Hate speech directed toward Muslim migrants and multicultural people and families, has spread pervasively in South Korea (S. Lee, 2015). Especially in the

aftermath of 9/11, and following an incident where Korean citizens were kidnapped by the Taliban in Afghanistan in 2007, Islamophobic sentiments have affected the Muslim minority (S. Her, 2015). This phenomenon has been further fueled by a series of interconnected terror attacks mainly conducted or inspired by ISIS (Islamic State in Iraq and Shams) throughout the world. According to analysis by South Korean researcher Koo, Gi Yeon (2016), negative search terms related to Islam and Muslims increased in earnest on social media since ISIS officially declared Caliphate State in Mosul, Iraq in 2014.

Despite the rise in anti-Muslim attitudes in the country, the South Korean government and politicians have failed to establish relevant laws investigating, prohibiting or punishing hate speech and hate crimes against Muslims. In South Korea, there is no relevant law similar to the hate crime statute laws of the United States, and consequently it is difficult to determine the nature of Islamophobia in South Korea (M. Yang & H. Lee, 2008). There are even no official statistics on hate speech or hate crimes against Muslims because there is no legal definition of hate crimes in South Korea. Moreover, the South Korean government conceived the introduction of an official labor migration system in order to systemically control and manage foreign workers (Kim, 2010 & Her, 2015). This system has the potential to impact the acceptance of the majority groups towards the minority groups including Muslims, as the system would label foreign migrants as temporary sojourners, partly excluding them from the South Korean society many of them have lived in for several years (S. Her, 2015). Under these circumstances, many Muslim migrant workers encounter various challenges during the adaptation process, such as discrimination and Islamophobic sentiment (S. Her, 2015). Recently, South Korea has experienced increasing public debate about foreign migrants, minorities and related government policies (J. Yi, 2015).

The purpose of this thesis is to contribute to a wider understanding of the challenges

the growing Muslim minority has recently faced in South Korea. This study focuses on exploring the roots of Islamophobic discourse in South Korea by securitization frame and the deep-rooted images of Islam and Muslims in the country. Analyzing these images is critical as they lay the groundwork for the Islamophobic discourse in South Korea. This investigation also allows for an interesting study of security complexities, multiculturalism, and the media framing concerning Muslims, which will help shed light on how security discourse functions within different contexts. In addition, this study examines how anti-Muslim groups such as right wing politicians including former President Park Geun-Hye, who led the ruling Saenuri party, as well as conservative Protestants living mainly in Seoul, play on the anxieties created by the potential threat in order to stir up anti-multiculturalism and Islamophobic sentiments. This is done by analyzing common rhetoric towards Muslims used by these actors. Some of them, for example, propose a nationalistic ideology that tends to exclude other ethnics including Muslims. For them, national security requires a protection of the relatively mono-ethnic country against foreign influences, particularly from the Islamic world.

Furthermore, this thesis investigates how these same groups have instrumentalized the increasing global threat of ISIS to incite prejudice against Muslims, through security discourse, social pressures, religious discourse, and media framing. Following this discussion on the role of security discourse, this thesis will explore how social media outlets such as Twitter have become a powerful platform for these groups to spread anti-Muslim sentiments. According to a survey, around 5 million South Koreans were using Twitter in 2011. Also, Twitter is an important media platform because it allows people to stay up-to-date with the news and access and connect through the exchange of quick and frequent messages.

In this way, this study contributes to an understanding on the roots of Islamophobic discourse in South Korea and the motivation of those who perceive Muslim communities as

problematic and a major security concern.

Research Question and Argument

The main question of this thesis is to contextualize the Muslim experience in South Korea in order to discern the roots of Islamophobic discourse and inter religious intolerance towards the Muslim community in the country. The study of pervasive and deep-rooted images on Islam and Muslims is also important because these images have played a role in laying the groundwork for fueling Islamophobic sentiments in the country. In this sense, the main aim of this thesis is to determine whether there is Islamophobia against a migrant Muslim community in South Korea.

There has been little research on Islam through the lens of security and political discourse in South Korea compared to the West. This may be because these East Asian countries including South Korea, China, and Japan have not faced serious problems and challenges regarding Islam and do not have a large Muslim community like many Western countries. Thus, the lack of research about Islam and Muslims in South Korea leaves very little information for understanding the rise of Islamophobia in the region.

The research question is addressed through securitization theory by analyzing the political, social, religious and media discourse, as well as online framing of the migrant Muslim minority in South Korea, exploring certain sectors of South Korean society have exacerbated the existential threat of ISIS as an instrument of attack against this minority. This theory may help provide us with lens for analyzing the relations between the South Korean society and the Muslim community in the country. One of the most interesting characteristics of securitization theory is its emphasis on the construction and confrontation of security threats (Buzan & Hansen, 2009). In addition, this thesis examines how social media users, in particular Twitter users, play on the anxieties created by the potential threat.

Research Methods

This section discusses the use of the qualitative research methods and underlying assumptions regarding the reasons for Islamophobia in South Korea. This thesis aims to explore the dynamics of threat construction as relates to the framing of Islam and Muslims as an issue of security by means of a comprehensive and broad discourse analysis. The discourse analysis reveals that one of the most interesting features in the South Korean case is the construction of security threat. This research is concerned with discursive security discourse in the context of history of Islamophobia and the process of establishing the public agenda based on securitization as a theoretical foundation. The main method used is qualitative discourse analysis. It utilizes content analysis in specific occasions and incidents that call for complementary research. Qualitative research methods provide the researcher with a deeper understanding of complex issues, as every individual experiences phenomena differently in a given context where multiple realities coexist (Creswell, 2007). These multiple realities are constructed through individuals' social interaction with others (*Ibid*). In order to achieve the main goal of understanding the reasons for the roots of Islamophobia in multiple South Korean realities, qualitative research is a more suitable approach for this study than a quantitative research.

Furthermore, this research attempts to understand the four main factors that contribute to the spread of Islamophobic sentiments in South Korea. It will take a multi-method approach which incorporates primary and secondary research on Islam, Muslims and Islamophobia in South Korea because these are likely to be interlinked. Discourse analysis will provide an understanding and a background on many of the contemporary issues like Islamophobic discourse in South Korea. As stated above, the goal of securitization studies is to understand who securitizes, on what issues, for whom, why, with what results, and under

what conditions (Buzan, Waeve, & de Wilde, 1998). All these questions are addressed by each chapter of this thesis in five stages.

The first section will investigate that political discourse may play a key role in spreading Islamophobic attitudes in South Korea. This discourse serves to confirm whether Islam and Muslims are portrayed as a security matter. Islam has been framed through a security lens as a result of political discourse. This discourse, which is perhaps the most important factor of this thesis, securitizes the salience of conflict related to Islam by portraying Muslims as a security issue and, this is evident in policy speeches of securitizing agents who bundle Islam and Muslims with referent objects such as terror attacks and government policies regarding foreign migrants. The securitization of Islam in the South Korean case will be addressed by analyzing the history of security in South Korea, the open speeches of politicians, and the government's policies towards migrants including Muslims in the country.

Second, it is significant to investigate how South Korean society has responded to minority groups and the Multiculturalism trend in order to understand the background of Islamophobic discourse. In South Korea, social-approaches that integrate minority groups have been neglected for decades. In particular, this section will explore how anti-Muslim groups have behaved in the relatively mono-ethnic society by analyzing the responses of conservative politicians and Protestant groups through existing research and news coverage.

The focus of the third section is placed on understanding how some South Korean churches may have spread anti-Islam slogans and other hate speech towards Muslims. This prominent sector of South Korean society often uses the “us verse them” frame in response to the influx of Muslims into South Korea, reminding church attendees of the gradual Islamization happening in the country (J. Lee, 2011). This section also will analyze the

characteristics of South Korean Christianity, specifically Protestants, relying on existing research and news coverage regarding religious conflict between Christianity and Islam in the country.

The fourth section will investigate how South Korean media has described Islam and Muslims. South Korean media has a tendency to report on negative incidents related to Islam and the Middle East without significant challenge to it. This section demonstrates stereotypical Islam and Muslim images through analyzing the studies of news coverage on the Middle Eastern Issues. In this sense, the media discourse in South Korea will provide us insights regarding the way the topics of Islam and Muslims have been dealt with in the country.

The last section will investigate how online media plays a role in spreading and rooting images about Muslims by associating words such as terror, ISIS, war, and conflicts with Islam. This section will highlight how online media depicts Islam and Muslims in South Korea through existing research focusing on social media based on statistical analysis. In particular, analyzing Twitter cases will provide an insight on the way in which social media has contributed to the spread of Islamophobic images on internet.

The primary research will be supplemented by a statistical analysis of Twitter as a parameter to show how the South Korean society responded to the Muslim community after specifically significant events. In the fifth stage, the case study of social media focuses on Korean language Twitter. It is rational to choose Twitter as an indicator of Islamophobia because it is an important and high ranking social media platform in South Korea.

There may be drawbacks to using and analyzing data via social media sites such as Twitter. For example, there are issues related to anonymity and public and private posts resulting in a decrease in the reliability of information. Nonetheless, the case study is still

useful because it provides specific insight into emerging patterns of online Islamophobia appearing on Twitter. Moreover, although its findings cannot be generalized to all South Koreans regarding online Islamophobia, this research will give us a better understanding of how social media sites have been used to generate online feelings of Islamophobia. Therefore, it is meaningful to investigate the role of social media in spreading ideas about Islam and Muslims in South Korea since it plays a key role in framing anti-Muslim sentiments.

LITERATURE REVIEW

Theoretical Framework of Securitization and Threat

This thesis attempts to raise awareness about Islamophobia, commonly defined as the fear or hatred of Muslims and Islam, by using securitization theory proposed by Oren Weaver (1998) in order to study the South Korean case. Security is a very important concept related to Islamophobia because the perception of security plays a role in framing Islam and Muslims as a threat. Islam and Muslims have clearly been framed as a security threat in the last decade (Bonansinga, 2016). For this reason, security can contribute to the spread of negative perception that turns a phenomenon into a collective risk for societies and states (Bonansinga, 2016). The transformation from a social matter to a political and security matter then occurs.

The significant observation of Islamophobic sentiments coincided with the security concerns given to Islam. According to securitization theory, a phenomenon is a threat to security when it is framed by labeling something a security issue and subsequently it is becoming one (Weaver, 2004). This means that when securitizing actors adopt the rhetoric of security to convince the audience of the existential nature of the threat, it can be defined as a securitizing move (Bonansinga, 2016). To present an issue as an existential threat is to say that: “if we do not tackle this problem, everything else will be irrelevant” (Buzan et al., 1998).

Therefore, securitization theory can be used to understand the function and effect of political, social, and religious discourse, and the media's narratives, as it analyzes key-actors and how they articulate security threats to the public. This theory also represents the lens through which the vast majority of public opinion sees an issue of public concern (Buzan et al., 1998). For this reason, Bonansinga (2016) states that, "the securitization of an issue is strictly related to the political agenda. Once an issue has gained the status of security threat, it automatically enters the policy agenda." (p.3)

The securitization exercise constitutes three main factors: the securitizing agent, the referent object, and the audience (Barrios, 2013). This research attempts to use these three elements based on securitization theory as they relate to Islamophobic discourse in South Korea. For instance, the securitizing agent performs the speech and action such as anti-Muslim campaigns by framing a specific issue like ISIS as a threat to the referent object. Consequently, the audience decides whether they accept the securitization frame or not, by tolerating the breaking of rules or procedures that otherwise would have to be obeyed (Barrios, 2013).

As mentioned earlier, the main aims of the securitization theoretical approach are to elucidate "who securitizes, on what issues, for whom, why, with what results, and under what condition" (Buzan & Waeber, 1998). One of the objectives of this thesis is to apply the framework developed by Buzan, Waeber and de Wilde (1998) in order to demonstrate the characteristics of the securitization of Islamophobia in South Korea while investigating main possible factors that have caused the phenomenon. This research also focuses on the way in which securitizing agents have securitized Islamophobic discourse by using their rhetorical strategy like raising concerns about terrorism. This strategy is usually based on two steps: firstly, through a process of hyper simplification, Muslims are depicted as a homogenous

entity; secondly, rigid and impermeable boundaries are constructed between the majority and minority groups (Bonansinga, 2016). Furthermore, this thesis refers to the analysis of the security discourse, structure of hate speech and actions, and its components as enacted by the Korean conservative politicians, the government, media, and Christian churches.

Securitization is generally a process by which an issue is presented as an existential threat that calls for the placement of the issue in a condition of emergency, and justifies the adoption of special measures to handle it (Buzan & Hansen, 2009). In international relations, securitization is the process of state actors transforming subjects into a matter of security; an extreme version of politicization that enables extraordinary means to be used in the name of security (Weaver, 1998).

This theoretical framework helps to provide a better understating of Islamophobia in South Korea by using the lens of securitization to analyze this phenomenon. By applying this process to South Korea, this thesis reveals how the securitizing agents such as right wing politicians and religious groups create and fuel negative perceptions about Muslims and use media in order to receive support in South Korea. The construction of this perception is based mainly on hinting that Muslims could be potential terrorists and thus be security concern, presenting the potential Islamization of the society as a cultural threat, and increasing pointing illegal migrant workers as economic threats.

This thesis began as an interest in studying Islamophobia within the frame of security in South Korea, conceiving this issue as a security concern. Although anti-Muslim sentiments are not new in South Korea, it is meaningful to explore how the security discourse is constructed and the types of frames that conservative ruling and religious groups use to construct them. This thesis argues that these groups successfully securitize anti-Muslim sentiments by using a rhetoric that emphasize the security concerns and the use of security

discourse.

In order to analyze Islamophobic discourse in South Korea, this thesis uses existing literature regarding the historical background of Muslims and the development of Islamophobic discourse in South Korean society. The results of this case study will reveal four main factors that appear to significantly contribute to increasing anti-Muslim sentiments in South Korea: heavily securitized frame, social pressure on Muslims, the role of Protestants, and the deep-rooted negative images associated with Islam and Muslims in mass media and social media.

The first main factor will highlight political and policy discourse about Islam and Muslims. This discourse focuses on how security framing may profoundly influence in forming the misperceptions and negative attitudes towards Muslims. In the South Korean case, after the emergence of Islamic militants such as ISIS and its terror attacks in Europe, some right-wing ruling parties have attempted to obtain the attention of the public by inflating threats and exploiting people's irrational fears about Muslims (S. Han, 2016). Like this phenomenon, South Korean right-wing ruling party attempted to raise security concerns by using ISIS issues and political discourse. These movements have thrived gradually because security issues have been the main agenda used for its propaganda and gaining support during the times of uncertainty due to the securitization process. Moreover, the policy of the South Korean government towards Muslim migrants may have played a role in contributing to weaken the foothold of Islam and Muslim minority in the country. Certain policies of the government have not made it easier for foreigners to integrate into the society. Under these circumstances, examining the discourse between politicians, decision makers, and conservative ruling groups is very important when it comes to addressing the security matters being used to fuel Islamophobia. In this sense, the first factor that may contribute to

Islamophobic sentiments will be analyzed by looking at the assessments or public speeches of right wing politicians, intelligence authority, and political activities of conservative civil groups.

The second factor that will be analyzed is social discourse, based on the debate surrounding the mono-ethnic ideology, the Muslim migrant community, and the lack of legal protection in tackling anti-Muslim sentiments. The social pressures may increase inter religious intolerance in South Korea. Current high unemployment among young people coupled with low economic growth can be seen as adding to the spread of intolerance regarding policies of multi-culturalism, which directly affects Muslims living in South Korea. This maybe because young Korean people tend to believe that multi-culturalism might strengthen their unemployment, consequently, it leads them to be less tolerant to certain migrant issues due to the dissatisfaction. In this way, this section will investigate some variables that can be associated as social factors, mainly focusing on a cohesive social entity ideology that maybe related to Islamophobic sentiments. This section also will study the relationship between Orientalism and Islamophobia in order to understand the background of the ideology in South Korean history.

The third factor related to Islamophobic sentiments in South Korea is religious discourse: Religion is used to justify Islamophobia, in particular with the Korean Protestant churches. Some conservative Protestants in the country have repeatedly produced negative images and hate speech about Islam through media, and have gone to the streets to demonstrate in anti-Muslim campaigns. Some fundamentalist missionaries have openly warned church leaders and Christians of gradual Islamization. These groups have elevated the degree of their argument couple with the ISIS-inspired terrorist attacks by focusing on their brutality and the potential threat to Christianity in South Korea. Therefore, it is meaningful,

in this section, to explore the structural role of Protestants and why negative perceptions about Islam and Muslims are pervasive in South Korean churches. In this way, this section will reveal the relationship between Protestantism and Islamophobia in the country.

The fourth factor that may contribute to Islamophobia is deep-rooted images of Islam and Muslims through media coverage and stereotypical rhetoric that justifies anti-Islam attitudes by framing Muslims as potential security threats. This factor can play a role in contributing to the spread of negative images about Islam and Muslims in Korean society. In fact, the media, which can heavily influence society, has a tendency to condone Islamophobic attitudes in the name of ‘freedom of speech’ (Bryfonski, 2012). The social and economic problems make the public more susceptible to populist rhetoric that is exacerbated by the media (Bonansinga, 2016). In this sense, this section will investigate how mass media in South Korea deals with Islam and Muslim issues. This section also will attempt to explain the background of the tendency of South Korean media’s reports regarding the Middle Eastern issues.

The last factor that may contribute to Islamophobia is online media platforms in South Korea. In particular, social media has recently become the platform of conservative groups for spreading negative images about Muslims. To some extent, the role of social media is comprehensible because a clear characteristic of social media is that it tends to allow the propagation of exotic, strange, and weird issues from attracting attention of the general public. However, it often allows for the portrayal of some negative events involving Muslims as religiously motivated, while providing viewers and readers with accessible nuggets of prejudice and misperceptions towards Muslims through specific frames. Additionally, social media has also strengthened anti-Muslim sentiment by spreading hate speech about Islam and Muslims in South Korea. Therefore, it is important to analyze how Protestants use mass and

social media in order to spread their ideologies regarding Islam and Muslim issues in this section.

History of Muslims in South Korea

The history of Korean contact with Islam goes back to hundreds of years. Although Korean sources from the Silla Dynasty (B.C 57-A.D 935) mention nothing about Islam, Muslims, or Arabs, there are some references to the Korean peninsula in early world geographies by Muslim scholars (Baker, 2006). The Korean peninsula's first encounter with Islam was during the Goryeo Dynasty (A.D 918-1392), which followed the Silla dynasty, when a few Central Asian Muslims moved into Korea (Baker, 2006). According to Lee Hee Soo, a Korean researcher of history and Muslim-Korean relations, the first such reference appears in Ibn Khurdadbih's *General Survey of Roads and Kingdoms*, which was published in the mid-9th century (H. Lee, 1997). Despite these early encounters, the religion of Islam and the Islamic community was not present in the Korean peninsula in this period. Not only are there no records of Muslims from 1427 through 1910, there was not much Muslim, Arab, or Central Asian influence on the peninsula during the Chosen Dynasty, which followed the Goryeo Dynasty, and which is often labeled a "Hermit Kingdom" (Baker, 2006). After the end of the Korean War (1950-1953) and the collapse of the Chosen Dynasty, Turkish forces reached the country through a United Nation's peace-keeping mission in support of the South Korean government (H. Cho, 1990). During the Korean War, the South Korean people often witnessed the practice of Islamic prayers by these soldiers, and even showed interest in this religion. Due to Turkish troops who stayed in South Korea, a true Korean Muslim community finally started to appear in the 1950s (Baker, 2006). Although those Turkish soldiers did not come to Korea to convert Koreans into Muslims, they did not turn away Koreans who came

to join them in their prayers (*Ibid*). Some Koreans who had become Muslim who lives in Manchuria, which is located in northeast China, spoke to the imam of the Turkish forces and agreed to help them form a Korean Muslim Community Center in 1955 (*Ibid*). Within one year after a formal Korean Muslim Community Center was established, it had over two hundred members (*Ibid*). One of the leaders of the Muslim community in South Korea, Umar Kim Jin-Kyu along with Sabri Suh Jung-Kil, visited Mecca, becoming the first Korean to carry out Hajj (Baker, 2006). The small Muslim community in South Korea grew between the 1960s and 1970s, fueled partially by religious conversions among Korean construction workers who went to the Middle East to work on mega projects such as power plants, factories, and aqueducts (Her, 2015). In 1976, the Korean Central Mosque, which is still the biggest mosque in the Korean peninsula, opened on a hill in Itaewon, in Seoul, South Korea. Since the establishment of this small Muslim community in the middle of the 20th century, some Muslim migrant workers in South Korea have married to native Korean women and some Koreans have converted to Islam.

Coinciding with this relatively recent increase in Muslim migrants to South Korea, the country has experienced anti-Muslim sentiments after 9/11. Although there were little anti-Muslim attitudes at the beginning of 20th century, these increased after 9/11 and following an incident where South Korean citizens were kidnapped by the Taliban in Afghanistan in 2007 (S. Her, 2015). Although it is not clear exactly when anti-Muslim sentiments started appearing in South Korea, it has grown little by little since 2008 (J. Lee, 2011). Afterwards, the hostile feelings among South Koreans have grown stronger over the 3 years after the rise of ISIS as hate speech towards Muslims has increased on social media. Hate speech is usually defined as speech designed to promote hatred on the basis of race, religion, ethnicity or national origin (Rosenfeld, 2002). At the same time, anti-Islam

campaigns often have been held in the streets. As the number of South Koreans who have shown more interest as well as concern regarding Islam and Muslim issues has increased, some conservative groups such as right wing politicians and Protestants have even demonstrated their hostility towards Muslims by protesting against the building of a Halal food factory and Islamic finance funds in the country. According to the report of National Human Rights Commission of Korea (NHRCK, 2010) disrespect, slander, and threat towards foreign migrants including Muslims has emerged in contemporary times though there are no official statistics on hate crimes against Muslims in South Korea. After NHRCK monitored the expression of racial discrimination on local major portal sites in 2010, it suggested an applicable policy improvement to the South Korean government in order to prevent someone from spreading hate speech.

Religious Demographics of South Korea

In South Korea, there has been a religious transition for decades. Although the Christian and Buddhist populations in the traditionally Confucian Korean society have increased since the Korean War, Islam has not attracted many Koreans to mosques. In particular, the number of Christians has grown dramatically from 1.1 million to more 14 millions in South Korea since the 1960s (H. Lee, 1997). Like Christianity, Buddhism has grown from a couple of million adherents in the 1960s to over 10 million today while the number of Muslims reached only 145,000 during the same period (Baker, 2006).

Protestants, Catholics, and Buddhists have been the three main religious groups for decades in South Korea (Cho, 1990). The rate of Protestantism, Catholicism, and Buddhism in total religious population in South Korea reached to 98% in 2005 (*Ibid*). Regarding this, there may be three important reasons in explaining why the Muslim population has not

increased like Christians and Buddhists in South Korea. The first reason for the limitation of the spread of Islam results from the strict demands that Islam requires, which can bring about a clash with Korean social norms (Baker, 2006). Since Korean society is ethnically and culturally homogenous and very group-oriented, it exerts strong peer pressure to fit its social norms (*Ibid*). Under this circumstance, Muslims usually face challenges in the workplace or at school when they want to pray five times a day but are surrounded by Christians, Buddhists, and atheists in South Korea. For instance, during Ramadan, most Muslims who try to adhere to the month-long daytime fast cannot escape the questions and requests for information regarding religion and the necessity to observe social norms. In South Korea, there is also a large number of atheists. According to the 2005 South Korean Official Census, 47% of total population was considered atheists. The atheist population has gradually increased and surpassed the half of total population: from 42.5% in 1985 to 53% in 2005 (S. Ryu, 2009). Thus, as Don Baker (2006) points out, there is social pressure on Muslim community not to act differently from those around them.

The second factor limiting the influence of Islam in South Korea is that it is a relatively unknown religion in the face of the two dominant religions: Christianity and Buddhism. Although South Korea has moderately transformed into a multicultural society, it still has different standards when judging Islam as compared to Christianity and Buddhism. Due to the huge influence from Western culture and religion, especially from the U.S. after the Korean War, there was a favorable perception of Christianity over other religions such as Islam (Baker, 2006). Moreover, since the fourth century C.E., South Koreans have gradually become accustomed to the religious norms of the Chinese. This tendency helped to create a gap between dominant religious groups and minority religious groups, which may facilitate the dominant group's ability to take negative action against minorities such as Muslim

community.

The third reason why Islam has perhaps failed to attract the interest of South Koreans is related to the misperceptions about Islam among them. Since the 1960s, there has been a tendency to consider Islam a religion for foreigners, which is reinforced by Islam not making more headway in South Korea (Baker, 2006). Under these circumstances, dominant religious groups such as Christians and Buddhists could enjoy relatively higher status and greater privileges than minority groups like Muslims (Wirth, 2005). As a result, both Christianity and Buddhism in South Korea have become the dominant religious groups for a long time, while Islam has been relegated to the status of a minority group.

Definition of Islamophobia

Islamophobia can refer to prejudice coupled with feelings of fear or dislike toward Muslims (Lee et al., 2009; Sheridan, 2006; Abu Raiya, 2008). The main concept of Islamophobia is similar to other forms of prejudice and discrimination. One general trend in the literature on Islamophobia is defining it as a specific form of religious ‘xenophobia’ characterized by fear and prejudice against Islam (Hopkins, 2006; Alghorani, 2003). Sheridan (2006) argues, for instance, that intergroup prejudice towards Muslims increased following 9/11 with Islamophobic attitudes often bringing about social tension between Muslims and non-Muslims. This social tension can fuel social problems because it can lead to the perpetration of hate crimes against Muslims. In this context, Islam is not only a religion, but also a broad, comprehensive way of life and the purpose of human existence (Denny, 2011; Kamis & Muhammad, 2007). This has important implications for the way society responds to the problem.

The term of Islamophobia has a long history despite a suggestion that Islamophobia

is a new phenomenon in the contemporary world. Islamophobia, which currently refers to the fear or hatred of Muslims and Islam, has been used to describe anti-Muslim feelings of a mostly Christian population in Europe (Ogan, 2014). The first attempt to recognize Islamophobia as a form of discrimination in the academia and the media can be traced back to the 1990s. Before Islamophobia was acknowledged as a type of discrimination against Muslims, it was called by different terms such as Orientalism (Allen, 2010). In terms of the word Islamophobia, it was first recorded in print in an American periodical, *Insight* employed by Tariq Modood (Allen, 2010). A few years later, the first British non-Muslim acknowledgement of Islamophobia was made in the Runnymede Trust report in 1994 (*Ibid*). This first attempt to contribute to the specification of the concept was from a report titled *Islamophobia: A Challenge for Us All* published by the Runnymede Trust (Bonansinga, 2016). This NGO based in the U.K. analyzed in an empirical and comprehensive way how Islam is viewed by Islamophobes: It is seen as a barbaric, primitive, violent and sexist religion, supportive of terrorism and engaged in a clash of civilizations (Runnymede Trust, 1997). The concept of Islamophobia became more widely used following the impact of this report. The most comprehensive study of Islamophobia following 9/11 was conducted by the European Monitoring Center on Racism and Xenophobia, which examined Islamophobic sentiments and discrimination across fifteen European countries (Allen & Nielsen, 2002). Sheridan (2006) and Poynting (2004) examined whether intergroup prejudice against Muslims increased since 9/11 in the United Kingdom and Australia. In this sense, Martin-Munoz (2010) defined Islamophobia as a form of discrimination and prejudice specifically, as a “construct in which a monolithic image of us and them” in two separate cultures is created. From this perspective, Muslims are often perceived as “alien, separate, inferior, fanatic, fundamentalist, and irrational” with no common values with the West (Ava, 2013).

This conceptualization of Islamophobia is related to other forms of prejudice and discrimination that can be expressed and experienced in a variety of contexts and settings such as educational settings and the work place (Ava, 2013).

Meanwhile, Islamophobia may be expressed overtly or covertly, both being considered as hate crimes (Sheridan, 2006). These examples include abusive calls and messages toward Muslims, and treating Muslims with suspicion, staring, leaving one out of conversations, and asking a Muslim individual to speak for other Muslims in general (Ava, 2013). Others may involve Islamophobic content in email, text message, blogs, mass communication, or social media (Sheridan, 2006 & Awan, 2014). Overall, Islamophobic views are shaped by a ‘closed set’ of narrow views on Islam and Muslims, which has helped contribute to “othering” (Awan, 2012). For this reason, differentiating between “us” and “them” can lead to discriminative practices and further Islamophobia (Awan, 2012).

Islamophobia and Hate Crimes

In order to understand the possible Islamophobic sentiments in South Korea, it is significant to explain the general worldwide perceptions about Muslims and Islam, especially if we appreciate the impact of free movements of Muslim migrants from the Middle East and its role in the spread of information and ideas. 9/11 in 2001 and the rise of ISIS in 2014 seem to have contributed to increase in anti-Muslim attitudes including hate crimes in the West. For example, some studies exploring the effect of 9/11 have demonstrated that the attack led to greater levels of anti-Muslim hate crimes in several Western countries (Coryn, Beale and Myers, 2004). Also, there appears a vicious cycle of pro-ISIS extremism and anti-Muslim hostility since 2014 (Mitts, 2017).

Although hostility toward Muslims escalated after 9/11, it has deep roots in the

history of Europe. The tension between Christians and Muslims can be traced back to the 7th century with the founding of Islam (Bryfonski, 2012). This tension increased over the centuries and resulted in a series of nine wars, called the Crusades, which stretched from the end of the 11th century through the 13th century and began as a conflict over possession of the ‘Holy Lands’ (*Ibid*). The Crusades worsened relations between Christians and Muslims while also creating distrust that continues to this day (*Ibid*).

The wave of hate crimes against Muslims in the U.S. began in the wake of 9/11 (Kaplan, 2006). In 2001, according to the U.S. Department of Justice record, there was a 1,600 % increase in anti-Muslim hate crimes between 2005 and 2006 (Read, 2008). The typical and legalistic definition of hate crime is “crimes that manifest evidence of prejudice based on race, religion, sexual orientation or ethnicity” (Perry, 2001) The research conducted by Pew Research Center just after 9/11 also showed that the incident caused the dramatic increase of negative images about Islam (Kim, 2016). According to a Pew Research Center report (2010) that analyzed the news coverage for the week of 6-12 September, the second most covered topic was anti-Muslim sentiment, filling 15% of the news hole. In this regard, Christine Ogan (2013) argues that there has been an increase in Islamophobic discourse in most Western European countries including France, Germany, the U.K., Italy, and Spain. At the same time, this research demonstrated that over two thirds of American responders answered they had more interest in news reports regarding Islam (Kim, 2016).

Furthermore, the events of 9/11 have contributed to motivating an increasing securitization framing of the Islamic world and the Muslim community, especially, within Western academia. Some research has argued that 9/11 affected the increase of anti-Muslim sentiment, discrimination, and hate crimes toward Muslims in the United States. Additionally, 9/11 stirred up hate crimes and debates on religious conflict discourse between Islam and

Christianity. In the aftermath of the 9/11, for example, some Western researchers found that one of the biggest predictors of discriminatory behaviors and hate crimes was visual appearance: the physical traits and objects that identify an individual as Muslim (Saedi, 2012). Their studies provide similar findings according to the widespread characteristic of post 9/11 Islamophobia. At the same time, the idea of a clash of civilizations between Christianity and Islam was reinforced with focus on influencing Western public opinion (Bonansinga, 2016).

Since 2014, the emergence of ISIS has refueled the anti-Muslim sentiments worldwide. Most European countries and the U.S. have experienced strong and pervasive Islamophobic feelings and attitudes after the emergence of ISIS. Similar to what occurred after 9/11, the attacks conducted or inspired by ISIS have led to an increase in political and security discourse warning of the danger of extremism and radicalization as well as anti-Muslim sentiments in Europe, the U.S, and East Asia. The clear example of this can be seen, in the U.S., where recently elected president Donald Trump has fueled Islamophobic sentiments by using anti-Muslim rhetoric since the beginning presidential campaign in 2016. Trump's anti-Muslim rhetoric, including actions like calling for "Muslim immigration bans" and "making the desert glow," manifest the intense political Islamophobia that has gripped U.S. politics and promoted more Islamophobic feelings and incidents in these countries (Beydoun, 2016). There has been similar anti-Muslim and anti-refugee rhetoric during the election campaigns in Europe over the past couple of years, including France, Austria, and the Netherlands. These campaigns have not only centered on the continued immigration of Muslims into their countries, but also focused on proposing hostile actions regarding Muslims already living in their countries. For instance, in France, there has been a controversy surrounding a ban of the Burquini, which is a swimming suit for Muslim women. Some Muslims protested against the banning of the Burquini on beaches, but the French

government still sticks to the policy that does not allow the wearing Burquinis. Debates like these seem to be emerging more frequently in France and other European countries following a series of terror attacks in Europe.

Moreover, the refugee crisis resulting from ISIS threats and conflicts in Syria have fueled anti-Muslims sentiments, while negative perceptions like security threats of Islam have spread throughout the world. As anti-Muslim attitudes have increased after rise of ISIS, the possibility of hate crimes against Muslims has become high due to the reaction to a series of incidents related to Islamic militants. For instance, Tamar Mitts (2017) suggests that highly visible actions by Islamists including ISIS drive further anti-Muslim hostility while this hostility leads to Islamist radicalization, illustrating a vicious cycle of radicalization and anti-Muslim hostility.

The dramatic increase of migrants and refugees from Muslim countries inside Europe has led to cautious feelings toward Muslims and xenophobia spreading rampant in the West due to the different religion, language, and culture. Recently, European countries are key destinations for refugees from Syria, Iraq, Afghanistan, and Iran while the majority of them try to continue on to Germany (Amnesty, 2013). Thus, the 'border countries' of the EU are of special interest in terms of their dealings with the refugee issue. Concerning the Muslim community in Europe, France is home to an estimated 10 percent of Muslims; whereas Austria, Belgium, Germany, and Switzerland host about 6 percent. However, a common strategy uniting all EU member states has not yet come into being (Hafez, 2015). For this reason, every EU member state is left quite alone in dealing with the refugee and migration issues. Consequently, this has threatened the Schengen Treaty, which allows for unimpeded travel within the EU designated zone.

Equally significant is the fact that the current migrant and refugee crisis has fueled

security discourses in the West, which tend to frame Muslims as potential threats. As animosity towards Muslims in the West has been rising in recent years, anti-Muslim hostility is reflected in the increasing support given to far-right parties in Europe (Burrows, 2016; Mitts, 2017). These sentiments have sometimes led to setting fire to mosques, spreading anti-Muslim graffiti, and physically attacking those who practice Islam in Europe (Mitts, 2017). For instance, right wing politicians in the West used anti-Muslim rhetoric in order to win elections. Several scholars suggest that far-right voting is strongly linked to anti-Muslim attitudes (Norris, 2005; Rydgren, 2008). In this sense, Tamar Mitts (2017) argues that there is a close correlation between holding anti-Muslim and anti-immigrant attitudes and self identifying as a far-right supporter or voting for far-right parties because local-level support for far-right parties can reflect an atmosphere of anti-Muslim hostility.

The refugee crisis has been regarded as the most serious problem in Europe since the Second World War (Hafez, 2015). According to UNHCR, 38 European countries received 264,000 asylum applications. UNHCR counted more than 4 million Syrians affected by the refugee crisis since 6 September 2015 (Hafez, 2015). This number includes 1.9 million Syrians registered by the Government of Turkey and 2.1 million people registered in Egypt, Iraq, Jordan, and Lebanon combined while the number of refugees from Iraq and Afghanistan has increased as well (Hafez, 2015). The figure for the number of refugees in the main host countries (Egypt, Iraq, Jordan, Lebanon and Turkey) was 2.2 million (Hafez, 2015). The figure for the total number of refugees from Syria globally was estimated 2.3 million in 2015 (*Ibid*). However, this is only the number of those who have registered with UNHCR, and does not include the migrants who are unregistered. Some European countries have offered resettlement and humanitarian assistance, but eighteen EU member states including the U.K. and Italy have not made any resettlement or humanitarian admission pledges (Amnesty,

2013). In short, as the number of refugees has increased in the Western countries, the constructed security and political discourse has framed the migration crisis as a crisis that can lead to the threat of security.

From this point of view, one can identify three main incidents that have impacted global perceptions about Muslims; 9/11, the rise of ISIS and a series of terror attacks related to the group, and the refugee crisis following the civil war in Syria. In fact, these factors have played a significant role in supporting Islamophobic attitudes that have been propagated, especially in the West.

There is a lack of discussion, however, regarding hate crimes in South Korea. There are even no clear legal systems that have been created to regulate hate crimes or hate speech against locals or foreigners, including Muslim migrants (T, Kim, 2015). In South Korea, it is difficult to criminalize hate crimes against Muslims because there are not criminal laws to regulate hate crimes or hate speech towards Muslims. There is not even a legal definition of ‘hate speech’ or ‘hate crime’ in South Korea. Although the opposition party has tried to pass legislation that regulates hate speech for several years, it has failed to pass in parliament because the dominant ruling party did not support the bill. Moreover, the conservative civil groups and some Christians strongly protested that if the bill was implemented, it would damage Christians’ freedom of evangelism and missionary activities while it is provoking homosexuality (Kuk-Min Ilbo, 2016). For this reason, there has been no official statistics regarding hate crimes and regulation banning hate speech, leading society to rely on self-regulation, which has not affected or changed the spread of anti-Muslim attitudes in South Korea.

This lack of legal protection for the Muslim minority can contribute to deep-rooted misperceptions and prejudices regarding Muslims, allowing discrimination against them to

thrive. This phenomenon in turn has prevented Muslim migrants from attempting to integrate into the South Korean society and has consequently made it easier for Islamophobic sentiments to remain largely unchallenged. In this regard, some Korean researchers suggest that the rights of minority groups including the Muslim community should be protected from hate crimes or hate speech by legislation.

Moreover, there are no official statistics on hate speech or hate crimes in the country. The type of hate crimes happening in South Korea are different from those in the U.S., which mainly derived from discrimination based on different races and nationalities (T. Kim, 2015). In South Korea, hate crimes are often regarded as social crimes based on the gap between rich and poor, social complaint, individual resentment, women-phobic sentiments or nonspecific motive crimes in media coverage (T. Kim, 2015). This may sometimes make South Koreans understand the concept of hate crimes differently compared to the U.S.'s case. In addition, there is no relevant law, like the hate crime statute laws in the U.S. For this reason, it is difficult to figure out the reality of the problem in South Korea (M. Yang & H. Lee, 2008). Although a few South Korean lawmakers from the opposition party in 2016 tried to pass a bill regarding hate crime statute laws, which do not allow discrimination based on religion, sex, race, and age, they failed because some conservative groups including right wing ruling political party and the Christian community were against the bill and lobbied to discard it (J. Kim, 2011). Some Protestant missionaries have tried reminding church leaders and communities of Islamization of European countries such as U.K., France and Germany (J. Lee, 2011). Lee (2011) argues that this seems their strategy of escaping of their struggles from a decrease in believers and criticism from the civil society while attributing their own problems to others.

In addition to the recent political and media rhetoric regarding Muslims in the West,

many internet users have also shown their hostilities towards Muslim by posting hate comments and fabricated pictures on social media. Some recent figures show an increase in online anti-Muslim abuse (Awan, 2016). These manifestations of intolerance were propelled by the social tensions arising from a series of terror attacks related to ISIS and the world wide refugee crisis. Given the reality that supporters and loyalists of ISIS are still operating in Syria, Iraq and even some European countries, the Islamophobic attitude in the West is deeply rooted, and is further exacerbated by an increase of Muslim migrants and refugees.

To summarize, the spread of hostilities towards Muslims and negative attitudes in the West seem to have a close tie with three major incidents and trends: 9/11, ISIS-related terror attacks, and refugee crisis. An increasingly securitized discourse regarding Islam and Muslims in the West has utilized these events for the political and economic agendas of various groups, which in turn has fueled the increased hatred and condemnation of and against Islam and Muslims. This is particularly true of many conservative political and religious groups in Europe and the United States. In addition, continued economic problems have negatively affected public opinion further, making real security issues more vulnerable to populist rhetoric (Bonansinga, 2016). As a result, the situation of intolerance against Muslims has further worsened while significantly impacting Islamophobic phenomenon.

With this understanding of the main characteristics of Islamophobia in the West, including its origins and consequences, we have a clear starting point from which to analyze Islamophobia in South Korea. As has been hinted at above, the factors that have influenced the spread of Islamophobia in the Western countries are present in the South Korean case. This, along with the factors unique to South Korean history and its society, are an important background to understanding the rise of Islamophobia in this East Asian country.

CHAPTER 2: SECURITY DISCOURSE IN POLITICS

The aim of this section is to explore security discourse in South Korean politics. This section will discuss the history of security discourse, and foreign policy in South Korea. It will also show how security discourse related to Islam in the country has increased after 9/11 and has been exacerbated after the rise of ISIS, which further influenced the spreading of Islamophobic attitudes. Security discourse in South Korea will be investigated through research papers and news coverage published. In addition, the debate surrounding the Anti-Terrorism Act, which is related to security matters including responding to the global threat of ISIS, will be discussed in order to understand how the legislation process of the Act has impacted negative perceptions towards Muslims in South Korea. The findings in this section will demonstrate how the conservative ruling political party, intelligence authority, and civil and religious groups utilize the ISIS issues to contribute to increasing Islamophobic sentiments.

Historical Background of Security Discourse

Understanding the history of security discourse in South Korean politics is important because its background is related to the emergence of Islamophobic discourse in contemporary times. The perception of security-related threats has played a significant role in South Korea for decades. Historically, South Korean politics is rampant with security discourse. During the Cold War, a few authoritarian regimes have used the state and the division between South and North in the Korean peninsula to seize power and suppress opposition groups (S. Han, 2016). Military regimes such as Park Jung Hee's (1917~1979), Jeon Doo Hwan's (1931~present), Roh Tae-Woo's (1932~present), who were former generals in the army, tended to depend on security measures in order to prevent opposition

groups from obtaining power and to attract public support mainly under the name of anti-communism slogans between the 1970s and 1980s. Since South Korea experienced the Korean War, which began with the invasion of North Korea in 1950, the importance of national security has become a main tool of regimes and a point of focus for citizens because of the state of tension derived from the division of over seven decades (S. Kim, 2016). In fact, the military regimes in South Korea are key-actors in presenting and articulating security threats to the public. At the same time, they manipulated and controlled media coverage through which the vast majority of Koreans obtain information about issues of public concern. Therefore, it is said that politics in South Korea is strictly linked to the securitization processes. This tendency in South Korean politics can be considered a precursor to the security discourse utilized against opposition groups or minority groups today.

The tendency to focus on security issues in South Korea may be a little different from the U.S. led War on Terror. In South Korea, the term “actors of threats” often refers to the North Korean regime due to the situation of division between South and North Korea after the Korean War. The two Korean regimes often focused on national security issues by cultivating tension between each other. In this way, national security issues raised by ruling military groups affected the fear of the South Korean people effectively and succeeded in attracting the supports of the majority of people. South Korea did not particularly show huge interest in security issues regarding Islam and Muslims before 9/11 (H. Cho, 1999). In the case of the U.S., the War on Terror has been mainly underwritten by the Islamophobic discourse focusing on perceived negative aspects of Islam and Muslims (Butler, 2008). Nonetheless in both cases, key events such as 9/11 have been employed in discourses that have contributed to the spread of Islamophobic attitudes by heightening the sense of the existence of a security threat.

Although the Middle Eastern issues have growing interest in the political, economic and academic fields recently, there was little interest of South Korea regarding the Islamic world until 1990s. Main interests related to the Middle East are oil, export industry, and terrorism in the government policies and research (S. Lee, 2009). There may be two main reasons in explaining the lack of interest in Islam at the beginning of modern history in South Korea: the first is a low Muslim population and the second is the South Korean government's foreign policy. Regarding the first reason, Muslims in South Korea have made up a small number of the total population. Unlike the small number of Muslims in South Korea, the number of Christians has grown to more than fourteen million followed by the number of Buddhists at ten million currently (Baker, 2006). Moreover, South Korean society still appears to have little understanding or appreciation for the Muslim populations (S. Her, 2015). These religious demographics explain the reason for the low interest in Islam in South Korean history.

Secondly, the South Korean government has demonstrated very little interest in the Islamic world, and thus may not want to exert influence in the politics of the region. For this reason, the government has maintained a foreign policy of non-intervention within the politics of the Middle East. Historically, South Korea has not shown any intention of influencing the Islamic world directly from the political and military perspectives, instead, mainly focusing on economic matters. The South Korean government has not officially announced the direct support of military intervention against ISIS and Al-Qaeda. This seems to show that the government has been reluctant to influence the Middle Eastern political issues.

South Korean foreign policy aims at maintaining a stable environment where it can increase its own benefits such as energy security including oil or natural gas imports and

manufactured goods exports to Middle Eastern countries (S. Lee, 2009). Although 9/11 contributed to an increase of concerns about potential terror attacks in East Asia including South Korea, the foreign policy of the Korean government in the Middle East has been continually driven by a search for energy security and a desire to increase its overseas markets and investment opportunities (Chaziza, 2016). Consequently, there is not much provocation that may lead extremists in the Middle East to participate in or incite domestic terrorist attacks in South Korea. However, the recent active debate regarding terrorism and Islamic militants led by right wing politicians in the country has contributed to the spread of anti-Islam attitudes among conservative groups such as Protestant churches.

The nature of South Korean foreign policy in the Middle East has not changed dramatically, but there was an increasing of the discourse of extremism and radicalization, and anti-Islamic sentiments in the country following 9/11 and a series of terror attacks carried out by extremists, especially in Europe. As it has raised more worries about security due to the rise of threats of terrorism, Muslims in South Korea have been exposed to an increasingly belligerent security and political discourse. According to the reports of Huffington Post Korea, some conservative politicians and religious groups warned of the possibility of terrorists' infiltration leading to an active discussion on Anti-Terrorism Act in 2015 and 2016. In addition, two Christian newspapers 'Kuk Min Il-Bo' and 'Christian Today' reported a few Protestant groups had campaigns in the streets against the influx of Islamic funds while claiming the probability of Islamization at the time. Similarly, two South Korean researchers Joseph Yi and Gwoon Jung (2015) argued that this rise in Islamophobia is linked to South Korea experiencing a growing public debate about foreign migrants and related governmental policies.

Like South Korea, other East Asian countries like China and Japan were affected by

the rise of ISIS threat and this contributed to the active security discourse. Both two countries have witnessed similar Islamophobic attitudes based on the security threats because of terror attacks in the West. Chinese researcher Lin Yi (2010) and Japanese researcher Hideki Maruyama (2007) proposed that the concept of Islamophobia may be relevant to the one in the West. In this way, Lin Yi (2010) introduced three primary criteria in explaining Islamophobia: prejudice or discrimination against Islam and Muslims, a specific 'phobia' against Islam or Muslims, and the War on Terrorism. Hideki (2007) also argued that Muslims living in Japan experience Islamophobia in the country that is one of the most homogeneous major nations in the world.

Framing Security Threats in Korean Politics

The rise of ISIS and Paris Terror Attacks between 2014 and 2015 hugely influenced security discourse in South Korea like it did in Western countries. Security issues regarding extremists or ISIS are discussed more heavily and frequently in Korean politics. Due to the rise of this security discourse focusing on anti-terrorism, Muslims and Islam are often linked much more aggressively with national security matters. Conservative South Korean politicians including the ruling party, the intelligence authority, and civil and religious groups have voiced their fears and concerns about Islam and Muslims in public places and the media.

Firstly, right wing politicians in South Korea led to the security discourse in earnest regarding Islam issues while framing those issues as potential threats after the Paris Terror Attacks. In 2014, the ruling Saenuri Political Party again pursued an Anti-Terrorism Act that was deadlocked in parliament for several years while raising concerns of potential terror attacks. According to the report from Huffington Post Korea, the Saenuri Party often mentioned ISIS issues as a threat to security in order to pass an Anti-Terrorism Act in the

parliament. The party also emphasized that “the targets of the Act were suspects like a young Korean man in his 20s who joined ISIS and some young Koreans who are trying to join illegal militant groups linked to terrorism” (Democratic Law Research, 2016). One influential member of the party even stated that “it was difficult to find suspects of terrorism without Anti-Terrorism Act” (Huffington Post Korea, 2015). Another member of the same party stated that the NIS (National Intelligence Service) demanded legislative improvement such as the Act to obtain the terror suspects’ IP address on the internet because it was impossible to pursue them under current legal systems although it is not difficult to figure out the addresses (Huffington Post Korea, 2015). Similar controversial discourse appeared in the South Korean Presidential office while raising more concerns of excessive security frame. The former South Korean president Park Geun Hye, who led to Saenuri Party, stated in a cabinet council that “masked protestors should not be allowed in the streets because ISIS did so” in November 2015 (Han, 2016). Her announcement immediately raised controversy because according to her definition of ISIS, anti-government protestors were considered illegal and violent terrorists like members of ISIS. After the announcement, the ruling party strongly pursued the bill that organizers and protesters should not wear masks while distributing negative images at anti-government protestors. Although, this bill not allowing protesters to wear masks has not passed in parliament, the party and former its leader seemed to succeed in raising a fear of potential terror attacks spreading negative images about foreign Muslims regardless of the real threat of ISIS toward South Koreans.

Furthermore, the South Korean NIS contributed to fueling similar security framing of Islam and Muslims by relating them to Islamic extremists and terrorism. Since 2015, the NIS has reported to parliament suspects linked with extreme groups or potential security risks who tried to join ISIS, though there have been no actual and direct threats in South Korea.

These reports published by the NIS were immediately published by all South Korean media outlets, consequently leading to more security discourse surrounding the ISIS issues. The NIS utilized ISIS issues in order to attract favorable public opinion regarding the Anti-Terrorism Act. For example, according to the Huffington Post Korea, the NIS reported to the parliament that “circumstances that some South Koreans attempted to join ISIS were revealed in detail” (Huffington Post Korea, 2015). However, the NIS did not suggest specific evidence, only explaining that “most of suspects asked detailed questions such as ‘how to enter the Syrian territory’, ‘what is the way to contact ISIS fighters’ on the internet” (Huffington Post Korea, 2016). Although these questions are often found on South Korean portal sites, the NIS seemed to attempt to relate this curiosity to the ISIS threat without providing factual evidences. Nonetheless, there was not been concrete evidence to prove the suspects were closely related to ISIS members. In reality, the NIS was not likely to have an intention to be hostile towards Islam or Muslims, but these actions played a role in fueling anti-Muslim attitudes in South Korea. This is because the frame of security could contribute to building a public agenda regarding specific phenomenon like the rise of the ISIS threat.

Moreover, a small fundamental Christian political party, named Christian Liberal Party took sides with the security discourse fueling anti-Muslim sentiments (K, Goo, 2016). This party partly consists of conservative small civil groups such as the anti-multiculturalism policy group, educational parents’ group, and people’s solidarity for healthy society, which hope to create a campaign in the streets and through conservative media. For example, the recently founded Christian Liberal Party fueled anti-Muslim sentiments in official political campaigns. The party which shows conservative ideology, for instance, created a slogan during the parliamentary election campaign in 2016 by using pictures and placards that focused on the brutality of ISIS stating the following, “Definitely stop homo-sexuality, Islam,

and anti-Christian law” (G. Koo, 2016). In addition, there appeared Islamophobic words such as ‘Against Laws related to Islam and homo-sexuality’ on the official pamphlet of Christian Liberal Political Party. This pamphlet includes the anti-Muslim sentences like ‘If 300,000 Muslims live in Iksan City, where Hala factory is supposed to be built, this country would be fallen into the danger because of terror and Korean women would be dangerous due to the increase of raping’ (G. Koo, 2016). They even claimed, in appealing to over 10 million Christians in South Korea, that if the government does not tackle the influx of Muslims, the increasing numbers of them would become a significant national security threat (H. Kim, 2016). This political party is not very popular and has failed to have official parliament members in South Korea, but these campaigns highlight how they attempt to link Islam with the increased fear of security from extreme militants like ISIS, while not providing evidence or proofs that support their assumptions.

Similarly, 27 conservative civil groups, including a group calling for an *anti-multiculturalism policy campaign*, have appealed conjointly to the government to stop integration policies, which aim to support foreign migrants in order for them to assimilate into South Korean society mainly in 2015 and 2016 (Kim, 2015). They sometimes claimed that “multiculturalism was already dead in Europe and that policy was proved as failure as support their claims” (Kim, 2015). By doing this, they continually demanded the government to end the multiculturalism policy. Although this anti-multiculturalism campaign did not receive widespread support from ordinary people in South Korea due to weak factual grounds, it clearly reveals its intention to attempt to undermine a multiculturalism policy (Kim, 2016). Thus, South Korea has witnessed a rise of Islamophobic phenomenon that shows political and social anti-multiculturalism slogans (G. Koo, 2016)

Overall, the aftermath of rise of ISIS, the Paris Terror attacks, and other related

incidents, have contributed to the approval of the Anti-Terrorism Act in 2016 (S. Han, 2016). This act, which had been pushed forward by the ruling party and the NIS since 9/11 in 2001, was finally enacted after 15 years. Although opposition parties and liberal civil groups have claimed that the Act could infringe on fundamental rights such as privacy because the bill allows authorities to use any means necessary regarding terrorism despite the strong power of the NIS, a comprehensive surveillance systems, and the ambiguity of the scope of terrorism, the ruling party succeeded in passing it (Kim, 2016 & S. Han, 2016). In this sense, it seems to be evident that security discourse in politics played a role in the passing of Act, as politicians deliberately portrayed Muslim migrants as a potential threat in South Korea. This security discourse also demonstrates that politicians can use this security frame for their own political benefit.

The security discourse surrounding terrorism issues provides us insights into understanding the securitization process regarding the referent object of threat. The recent ISIS threat has led to the rise of the security discourse again in South Korea after 9/11. Although there has been no actual threat or direct indication that foreign Muslims could become a security threat or are a radicalizing group in South Korea, foreigners including migrant Muslims living in the country have been increasingly portrayed with suspicion within political agendas (H. Kim, 2014). Regarding this, Eum Han Jin (2015) argued that peoples' negative sentiments towards foreign migrants, women, and homosexuals can more influence a social phenomenon than criticism on their class structures or political systems. Anti-multiculturalism supporters in South Korea have tried to place their claims into political sphere based on hatred towards others (H. Kim, 2014).

In South Korean politics, it is possible for ruling politicians and the state institutions including intelligence authorities to abuse or misuse the Anti-Terrorism Act because the

targets of Act are still unclear and the term ‘terrorism’ is ambiguous. In addition, there is still controversy and debate over this issue among political parties in South Korea. As the Act fueled the legitimizing political discourse against ISIS, it may have contributed to spread anti-Muslims sentiments indirectly by ruling and conservative groups who want to keep opposition groups in check. While the argument regarding the Act is on-going, it can fuel the spreading public hostility and Islamophobic sentiments within Korean society.

This is also likely to be applicable to the securitization process, where the securitizing actors adopt the rhetoric of security to convince the audience of the existential nature of the threat (Donatella, 2016). Moreover, this demonstrates that once one specific issue has obtained the status of security threat, it automatically enters the policy agenda, while collective concerns legitimize the endorsement of state actions (*Ibid*). Consequently, security discourse has impacted on Islamophobic attitudes by spreading negative perceptions and prejudice towards Muslims in Korean politics.

CHAPTER 3: SOCIAL PRESSURE ON MUSLIMS TO CONFORM

The purpose of this section is to investigate social discourse related to Islam and Muslims in the relatively mono-ethnic South Korean society. This section includes a brief discussion on the struggles faced by the Muslim community in the country, the rise of anti-multiculturalism sentiments, and the assimilation of Muslims. The social discourse about Islam in the country has been prominent since the influx of foreign Muslim workers and after 9/11, as well as since the emergence of ISIS. This section will explore how the Muslim community in the country has been negatively affected in several areas including foreign Muslim workers and their children in workplaces and schools. It will also analyze how the anti-multiculturalism debate has developed by looking through existing research. Finally, this chapter will shed light on how Muslim migrants have tried to adapt to the dominant secular society through a look at existing studies related to Muslims. This section thus hopes to demonstrate how social pressures on Muslims to conform to the lifestyle of majority have contributed to the exclusion of the Muslim community in South Korea.

The Struggle of the Migrant Muslim Community in Korean Society

Despite the growing presence of Muslims in South Korean society, they have been victims of misperceptions and ignorance over the past five decades, as both migrants and Muslims (H. Lee & W. Lee, 2005). This is partly due to the fact that South Koreans have little knowledge about Islam and deep-rooted tendency to focus on negative incidents of the Middle East (H. Cho, 1990). At the same time, Muslim workers typically encounter various challenges or conflicts of cultural distance between the home and the host Korean country (S. Her, 2015). This phenomenon became more pervasive following the 9/11 attacks, the kidnapping of 23 South Korean citizens by members of Taliban in Afghanistan in 2007, and

recent overseas terrorist attacks since the emergence of ISIS in 2014 (I. Eom, 2015; S. Her, 2015). As a result of these negative incidents related to self-termed 'Islamic militants', South Korean society tends to frame Muslims as potential security threats, consequently sometimes leading South Koreans to reveal hostilities to them through hate speech.

Although there is an increase of anti-Muslim sentiments, it is very rare to punish the perpetrators based on the current laws in South Korea, because there is not legislation or a legal mechanism for punishing hate speech and hate crimes. The only exception is an incident of hate speech towards a foreigner that happened in 2009 based on a criminal act. According to South Korean reports, a 28-year-old Indian professor, named Bonojit Hussein was verbally assaulted by a Korean passenger on a bus. The Korean man shouted, "You Arab, You Arab!" "You smell, you are a dirty guy! Fuck you! Fuck you!" After listening to these insults from the Korean man, Hussein filed a criminal lawsuit for contempt against him. In the end, the Korean man was ordered to pay around 1,000 USD dollars by the criminal court. The Korean man was guilty based on a criminal contempt charge because there is no relevant law that regulated the hate speech used (Lee, 2015). This racial discriminatory case shows that in cases of criminal contempt in South Korea, it seems to be difficult to be found guilty especially if the victims are from a specific region, class, or group. In this sense, most Muslims who have experienced hate speech or hate crimes are likely to be reluctant to take legal action because of the complexity of legal suit processes and the language barrier, though they were discriminated against based on their religion or appearance. Other contempt charge cases related to anti-Islam or anti-Muslim behaviors were not found in official documents and research papers in South Korea.

Another similar Islamophobic incident linked to anti-Muslim sentiments happened in the country in 2016. A highly educated but unemployed South Korean man was arrested for

threatening to bomb the In-Chon International airport in protest of his unstable work situation. In the toilet of the airport, he left a coarse bomb with a memo written in Arabic, perhaps being inspired by the pervasive security discourse of the ISIS or other Islamic militant groups' threat. Although there were no casualties, this incident showed that social tensions had begun to increase with the emergence of worldwide terror attacks.

Furthermore, some studies in South Korea revealed that the rights to education at schools for foreign migrant families were neglected by the society (J. Choi, 2010; Kang, 2010; Moon, 2010). These studies found that there were still children of migrants who do not have an equal chance to childcare and they could not receive a preschool or official education, not only because parents are working outside their homes but also because their status is illegal in South Korea. For instance, according to a study by S. Kim (2010) the parents of undocumented children and some South Korean-born children of migrants had been deported since the implementation of strong crackdowns on undocumented workers in 2004. As a result, these migrants' children were excluded from proper rights including national medical care service and public education, or were deported to the countries their parents came from (S. Her, 2015).

As previously mentioned, the struggles of Muslims and slow acceptance of Islam in South Korea may be based on the mono-ethnic characteristics of its society. Due to South Korea's homogenous make-up, in comparison to Western countries, there is little public debate on the issue of the integration of migrants and acceptance because South Korea has not had much experience with Islam (S. Her, 2015). This factor can explain why the South Korean society has not been very receptive to foreign Muslim migrants. Historically, South Korean society has been characterized by a monolithic culture considered as the sole determinant of Korean identity (Choi, 2010). This is a unique factor that may differentiate

South Korea from other Western countries that have an Islamophobia problem. For instance, the emphasis on unity among South Koreans creates a sense of national identity like “we-ness” or “one-ness” and this consequently contributes to the negative attitudes toward foreign Muslim migrants and non-Muslim migrants (Choi, 2010). In addition, continued Korean social and economic problems including inequality, unemployment, and recession have further worsened the attitude of intolerance towards Muslim refugees and migrants. Regarding this point, South Korean Researcher Jang (2010) argued that job security is a significant topic that affects people’s attitudes towards migrant workers.

The fear of South Koreans to be associated with other “backward” countries such as developing Muslim majority countries has become greater than any potential comparison with the West (O. Lee, 2003). This fear has caused South Koreans to accentuate the differences between us and others by developing a vision of them as being hopelessly mired in underdevelopment and incapable of change for the better (O. Lee, 2003). Furthermore, most South Koreans have been aware of Islam after the colony of Japanese occupation between 1910 and 1945 followed by the Korean War. Then, South Korea fell under the control of the U.S. while Western culture flowed into the country until the beginning of the 20th century. In this sense, there is a possibility that the perception of South Koreans regarding Islam is based on an imitation and reproduction of the image developed in the Western countries. Regarding this point, Lee Ock Soon (2003) argues that South Koreans attempt to identify themselves as modernized people with the West despite cultural and historical differences, and refer to the image of the other countries of the Orient adopted by the Western literature, mass media, and education. She adds that this reproduced Orientalism has emerged as a mean to suppress other Oriental countries including the Middle East countries, blurring the dichotomy between East and West (Bhabha, 1994). In fact, the

negative images of Islam and Muslims created by the West are still pervasive in South Korea. These historical and social backgrounds might make South Korea a particularly cohesive social entity and its population particularly suspicious of Muslim migrant groups.

This feature of social pressures on the Muslim community in South Korea can be analyzed using the social identity theory. This theory explains the origin and negative perception of threat as a consequence of self-categorization (Garcia-Retamero, 2007). As this theory puts it, individuals are likely to place themselves into social categories; such placement creates an “other” and overall the categorization process will lead to the emergence of prejudicial attitudes towards the out-group and a feeling of threat (*Ibid*). This implies that when power is unevenly distributed among the groups, both parties in the asymmetric relationship may have cause for alarm, especially the weaker side (Bonansinga, 2015). This is likely to be applicable to the framework of securitization on specific issues like the rise of ISIS. In this way, a threat is defined as a situation in which one agent or group has either the capability or intention to inflict a negative consequence on another agent or group (Davis, 2000; Garcia-Retamero, 2007). Similarly, some researchers consider threats as functions of power asymmetries (Bonansinga, 2015).

Another important factor contributing to some campaigns against minority group including Muslim migrants is linked with the concept of “blaming the victim” (Ryan, 1976). It may be done not only in regard to what are conventionally seen as racial groupings, but also in regard to religious minorities (Joseph Yi, 2015). The concept of the ‘victimization’ of minority groups is implemented in the context of Islamophobia because it may allow for the dominant group to take action against Muslim minority. The emergence of Islamophobia is based on the number and size of the community in the society while discriminating the minority group because of different skin color, race, language, religion, and culture. In this

sense, Islamophobia plays a role in convincing many that a ‘clash of civilizations’ will be inevitable and that essential and irreconcilable differences exist between “us” and “them” (Gottschalk, 2008). The root of this type of racist ideology towards Muslims is deeply embedded in the dominant definitions of prejudice in the West (Gottschalk, 2008). Currently, Islamophobic attitudes can also be found in South Korean society as dominant groups have groundless prejudice against Muslims. For this reason, Muslims living in South Korea are subject to the same kind of negative out-group stereotyping due to the difference between “us” and “them”.

In contrast to South Korea, Western countries have had laws that prohibit and regulate anti-Muslim behaviors and hate speech for several decades. In particular, hate speech is considered as inflammatory, insulting, derisive, and threatening words against individuals or groups because of a difference in race, religion, or age (Lee, 2015). For example, the U.S. Civil Rights Act, established in 1965, banned discrimination based on skin color, religion, sex, origin, disability, and age. Similarly, the Equal Employment Opportunity Commission (EEOC) in the U.S. attempts to regulate discrimination in applying for government positions by using a civil compensation system while there is no such a regulation in South Korea. In Europe, many anti-hate speech movements and legal actions have been taken by the European Union. As a result, the European committee succeeded in defining hate speech as all types of expressions that spread, incite, promote, justify anti-Semitism, xenophobia, and racial hatred (Lee, 2015). The British government also established the Racial and Religious Hatred Act to regulate hate speech in 2006 and made an anti-discrimination law called the ‘Equity Act’ in 2010 (Lee, 2015). In the case of Germany, its government punishes hate crimes based on ‘Volksverhetzung’ which prohibits public hatred and provocation. Although not a European country, in 1993 New Zealand also implemented the Human Rights Act,

which considers hate speech based on skin color and race as a criminal. Moreover, there has been a lot of research centered on defining and discussing hate speech and hate crimes in the West.

Multiculturalism in South Korea

Social pressures on the Muslim minority in the relatively mono-ethnic country have fueled anti-Multiculturalism sentiments. In South Korea, ‘multicultural’ is used as a specific, legal term for families consisting of a Korean national and a foreign spouse. Multiculturalism in the country may result from the growing demand on foreign labor in small and medium manufacturing industries. According to the Statistics Agency of Korea, around 2.2% of the total population is foreigners living in South Korea. Also, the Agency expected that the number of foreigners will represent 9.2 % of total population in 2050. Multiculturalism also is used to describe the presence of divisive racial and ethnic groups, and relevant government policies and normative ideas about accommodating diversity (Joseph Yi, 2015). Based on this concept of multiculturalism, the South Korean government enacted the Employment Permit System, which attempts to guarantee equal wages and labor rights for foreign migrants.

Although, the policy of multi-culturalism has been pursued by the central and local government in South Korea beginning in the mid-2000s, it has faced an anti-multiculturalism backlash especially from conservative groups (H. Kim, 2016). Multicultural discourse in South Korea is largely concerned with an increasing of low-skilled foreign migrants from developing countries such as East Asian Muslim countries and mixed-race families (Yi, 2015). South Korea was primarily exposed to cultural and religious diversity during the 1990s and 2000s when a significant number of foreign workers, many Muslim, migrated and settled into the country. In the end, the South Korean President Roh Mu Hyun declared for the first time that, “it is irreversible for Korea to move towards a multiracial and a

multicultural society. We must try to integrate migrants through multicultural policies' in 2006 (Kim, 2010). The 2008 Multicultural Family Support Act promised significant benefits for families of marriage migrants or 'multicultural' (*damunwha*) families.

However, anti-Multiculturalism campaigns have emerged since 2008 in South Korea. A small, vocal group of activists has created many Internet communities explicitly opposed to multicultural policies (Joseph Yi, 2015). The anti-Multicultural Policy was the largest in terms of registered users (10,815); *I love Korea: The Citizen's Solidarity* was the most politically active and organized (Joseph Yi, 2015). Additionally, other sites appeared that were mostly conservative and opposed to multicultural policies, such as Daily Storehouse (*Ilbe*), which was one of the largest sites in Korea having 140,000 daily visitors (Gwak, 2013). After 9/11 and the rise of ISIS, the campaign against the multi-culturalism policy fueled anti-Muslim sentiment in South Korea. This led to an increase in prejudice against non-Koreans who are seen as comparatively different due to skin color and language. Particularly, in respect to Muslims, there is a specific 'phobia' at work, which emerges from anti-multiculturalism sentiments against minority groups including Muslims.

Still, relatively homo-ethnic sentiments remain in South Korean society. For instance, the UN Committee on the Elimination of Racial Discrimination pointed out that emphasizing South Korea as a racially homogeneous country in the world was equivalent to racial discrimination, thus recommended that the government should stand on the front line of abolishing discrimination (National Human Rights Commission of Korea, 2011). Moreover, the National Human Rights Commission of Korea (NHRCK) has expressed its concern about increasing discriminatory speech and acts against foreigners including Muslims. According to the report published by the NHRCK in 2011, there were some expressions that describe foreign migrants from the Middle East as dangerous people, linking to terrorism on the

internet, which allows for the increasing security measures against them. The NHRCK also showed that some internet users repeatedly stated and spread the following statement: “all Muslims are not terrorists, but all terrorists are Muslims”.

Moreover, Muslims in South Korea were often blamed after 9/11 and they felt discriminated against by the larger society, which created for them the sense of being separated and segregated within their own communities (Ji, 2011). While the situation of intolerance against Muslims has deteriorated after the rise of ISIS, there appears to be a revival of social tensions manifested by the rallying of some civil groups against Islam and Muslims in South Korea. Particularly, populist, right-wing sites and unemployed young people have expressed hostility toward migrant workers. Also, distorted news stories and rumors such as crimes committed by foreigners, have been uploaded and quickly disseminated among South Korean internet users.

In this regard, Muslim migrant workers living in the country suffered from threats, harassment, discrimination and violence, which cause them to be alienated and further marginalized from the majority in the society (D. Kim, 2008; S. Kim, 2010). These circumstances have contributed to a prevailing discourse of victimhood in South Korea. This is related to the Muslim minority associated with small, ideologically homogeneous groups (Joseph Yi, 2015). Prejudice and discrimination against ethnic minorities such as Muslims has been increasingly embedded in anti-multiculturalism sentiments in the country. In short, the anti-multicultural discourse in South Korea has victimized minority groups, mainly concerning low-skilled foreign migrants from developing predominantly Muslim Asian countries and mixed families of foreign Muslims and native Koreans. This tendency gradually affected the discourse surrounding the multi-culturalism policy. Consequently, Muslims have faced vulnerability in South Korean society because of their religion and this

new challenge has increased the frustration of some members of this group.

Muslim Integration and Social Interaction

The Muslim community in South Korea has not faced serious hate crimes as in other Western countries, although there are anti-Muslim sentiments among certain sectors including conservative groups in the country. Ordinary Koreans do not express strong hostilities toward Muslims in the street. There are no reports of Muslims being attacked physically without reasons in South Korea. In addition, the Korean Central Mosque, which was established in 1976 in *Itaewon*, a central district in Seoul, has not faced direct threats of bombs or arson.

Meanwhile, some Muslims living in South Korea have shown how they attempted to adapt to a secular society. They seem to compromise their religious practices, which show a tendency to attenuate their religiosity and move them toward secular ways (S. Her, 2015). In this way, a few Muslims focus on their work as their main priority, so they do not keep daily prayer times to work within a dominant secular environment in South Korean society (S. Her, 2015). In order to collect a regular salary, many considered this temporary compromise on religious practices an acceptable part of living in the country (*Ibid*). For instance, one Bangladeshi participant from a South Korean study on Muslim migrants stated the following: “For me, it does not matter whether religious practices are performed or not. The purpose that I came to Korea is to work and earn money for my family” (S. Her, 2015). This compromise seems to come from the tacit pressure of South Korean society on Muslims to conform the social norms of the majority. After all, this phenomenon demonstrates how some Muslims working in South Korea attempt to move toward a secular way of life when they face the difficulties in performing religious practices within the South Korean society. In fact, they

suffer from various challenges in performing religious duties such as daily prayers, fasting during Ramadan, and Friday praying in the workplace because the rules in South Korea say the migrant workers should be working (Chang, 2010). Furthermore, many South Korean employers do not consider religious obligation an essential part of Muslims' daily lives (S. Her, 2015). In reality, Muslim migrant workers were forced to try to live in a way that shows they have been assimilated into the larger South Korean society (Moon, 2010).

Moreover, some other Muslims staying in South Korea depend on an in-group supportive Islamic community. This type of community can contribute to strengthen in-group ties, pride, and centrality (Ward, 2013). For instance, Indonesian Muslim workers have built networks to facilitate social interaction in South Korea (S. Her, 2015). Each Muslim community that came from Islamic countries has their own features, but Indonesian workers have built a more strong and organized network than other ethnic communities in South Korea. In this regard, they can feel closeness and togetherness with an in-group community while being proud of their ethnicity (*Ibid*). This network can enhance in-group solidarity and a sense of Muslim identity in the secular society (*Ibid*). These two paths show how Muslims in South Korea adapt in a secular society, highlighting how some view religious obligations as a matter of choice, not routine (Ammerman, 2003). Similarly, some Muslims in South Korea have shown their attempt to integrate into society by limiting or doing away with religious practices (S. Her, 2015). Although most Muslims may face adaptation difficulties in South Korea, they keep attempting to open the door to secular life styles in their own way.

CHAPTER 4: RELIGIOUS DISCOURSE

The main aim of this section is to explore how religious discourse is used to develop and spread Islamophobic sentiments in South Korea. This section will demonstrate the influence of the Protestant church in South Korea and why Protestants might be acting against Islam and Muslims through campaigns, mass media, and social media. Also, it will show how some influential pastors and churches spread false information or hate speech towards Muslims. In this way, this section will analyze how the Protestants have fueled Islamophobic sentiments in South Korea. This research depends on existing papers, some Christian figures' speeches, and daily newspapers associated with the Protestant church in South Korea. In addition, this section will review the root of Islamophobic information in Korean churches by investigating existing research. The finding of this section will show that South Korean Protestants have systematically contributed to the rise in Islamophobic discourse by repeatedly producing and spreading negative perceptions in the long term.

Muslim and Christian Relations in South Korea

In South Korea, the emergence of Islamophobic sentiments is closely related to the role of Christianity. In particular, the Protestant Korean church has disseminated negative images and representations of Islam, forming Islamophobic discourse (J. Lee, 2011). Some fundamentalist missionaries prophesize that a gradual Islamization is occurring in South Korea (J. Lee, 2011). They often argue that Islam is a violent religion and is a tool to oppress Muslim women (*Ibid*). They even posted photos of ISIS's brutality when they were conducting an anti-Islam campaign in the street in 2015 and 2016. This kind of prejudice and negative perception is also being spread via the media and the Protestant church community.

Although it was not easy to find cases of “Islamophobia in the streets,” it has been frequently used amongst Protestants in South Korea recent years (J. Lee, 2011). The emergence of Islamophobic discourse can be traced back to around 2008 in South Korea. At this year, it was found that South Korean Protestants began acting systematically to form anti-Muslim sentiments (J. Lee, 2011). Since then, specific South Korean newspapers and television programs affiliated with the Protestant church have spread Islamophobic discourse in the society. For example, one of major Christian newspapers ‘Kuk Min Il-Bo’, the ‘Church of Love’, and Korean World Missionary Association (KWMA) held an international forum titled “Islam is Coming” while the Far East Broadcasting Company (FEBC) screened a program titled “Islam, they are Swarming” (J. Lee, 2011). Another anti-Islam group named ‘*Halting Islamization Movement*’ conducted a campaign against Islam in the streets of Seoul. According to ‘The Christian Today’, the leader of this group, Lee Man Seok (2009), who is an influential pastor, stated when launching the campaign that, “the doctrine of Islam is not peaceful, and its aim is to unite all the world through Islam by using measures and methods including lies, violence, murder, and terror.” (J. Lee, 2011)

Moreover, a South Korean researcher Koo, Gi-Yeon (2016) argued that some influential bloggers and Twitter users seem to come from a Christian background in South Korea since 2015. By doing so, they have called for the government to take specific measures to block the building of mosques as well as the influx of Islamic funds into the country. In order to achieve their goals, some Protestants went to streets showing hostility towards Muslims while attempting to connect them with ISIS.

The rise of conspiracy against Islam and Muslims based on the Western sources has fueled Islamophobic discourse. The documents titled ‘The Strategy of 8 Steps for Islamization’ assumedly published by the Central Intelligence Agency (CIA) played a role in

spreading Islamophobic discourse in South Korea (J. Lee, 2011). The documents included content about how the Muslim minority gradually occupies specific countries from the 1st step to the 8th step by using an elaborate strategy. The Protestant groups have made videos based on this CIA documents and have disseminated them online and around churches (J. Lee, 2011). According to the research, the video depicts Islam as a horrible religion and led to the fear of Islam spreading. As a result, the video rapidly spreads to Korean churches through their websites and it influences the Protestant community though the content of the video proved to be false (D, Kim, 2009). In fact, the majority of the Protestant churches' claims are based on incorrect information and misperceptions (J. Lee, 2011). Similarly, some South Korean Protestants have warned of the possibility of terror attacks by Muslims, stating that "the Muslim population is below 1% in Korea, so they pretend to love peace and restrict violent activities until they have stronger power" (M. Lee, 2009). A few Protestants even revealed their hostile attitudes toward Muslims while assuming that they were potential threats like ISIS members or extreme Islamists.

The influence and increase of the number of Protestant populations may help explain these growing anti-Muslim attitudes in South Korea. According to the Kuk Min Il-bo, those who do not like the influx of Muslims to South Korea are predominantly Protestants (56.3%), followed by Catholics (30.7%), Buddhists (25.7%), and atheists (15.6%) (J. Lee, 2011). This poll shows that Protestants seem to be more cautious in their response to the influx of Muslims than other religious people. While there are ups and downs in population rate by religions in South Korea, according to national census the rate of Protestantism was rapidly raised from 16.1% to 19.7% between 1985 to 2015 (N. Yoon, 2017).

A South Korean researcher Lee Jin Gu (2011) argued that the reason for this rather unreasonable hatred toward Muslims is related to the crisis within the Protestant church. He

suggested that the Protestant church has suffered from a decrease in believers as well as criticism from the civil society. In fact, the Protestant church has faced serious criticism from civil society groups due to their aggressive missionaries locally and internationally. For example, some missionaries have yelled in the streets or in front of main railway stations, “if you do not believe in Jesus, you will go to the hell”. Aggressive activities and provocative slogans by these missionaries is a major cause of recent criticism facing the Protestant church in South Korea. Even though the South Korean society is worried about the actions of the Protestant church, they played a role in contributing to anti-Islam attitudes by using a rhetoric strategy that differentiates between Koreans and Muslims.

In addition, as previously mentioned, the Christian Liberal Party, which mainly consist of Protestants, has impacted the spread of Islamophobic sentiments. This party often revealed their anti-Muslim speeches during the parliamentary elections in 2016. This party pledged to prohibit Islam, anti-Christianity values, and homosexuality. Some Korean Protestants led protests calling for the rejection of the building of a Halal factory in South Korea. In this regard, Lee Jin Gu (2011) argued that some fundamental Protestant church leaders are using a strategy of diffusing Islamophobia in a way to escape its own problems and critical environment. These campaigns raised a controversy but the party failed to obtain seats in parliament.

This phenomenon may reflect a religious and ideological worldview revealing the wish for a racially pure nation-state or a Christian Europe (Hafez, 2015). This phenomenon in Europe seems to be relevant because European identity is rooted in Christianity (*Ibid*). Similarly, Islamophobia has been linked to nationalism based on a historical review in Europe. For instance, racially based attacks against Muslims and foreigners intensified in the 1980s and 1990s and then Islamophobia spread across Europe (Hafez, 2015). By exploring

these sentiments based on the assumption of an imagined Christian Europe, many politicians from nationalist, right wing political parties, and conservative Christian camps attempted to spread a security discourse stirring hatred and dividing people against an imagined threat. Furthermore, many politicians justified Islamophobia by portraying Islamic culture and tradition over the status of Muslim women as victims of an oppressive Islam. These concerns were voiced to elicit support for the wars in Iraq and Afghanistan (Ahmed, 2012). Therefore, conservative Christian camps in Europe may be able to reproduce Islamophobic discourse strategies by using the typical religious rhetoric against Muslims. The dynamic of group differentiation through religious discourse can be achieved through the negative representation of Muslims and Islam (Ahmed, 2012).

However, the case of Islamophobia from a religious perspective in South Korea may be different from Western cases, to some extent. In the West, as Islamophobia has spread across Europe, there have been activities that regulate and prohibit hate crimes toward Muslims. This is because most European countries have shown that hate crimes against Muslims are serious crimes and social problems. Additionally, the reason for Islamophobia in Europe mainly resulted from actual terror attacks in their territory combined with an increase in the Muslim population, a failed immigration policy, and the emergence of far right-wing parties. On the contrary, the phenomenon of Islamophobia in South Korea has been built not in the streets, but in the type of discourse among conservative groups. This shows that the expression of Islamophobic sentiments is different between Europe and South Korea, though the reason for the emergence of Islamophobia is similar.

CHAPTER 5: ISLAM IMAGES IN MASS MEDIA

This section investigates images associated with Islam and Muslims in South Korean news coverage and how these images spread through media platforms. This research is important because these images can be groundwork for understanding South Korean society's attitudes towards Muslim community. Due to the influence of news coverage, South Korean traditional media such as newspapers and television has played a significant role in giving and rooting a general image and idea about Islam and Muslims. This section will explore how the South Korean mass media has described Islam and Muslims after it encountered them. Also, the main images associated with Islam and Arabs will be addressed by analyzing South Korean media coverage in daily newspapers and broadcastings. This research uses the method of content analysis of news articles in the Korean language. The outcome of this analysis will be to show how media has contributed to the spread of particularly negative images of Islam and Muslims, and consequently, has led to the exclusion of the Muslim community while fueling Islamophobic sentiments within the society.

Islam and Muslim Images in South Korean Media

There has been little research on the image or perception of Islam and Muslims in South Korea (S. Kim, 2016). There still remains a lack of textual research sources that describe the general image of Islam and Muslims via the lens of the South Korean media. However, some South Korean researches argue that there have been several signs that show Islamophobic attitudes are growing in the society. Only two surveys conducted by two South Korean researchers in 1990 and 2016 revealed that the South Korean media tended to focus on negative issues regarding the Arab world and that Korean responders who had negative images of Arabs were more numerous than the ones with positive references. The two

surveys are based on monitoring South Korean mass media since most Koreans received information regarding the Middle Eastern issues from televised news, newspapers, radio, and Internet (S. Kim, 2016). The results of these two surveys showed that opinions about Arabs and Islam in a comparative examination of public views have not changed thus far in South Korea. For instance, according to the website for the Ministry of Employment and Labor in South Korea, there were 1,500 comments that requested to exclude Islamic countries from labor supply countries and to end the government policy of multiculturalism (J. Lee, 2011). Moreover, the coverage of Muslims in South Korea seems to appear rather scarce, but with a significant focus on sensationalism.

Korean researcher Cho Hee Sun (1990) conducted a study, titled 'Arab's image in Korean Society', by analyzing daily newspapers for the first time in Korean academia. Cho used the term 'Arab' instead of Islam or Muslims because she considered it a common word that described the Islamic world in the minds of South Koreans though 'Arab' is the term of ethnic group related to its own culture or language without religion. Cho (1990) investigated the Arab image in relation to 52 articles published by the biggest Korean daily newspaper '*Chosun Ilbo*' for two months in 1987. The results demonstrated that the majority of South Koreans had negative perceptions of Arabs and Islam. They viewed Arabs and Islam as dangerous symbols related to war, terror attacks, and conflicts. Even though the articles dealt with various issues in the Arab world, most of them focused on negative associations. For instance, 18 of the 33 articles dealing with military and political issues in the Arab world were related to the conflict between Israel and Palestine, followed by 8 articles dealing with Iraq, 3 articles related to the Libyan issue, and 2 articles regarding the relationship between Turkey and Syria. The other 4 articles mentioned weapons, explosions, and kidnappings in the Arab world. Overall, this research revealed that 67% of the total articles dealing with the

Arab world shed light on military and political aspects. This proved that there were some stereotypical expressions that were assigned to Arabs: war, terrorism, kidnapping, explosion, seizure, weapons, victims, killed people, missiles, and other negative words (Cho, 1990). This framing could provide South Korean readers with negative perceptions of Islam and Muslims. For example, the endless conflict between Israel and Palestine would give the impression that it is almost impossible to reach a permanent peaceful agreement in the Middle East. In this sense, Cho (1990) argues that if an ordinary citizen were to be asked about his or her view of the Arab world, he or she would have likely mentioned wars, conflicts, and terrorism. On the other hand, if Koreans were asked the same questions about the West or the U.S., they would list some famous figures, movie stars, and celebrities instead of terror or conflicts (Cho, 1990). This result may have come from sources such as text books, films, pictures, and dramas that were framed by the West, so there were deep-rooted differences between the images of the Arab world and the West (Cho, 1990).

Another survey conducted in 2016 provided similar results. A South Korean researcher Kim Soo Wan (2016) explored the main factors that determined current levels of awareness and attitudes of South Koreans towards Arabs and Islam. Like the previous research conducted by Cho (1990), Kim also used the term ‘Arab’ because it is a very common word that depicts the Islamic world and the Middle East. According to the results of the Kim’s research from 642 ordinary South Korean citizens, 75% responded that the strongest image of Arabs and Islam from the open-ended questions were negative aspects such as terror, war, conflict, and it being a dangerous area. These responders considered the Middle East as a region with continued turmoil and conflict between Arabs and the U.S. or Arabs and Israel (S. Kim, 2016). Other responses included: ‘oil rich countries’ (50%), ‘sterile natural environment’ (33%), ‘economic reconstruction’ (21%), ‘sex discrimination and

feudalistic social system' (15%). These examples imply that negative perceptions about Arabs and Islam in South Korea were stronger than positive ones. Furthermore, the same research revealed that over 83% of the responders acknowledged the amount of negative news coverage on Arabs and Islam was larger than the positive one in South Korean media. From this perspective, Kim (2016) demonstrates that South Koreans have more negative images of Arabs and Islam because they are influenced by the negative tone of the Korean media. He also argued how the media focused on sensationalism, biased and non-objective reports on Arabs and Islam. This research shows the importance of people's perception and attitudes toward Islam and Muslims as a result of their stereotypical depictions by media.

According to a few South Korean studies, news coverage on Islamic issues has existed since the late 1970s, but most reports seemed to focus on negative aspects. There maybe two main reasons that explain the negative coverage of Islam and the Arab world. First, news coverage regarding Middle Eastern issues in South Korea heavily depends on Western media platforms from the U.S. and Europe. This limitation of access to information contributes to them following the framing that comes from the West. Secondly, some articles as a result of anonymity of sources are sometimes fueled by negative images of Islam and Muslims. These anonymous sources often targeted Islam and Muslims without factual grounds or impartiality. In this sense, Lorne L. Dawson (2004) writes that the, "Media is not neutral or passive conduits for the transfer of information. They mold the message in ways that crucially influence the world views we construct. They adjust our self-conceptions, notions of human relations and community, and the nature of reality itself" (Dawson, 2004).

The crucial problem is that Western media outlets tend to focus on political and religious conflict issues and often use the framing of 'clash of civilization theory' suggested by the political thinker Samuel Huntington (1993) in order to analyze the Middle Easter

issues. Likewise, the South Korean media and reference books depicted the conflicts and disputes in the region as religious and cultural conflict between Muslims and Christians. A South Korean scholar on Islam, Cho Hee Sun (1999) argued that hundreds of studies and articles dealing with Islam and Arab issues do not use Arabic references, but depend on English ones. Another scholar on Islam in South Korea, Lee Hee Su (2016) also suggested that South Koreans have perceived Islam mainly through the lens of the U.S. media which is biased against the Islamic world and centered on the West.

According to a study on the perceptions of Islam, Muslims are often depicted in a stereotypical and negative manner by Western media outlets from mainly the United States ("Western Media, 2005). This tendency, especially related to the Middle Eastern issues, may be a type of rhetoric based on deep-rooted negative perceptions toward Islam and Muslims. As mentioned above, the predominant stereotypes of Muslims in the media are that they are terrorists and oil-rich tycoons, while Muslim women are considered the victims of Islamic culture. Currently, the most well-known stereotype, the Muslim as an Arab terrorist, is one of the most common in South Korea. This is because Islam is continuously being depicted as violent, aggressive, threatening, and supportive of terrorism, and engaged in a 'clash of civilizations' (Muir, 2004). The second common stereotype is a bearded oil-rich tycoon that emerged during the oil crisis of the 1970s and 1980s (Saedi, 2012). These stereotypes may lead to misunderstandings and negative perceptions concerning Islam and Arab people in the West, while resulting in rising discrimination based on different race, language, and culture ("Western Media," 2005). Some scholars, such as Samuel Huntington, argue that cultural differences are natural and lead to conflict (1993). For example, Huntington stated:

"It is my hypothesis that the fundamental source of conflict in the new world will not be primarily ideological or primarily economic. The great divisions among humankind and the dominating source of conflict will be cultural.

Nation states will remain the most powerful actors in world affairs, but the principal conflicts of global politics will occur between nations and groups of different civilizations. The clash of civilizations will dominate global politics. The fault lines between civilizations will be the battle lines of the future.” (p.22)

The concept of a ‘Clash of Civilizations’ proposed by Huntington (1993) has been used in explaining the rise of Islamophobia. Huntington (1993) argues that the feature of international conflicts is based on the civilization conflict while civilizations are distinguished by religion, history, language, traditions and norms using examples of the Middle Eastern conflicts in 1990s. In this regard, the ‘clash of civilization’ concept has been often utilized to increase fear of an Islamic movement, perceiving it as increasingly powerful and anti-Western (Saedi, 2012). At the same time, the U.K. based NGO, Runnymede Trust (1997) analyzed in a comprehensive study how Islam was seen and engaged in a ‘clash of civilizations’ by Islamophobes (Bonasinga, 2015).

Moreover, after the rise of ISIS, most South Korean media outlets show a tendency that focuses on the brutality of Islamic militants and extremists in the Middle East and Europe. This tendency has played a role in rooting the stereotypical images of Islam and Muslims. Images are very important because they can take the form of symbols and milestones which can constitute the boundary between us and them (O, Lee, 2003). Negative images sometimes incite anti-Islam campaigns among conservative groups such as right wing politicians and Christians in open places like near the national parliament and government complex in 2015 and 2016. The negative framing by the media toward Islam has even led to the movement of anti-Halal facilities in South Korea. Under these circumstances, Gang Won province and Go Yang City abandoned the plan that establishes Halal food market or Hala town because conservative groups and local residents conducted anti-Halal campaigns. Gang

Won province even gave up holding the 2017 World Islam Economic Forum despite the submission of application form to hold it. This shows that there is an overt antipathy towards Halal factories or overt expression of Islam because Halal food symbolizes Islamic religion and culture. Regarding this point, South Korean researcher Eom (2015) argues that Muslim migrants strongly preserve their religious and cultural identities instead of assimilating into original societies in European countries though this is not a South Korean case. Eom (2015) also points out that this tendency of Muslim migrants increases concerns and anxieties of European majority of people.

To sum up, the research on images associated with Islam in South Korea shows that Islam and Muslims are usually negatively framed and discriminated. Furthermore, mass media in South Korea often reports the issue of Islamic militants and extremists in a manner that negatively portrays Islam and Muslims. This tendency can lead to negative stereotypical expressions and demagogic forces that overwhelm the social discourse regarding Islamophobia by dominant groups. These findings help us understand how the framing tactics used by the South Korean media are often biased against Muslims and Islam. Thus, this tendency of the South Korean media focusing on negative coverage can fuel the spread of Islamophobic sentiments by using a type of rhetoric related to prejudice towards Muslims. Unfortunately, the research committed by the South Korean government or official institutions on images of Islam has not been conclusive while the analysis of visual and interviews with Muslims has not been conducted in Korean academia.

CHAPTER 6: ONLINE DISCOURSE

The aim of this section is to explore online media platforms most associated with Islam and Muslims in South Korea. This section shed light on how online media has become a powerful tool for spreading certain images about Islam and Muslims in South Korea. This online discourse has been most active in recent years, especially as some specific groups including influential Protestant leaders use social media to raise concerns about the spread of Islam. They do so primarily by linking Islam with negative matters such as threat of terrorism and uncivilized culture. First of all, it will investigate how Islam has been discussed in internet websites and social media platforms in the Korean language and how online discourse regarding Islam and Muslims has emerged and developed. This section will analyze official reports from the National Human Rights Commission of Korea and existing research papers comparing South Korea with Western cases. This section will also attempt to find common rhetoric by discussing South Korean Twitter content analysis between January and July in 2016. The outcome will demonstrate how social media plays a role in contributing to an increase in Islamophobic sentiments through reproducing false and negative images or hate speech towards Muslims in South Korea.

Online Discourse towards Muslims in South Korea

In addition to an increase in anti-Muslim rhetoric from the traditional mass media, South Korea has been experiencing a rise of Islamophobic sentiments in online media since 2014. Online abuse is not restricted to online Islamophobia but also includes online incidents of racism, homophobic abuse, gender-based abuse and anti-disability abuse (The Huffington Post, 2013). Particularly, online anti-Muslim sentiments occurring in recent years on social networking sites such as Twitter and Facebook can be categorized as “cyber hate” and

“cybercrimes” (Awan, 2014). A recent report conducted by Feldman et al. (2013) regarding online anti-Muslim prejudice highlighted the following: “The online domain remains under-researched and much less attention has been paid to online hate crimes, which can be the precursor to more physically threatening offline incidents.” Many of the comments posted online through social networking sites have an extremist and incendiary undertone (Feldman et al, 2013).

To understand the influence of online media in spreading images and forming public opinion is important in South Korea although it is difficult to compare the influence of spreading and forming images between traditional mass media and online media (Keats et al, 2011). Social media platforms were being used to facilitate and form online hate speech and intolerance. For example, this type of online hate speech can intensify following some trigger incidents such as the Paris attack and the Brussels terror attacks (Awan & Zempi, 2015). Hall (2013) argues that the increase in the use of the Internet as a vehicle for hate, prejudice, and hostility is seemingly undeniable in a more causal manner.

Similarly, the phenomenon of anti-Muslim rhetoric has become more pervasive in South Korea after a series of terrorist attacks by ISIS in Europe in 2015 and 2016 (G. Koo, 2016). According to the recent Korean news reports, some Protestants demonstrated their hostility by posting and tweeting hate speech towards Muslims. Many internet users have also shown their anti-Muslim sentiments by using social media to spread the negative images of Muslims. In this regard, building a negative image of Muslims through social media may contribute to the rise of Islamophobic sentiments despite them having lived in South Korea for decades, and having continuously migrated into the country.

However, very little discussion has been initiated regarding online Islamophobia, and specifically, that found on social media. In fact, few studies have analyzed the impact and the

role of the internet in spreading anti-Islamic and anti-Muslim opinions in general (Larsson, 2007). Although the definition of online or cyber Islamophobia remains limited in scope with regard to the online dimension of Islamophobia, it gives an important starting point for further discussion in this field. To study the influence of the Internet is also significant since it is part and parcel of everyday life in most countries that have internet infrastructure (Larsson, 2007). In addition, the Internet is used by journalists for gathering information and doing research for other media reporting (*Ibid*).

In South Korea, much of the multicultural and Islamophobic discourse has occurred via online-media, which offers a space for various producers including mainstream media professionals, influential internet users, and resident foreigners in order to express their opinions (Joseph Yi, 2015). For example, some internet users have shown their anti-multiculturalism stance or anti-Muslim sentiments by using various social media platforms to spread negative images linking Muslims with the brutality of ISIS. According to the recent Korean media, some Protestants demonstrated their hostility by posting and tweeting hate speech towards Muslims in their social media platforms. Interestingly, however, anti-Muslim posts on internet have not translated into offline hate crimes in South Korea because these posts often fail to attract public support of the majority of people due to weak factual grounds and fabricated images. Although it is not a South Korean case, Feldman et al. (2013) found that 74 % of reported anti-Muslim hate speech occurred online, in comparison to 26 % of offline incidents. In this sense, some critics argue that the difficult nature of policing online space has led to local police forces failing to protect Muslim communities (Awan, 2014).

One South Korean researcher, Koo Gi Yeon (2016) argues that the reflection of Islam in the South Korean media is contributing to the spread of negative images about Islam in the society. Koo (2016) suggests that negative words related to Islam surged on social

media outlets such as Twitter and blogs after the emergence of ISIS. According to her research, negative words most frequently associated with Islam on social media have dramatically increased since 2014. For instance, the word most frequently linked with Islam on Twitter and blogs was 'terror' in 2015. In this sense, Koo (2016) highlights that the fear, phobia, and negative rumors about Islam are being constructed through mainly social media. However, except this research there have been no previous studies that have focused on the role of social media in spreading Islamophobic opinions in South Korea.

Meanwhile, the anti-Muslim rhetoric relating words such as terrorism, extremism, and uncivilized people to Islam on social media has contributed to further worsening the attitude of intolerance towards Muslim refugees and migrants in South Korea. In fact, anti-Muslim sentiments have pervasively spread through social media outlets including Twitter or Facebook during the last two years because Muslim migrants are often perceived as potential threats to national security, both in terms of economy and safety, even though the Muslim community is very small, only 0.3% of total 50 million populations in South Korea. According to the National Human Rights Commission of Korea, the number of racial discrimination speeches against foreigners reached 210, based on internet information found through monitoring blogs, news articles comments, and videos between October 1 and October 31 in 2010. The NHRCK argued that there was a tendency to consider specific foreign migrants such as Muslims as threats or criminals. The NHRCK also found that there were discriminatory and prejudicial expressions on the internet based on differences in skin color and religion. In addition, it demonstrated that some Korean people have shown their hostility towards Muslims by posting or tweeting negative pictures and hate speech on social media platforms and more recently, the influx of foreign migrant Muslims coming into the country.

The analysis of Twitter between January and June in 2016 clearly shows there is some negative rhetoric about Islam and Muslims. Figure 1 shows how Korean Twitter users usually view the Islamic world in relation to the three main attacks during the last six months of 2016. After examining the top 5 Re-tweets related to Islam and Muslims, it is evident that there are some specific expressions used that depicts the Islamic world in a negative manner. For instance, the top tweet among the most Re-tweeted was related to the GangNam Korean woman killed in 2016, and stated that “the rate of killing women is higher [in South Korea] than in Islamic countries and this proves that the Republic of Korea is very seriously deformed.” This statement implies that the rate of killing women in Islamic countries is high as like South Korea or the rest of the world. The second tweet among the most Re-tweeted was written just after the Orlando shooting, praising a tweet from then presidential candidate, now-U.S. President Donald Trump, mentioning in the Korean language; “Thank you for the congratulations on my evaluation that extreme Islamic terror is right. From the incident, 50 people were killed”. This statement proposes that Islam is a threat to national security. The third tweet among the most Re-tweeted states that, “Korea seems to be a civilized country, but do not forget that it is no more so than Islamic countries.” This tweet shows the negative perceptions of Islamic world regarding civilization and culture among Korean Tweeter users. The fourth tweet is set up in a question and answer format, “Who is going to commit terror attacks?” while providing 5 choices including “someone who is connected to Muslims.” This statement suggests that all Muslims can be terrorists. This table represents typical misperceptions towards Muslims and the Islamic world, which consequently has led to the reproduction of anti-Muslim rhetoric in South Korea.

User Name	Tweet	Date	Number of Re-tweet

kidogom	“...although the rate of arrests [in South Korea] is high, the sexual crime rate in this country is number one and the rate of killing women is higher than in Islamic countries and this proves that the Republic of Korea is very seriously deformed”	2016-05-18	3,165
sideway_s	“during the night, after the random shooting in Orlando, which dominated the U.S media, the tweet of Trump is “Thank you for the congratulations on my assertion that extreme Islam terror is right. From the incident, 50 people were killed.””	2016-06-13	561
hottchaa	Re-tweet “...“Korea seems to be a civilized country, but do not forget that it is no more so than Islamic countries. If something is unsatisfactory, [Koreans] kill women and it is emotionally forgiven.”	2016-05-18	364
histopian	“Who is going to commit terrors among the following? Someone who is connected to Muslims, someone who usually enjoys violent games, someone who often says “I will kill you all,” and...”	2016-02-24	309
_llo	“Park Young Sun [lawmaker of opposition party Min-Ju party] is going to do a filibuster against the Anti-Terror Act, although she announced the party platform is to discriminate sexual minority and Islam in the far-right Christian event. Isn’t this self-contradiction?”	2016-02-29	276

Figure 1. Top 5 Selected Tweets among the Most Re-tweeted Between January and June 2016

Currently, hate speech can easily be found on many types of websites and social media platforms discussing foreign migration workers such as civil groups for foreign

laborers, human rights, internet cafes for anti-multicultural policy, and local groups for anti-foreign criminals in South Korea (Lee, 2015). In these platforms, a lot of hate speech targeting foreign migrant workers can be found. According to the report of the National Human Rights Commission of Korea in 2012, some extreme hate speech is reproduced online. For example, there are some hate comments towards Muslims that, “the priority is illegal migrants and is not Koreans in this country” or “Muslims should be banned from approaching the G20 conference room” (Lee, 2015). This shows how foreigners from the Islamic world are depicted as threatening, often linking them to terrorism (NHRCK, 2011). In addition, this kind of anonymous hate speech on the internet is usually not erased by the managers of the internet sites or related organizations due to the lack of criminal regulation. This seems like a backlash against Muslim practices despite the fact that violent protests towards them have not directly happened in the streets. This is particularly true because anti-Muslim sentiments have dramatically increased after the terror attacks by ISIS in Europe, the U.S, and Asia. To some extent, it is not strange for social media to have a tendency to focus on conflict issues and portray events involving Muslims as religiously motivated. However, the users of social media are not likely to take their responsibilities attributing the fault to primary sources of information they are citing, although social media sometimes depends on anonymous sources and untrustworthy information.

In general, some social media outlets have shown a tendency to legitimize Islamophobic attitudes in the name of ‘freedom of speech’ (Bryfonski, 2012). This tendency can potentially lead to hate crimes and hate speech due to the wide spread of anti-Muslim prejudice. Moreover, there could be even more attacks towards Muslims on internet because the level of hate speech has increasingly strengthened among South Korean social media users. In order to prevent online abuse, some Western countries provide an example of how

to tackle these phenomenons. For example, the police in the U.K. have an online tool called ‘True Vision’ that restricts and punish cyber hate crimes including, illegal content that threatens or harasses a person or group because they are of a different race, religion, or sexual orientation (Awan, 2014). However, South Korea currently has no tools or measures to tackle cyber hate crimes.

In South Korea, social media is a very popular tool to communicate each other. 35 million South Koreans are using the internet, while most of them use social media via computers or mobiles. In particular, Twitter and Facebook have become more influential platforms. According to a survey, around 5 million South Koreans were using Twitter in 2011 while 19 million South Koreans currently have Facebook pages. For this reason, it is meaningful to investigate the role of social media, especially focusing on the case study of Twitter, in framing anti-Muslim sentiments in South Korea. This thesis conducts an in-depth analysis by using Twitter because it can be a starting point in helping detect and tackle online Islamophobic attitudes in South Korean society. In South Korea, social media has become a communication platform that has played a huge role in developing public opinions.

Case Study of Twitter

This case study on Twitter uses both quantitative and qualitative data gathering techniques to analyze text mining, opinion mining, and the content of hate speech based on all comments and posts in Twitter during the research period. By using the electronic software system ‘Net Miner,’ which was invented by CYRAM Korean Company, one is able to collate ‘high frequency’ words and patterns that are directly related to anti-Muslim hate speech. The data from Twitter is obtained from tweets generated between January 1st 2016 and June 30th 2016. This period was chosen because a series of terror attacks by Islamic

extremists such as ISIS took place in Orlando, the U.S. and Brussels, Belgium during this time, motivating increased Islamophobic expression throughout the world. This period is also significant since Islamophobic expressions and sentiments were prevalent due to a few major terrorist attacks during this time. This research examines 13,082 tweets from 8,556 different Twitter users in order to find out how Muslims are viewed in South Korea via Twitter platform. It includes all relevant tweets that Twitter users created, Re-tweets, and Reply tweets. All of the tweets are available and accessible in the open public domain. An overwhelming majority of tweets were written and posted in the Korean language. This research uses the terms Muslims AND ISIS, Muslims AND Extremism, Muslims AND Terrorist, and Muslims AND Militants. These results provide some characteristics of the offenders such as their political and religious leanings, politically right-wing leaning tendency, and being fundamental Protestants.

By using this research method, this section examines not only common terms by using big data of Twitter collections on Islam and Muslims but also investigates some characteristics of hate speech from the offenders to categorize patterns emerging regarding online Islamophobia. This method also allows for an opportunity to use specific terms such as extremist and militant, as a means to see how Muslims are depicted in South Korea during a specific time frame.

During the period of this study, there were two main terror attacks in the U.S. and Belgium. In the U.S., Omar Mir Mateen, who was Afghani-American, shot and killed 50 and injured 53 at a nightclub in Florida on the 12th of June. After the attack, Mateen pledged loyalty to the leader of ISIS, Abu Bakhr Al Baghdadi, but it was not clear if ISIS was directly responsible for the incident. In Belgium, there were three bomb attacks resulting in 34 deaths, including two suicide bombers, and over 250 injuries on 22th of March. These two attacks

influenced some Asian countries including South Korea, as can be seen through the active use of Twitter where Koreans posted fake articles and pictures about Islam and Muslims. Interestingly, when a 35-year-old Korean man, who claimed himself to be a “self-woman-phobe”, randomly stabbed and killed a 23-year old Korean woman without any reason in the center of Gang Nam District, Seoul on 17 May, 2016, there was a dramatic increase in tweets comparing the incident to the conditions of women in the Islamic world. The exact motivation is still unclear, but this incident drew controversy and was referred to as “woman-phobia” within Korean society. Such phenomenon may result from the ignorance about Muslims and Islam. South Korean scholar Cho Hee Sun (1990) points out that this ignorance is mainly from the lack of South Koreans’ understanding of the cultural and religious difference between Korea and the Islamic world since Koreans have not had a close relationship with it. In this sense, this research shows how Islam and Muslims were depicted both before and after two key incidents.

Content Analysis

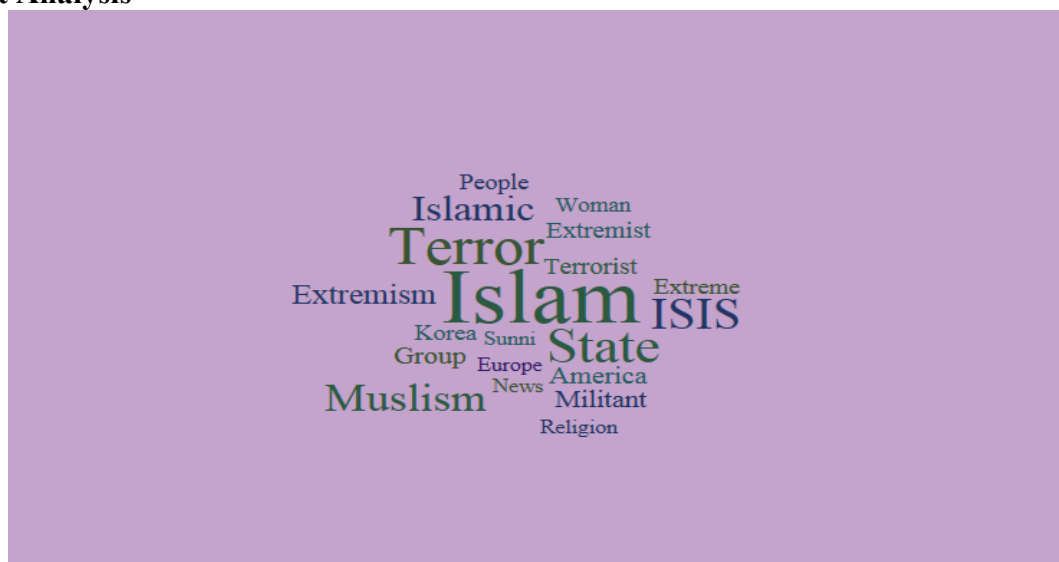


Figure 2. Word Cloud of Frequent Anti-Muslim Posts of Top 20 from Twitter

According to the analysis of Twitter's search engine, there were a number of terms that were used to describe Islam and Muslims in a negative manner. Some of the most common reappearing words used to describe Islam and Muslims in a derogatory way were examined (Figure 2). These include the following: Terror (12.6%), Muslim (8.3%), ISIS (6.4%), Extremism (4.5 %), Islamic State (3.8 %), Militant (2.9 %), and Terrorist (2.8 %). Figure 3 shows the top 20 ranking which includes both Islam (20.8%) and Muslims (8.3%). Both Figure 2 and Figure 3 demonstrate a trend regarding Islam and Muslims in an overall negative manner on Twitter.

Islam	1,181	20.8%
Terror	716	12.6%
Muslim	470	8.3%
ISIS	365	6.4%
Extremism	253	4.5%
State	236	4.2%
Islamic State	214	3.8%
America	181	3.2%
Islamic State IS	181	3.2%
Militant	165	2.9%
Terrorist	160	2.8%
Extremist	146	2.6%
Extreme	122	2.1%
People	122	2.1%
Korea	105	1.8%
Woman	98	1.7%
News	93	1.6%
Religion	93	1.6%
Europe	90	1.5%

Figure 3. Top 20 Frequently Used Words Related to Islam and Muslims in South Korea

Net Miner, which is electronic software system that can collate 'high frequency' words and patterns, was used to examine the time and the frequency regarding the use of terms related to Islam and Muslims. As Figure 4 demonstrates, between the months that the attacks in Orlando and Brussels happened from March to June 2016, the overall number of

tweets with anti-Muslim rhetoric dramatically increased from 2,062 to 3,118, with a peak of 4,201 near the end of the period. This echoed the feelings on Islam or Muslims among South Korean Twitter users. In particular, one day after the Orlando attack, there were 1,638 tweets among 10,120 total tweets. This shows a dramatic increase of tweets, which mainly associate terror attacks with the terms 'Islam' or 'Muslims'. Similarly, both the day of and one day after the Brussels bomb attacks, there were 92 and 127 tweets per day respectively. Additionally, the killing of the Korean woman in Seoul mentioned above led to explosive responses on Twitter throughout South Korea. The tweets associated with Islam on the day of the incident reached 2,875 out of a total 10,120: the largest number in six months. This data demonstrates there is a clear relationship between terror attacks and the spread of negative images regarding Islam and Muslims.

In some cases, Twitter users simply used Twitter as a tool to antagonize and create hostility with Re-tweets and Reply tweets. For example, Christian Liberal Party is running an official Twitter account and its members often reveal their hostilities towards Muslims by using Re-tweets and Reply tweets of anti-Muslims speech and negative images on them. Moreover, some tweets used a negative hashtag to spread campaigns such as against the building of a Halal factory in South Korea using a big picture containing ISIS militant members or ISIS flag. These results demonstrate negative incidents related to Muslims or phobias against specific groups have contributed to the Islamophobic attitudes on Twitter. The figure in these graphs reveals how hate speech against Muslims is being deep-rooted in South Korea. Thus, the figure may be an example of the rise of Islamophobic attitudes in South Korea.

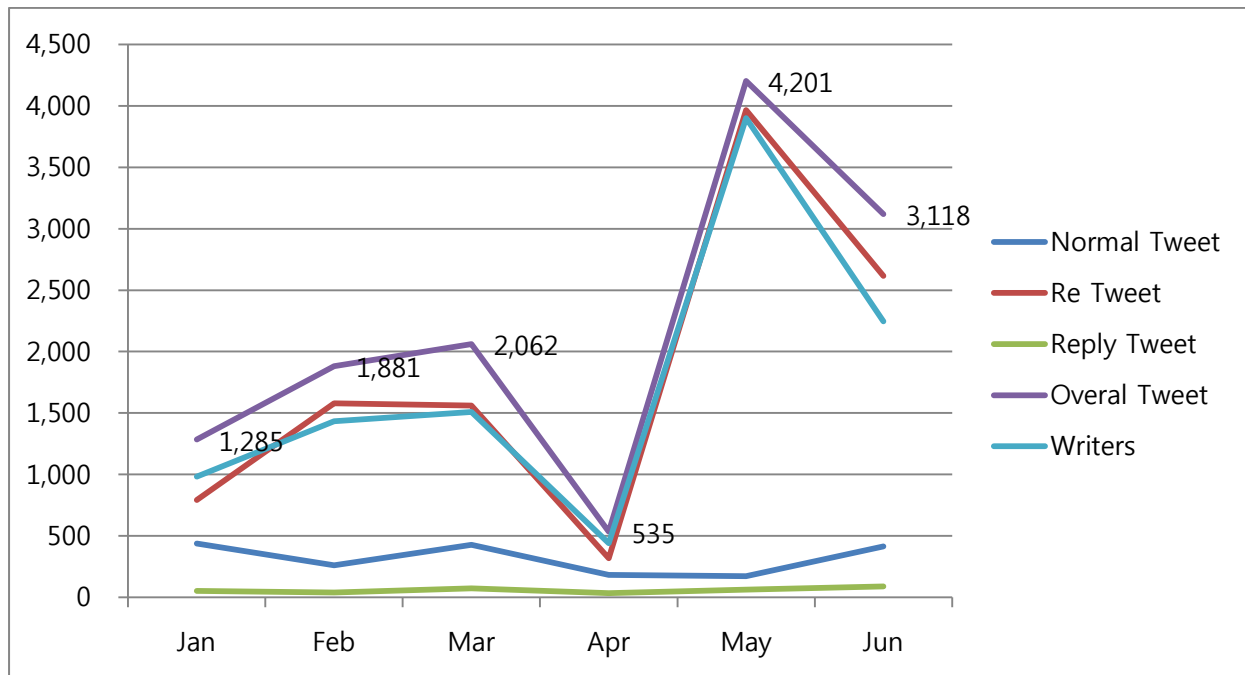


Figure 4. Graph on Twitter Buzz between January and June in 2016

Additionally, most of the top 20 frequent tweets emerging with two words together related to Islam or Muslims showed a strong Islamophobic tone and blamed Muslims on particular issues in order to justify their abuse (Figure 5). Some accounts were open about their anger and hatred for Muslims and Islam as a result of the two attacks in the U.S. and Belgium. For example, the same day and one day after the two attacks anti-Islam expressions linking Muslims with Terror or ISIS surged dramatically on Twitter. In addition, a number of accounts used anti-Islam images and literature as a means to defame Muslims as dangerous pedophiles (Figure 6. 76p). Some internet users spread wrong Islamic basics of Quran on Twitter. For example, a user claimed that, “it is possible to rape, marry, and divorce with girls who have not started puberty –Quran 65:4” without any factual grounds. This tendency shows that some Twitter users consider Muslims a dangerous group or a threat to South Korean society. Consequently, this tendency can worsen the image of Islam and Muslims because it provides South Koreans with a negative perception of Islam and Muslims on the

internet. These tweets are also a significant factor since some specific words frequently used in social media can represent the overall image about Islam in South Korea.

word1	word2	frequency
Islam	Terror	380
Terror	Muslim	223
Islam	State	202
Islam	Extremism	185
Islam	ISIS	182
Terror	ISIS	134
Islam	Extremist	132
Islam	Militant	112
Islam	America	104
ISIS	Extremism	93
Muslim	Terror	91
Islam	Muslim	88
Extremism	Militant	81
Islam	Extreme	78
Terror	America	77
Terror	Extremism	69
ISIS	Islamic State	68
ISIS	Militant	63
Islam	Religion	59
Islam	Belgium	59

Figure 5. The Top 20 Key Words Regarding Islam and Muslim with Number Frequency Emerging Together

In addition to these tweets, there were some trending words and images across Twitter where Muslims were being depicted through photos as extremists and terrorists, linked to online news sites and websites. Some of them often equate Muslims with terrorism, lawlessness, or killers who want to kill non-Muslims. Members of an anti-Islam group posted a picture where they were protesting against influx of Islamic funds and Muslims in South Korea (Figure 7). This idea often targets the Islamic culture or Halal food of Muslims and Islamic law. Even a Twitter user, who urged the passage of the anti-terror Act in parliament, posted a brutal picture of a beheading by ISIS (Figure 8). The aim of these tweets and pictures seem to not only be the spread of hateful content, but also a normalizing of this

content. Some staffs from Christian Liberal Party posted their photos of election campaigns in the streets while pledging to stop Islam, homosexuality, and anti-Christianity laws. In addition, some South Korean internet users have a tendency to upload or linked brutal and sensational video and photos while spreading false information about Islam (Figure 8; Figure 9; Figure 10).

Although some hate comments and pictures posted on Twitter are not directly related to the three main attacks, Brussels' attack, GangNam killing, Orlando shooting, they can play a role in spreading negative images that Muslims are a potential threat or dangerous people who conduct or involve terrorist attacks. Consequently, these Re-tweets formed and promoted Islamophobic discourse in South Korea contributing to constructing a typology.

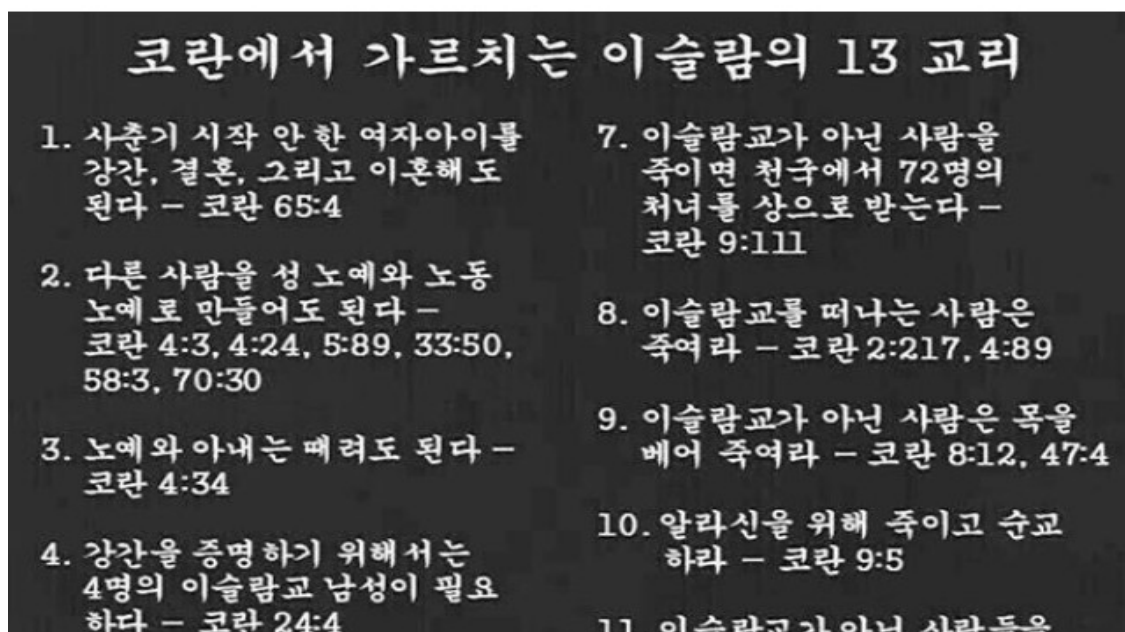
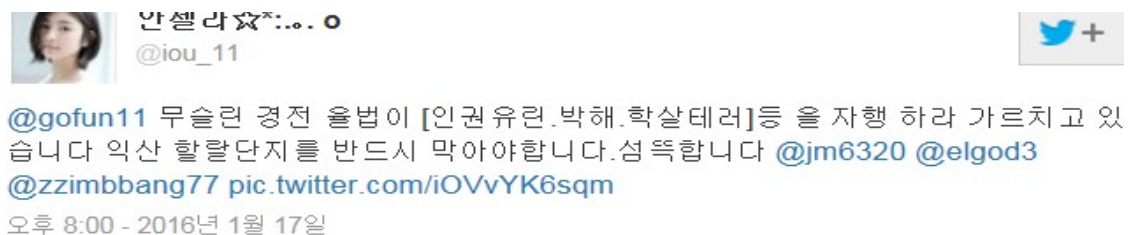


Figure 6. A Korean Twitter User Claimed “Muslim Holy Book Quran Is Teaching Violation of Human Rights, Persecution, Massacre, and Terror. We Must Stop the Hala Food

Factory in Ik-San. It is Horrifying.” The black box below states that, “The 13 Doctrine that the Quran Teaches: 1. It is possible to rape, marry, and divorce with girls who have not started puberty – Quran 65:4 2. It is possible to possess other people as sex slaves and labor slaves – Quran 4:3, 4:24, 5:89, 33:50, 58:3, 70:30...7. If you kill non-Muslims, you will be awarded with 72 virgins in heaven – Quran 9:11. 8. Kill the people who leave Islam - Quran 2:217, 4:89.” [17-Jan-2016]



Figure 7. A Campaign against Islamic Fund and the Influx of Muslims into South Korea. The slogans states, “Random killing terror in France is not other country’s matter” “Let’s protect our country from Muslim ISIS terror” “Against Islam Money” “Against Halal food”. [07-Jan-2016]



Figure 8. In a South Korean street, a woman staff from Christian Liberal Party raises poster which contains, “Christian Liberal Party will definitely stop homosexuality, Islam, and anti-Christianity laws”. Right picture is the official parliament election poster of the party.
[06-April-2016], [04-April-2016]



Figure 9. A Video Capture Linked with a South Korean Twitter. This Placard states

that, “The Government Should Stop the Plan of Islam Halal Food that it is pushing ahead because Halal Food Can Danger the Republic of Korea due to the Islamization”. This Protest Was Held in Ik-San City Where Was Expected to Held Hala Food Factory. [03-Feb-2016]

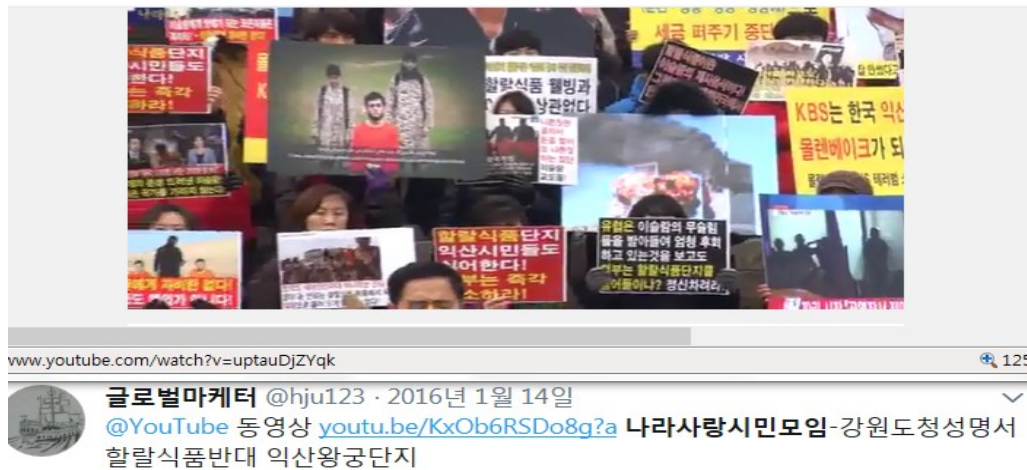


Figure 10. A South Korean Twitter User links a YouTube video which shows anti-Islam campaign in the street. The campaigners raise posters related to ISIS and Al-Qaeda attacks claiming that, “Europe awfully regrets in accepting Muslims” “Terrorists can come to Korea with Halal food”. [14-Jan-2016]

From these findings, it may be clear that some Twitter users in South Korea had similar motivations. They seem to be seeking online hegemony as shown by some tweets from Twitter accounts to collect and maximize influence. In this sense, this research sheds light on the potential of Twitter affording some people the motivation to commit online trolling, consequently, seeking to target specific people (Iganski, 2012).

Regarding this point, Awan (2014) categorizes the following content behavioral offender typologies: the trawler (a person who has gone through other people’s Twitter accounts; the apprentice (someone who is fairly new to Twitter but nonetheless has begun to

target people with the help of more experienced online abusers); the disseminator (someone who has tweeted about and re-tweeted messages, pictures, and documents of online hate; the impersonator (a person who is using a fake profile, account, and images to target individuals); the accessory (a person who is joining in with other people's conversations via Twitter to target vulnerable people); the reactive (a person who follows a major incident or issue on immigration, will begin an online campaign targeting that specific group and individual); the mover (someone who regularly changes their Twitter account in order to continue targeting someone from a different profile); and lastly, the professional (a person who has a huge following on Twitter and regardless of consequences has and will launch a major campaign of hate against an individual or group of people) (Awan, 2015). Although there are typologies of offenders, it may be difficult to identify these main typologies within the South Korean case study because it does not provide any information regarding the users of Twitter in South Korea. For this reason, this case study cannot specify who the main actors are and who tweet or write against Islam and Muslims

By focusing on Twitter case of South Korea, this study gives us a better understanding of how social media reflects the ideas of Islamophobic sentiments in South Korea among certain sections. The tweets examined in this thesis also highlight the derogatory and systematic abuse that people suffer as a result of online abuse. In this way, this case study shows that there is a need for improved dialogue between different stakeholders and social media networks to ensure that online anti-Muslim incidents of hate are taken seriously.

CHAPTER 7: CONCLUSION

This thesis analyzed the roots of Islamophobic discourse within a relatively mono-ethnic South Korean society by using the securitization lens. A number of conclusions are drawn from the main factors influencing the spread of Islamophobic sentiments in South Korea. The South Korean case illustrates the extent to which a combination of political, social, and religious factors plays in with securitization process. Also, negative images of Islam and Muslims on social media including Twitter are deep rooted in the country, consequently, these images have laid the groundwork for the Islamophobic discourse. In this way, the outcomes of this thesis show how Muslim migrants are being viewed and dealt with in South Korean society while demonstrating the relationship between the Muslim minority and the secular Korean majority. However, the main cause of Islamophobic sentiments in the country seems to be the excessive security threat related to Islam and Muslim issues.

First of all, the security factors which have been shown to be paramount in South Korean politics are: the assessment and roles of right wing politicians, intelligence authority, and conservative civil and religious groups regarding Islamic issues and Muslim migrants living in South Korea. These crucial elements should be mentioned at first because they can heavily influence substantial government policies and relevant laws regarding Muslim community in the country. In fact, there is a lack of legislation of hate crimes in protecting minority groups including Muslim migrant community in secular Korean society. Under this circumstance, these ruling and religious groups could utilize ISIS issues in order to obtain political benefits and strengthen their discourse while ignoring legal protection issues. On the other hand, legalization of the Anti-Terrorism Act in South Korea shows the government's increasing concerns against the potential threat of Islamic extremists and illegal Muslim

migrants. The political and securitized environment in the country seems to cope with social backlash against Islam issues. This is because the phenomenon appears when a threat is defined as a situation in which securitizing groups have an intention to inflict a negative consequence on the Muslim minority. Additionally, from this research it was found that security discourse has played a main role in spreading both the perception of risk and a sense of safety when discussing security threats in the country. Since 2014, a series of terror attacks allowed the South Korean ruling party to lead security discourse and succeed in passing the Anti-Terrorism Act by using securitization of threat. As a result of this heightening the security discourse and the growing threat from ISIS, Act that authorizes the NIS to have more power such as monitoring any suspicious groups and collecting information for anti-terrorism missions was passed in the parliament in 2016. In this way, if security discourse is instrumentalized by political rhetoric, it may induce negative perception and the development of Islamophobic sentiments. Accordingly, the numerically negligible Muslim minority in South Korea might experience growing public hostility; consequently, it may result in raising emotional mobilization of South Korean citizens against Islam without them actually knowing enough about Islam and Muslims. Additionally, it is revealed that while there are no legal protection systems that can prosecute hate speech and hate crimes against foreign migrants including Muslim workers while the government policy toward foreign Muslim migrants has not changed with regards to controlling them systemically. Thus, Muslim migrants living in South Korea have had to cope with issues of unprotected human and labor rights. Under these circumstances, political decision makers securitized ISIS issues by portraying Muslims as a threat while they resist addressing possible growing Islamophobic sentiments in an increasingly securitized environment.

The second social factors which have been shown to be paramount in contributing to

Islamophobic discourse include the ideological perception of a relatively mono-ethnic country regarding foreigners, and an environment that pushes for assimilation, which has been further reinforced by deep-rooted anti-multiculturalism sentiments since 2004. This social discourse is embedded in different contexts. Some detractors of the multiculturalism campaign claimed that foreign Muslim migrants, building mosques, Halal factories, and Islamic finance funds should be banned based on the assumption of a mono-ethnic ideology among South Koreans. In particular, Halal food industries in South Korea have been blamed by various conservative groups who have prejudice and misperceptions regarding Islam. Although radical campaigns such as banning entry of all Muslim have found little in South Korea, a few specific issues such as Halal food industry has been often targeted by some conservative Koreans because Halal food maybe more feasible component of religion in the street. Also, the main Islamic practice among Muslims such as five times praying is not freely allowed when they want to pray in many South Korean workplaces. Others even try to legalize their Islamophobic positions by referring to conspiracies of an alleged “Islamization of South Korea” or “Occupation of Muslim populations in South Korea” linking the higher threat of terrorism to the current influx of Muslim migrants and refugee crisis. These examples clearly reveal the intolerance of South Korean society towards Islam and Muslim culture based on the ideology of the mono-ethnic society that might be linked to Orientalism developed by the West. In the end, these factors contribute to fuel the rise of Islamophobic discourse throughout the society, justifying hostile attitudes by portraying foreign Muslims as potential security threats. Moreover, anti-multicultural discourse to some extent influenced the formation of anti-Muslim sentiments by increasing anxiety under the environment of growing public debate about illegal foreign workers including Muslim migrants. In this way, this section implies how social discourse of victimhood regarding the Muslim minority is

associated with homogeneous dominant groups in South Korea.

The third religious factors contributing to Islamophobic discourse in South Korea include the role of Protestants and pervasive misperceptions about Islam and Muslims in Korean churches. Particularly, the tensions between Protestantism and Islam have emerged as some Protestants have repeatedly produced negative stereotypes against Islam and Muslims. This study shows that Protestants have played a crucial role in securitizing ISIS in the same manner as conservative politicians. Due to the lobbies of Protestants, laws related to hate crimes have not come to exist in South Korea. By doing so, some Protestants seem to believe that they are playing a role in preserving South Korean identity such as mono-ethnic nation or genuine descent in the country. In this sense, they have maintained their religious dominant positions in the country and have tried to spread common rhetoric and misperceptions about Islam without factually-based arguments. At the same time, they often reveal their tendency to create a dichotomy between “us” and “them”. Consequently, they attempt to rationalize the discrimination and hostile feelings towards Muslims in order to maintain a dominant position in religious demographics. Their strategies of blaming Muslim migrants and attributing their own problems to others seem to be an attempt to escape of their problems from a decrease in believers and criticism from some civil society due to the discriminate and fundamental ideology regarding religions.

The South Korean media is another component that has contributed to the deep-rooted stereotypes about Islam and Muslims in the country. In fact, this tendency of focusing on conflict issues related to Islam and Muslims has laid the groundwork for fueling Islamophobic attitudes in South Korea for decades. Particularly, anti-Muslim rhetoric from the media has influenced the spread of negative images of Islam and Muslims in South Korean society. After a series of terror attacks by ISIS throughout the world, some social

groups and the media have securitized issues related to Islam and refugee issues while simultaneously showing a tendency to condone Islamophobic attitudes.

Lastly, the online factors which have been shown to be dominant in Islamophobic discourse are the growing influence of social media and its use by conservative groups in South Korea. Some conservative Protestants have actively used social media not only as a tool to expand Islamophobic discourse, but also in simultaneously spreading hate speech and negative images regarding Islam and Muslims to defame them. While social media including Twitter has popularity in South Korea, it has recently become a main platform of conservative groups for spreading negative images. This study has also revealed that social media users often depict incidents involving Muslims as religiously motivated. Furthermore, from the case study on Twitter in South Korea, it is evident that anti-Muslim hate speech and images are distributed in a negative manner. By analyzing frequent negative rhetoric and hate speech towards Muslims, the study clearly shows that the role of social media including Twitter has aggravated the Islamophobic discourse.

Overall, this thesis argues that a narrow security agenda, lack of legal protection and engagement with Muslim community, and a spread of negative stereotypes against Muslims especially in conservative groups can fuel more Islamophobic attitudes. Through these factors, Muslim migrants have been marginalized and demonized in South Korea. This represents an aspect of vulnerability of Muslim migrants within society that may also threaten social cohesion in the country because many innocent and law-abiding Muslims could be the victims of hate crimes committed due to growing Islamophobia. In fact, the public Islamophobic discourse in South Korea seems to be successful in spreading the alleged Islamic threat into existence. At the same time, the government's multicultural policy in South Korea is facing the challenge of a racially homogeneous ideology which can lead to

discriminatory speech and acts against foreigners including Muslims. This circumstance may undermine the multiculturalism policy, which the South Korean government has to pursue near future.

The conclusions in this research are also applied to hypothesizing about the trend of attitudes of South Koreans toward Islam and Muslims by analyzing social media, particularly Twitter. Furthermore, this thesis helps us to understand the securitization process in South Korea by focusing on the role of the securitizing actors that spread Islamic threats into existence. From the South Korean case, the securitization theory can provide us the frame of the understanding the background of the rise of Islamophobic sentiments despite the small number of Muslims in the country. In practice, in the South Korean case, these have tended to galvanize the spread of Islamophobic discourse, especially after the Paris attacks and the rise of ISIS. In this sense, a case study on South Korea provides insight into understanding the factors that fuel Islamophobic discourse in South Korea.

However, due to the nature of this discursive analysis, its findings cannot be generalized to all South Koreans and their sentiments about Islam and Muslim migrants. Moreover, there are limitations in the scope of analysis in this field as well as the research period, which made collecting data difficult in some cases, specifically when discussing abstract concepts such as positive meaning or negative meaning. In addition, it is not clear whether social media users including Twitter users frankly expressed their opinions about Muslim migrants. Additionally, the contents of online media remain limited in scope in regard to the area of Islamophobia.

In this regard, this research did not cover all aspects of Islam and Muslims in South Korea. It focused mainly on the contentious discourse surrounding ISIS and Muslim minority. For this reason, further investigation is needed in order to understand the complex nature and

interrelated challenges that Muslim migrants face in South Korea. For instance, the positive influence of Islamic culture can be an example to help in understanding the dynamics of different religions within a multi-cultural society.

Despite this limitation, this overall research may be meaningful because it reveals many implications for the South Korean society. First of all, it is recommended that the South Korean government and policy makers should make and pass legislation such as hate speech and hate crime prevention laws towards Muslim migrants on the basis of human rights towards minority groups. Under the new government, there are more prospects for the introduction of new hate crime legislation in the country, but politicians in the parliament need to put more efforts in making relevant laws to prevent the spread of Islamophobic attitudes. This movement will help South Korean society facilitate the integration of foreign migrants and to protect their basic rights. Moreover, South Korean politicians must not misuse security discourse to obtain their interests or benefits. Prior to prevent hate crimes and hate speech towards Muslim migrants in the streets or on internet, it is essential to be aware the fact that multicultural society requires more understanding of different cultures and religions. As a host society, South Korea will need to become more open towards Islamic practices to respect a religious minority for social integration. Since South Korea is going down the road of pluralism, it is important to forestall the cultural clashes that have rocked other societies.

One of the main problems to solve it is that South Korea as a whole does not seem to be ready to deal with Islamophobia. Additionally, it is not rational to condemn or diabolize an entire Muslim group of people or religious community for the brutal acts of a small numbers due to the propagated purposes in different religion and culture. This is because the blind condemnation can hurt all those who practice Islam peacefully and who reject the abuse of

Islam as a tool of violence. In addition to this, unfortunately, the pervasive anti-Muslim hate speech on social media in South Korea is an indicator of the prevalence of Islamophobic discourses in the country in general. In this sense, it is necessary to state that many of the right-wing politicians and Protestants who are mainly spreading Islamophobic feelings are not being dealt with by social norms and systems.

Consequently, the findings of this thesis suggest that the South Korean society is far from demonstrating tolerance towards Islam and Muslims and tackling stereotypes and prejudices against them. These attitudes can potentially incite actual hate crimes if adequate preventions are not put in place in South Korea. In order to solve this problem, as previously mentioned, implementing same legal and civil rights that protect South Koreans, including social services, equitable treatment, and freedom from harassment, and medical services can reduce the gap between the dominant groups and the Muslim minority in South Korea. Furthermore, both formal and informal educational efforts should be placed into promoting harmony between native South Koreans and foreign Muslims. It is also very important for South Korean churches, especially, Protestants to attempt to understand what Islam is and who Muslims are based on a partnership that can bridge the gap between Christians and Muslims through friendly overtures. At the same time, the mass media and social media should play a role in encouraging to report and spread more neutral and positive aspects of Islamic issues and other migrant Muslims to foster harmony amongst diverse ethnic groups in South Korea. Lastly, it is crucial that Muslims living in South Korea develop strategies to cope with difficulties such as discrimination and misperceptions. For instance, some previous studies suggested that the Muslim community needed to establish a unified front based on a firm religious bond to counter discrimination and prejudice. In this sense, one of the most important elements between the Muslim minority and non-Muslim secular dominant group

should be tolerance and friendship.

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