



Indonesian Muslim Diaspora in Contemporary South Korea: Living as Religious Minority Group in Non-Muslim Country

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Abstract. The process of migration and cross-border mobility occurs for a number of reasons or backgrounds such as politics, economics, education, and so forth. It made a number of Muslims leave their homeland to another country. Due to this migration, a significant number of Muslims become a diasporic community in other countries and sometimes live as a religious minority group in a non-Muslim country. Currently, it is about one-third of Muslims in the world live as a minority in a number of countries both in the West and also in some Asian countries such as India, Japan, South Korea, etc. This article discusses the Indonesian Muslim minorities in South Korea on how they preserve their identity amidst the challenges they faced as diasporic and minority groups of people, and how the Islamic jurisprudence perspectives discuss and offer the problem solving through the discourse of *fiqh* of minority and *fiqh* of citizenship. Through the interviews and observations, the data show several problems they faced as a minority in non-Muslim land. As diasporic, at least two types of identities they preserve well, cultural/ethnic identity as well as for some of them is also religious ones. In most cases, the latter ones are most contested than the previous ones. On the other hand, in a bigger context as diaspora and minority, there have been several crucial issues related to the integration matters, citizenship, and such, which still lasts and needs to be addressed or solved fairly.

Keywords: Muslim diaspora, South Korea, non-Muslim country, religious minority, *fiqh* of minorities

Abstrak. *Proses migrasi dan mobilitas lintas batas terjadi karena beberapa alasan atau latar belakang seperti politik, ekonomi, pendidikan dan lain sebagainya. Hal itu membuat sejumlah umat Islam meninggalkan tanah airnya ke negara lain. Akibat migrasi ini, sejumlah besar Muslim menjadi komunitas diaspora di negara lain dan terkadang hidup sebagai kelompok minoritas agama di negara non-Muslim. Saat ini, sekitar sepertiga umat Islam di dunia hidup sebagai minoritas di sejumlah negara baik di Barat maupun di beberapa negara Asia seperti India, Jepang, Korea Selatan, dll. Artikel ini membahas tentang minoritas Muslim Indonesia di Korea Selatan tentang bagaimana mereka mempertahankan identitas mereka di tengah tantangan yang mereka hadapi sebagai kelompok diaspora dan minoritas, dan bagaimana perspektif fikih Islam membahas dan menawarkan pemecahan masalah melalui wacana fikih minoritas dan fikih kewarganegaraan. Melalui wawancara dan observasi, data menunjukkan beberapa masalah yang mereka hadapi sebagai minoritas di tanah non-Muslim. Sebagai diaspora, setidaknya ada dua jenis identitas yang mereka pelihara dengan baik, identitas budaya/etnik dan sebagian juga identitas agama. Dalam sebagian besar kasus, yang terakhir paling diperebutkan daripada yang sebelumnya. Di sisi lain, dalam konteks yang lebih besar sebagai diaspora dan minoritas, ada beberapa isu krusial terkait masalah integrasi, kewarganegaraan dan semacamnya, yang masih bertahan dan perlu ditangani atau diselesaikan secara adil.*

Kata Kunci: *Diaspora Muslim, Korea Selatan, negara non-Muslim, agama minoritas, fikih minoritas.*

Introduction

For Muslim who live both in Muslim and non-Muslim countries, their preference to Islamic law in respect with particular matters of family law; marriage, divorce, inheritance, property and business transaction, is quite apparent. This would not be a problem for those Muslim living in Muslim countries or a country with majority Muslim population like Indonesia. It might create issues or dilemma when an Indonesian Muslim like migrant workers or others, who are living both permanently or temporarily as a diasporic community in non-Muslim countries such as in South Korea. For this reason or background also, there has also been a debate among Muslim scholars of whether it is permissible for a Muslim to migrate to non-Muslim countries. Moderate Muslim scholars such as Yusuf al-Qaradawi highlighted that as long as freedom of choice, expression and practice for religious rituals are guaranteed, migration to such non-Muslim country is allowed. Al-Qaradawi and other Muslim scholars, notably Taha Jabir al-Alwani also called for the needs of “minorities *fiqh*”. For

both of them, as well as other proponents of *fiqh* of minorities such as Tariq Ramadan, the issue of *fiqh* of minority is basically how *fiqh* serve Muslim identity as minority in non-Muslim country. Meanwhile, there has also been the opposition towards the concept of *fiqh* of minorities from other scholars. For them, there is no need to produce a specific *fiqh* for minorities as the existing *fiqh* has accommodated all matters and situation of Muslim who live as majority as well as minority groups in non-Muslim land.

Nevertheless, the fact that Muslim who live as minority groups increases, not only in the West in which has deserved much attention of the Muslim scholars and jurist, but also in other non-Muslim countries in the East. However, so far, there has been a little involvement of Muslim scholars from those countries in which Muslims live as minority to engage in the discourse. Al-Alwani who live in the West and observed the issues closely (the challenges faced by Muslim minority), has been the first who propose for the need of *fiqh* if minorities in which he stressed the *fiqh* recourse to principles enshrined in the philosophy of *maqasid al-shari'ah*. Although, most of the discussion relied on the context of Muslim minorities in the West, it is still relevant to other context of Muslim minorities in other countries, include South Korea in which this paper focused on.

This article focused on the Muslim diaspora, with a close observation to Indonesian Muslims who live as minority in South Korea. Currently, there has been an increasing interest on South Korea among Asian people and countries, including among Southeast Asians. The Korean wave that hit a number of Asian countries, also influenced the popularity of Korea among few groups of people in Asian countries. Besides, to most Asian societies, South Korea has been known as a country that host a lot of industrial and technological companies, that attracted a number of migrant foreign workers, including those from Muslim countries, such as Middle East, South Asian, Southeast Asian. According to Hye,¹ and Asian countries made the biggest portion of immigrants in South Korea, in which Southeast Asian countries are also among those countries with a number of their migrant workers or labours across the nations.

On the other hand, in fact, those Muslim who resided in Korea is not only the temporary foreign workers, but also those who have been residing there from the first generation. Looking at the trend of the current migration to South Korea, including those of Muslims, Cho² identifies that the Muslim migration to South

¹ Hye-Kyung Lee, "An Overview of International Migration to South Korea," in *Social Transformation and Migration: Migration, Diaspora and Citizenship*, ed. oleh Stephen Castle et Al (UK: Palgrave Macmillan, 2015), 82.

² Hyo-Jung Kim Cho, Hee-Sun, Dae-Sung Kim, Jung-Kook Ahn, Jong-Jin Oh, "Muslim Immigrants in South Korea: Their Inter-marriage with the South Koreans and the Settlement," *Journal of Mediterranean Area Studies* [지중해지역연구] 11, no. 3 (2009): 1–37.

Korea takes place in varied ways, not only labour migration, but also through international scholarships of foreign students, mixed marriage, as well as business investment.³ Major universities in South Korea host few foreign students. Few of them decided to continue residing in South Korea even after the completion of their studies for the purpose of working in the country, few even married to the local people.

Compared to other Southeast Asian countries, the immigrants from Indonesia, -in which the majority of them are Muslim is among the highest. Most of those [Muslim] Indonesians live in Ansan, Busan, Changwon, wherein a number of industrial factories are located. Apart from migrant workers, there are also a number of Indonesian students and their family who live in Korea. This group of Indonesian Muslim diaspora have their own Islamic association organizations, such as Rumaisa (Rumah Muslimah Indonesia). Rumaisa has a regular religious program activities for women are quite popular among the Indonesian [Muslim] students and or their family, but least followed by the [women] migrants workers. Meanwhile, few ethnic groups even have some smaller ethnic based organizational groups such as Minang Saiyo and such.

In the early stages of their migration to Korea, those migrants often strive to adapt to the mainstream of the South Korean society, especially in its public sphere, while in their private lives, they often tend to stick to their home culture, emphasizing ethnic socio-cultural roots. However, the subsequent generations, who were born or spent their childhood in South Korean society, show different patterns of acculturation, simultaneously experiencing their parents' Muslim culture at home and South Korean culture in their social and public lives. For the foreign workers, their situation is not always easy, especially to preserve the five daily prayers. An interview a non-government organization working for foreign workers (most of them are Indonesian) revealed that at least there are there major barriers for [foreign] workers, dealing with the language, culture and eating (*halal* food). This barrier would require 'social survival' to manage and deal with those of difficulties.

There has been a number of works studied minority and diaspora such as the work of Agnew⁴ that relate the diasporic community to their belonging as well as their longing to their home. This is connected to the memory they brought from their homeland, which is closely connected to their identity, socially and culturally, and also religiously. Most of the existing number of works of the diaspora use to portray the issue from cultural perspectives, although in reality,

³Cho, Hee-Sun, Dae-Sung Kim, Jung-Kook Ahn, Jong-Jin Oh.

⁴ Vijay Agnew, ed., *Diaspora, Memory and Identity: A Search for Home* (University of Toronto Press, 2005).

religion for those community groups has even been stronger identity they brought with from their homeland.

This article will focus on the how the Indonesian Muslim diaspora as religious minority in South Korea express and 'preserve' their identity, characteristics as well as challenges they faced as minority amidst the thread of Islamo-phobia, as well as the integration matters to the local people. How the Islamic jurisprudence responded through the problems face by those living in non-Muslim land through the discourse of *fiqh* of minorities? Throughout the conversation and observations, those Muslim adopt several identities, culturally as Indonesian, and religiously as Muslim. Therefore in most case their religious engagement, congregation and has a strong Indonesia character and nuance, as the way to preserve their religious and cultural identity, and to cope with their longing to their home countries at the same time. As the problems faced by the diasporic Indonesian Muslim community leave several crucial issues such as integration, rights, as well as citizenship related matters, the discussion on their lives could be developed any further from Islamic jurisprudence perspective.

The research has initially started from looking at the Muslim diaspora in general, from different countries through several interviews, and observation, nevertheless from to time to time, more focus on Indonesian Muslim community emerge. Most of the research was conducted in major cities in Korea, especially those hosted a relatively few number of Indonesian Muslims, which also has a mosque in which they performed the rituals and settled few congregations. Apart from the interviews with the migrant workers, leaders of Muslim organizations, temporary visitors like students, I also observed few Indonesian Muslim religious gatherings invited few Indonesian preachers (*muballigh/ustaz* or *muballighah/ustazah*), I also observed the teaching and learning of Islam for the children in the mosque as well as the *musholla* (small mosque) such as the most-well known ones previously was in Yeong Dong Pu, near the subway exit. It was very accessible, but due to the decision of the owner who did not want to extend the rent, the *musholla* (small mosque) was then moved out in to another area. Some in-depth interviews were also conducted with *da'wa* (Islamic mission) activists, Muslim students, and also with few [Indonesian] mixed marriage couples since within the mixed marriage family, the contestation happen more intensively. The field research was not only in the capital city of Seoul, but also in some other cities or provinces such as Busan and Changwon, to get a broader sense of their social interaction, religious and cultural group activities within the adopted society. This research utilize diasporic and migrant interchangeably, the diaspora in this sense understood in a loose meaning as someone who left their home countries and reside in others.

The Historical and Contextual Contact Between South Korea and Muslim

There has been limited research available in examining the life of Indonesian Muslim minorities in South Korea, although their number is relatively significant. Regarding the topic on the life of Muslim in South Korea, they are a number of works from various aspects, history, culture, sociology, social geography and such. Doyoung Song,⁵ article on “Ummah” in Seoul: The Creation of Symbolic Spaces in the Islamic Central Mosque of Seoul in the *Journal of South Korean Religions* studied about the Muslim life in South Korea from the existence of symbolic space in the mosque. The central mosque in Seoul has been very popular among the Muslim in South Korea as well as Muslim travellers. Several *halal* restaurants surrounded the mosque, but at the same time also still offered some very typical South Korean culture and economic characters. The area was a site of negotiated social space and symbolic space as well.

Historically, Muslim arrived in South Korean peninsula during the reign of the ancient South Korean kingdom. The contact between South Korean and Muslim has dated since the ancient kingdom of South Korea such as Shilla and Goryeou. This kind of contact of the news of the Muslim living in South Korea almost disappeared during the Choseon period. Nevertheless, this connection was reintroduced again during the twentieth century. In 1962, the Malaysian government offered the grant to build a mosque in the Itaewon, which was then finally built in 1970. The Muslim in South Korea has a specific communal organization, namely KMF (South Korea Muslim Federation), that also launched Prince Sulthan bin Abdul Azis elementary school in South Korea, which was publicly opened in March 2005. KMF also manage to issue the *halal* certificate for products of business or stores in South Korea that target Muslim customers. Since late 1980s, Muslim in South Korea grows. Turkish army participated in South Korean war (1950 – 1953) under the banner of UN (United Nation). This contact in modern time of South Korea has resulted to the expansion of their religion and also introduced the cultural diversity, especially as South Korea as also grow as much globalised over the times from the increase of the migrants, the international labour and the technological development. In the early 1990s, the system initiated by the South Korean government, namely the Industrial Trainee System, has resulted in the influx of migrant labour, as those participated in the program were those from overseas especially Southeast Asia and South Asia – Pakistan, Bangladesh and Indonesia in particular. This system has marked the important point of the arrival of the migrant workers in South Korea, and the same time this also imply the migration of Muslims into South Korean society.

⁵ Doyoung Song, “Ummah” in Seoul: The Creation of Symbolic Spaces in the Islamic Central Mosque of Seoul,” *Journal of South Korean Religions* 7, no. 2 (2016): 37 – 68.

The workers will stay in South Korea for a specific period of time, with their respective contracts and work permits.

In some circumstances, those migrant workers still decide to stay in South Korea although their work contracts have expired. Therefore, there is also a substantial number of illegal Muslim migrants. Meanwhile, since 2000s, South Korea experienced the increase of the elderly population whereas at the same also experienced the falling of birth rate. This situation will impact on the manufacturing or industrial sector. Without the migrant labour force, it is arguably impossible to maintain a manufacturing industry in contemporary South Korea.⁶ This social phenomenon of Muslim migration inevitably raise some resistance among the host communities, especially among their religious groups or congregation. For instance in 2008, the Christian Council of South Korea, a South Korean Protestant organisation released a video of Islam entitled 'Islam is Thronging In'. This video portrayed Islam, more especially Muslims as extremist, and those Muslim has a specific conspiracy to islamize South Korea through their massive migration and missionary strategy that until the year 2020, 150 thousands of Muslims will infiltrate into South Korea.

The video also claimed that around, '20 or 30 thousands of Muslims in South Korea are undertaking the missionaries works for this purpose. The message sent also emphasize that Islam correlates with the terrorist attack and Islam is not a peaceful religion. This kind of propaganda has been effective in mobilizing the resistance towards Islam and Muslim among South Korean. In this case, mosque or the place for Muslim prayers has been also considered as a threat which need to be occupied. It was even reported that during Ramadan, militant Protestant adherents come to Seoul Central Masjid to perform a Christian pilgrimage ritual within the mosque.⁷ Their resistance has been quite serious by setting up a particular task force, namely 'Islam task force'. All these activities promote Islamophobia and also lead to a clash with Muslims in South Korea.⁸ There was no clear objectives of what is the real reason behind such strong religious propaganda, whether they were in-secured because of the incoming of Muslims to South Korea, or it might also imply specific social and religious insecurity as well.

⁶ Lee, "An Overview of International Migration to South Korea."

⁷Song, "Ummah" in Seoul: The Creation of Symbolic Spaces in the Islamic Central Mosque of Seoul."; Cho, Hee-Sun, Dae-Sung Kim, Jung-Kook Ahn, Jong-Jin Oh, "Muslim Immigrants in South Korea: Their Intermarriage with the South Koreans and the Settlement," 109.

⁸Kyuhon Cho, "Muslim in Contemporary South Korea: Islamic Religion and Cultural Politics of Ethnicity," in *Muslim in Asian Politics and Society*, ed. oleh Yuka Kobayashi (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 2010).

In terms of religions, most South Korean are associated to either Christians or Buddhist. Nevertheless the statistic of South Korea 2015 also indicated the decrease of those who believe and practice religion among the South Korean people. A number of churches as well as temples spread over the city like Seoul and others. A number of diasporic Muslim or converts acknowledge of some Islamophobia among South Korean people towards Muslim. Islamophobia has been understood generally as the hatred of Islam or Muslim, and this is rooted in fear and ignorance of the unknown, and also in othering. Few informants interviewed confirmed that the cause of this Islamo-phobia was the news on Islam, and due to the news as well, sometime few South Korean assume that Islam and all Muslim is similar ISIS.

The Neighbourhoods

Most of Indonesian Muslim diaspora in South Korea for practical and professional reason live in the city and town below:

1. Itaewon

Halal food store, including the *bancan* and the thing called as *jajanan* (snack food) in Indonesia. The cosmetics sold in this area also emphasized on the *halal* parameter. In a number of visit to Itaewon and Itaewon's mosque, many Indonesian or Southeast Asian faces I met in the mosque complex, especially within the space of women's quarter of the mosque. The majority of *jama'ah* (congregation) came from Indonesian or Malaysian. South Korea has been increasingly popular, especially through the K-Pop and K-Drama. The owner of those *halal* restaurant in this area, are not only South Korea but also those came from different countries, the Middle east, South Asian and Southeast Asian as well. All of those Muslim visitors to South Korea will definitely visit this South Korea. The grand mosque itself has been relatively popular for Indonesian people who are interested in South Korea, as there has been some shooting either for film or promotion, which took place in near the grand mosque.

2. Busan

Busan in the second largest city in South Korea, there has been a popular South Korean film released recently entitled "Train to Busan". There is a big mosque in Busan, namely Al-Fath mosque, located quite central near the big road and a high population resided near by. The religious leader of Al-Fath is a South Korean convert, who previously was a student who studied Arabica, and then converted to Islam, and pursued her graduate studies in Arabic country. However, since there is also a significant number of Muslims, the mosque in Busan in quite active in undertaking various religious activities and congregations. The mosque

also set up a special class for *muallaf*, who wanted to learn Islam as a new beginner. Interestingly, the Indonesian Muslim community has even a special religious teacher came from Indonesia to manage the Indonesian Muslim religious congregations, which is usually held during the weekend. Within this religious congregation, almost always, it will be Indonesian food served together by the women, who gather and prepared those food from their *keputrian* (women) corner. I also stayed in the *keputrian* (women) corner during my visit to Busan to observe closely the activities. Over the weekend, the place will be crowded as a number of Indonesian migrant workers will come in to gather socially. During the interview with the leader of Al-Fath mosque, he admitted that the Indonesian Muslim community is very active, “but they only do this for themselves”.⁹ It means only for Indonesian Muslim groups and do not intermingle with others.

3. Ansan

Ansan in the place that has a number of stores that sell Indonesian food and spices. In this areas, a number of Indonesia could be met easily during the weekend. A number of Indonesian restaurants also located in the neighbourhood. More importantly, for Indonesian Muslim community, it is in Ansan, Indonesian Muslim community has a mosque for their religious congregations and other activities. The mosque was used not only for prayers, but also for education. During the visit, I observed a number of children who spent time in the mosque to learn Qur'an and Islamic teachings. Because a number of Indonesian migrant workers live in Ansan, the fund rising and other religious congregations held in the area accordingly, such as the event with The Ninih Muthmainnah and her daughter, Oki Setiana Dewi, and others.

4. Changwon

Most of Indonesian people who lived in South Korea stay in either Ansan or Changwon, since the two are the areas of those factories or manufacturers, where most Indonesian migrant workers are working. Both Ansan and Changwon, has a specific mosques owned by the Indonesian Muslim society. From the interview with those migrant workers, they mentioned on the strong support of the donations for the Indonesian migrants workers that allow the Indonesian Muslim community to purchase the building for the mosque. Few fund raising activities organized by the Indonesian Muslim community in South Korea usually invited a well-known *muballigh* or *muballighah*, few of them even actress such as Oki Setiana Dewi. Once, Oki Setiana Dewi was invited to Ansan

⁹Interview with Ustaz Yaseer Lee

by the Indonesian community, and she was asked to talk about *sadaqah* (donation), because from the very beginning the event was set up for fund raising among the Indonesian Muslim community. Teh Ninih (the wife of Aa' Gym), and her daughter, a young designer also came to share their religious experience, and discusses as well about Muslim fashion and such. Among the most discernible stuff during the event like this is the food served or sold are all Indonesian food. This is a way how they maintain the connection to the host country, through the friendship, food, and religion.

There has been no problems when the acquaintance with the people from their home country, the problem occurred for their social interaction with the native especially within the working environment. A director of NGO working on migrant worker issues in Changwon province mentioned at least there four adaptation faced by foreign migrant workers, and more especially are Muslim. Firstly, language problem, and this among the most common or challenge face the migrants workers. Secondly, working environment as they do not used to work for long working hours (12 hours) as apply in a number of companies/factories, thirdly food, and this is also considered as one of the main issues such as the prohibition of eating pork, or Ramadan which Muslim has to fast whereas at the same time they still have to work in regular working hours. Fourthly, the culture difference, with the less of public awareness of the issue has led sometimes to misunderstanding, and even discrimination, or humiliation. The situation indicate that apart from the professional work issues and competence, including relevant language competence, some cultural and religious barrier are also facing seriously by those Muslim migrants in South Korea. I will discuss this issue further in *fiqh* of minority section, the latest part of the this article.

On Religious Minority and Social Identity

The term “minority”, which made some people or groups of people who are perceived differently, and treated differently from the majority or the dominant culture. By contrast to a national group, a political, social, or economic minority is more the smaller of two or more group. A minority is part of a national population that differ in some major characteristics (e.g. race, language, political power, ethnicity, national origin) from the predominant members of a population. As such minority groups are usually subject to a differential treatment by the majority and predominant social group(s) of the given society. Minority groups member also have a sense of self determination, denial because of lack of economic wealth, political power, or general social or cultural influence on the society as whole. Besides, a person belong to a minority group like Muslim in Korea, also attached and hold closely the identity they brought from their home country.

An Indonesian woman, whom I met during the research also shared her insight on her strong intention to preserve what they assume as their own identity, religiously and culturally. The network or organizations she preferred to join in was the Indonesian Muslim organization or congregation. The attachment of those people as diasporic community emerge more in a cultural bond, compared to others including religion. It is difficult to find an intensive multi ethnic Muslim organization of those diasporic Muslim. The conversations with diasporic people in South Korea suggest at least two types of identities they preserve well, cultural/ethnic identity as well as for some of them is also religious ones. In most of cases, the latter ones is most contested than the previous ones.

Apart from religious activities, the Muslims in South Korea including Muslims also express their identity through attire, especially women, which is called as *hijab* or *jilbab*. Few Muslims faced some unfriendly response on their attire which is uncommon for most South Korean. Nevertheless, among the most difficult effort Muslim has to devote is to ensure the *halal* eating for their meals. It is not easy for most Muslim to find halal food in Korea, except in specific area such as Itaewon where the great mosque is located, or in other very few or limited places.

Migration and Minority

The discussion of whether it is allowed to migrate to non-Muslim country has provoked various perspectives among Muslim scholars. Nevertheless, the proponent of *fiqh* of minorities perceive the dichotomy of *dar al-harb* and *dar al-Islam* as a fixed category, which just based on the total population number of Muslim in the country. According al-Qaradawi and Ramadan for instance, the issue of safety and security is the justification for a nation to be considered as “*dar al-Islam*”. Imam Abu Hanifa as quoted by Jasser Auda (n.d) said “the purpose of calling a certain area or country as the land of Islam or a land of disbeliever is not a matter of Islam versus kafir, it is security versus insecurity”. In more detail, Jasser Auda also listed few categories of land of Islam or Islamic territory, namely: 1) a land where Islamic rules apply, 2) a land where a Muslim ruler has a control over its affairs, 3) a land of security, 4) a land where a practice of public act of worship is allowed, 5) a land of justice.

Being part of a minority group, one will be identified from physical appearance, cultural trait, common religion, region, nationality and language. Like ethnic groups, ethnic minorities are identified on the basis of physical appearance and/or cultural traits such as a common religion, region, nationality, and language. Whereas the social identity is understood as a person’s sense of who they are based on their group membership. In the concept of social identity a group of social class, family and such were important source of self-esteem and

pride. The discussion of social identity usually followed by two processes of categorization and self-identification. In the categorization stage, one categorises objects to understand them, and identify them, and in the second stage, which is called social identification, one is trying to adopt the identity of the group they categorized themselves as belonging to. The feeling of the minority of how they are perceived within the majority as well as the dominant culture. The subjects of this research at least have multiple identity, the Muslim identity, original national identity and host national identity.

As previously described, the presence of Muslims in modern South Korea has been dominantly occurred through the migration of foreign workers who were/are hired to work in South Korea for a specific duration of time. Generally there are three types of migrant workers, namely 1. The less skilled migrant workers (non-professional and industrial trainees), 2. The highly skilled (those with professional knowledge, technology and skill) 3. The settled immigrants (marriage migrants and permanent residents). With the rapid development in the industrial sectors among the Asian countries, South Korea has attracted a number of countries, which is reported at least those migrant workers came from 29 countries all over the world, and mostly from Asian countries, and Indonesian migrant workers made up a significant number. Those migrant workers also involved in a number of philanthropy works. They donated significantly to buy few buildings in South Korea to be settled as [Indonesian] mosques such as in Ansan, Changwon, and other few *mushollas* (small mosques) as well.

The background behind the migration, including those of [Indonesian] Muslims to South Korea have been referred to several theories of firstly, the neo-classical economic approach such as the income level, income distribution, economic growth, employment opportunity, spatial distance (airfare, etc), cultural distance. Secondly to the historical-structure approach of foreign investment, international trade, tourism, overseas ethnic South Koreans. There are at least two of immigrants, settled immigrants, and marriage immigrants. The South Korean government does not control international marriage in itself. Although Kim¹⁰ argues that foreign brides are 'imported' to overcome the crisis in reproduction caused by low fertility rates, and also marriage is a way to attain a full social personhood in South Korean society, and the urbanization has caused the crisis of brides within the countryside, in which the imported bride from other countries was considered as solution. The number of imported brides increased not only from China, but also from other countries like Philippines, Vietnam, Mongolia, Thailand, Russian and Cambodia (Freeman, 2013:3) For the settled migrants, the

¹⁰ Cho, Hee-Sun, Dae-Sung Kim, Jung-Kook Ahn, Jong-Jin Oh, "Muslim Immigrants in South Korea: Their Inter-marriage with the South Koreans and the Settlement," 65.

development of South Korea industry has also made the speculations among the immigrant of the positive and greater values of their income in South Korea instead of in their home country. (Dong Hoon Seoul, p. 69) According to Dong Hoon Seoul, another cause behind the migration is the cultural distance, including the impact of the views on K-Pop, K-drama and such as an indicator to show the cultural closeness.

In an interview with an Indonesian migrant woman living in Korea, she testifies that the most difficult cultural adaptation is if it is related to the matter of religion. For some migrants, religion is an important identity as well as values to be held tightly. Nevertheless, most discussion studies the Indonesian -South Korean relation fall into the economic relation between the two nations, religion receive less attention. In most of discussion on identity, ethnicity has been among important feature (1994). Although not much, there has also been some efforts to bring up the religion to the fore while discussing ethnicity or identity such as in the work of Pyong (2010), which highlights how ethnicity is [also] preserved through religion. In some cases, religion comes first before ethnicity. An Indonesian Muslim woman from West Sumatra told her story when she just arrived in South Korea, in which the first thing she was looking was the mosque. Although, she came from a community known from strong ethnicity bound and solidarity, she concern firstly on the being attached the religious groups or community through mosque based activities. Since then, she regularly visit the mosque, engage in its activities and made the friendship through the mosque congregations.

The Mixed Marriage

Mixed marriage is among the most serious site of cultural contestation among the Indonesian Muslims, one of Indonesian student who lived with her family in Seoul said during the interview. There has also been some previous work studied the phenomenon of mixed marriage with the South Koreans such as Choo,¹¹ and the realities of imported brides from few Asian countries such China, Vietnam and others. Again, this kind of mixed marriage was not much discussed from religious values contestation. In most of the marriage couples, I met during the research, are those of marriage between Muslim Indonesian women and South Korean men. The adaptation and contestation also showed some close relation to the cultural values embraced by both parties, which is derived from South Korean culture, and the culture of their spouses' home communities.

¹¹ Cho, Hee-Sun, Dae-Sung Kim, Jung-Kook Ahn, Jong-Jin Oh, "Muslim Immigrants in South Korea: Their Inter marriage with the South Koreans and the Settlement,".

For the case of Muslim, the culture means both their ethic or national culture plus the Islamic cultures or values. I met couple of mixed marriage spouse who told how it was initially difficult to adapt to Korean culture where the festive would include some alcohol or pork, which strictly prohibit for Muslim. Sometimes, “a problem of cultural contestation [in mixed marriage] came from not only the spouses but also the his/her family”. It took some times until the family (parents and sibling) of their Korean spouses could gradually understand the rules and principles applied to Muslim. Their Korean partners usually convert to Islam, and it was a challenge for her/him to teach the new religion to their spouses. On the other hand, from the few mixed marriage couple, it has been also a serious efforts they devoted to adapt to their new family that has different tradition to their own. An Indonesian woman married to a Korean said she took a course on Korean culture and language while living in Korea with her new family.

Organizations and Congregations

The most well-known Muslim organization in South Korea is KMF (South Korea Muslim Federation), which is like a hub organization for other Muslim organizations. KMF also released the *halal* certificate, the KMF office is located on the ground floor of Itaewon grand mosque in Seoul. Whereas the Indonesian community has its so-called KMI (Komunitas Muslim Indonesia), the Indonesian Muslim Community is one of the organizations managed by the Indonesian mosque of Sayyidina Bilal in Changwon. The committee of this mosque, mostly Indonesian migrant workers, and the building of the mosque which is relatively spacious.

The current Muslim migrant workers in South Korea has a strong charity activity to support the mosque and mosque-based activities. The Indonesian Muslim migrant workers donated in a significant amount of money which made them possible to purchase a building devoted to be as the [Indonesian] mosque. The mosque also set up small business like selling the Indonesian food to the Indonesian community, especially as there has been a strong concern of consuming the *halal* food. In Busan, within the management of Al-Fath mosque, the Indonesian Muslims who residing there and active in religious organization has their own organization, namely PUMITA (Persatuan Muslim Indonesia Al-Fatah), which also quite active for both local Muslim (mixed marriage couple) as well migrant workers and students.

What is also noteworthy to be mentioned is the existence of congregations across those organizations. One of the most active one is Rumaisa, the abbreviation of “Rumah Muslimah Indonesia”. Rumaisa has a cyber *taklim* (religious learning congregation), in which everyone across South Korea could participate through skype. The topic presented quite varied, including the survival

of being Muslim in a non-Muslim majority country. Rumaisa also set up a specific school for children as well, which curriculum focused on Islamic science, Arabic/English and the teaching on *asma'ul husna*. This organization also has few outdoor or incidental non-regular activities, but most of them are relating the learning of Islam, and strengthening the Indonesian Muslimah friendship and knowledge on Islam.

Since the majority of Indonesian migrants in Korea are Muslim, it is also quite apparent, that they preserve the social-bound, interaction and communication through a number of religious congregations or organization apart from their ethnic-based groups. The Indonesian Muslims have a regular mosque based activities for children's education, women's religious congregation, and regular prayer as well as Jum'a prayer as the area has the mosque, and even few mosques and *musholla* owned by the Indonesian Muslim community such as Sayyidina Bilal Mosque in Changwon province, a mosque in Ansan, and few other small mosques as well in different cities.

Those religious activities became more intensive during a special time like Ramadan. For Ramadan, the Indonesian Muslim community sometimes invite the religious teacher or *imam* specially from Indonesia. Even, outside Ramadan, they also have a special *ustadz* (religious teacher) who are responsible for Indonesian Muslim congregations in few mosque in Korea, especially the mosques which are belong to the Indonesian Muslim community. I once attended one of the religious gatherings organized by the Indonesian migrant workers in Ansan by inviting a well-known Muslim celebrity from Indonesia who talked about *sadaqah*. The representatives from the Indonesian embassy was there and gave a congratulatory speech.

Halal attributes

One of the major issues faced by the [Indonesian] Muslims in South Korea is regarding the halal attributes. There have been a research that emphasize of at least the five halal attribute, regarding social environment, local and staff, food and beverages, facilities and affective images. When I visited a halal Indian restaurant with an Indonesian Muslim friend and South Korean convert (*muallaf*), the owner of the restaurant asked the question " why the Indonesian Muslim visitors do not care much about *halal*? They will eat easily at any Korean restaurant without any concern its halal, as long as there is no pork, they considered it is halal. In fact halal is not only no pork, but also about others". One of the Indonesian Muslim interviewed, also reveals that the issue of halal food usually raised a serious debate as well among the Muslims, when it comes to try to make a specific standard of the halal food. As some perceived as long as there no pork, the food will be alright to be eaten by Muslim, whereas others considered

all of the meats, chicken served in a food had to follow the Islamic slaughter procedures.

In Seoul, the area in which a number of *halal* restaurant located is in Itaewon. For Indonesian Muslim, some would take it easy to eat in any restaurant as long as there is no pork. Nevertheless, there is also a strong effort from the Indonesian Muslim family to ensure all of they eat is *halal*. “I was living with an Indonesian family who are very careful about *halal* standard, since then I also imitate her way, so we always cook at home, we never eat outside, since there is no *halal* restaurant in our area”. Those Indonesian who attached to a religious congregation like Rumaisa (Rumah Muslimah Indonesia) and others, usually has a strict standard of *halal* food that they preserved.

During the interview with an Indonesian family who has been living in South Korea for several years, she mentioned her effort to be strict with all of those *halal* issues, especially regarding food. This has not been without any dispute even among those Indonesian Muslim themselves such as through *whatsapp* group discussion and such. For some, as long as there is no pork, it should be ok, whereas for others it has to be certified as *halal* food and *halal* restaurant.

From *Fiqh* of Minorities to *Fiqh* of Citizenship?

Most of Indonesian living in South Korea are Muslim, and usually they live in big cities in Seoul, Busan, Ansan and Changwon. Nevertheless, there have also been few Indonesian who are residing in more remote areas. For those who are residing in the big cities, they will easily could join the congregation and could access the mosque as well as the *musholla*, For those who live in far away, they even could not perform the Jum'a congregation as there is no mosque nearby. At the end, he with another one Muslim perform the Jum'a prayer, together, something which is unusual, but they have no choice as well. “We have to go to Seoul for celebrating *hari raya* (Ied) or attending other religious congregation, there is no mosque around here, and we hardly any Muslim in this area and surrounding”, an Indonesian woman said in an interview. She acknowledge that she has a good interaction with the local people, this has been possible ash she herself acquired the South Korean language, but for those who are not, their engagement with the local people is quite limited, and almost none. The food she cooked, the spices and everything are coming from Indonesia, also her fashion and her attires are also from Indonesia. She has a plan, that she and her family will stay longer in South Korea, and will not decide to return to Indonesia soon.

As language is the most common barriers among the diasporic people like Indonesian, the limited social engagement with the locals could be observed easily. For this reason as well, although similarly Muslim, but hardly they

established or participated in the same congregation of learning Islam. Language and other cultural barriers has caused this segregation or seclusion even among Muslim communities themselves. Indonesians are engaged with the other Indonesian Muslim in various congregations across the cities in South Korea. Sometimes, the Minangkabau even has their various ethnic groups of congregations, not necessarily religious ones (*pengajian*), but sometimes more as a social engagement, well known in Indonesia as *arisan* (interview with Minangkabau origin in Busan). This means that their spare time has been mostly allocated to social interact with the same ethnic people, and leave the locals.

A you tube interview between two Korean who converted to Islam highlighted that there are several aspect of being Muslim that is not easy while living in South Korea. First of all is keeping the five times daily prayers, since it is not easy to find a space for the purpose while outside the home. Secondly is the *halal* food especially during the gathering and social meeting with friends. The similar challenges also faced by other Muslims, who would like to preserve the religious. Teachings and values. An Indonesian woman married to a South Korean, also highlight another issue of drinking alcohol and having in pork in a number of their food has been also such a challenge for her, when she just married. Nevertheless, gradually the family of her husband started to understand her Muslim standard of *halal* food and respect it accordingly.

The barrier of the social integration seems to come from both side from migrants as well as the host society. The research on Pakistani Muslims in South Korea suggest that limited space left by the South Korean society foreigners to integrate, and in most of the cases, due to the language, culture, racism, tradition and such. This 'marginalization' has also caused Muslim communities living in South Korea to have more in-group solidarity instead, and has made them away from the mainstream of the South Korean society. During the field research in South Korea, I observed few Indonesian Muslim who acquire Korean language can intermingle easily with the locals, compared to those who are not.

As mentioned in the earlier part of this article by observing all of the barriers that Muslim faced especially in the context of the West few Muslim scholars who interacted with Muslim minority in the West proposed the concept of *fiqh* of minorities which is considered as more relevant and contextual principles to be applied for Muslim living as minority in different non-Muslim countries. This concept of *fiqh* has been understood to also integrate with the *da'wa* mission as it ensures a model that fit to the context of this living in non-Muslim countries more specifically. The process of producing fatwas in *fiqh* of minorities principles are based on selective *ijtihad*, collective *ijtihad* and public

good (*masalah mursalah*) that could serve as modern minorities well.¹² For the proponent of *fiqh* of minorities like Tariq Ramadan, this has been a strategy to provide a balance between preserving the identity of Islam and promoting a responsible citizenship”, between being a dedicated Muslim and a loyal citizen.

The work of Dina Taha¹³ went further to remind of specific matters need to be dealt in discussing the *fiqh* of minorities in non-Muslim countries such as youth problem and women issue. For women issue, as the home culture of those Muslim might have different way or treating women compared to the host culture and the law of the host country, such as in the West, might create some problems or contestation, it needs be handled carefully and properly.

The issue faced by diasporic community like Indonesian Muslim minority or other religious minorities as explained earlier is also the issue of integration. The challenge would be as immigrants, social and politically their positions are asymmetrical. Referring to this a barrier for he integration, Mohamed Mestiri proposed the idea of from the *fiqh* of minorities to the *fiqh* of citizenship. He recommended the effort to depart from *fiqh* of minorities, which is tied to an immigrant’s mind, toward a *fiqh* of citizenship. For him, this *fiqh* will produce a specific concept of equality of all human being, regardless of their minority position, and also would emphasize the principle of humanism, without leaving the notion of Islamic citizenship within a plural context. With this, the status of marginal migrant community can be also become as full citizens of the nation. In this regards, Mustafa Ceric relied civilizational cooperation instead of isolation or assimilation. As this is a complicated matter, more effort needs to be devoted to contribute and solve the problem fairly.

Meanwhile, within the Indonesian Islamic scholarship, not many scholars or Muslim leaders devoted their opinion and ‘ijtihad’ on the issue. Although few Muslim in Indonesia also live as minority regionally such as those Muslims in Bali,¹⁴ or in some Eastern Indonesian provinces. Nevertheless when the discourse of minority *fiqh*, more discussion from Indonesian Islamic scholarship touched upon the situation of Muslim in non-Muslim countries. Also, most of the arguments and methodologies based on the previous *fiqh* minorities discourse from the Muslim scholars and thinker like al-Qaradawi and others.¹⁵

¹² Okan Dogan, “Rethinking Islamic Jurisprudence for Muslim Minorities in the West” (The University of Texas, 2015), 42.

¹³ Dina Taha, “Muslim Minorities in the West: Between Fiqh of Minorities and Integration,” *Jurnal of Islamic and Middle Eastern Law* 1 (2013).

¹⁴ Fathurrohman and Saifuddin, “Praktik Fikih Keseharian Minoritas Muslim di Bali,” *Jurnal Studi Agama dan Masyarakat* 16, no. 2 (2020).

¹⁵ Noor Harisuddin, *Argumentasi Fikh untuk Muslim Minoritas* (Surabaya: Oustaka Radja, 2020).

Conclusion

Living as minority group who has been attached with their own identity has been not easy for Indonesian Muslim diaspora in South Korea, which also combined with the struggle over preserving their faith amidst the Islamo-phobia. Amidst the Islamo-phobia or Muslim-phobia among South Korean people, there has also been a growing interest in looking or even knowing Islam or Muslim better currently than before. More knowledge and information are available, although most of them still relied on the media, not from their real social interaction with Muslim in South Korea or by visiting Muslim countries. As diasporic, Indonesian Muslims in South Korea like other diasporic Muslim attached to religion (Islam) and cultural identities. Within the religious congregation events, the Indonesian diasporic community in South Korea is also preserving their attachment to culture; food, attire, and such. This kind of in-groups solidarity on the one hand has several benefits for them as migrants people, nevertheless on the other hand it might create spaces from having a better integration with the host society. With the rapid development of industrial and technological features, South Korea is unavoidably will becomes a multicultural society where diversity of ethnicity, religion, and such existed. It is also apparent that integration to the host people and country still an issue or a challenge for most [Indonesian] Muslims. From those various challenges faced by Muslim minority, the concept of *fiqh* of minorities or even the *fiqh* of citizenship might further facilitate or strengthen the fair integration of those minority in their host countries.

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