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Stereotyping Halal Food and Eating Halal Food in a South Korean Context

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Abstract

The paper seeks to consider the confusion around what "Halal Food" is and what "Eating Halal Food" means in South Korea; and how it causes stereotyping of halal food and Muslim foodways in a South Korean context. The findings of this paper are obtained from ethnographic fieldwork and semi-structured interviews with South Koreans and Muslim minorities living in South Korea. Findings from the ethnographic research show that halal food and foodways are stereotyped not only when it comes to misidentifying halal food concepts, but also halal food consumed by Muslims is linked to existing notions about Islam and Muslims in South Korean society.

Keywords: Stereotyping, Muslim Identities, Halal Food, Muslim Foodways, South Korea

Introduction

"You are what you eat" is a well-known phrase that embodies the idea of food as identity. As Robin Fox noted, eating is unavoidable for everyone, therefore, what we eat becomes one of the most powerful symbols of who we are.[2] Rachel Brown states that food has been understood as a potent marker of identity, as we classify others based on what they eat.[3] People position themselves among others by choosing to eat certain types of food in opposition to those who do not

eat similarly. Another point is that food and foodways[4] that make up a person's diet, the recipes used to prepare those foods, and the manners in which they are consumed are among the most visible symbols that highlight someone's belonging to a certain group (e.g., ethnic, national, regional, cultural, or religious).[5] In fact, many religious traditions have food probihitions and restrictions. For example, Muslim, Jewish, Seventh Day Adventists, and some Orthodox Christians do not eat pork. Some other religious traditions do not only have probitions and restrictions on pork consumption but also other kinds of meat, such as Hindu or Buddhist or vegetarian or vegan.

Food serves in many instances as a social-cultural symbol that communicates both an individual and a group identity. Considering the social-cultural symbolism of food, by the "you are what you eat" account, we can make judgements about people based upon what they eat. In fact, this can lead us to perceive them in stereotypical or biased ways. Walter Lippmann argues that stereotypes are "the pictures inside our heads," and people create stereotypes because they imagine things before they actually experience them.[6] As a result, Lippmann claims that such preconceptions govern the process of the way we see things.[7] Moreover, people tend to stereotype less within their own in-group. Alternatively, Edward Said suggests that one reason stereotypes occur is the fear of the unknown.[8] John Dovidio, Miles Hewstone, Peter Glick, and Victoria Esses highlight that stereotypes consistently influence how people perceive, process information about, and respond to group members.[9] They are conveyed through the media, socialization, language, and discourse. Roberta Giovine points out that a community's identity is expressed by differentiation from their neighbors' language, food, or other customs.[10] She continues to argue that people segregate among themselves who do not share the same values, do not eat similar foods, or avoid certain foods (and even how food is prepared and consumed). This can lead to define stereotypes between t "Us" and the "Others."

Halal food embodies religious dietary norms for Muslims that can be distinctive in terms of identity. In a broader context, Halal food is symbolic of the belonging to both the "Muslim individual" and a wider cultural-religious "group identity" (umma).[11] If we understand food as a symbolic representation of identity, the halal foods that Muslims consume can naturally be linked to representations of Muslim identities. In a global context, where Muslims are challenged by stereotypical Muslim identities in the media, Islamophobic discourses see Muslims as mistrusted minorities in multicultural societies.[12] Halal food and foodways can be perceived within the frame of these representations.

This study is concerned with how notions of halal food and halal foodways are being stereotyped in South Korean society and linked to Korean perceptions

constructed by contradicting images and portrayals of Islam, the Islamic world, Islamic culture, and representations of Muslim identities in the South Korean context. Having said that, contractive perceptions are formed based on Islamophobia, ignorance and prejudice towards Islam, the South Korean notion of the Islamic world (*Isŭllam-kwŏn* 이슬람권), and perceptions that all Muslims are working class and poor. Other perceptions include confusion of halal food concepts with other ethical, religious traditions or cultural practices, such as Hinduism, Vegetarianism, or Confucian rituals. Moreover, presentation of halal foods by South Korean government projects supporting halal businesses and tourism contribute to these contradictions, such as the Halal Food Complex, halal food exports, and Muslim Friendly Tourism.

Within this context, research questions explored in this study include: How do South Koreans perceive the notion of halal food? What does "eating halal food" mean in the South Korean context? To what extent does the incomprehensibility of the notion of halal food lead to stereotyping of halal food in the South Korean context? To what extent can representations of stereotyped Muslim identities be linked to the halal food that Muslims consume and contribute to the stereotyping of halal foodways in the South Korean context?

In fact, various studies can be found in Korean literature regarding Muslim communities and halal food in South Korea. The research mainly focuses on Muslims and their acculturation and adaptation to South Korean culture, halal food preferences, consumption, or practices in South Korea. Other studies concentrate on halal food markets and certificates and halal food businesses in terms of developing strategy for South Korean exports.[13] Some recent studies are focused on preferences for South Korean food among foreign Muslims in South Korea and foreign students' dietary behaviors and adaptation to South Korean food.[14] However, there is a lack of research covering halal food or halal foodways associated with local perceptions in the South Korean context. This paper aims to contribute to scholarship on halal food and Muslim foodways studies highlighting views of Muslims residing in South Korea and reflecting the perceptions of South Koreans on the subject.

This paper presents findings obtained from ethnographic research (participant observation and field notes) and a series of semi-instructed in-depth interviews with South Koreans and foreign Muslims living in South Korea. The semi-instructed in-depth interviews were conducted from the end of May to August 2020 online and offline in English, Turkish, and Korean at different locations from one up to four hours with breaks. The online interviews were performed with five participants via Kakao Talk video call due to the Covid-19 restrictions, limitation of mobility or distance: overseas (two participants), Seoul (one participant),

Kangwŏn-do Province (one participant), and Chŏnju (one participant). Face-to face interviews were completed with nine participants at coffee shops in different parts of Seoul, at the interviewee's house or interviewer's house. The ethnographic research includes my observations on a wider period of time and field notes based on field work in South Korea. In addition, the interviewees were chosen from people with whom I had meals before at South Korean halal restaurants or their homes in different cities and provinces of South Korea; such as Seoul, Ansan, Inch'ŏn, and Kangwŏn-do Province. Questions on halal food concepts and pork prohibition were asked repeatedly, when I would meet with non-Muslim South Koreans for meals or having a conversation about food.

The interviewees (fourteen participants) included: women (nine participants, of whom one wore hijab), men (five participants) of different ages (25–65), foreigners residing or who have resided in South Korea more than two years (four participants), married (six participants), single (eight participants), Syrian (one participant), Yemeni (one participant), Turkish (two participants), South Koreans (ten participants), hometowns from Chŏllado Province (three participants), Kyŏngsangdo Province (three participants), Kangwŏndo Province (one participant), Seoul (one participant), Kyŏnggido Province (two participants), South Koreans who have been to Muslim majority countries (six participants) or lived in Saudi Arabia (one participant) or who had a family member who lived in Turkey (one participant), South Koreans who have met Muslims outside Korea (six participants), foreign Muslims (four participants),[15] Korean Muslim (one participant), Christian (two participants), Catholic practicing Confucian rituals (one participant), practicing Buddhist (one participant), non-practicing Buddhist (one participant), previous Christian currently with no religion (one participant), no religion (three participants), housewife (one participant), retired (one participant), graduate student (one participant), post doc (one participant), working in a company (three participants) or institution (one participant) or factory (one participant) or freelance (four participants) or non-employed (one participant).

The semi-structured interviews were performed in English, Korean, and Turkish languages and in some cases using also Korean language alongside. The interviews touched on personal food practices, halal food concepts, halal foodways, images of Muslims and understanding of Islam, the Islamic culture in South Korea, and their opinions on issues regarding halal business and tourism in South Korea. Through the in-depth interviews with people of various ethnic, religious, and cultural backgrounds, I will demonstrate how the incomprehensibility of the notion of halal food and representations of stereotyped Muslim identities and Islam linked to halal food(ways) has led to stereotyping in the South Korean context. There is always a limitation between languages when it comes

to translation. However, all considerations have been made to offer the most proper translation with its closest meaning. The interviewees are named with pseudonyms to maintain their confidentiality.

Islamophobia *Isŭllam-kwŏn* 이슬람권, and Muslims in South Korea

The current status of the Muslim population in South Korea is not precise. The estimated population of Muslims is said to be approximately 160,000–200,000 currently residing in South Korea; including 35,000 South Korean Muslims and 7,000 second-generation Muslims.[16] The Muslim community in South Korea includes workers, students, marriage migrants from Muslim countries, and South Korean converts.[17] Although Muslims do not have a long and deep socio-economic and cultural presence in South Korea, representations of Islam in the South Korean media, fear of the South Korean multiculturalism, and rising Islamophobia are challenging Muslims who reside in the country.[18] K'i Yŏn K'oo discusses how Islamophobic discourses and misunderstandings of Islam are represented in the South Korean society.[19] She claims that the main difference of Islamophobic discourses in South Korea—compared to those in Europe or the United States—are not based on encountering Muslim immigrants but rather through the media transmitting fear and hostility towards Islam. The consciousness of South Koreans on Islam is mostly shaped through media and news rather than direct contact with Muslims.

At this point, it is essential to mention South Korean orientalism in considering the difference surrounding Islamophobic discourses in the South Korean context. Orientalism, creating the "other" and a fear rooted in a long historical relationship between the West and the Islamic world,[20] corresponds to a different meaning in the South Korean context. This is connected to the "Arabian dreams" of a generation of South Koreans, sent to work in the Middle East during the "construction boom" of the 1970–80s. At that time, thousands of South Korean workers went to Saudi Arabia, a leading importer of workers among the other neighbouring states, because it had the highest spending budget in its construction sector. This generation of South Koreans have a positive outlook on Islam and Islamic culture and behave in less reserved ways towards Muslims.

> Our people (South Koreans) do not know. If you say *Isŭllam-kwŏn* 이슬람권 these days, they do not favor it but for people like us *Isŭllam-kwŏn* 이슬람권 is nice. We saw those people's way of living in Saudi Arabia. We also experienced living together. (Interview, 15.08.2020) (brackets added for clarity)

According to the interviewees, South Koreans have a more negative image of *Isŭllam-kwŏn* 이슬람권 these days.[21] It has been ascribed a different meaning within an Islamophobic discourse that is widely known and shared by South Koreans.[22] Based on my observation and interviews, the *Isŭllam-kwŏn* 이슬람권 is assumed to be the Middle East, a land controlled by Islam, and a homogenized geography of origin for all Muslims sharing the same language, food, clothing, customs, and traditions. Next to this assumption, Muslim minorities face Islamophobic discursive discriminations and are confronted by images of being untrustworthy, troublemakers, having a low socio-economic background, and poor images of multicultural families in South Korea. On the contrary, halal food and Muslims visiting South Korea are portrayed in a different context.

Halal Food Market and Muslim-Friendly South Korea

The halal market developed noticeably over the last decades. It has grown to be a massive globalised market with a high potential of growth in halal products and brands in various areas. For example, food and beverage, banking, pharmaceuticals, textiles, cosmetics, fashion, and tourism.[23] For South Korea, halal food markets and businesses are a quite recent concern that started with Muslim immigrants working to establish a halal food supply network, and within years attracted South Korean businessmen and local authorities to invest in this market.

Since the immigrant flow of the 1990s, halal food has been an important challenge for the Muslim minorities living in South Korea. Pakistani and Bangladeshi migrant workers launched a halal food supply network in the mid-1990s. They produced halal chicken, without an official market, and were actively involved in the import of halal lamb meat from Australia.[24] There are four to five domestic poultry farms where halal poultry is slaughtered and supplied to halal restaurants and halal markets throughout the country.[25] In terms of meat supply, South Korea has grown to be a significant export market for Australia, not only in beef but also lamb exports.[26] According to a report from the Korea–Australia Free Trade Agreement (KAFTA) about beef, lamb, smallgoods, and seafood, new consumption trends such as shawarma and gyros have increased in overall sheap meat consumption in South Korea.[27] According to the South Korean Trade Meat Association (KTMA) (2020),[28] during the years 2018–2019, beef imports from the U.S.A., Australia, and New Zealand increased by 9.2%; sheep meat imports from Australia and New Zealand rose by 55.1% and chicken meat imports from the U.S.A., Brazil, and Thailand increased by 13.6%.[29] Online halal food supply sites usually import halal certified beef and sheep meat from Australia and halal chicken from Brazil.[30]

Next to the halal meat supply, imported halal products from multinational companies (MNC) became valuable in the consumption patterns of Muslim immigrants residing in South Korea. In 2018 halal products research, results show that local distribution channels imported products with a halal certificate, a Kosher certificate, and a Vegetarian certificate: 474 halal certified products, 629 kosher certified products, and 102 vegetarian certified products; in total some 1,231 products. Among these products, some 310 halal certified products were found in E-mart, Lotte Mart, Homeplus, and Costco. On the other hand, local area shops, convenience stores, and foreign markets were confirmed to have a total of 164 imported halal certified products.[31]

Halal food products are not exclusively imported to South Korea but similarly produced and exported along with the Korean Hallyu promotions. The size of the halal food and beverage market was estimated as of 2015 at about $1.2 trillion in fifty-seven Organization of Islamic Cooperation (OIC) countries. The global halal market size is expected to expand to US$ 10 trillion by 2030.[32] South Korean companies seek to enter and have a share in the halal market. Following this, in 2014, 133 South Korean companies obtained KMF certifications for 197 items and by 2016,[33] 197 local companies obtained KMF certificate for 562 items.[34] Among these famous companies are CJ CheilJedang, Pulmuone, Paris Baguette, and Lotteria.[35] These and other South Korean companies have halal certifications for export and overseas supply chains.

In relation with the halal market, halal food is not only produced for export as international trade, but also for a service sector known as "Muslim friendly Tourism" for Muslim travelers visiting South Korea. South Korea expects an annual increase of Muslim travelers and has been investing in the Muslim friendly tourism sector to meet the needs of Muslim tourists.[36] The South Korea Tourism Organization (KTO) has an official online portal with a section named "Muslim friendly Korea" that guides Muslim travellers in meeting various needs during their stay.

In the light of this information and statistics, it can be assumed that halal food is becoming significant and growing its share in the South Korean export and import market, as well as in the tourism sector. Nevertheless, halal awareness is low among mainstream South Koreans.[37] Despite a rising interest in halal businesses, there are contradictory aspects in terms of the representations of Islam, Islamic culture, Muslim identities, and notions of halal food and awareness in South Korea. On this basis, positive or negative perceptions are formed that create confusion around the notion of halal food and misconceptions of consuming halal foodways that lead to stereotyping.

Understanding the Notion of Halal Food in the South Korean Context

1. Notion of Halal Food and Muslim Foodways

The word halal is often solely affiliated with the foods that Muslims are allowed to eat. In Arabic, ***halal*** حلال literally means permissible, allowable, or be free, and is the opposite of haram.[38] As a term, halal حلال is translated as lawful, permitted, and more generally, halal food that is lawful for Muslims to eat.[39] In fact, this term is applied as a wider notion to describe everything that is permissible for a Muslim to do, both in deed and thought. Halal, from a cultural aspect, affects a Muslim's life in general. The notion of halal ranges from the clothing that can be worn to behavior and attitudes, work related issues, relations between men, women, and children to treatment of fellow Muslims and non-Muslims. In terms of food, halal is considered as good food for physical and spiritual health.[40] Yunes Ramadan Al-Teinaz states that according to the Islamic belief, God created everything on earth for Muslim's benefit unless he has specifically stated that something is not, in which case it is prohibited and unlawful, in Arabic haram حرام. Along with this, an emphasis is made to respect life and animal welfare. A Muslim is responsible to treat other lives, such as animals, with respect. It should be emphasized that Islam is not just a religion but also a source of law and a guide to social behavior specifying a standard for how Muslims should live their lives.[41]

Coming back to food, halal food embodies dietary norms for Muslims that are applied to everyday food practices. Muslims have food rules that are defined in the *Qur'an* القرآن and by pioneering Muslim scholars (ulema العلماء) according to Hadith الحديث and Sunna السنة.[42] Food rules, in other words, religious dietary restrictions and guidelines cover the concepts halal and haram. In the *Qur'an*, the chapters or suras that provide the clearest instructions are the following: Al-Baqara (2:173), Al-Ma'ida (5:3), and An-Nahl (16:114). Sharia or Islamic law features a set of standards that unites all Muslims in obeying the will of God. Though, it is necessary to state that, owing to a difference of interpretation by Madhabs (religious schools of thought), legal systems have progressed differently in different countries. However, one fundamental principle of halal is its aim to benefit the human being unless it is prohibited as haram in the *Qur'an* or other sources. Halal, as a food rule, includes the method of slaughtering animals, the kinds of animals that can be eaten, and various other taboos and conventions related to food storage, display, and hygiene.[43]

Considering halal as a diet, it is not dissimilar to other diets that are based on ethical or religious traditions, such as the Jewish kosher diet, Buddhist diets, Hindu diets, or a vegetarian diet. Any kind of food(ways) prepared according to

Islamic dietary rules is halal food or halal foodways. In this connection, not only the food and foodways of majority Muslim cultures (such as Arabic, Indonesian, Malaysian, Pakistani, Turkish, and others), but also food and foodways of non-Islamic cultures can be halal, providing that they are prepared according to the Islamic dietary rules. The notion of halal, applied to industry, covers hygienic, healthy, and/or ethical production that would not only benefit Muslims but contribute to the health of the wider population.[44] In South Korea, according to my observations and interview results, Islam, Islamic culture, and Muslims are felt to be unfamiliar. This creates puzzles about unknown terms, their usage, and causes misconceptions of the culture and its people.

2. Unknown Terminology and Misconceptions

Islam as a religion and Muslims as a community are a minority in South Korea. Therefore, mainstream South Koreans do not have many chances to observe and experience Islamic culture. All South Korean interviewees emphasized that they do not know much about Islamic terminology, for instance, Islam, Muslim, halal, and others. Their knowledge is based on information given on South Korean news, Simple Notification Services (SNS), and the general media. Most interviewees either could not differentiate between "Islam" (religion) and "Muslim" (person believing in Islam), thinking of these as a difference in pronunciation, or they had heard "Islam" but not "Muslim." Answers to the questions about halal food and foodways were similar; such as: "heard it for the first time, not well-known, or linked to some keywords."[45] For example, answers ranged widely: "food Muslims eat, no pork, according to the rules, slaughtering with a ritual, Middle East, Arabic food, curry, kebab, and other mostly meatbased foods."

> I thought they (Islam and Muslim) have the same meaning with a different pronunciation. Halal food is meat that is slaughtered with a (religious) ritual [*ŭisik*]. I did not know that it means 'allowed' until you (interviewer) mentioned it because it is not among my interests. (Interview, 20.06.2020) (brackets added for clarity)

South Korean interviewees, who encountered Muslims inside or outside South Korea due to work, or interviewees with a Christian background, recognized the term halal food. Nevertheless, hardly any of them knew that halal was an Arabic word and referred to "permissible or lawful." An interesting common point was the emphasis on words like "Middle Eastern, Arab, non-pork, religious, ritual, and slaughtering" among the answers. It is not surprising that there is an incomprehensibility of notions around halal food. Most of the halal food definitions in South Korea are explained on halal businesses or official tourism websites.[46] The South

Korea Tourism Organization (KTO) official website "Imagine your Korea—Visit Korea" (2019), opened under the section of "Where to Eat?" a sub-section named "Dietary Restriction" with titles like "Vegetarianism," "Muslim Dietary Concerns," and "Middle Eastern Food."[47] The explanations given under these subjects are quite considerate and caring about people with specific dietary needs. Attention is paid to Muslim's dietary needs due to their beliefs, but at the same time the information is confusing with two categories named "Muslim's dietary concern" and "Middle Eastern Food." Although both include Muslims, dietary, non-pork food, a significant difference can be seen in the use of the words halal meat, slaughter, Islamic law, and Middle East.

> I heard about halal food through Korean television. I knew that you could buy this kind of food (halal food) and halal food products of the (South) Korean major companies are out in the (global) market. (Interview, 15.08.2020) (brackets for clarity)

Recently, South Korean political administrations show more interest in halal businesses and tourism to become a part of the US$ 5.73 trillion global halal market to compensate for economic loss in the tourism sector.[48] In 2015, the term halal food became widely known to mainstream South Koreans through the South Korean news and media. It was a hot issue due to the strong objections by particularly conservative Christian groups on the construction of a Halal Food Complex in Iksan-si, Chŏllabuk-do Province.[49] The effort to explain halal food as a healthy food did not gain recognition by the majority. In fact, most of the non-Christian South Korean interviewees did not know or have not heard about halal food as a healthy food. South Korean Christian interviewees stated that they heard about the halal food complex but did not know the definition of halal food. The South Korean interviewee who worked in Saudi Arabia had learned about halal food exports and the South Korean major companies in the global halal market. Even so, he was not aware of the issue in detail nor was he informed about halal food.

> I have realized that they (South Koreans) do not understand, because they do not know. For example, I had a teacher at my language institute whom I really liked. We gathered for class dining and had to order some food. There were also other Muslims in the classroom. We told my teacher to buy halal meat and she said 'Let's buy halal pork! Where do we buy halal pork?' She tried to find halal pork online to order. (Interview, 28.05.2020) (brackets added for clarity)

South Koreans are confused by different explanations and practices of Muslims with various cultural and religious sectarian backgrounds.[50] Foreign interviewees said that South Koreans around them ask them every time if they can eat meat, beef, or chicken, which I can relate to given my observations. Foreign interviewees

stated various practices are observed, including themselves, such as Muslims who eat only halal certified meats; some eat imported Australian meat, because it is said to be halal, and some eat only chicken without halal consideration. Besides the various practices, Islamic terminology is quite unfamiliar to them. In this regard, the halal concept is understood in a partial perspective, emphazing what Muslims can or cannot eat. However, halal food is not only what Muslims can consume as a substance; in a wider context, it covers a sourcing process based on ethical and moral principles and welfare. In this matter, misconceptions seem to be formed on ignorance, or due to differences in cultural context and understandings.

3. Halal Food and the Islamic Way of Slaughtering: "Religious Food"

Halal food is referred to as foods on which Islamic food rules are applied. Considering that in a non-Muslim country, Muslims can struggle with halal food consumption, as any sort of food is virtually available but is potentially unclean.[51] Foreign Muslim interviewees complained about hardships having to check each time before buying a product or to look at a whole section of food but not being able to find even one single product to buy. They shared a common view that halal food is something they worried about in non-Muslim countries. They would not consider and buy or order it at will "back at home" (in their country of origin).

In recent years, due to an increasing interest in the global halal market, Islamic dietary, particularly halal food definitions became essential in terms of regulations. South Korean firms have shown an interest in global halal market, and the definition of halal is given on various websites related to halal exports and halal tourism. In this regard, halal discourses emphasize halal meaning food and products, that is, which are permissable to eat or use by Muslims according to Sharia law.[52] In this manner, the definition and perception of halal food becomes restricted and centered on "meat-based food" and the "Islamic way of slaughtering," which corresponds to different perceptions in the South Korean context. Firstly, within this context, being not able to eat meat is understood as a person being either a Buddhist monk or as a non-South Korean person from India, who does not consume meat. Secondly, interviewees declared that South Korean Buddhists do not practice restrictions on eating meat, and even some monks go to meat restaurants when they visit cities. Therefore, Muslims who cannot eat meat seem to be noticeably "conservative" and "religious" people.

A second perception is "religious (ritual) food, *chonggyo ŭmsik* 종교 음식." According to my observations, many South Koreans understand halal food as being "religious food, *chonggyo ŭmsik* 종교 음식" due to descriptions of halal

slaughter.[53] This creates a misconception around notions of halal food. One of the interviewees stressed that South Koreans could perceive the halal method of slaughter in terms of ŭisik, an understanding of a religious ritual; like *chesa* "the Korean Ancestor's Ritual," I performed one of the interviews with a South Korean couple at my home, where I provided lunch.[54] One of the interviewees gave me her opinion on halal food after the lunch, during the interview.

> Regarding halal, I told him (her husband) that I thought you (interviewer) did first something like a 'rite of baptism *serye ŭisik*' or any kind of ritual over the meat. The image was like that because I have a 'religious image'. Therefore, the first thought I had was, is it ok to eat this food? I felt a slight repulsion at first, because we do not eat the food from *chesa*. It is something we offer for our dead ancestors. (Interview, 20.06.2020) (brackets added for clarity)

The South Korean interviewee stated that she herself was not religious, but *chesa* was performed in her family. According to her statement, it is not good to eat *chesa* food, because it is offered to the dead people; at the same time, it is a "*chonggyo ŭmsik* 종교 음식," meaning religious food. A Christian interviewee said that South Korean Christians prefer not to eat *chesa* food and South Korean temple food, because of their religious differences. A Catholic interviewee, who also practices *chesa*, spoke of his younger experiences refusing to eat temple food, because of the notion that it is religious food. Since he became older, he realized that temple food is a surprisingly healthy and genuine cuisine.

Most of the South Korean interviewees shared a feeling and perception of halal food as being a religious food. They were confused concerning religious rules applied to food and the steps involved in the Islamic way of slaughtering. Through the interviews, I noticed that the understanding of halal food as a religious food was linked to a certain Muslim identity and narrowed to religious substance. In fact, halal food is a part of a wider halal notion that is signifiying a spirit of community in ethical and moral social health, sharing healthy food and symbolizing various multi-cultural and traditional Muslim foodways.

4. Homogenized Halal Food and Foreign Authentic Foodways

Foodways are an intersection of food and culture in which we cannot separate food choice and cultural practices from one another.[55] One's food choice can be linked to cultural practices or cultural practices can determine one's food choice and practices.[56] In terms of foodways, any kind of foodways that consider Islamic diet, in terms of ingredients and preparing process, is fine to consume, for example, Arabic food, Indonesian food, Pakistani food, Turkish food, halal Korean food, or halal German food.

It is a matter of fact that foods in Muslim countries and foodways of Muslims are in general considered to be halal due to common religious dietary practices. As a result, halal food can be a general expression; at the same time, signifying various Muslim foodways or halal foodways. One of the foreign interviewees said that "South Koreans think halal food should be Arabic food;" which is what many of the South Korean interviewees implied in their answers linked to the *Isŭllam-kwŏn* 이슬람권 notion.

According to my observations, an interesting aspect is an uncertainty of halal food and halal foodways that creates a view of homogenized certain types of halal food mostly connected with Middle Eastern or Arabic culture. As mentioned before, there is a section on the KTO website regarding religious dietary concerns. Under the section of "Muslim dietary concern," it explains that South Korean dishes are made with pork and that is customary in South Korea to drink alcohol during or after a meal. In the same paragraph, it states that Muslims cannot share these customs, and it continues "Fortunately, restaurants are showing increasing sensitivity to this issue and more and more restaurants are serving Middle Eastern food prepared according to Islamic law." In the next part, "Middle Eastern food" is explained in the following way:

> Due to religious beliefs, many Muslims may not partake of the blood of dead animals, pork, the meat of carnivorous animals, and/or meat not properly slaughtered in accordance with Islamic law. (…) Only halal meat (slaughtered properly in the Islamic way) is allowed. Therefore, Muslims may experience difficulties finding proper food when visiting South Korea.[57] (brackets added for clarity)

Explaining Muslim dietary concerns and Middle Eastern Food as two different elements generates a misinterpretation concerning the Muslim dietary and halal foodways concept. All Muslims refer to the same Islamic diet, with slight differences in practice. Muslims do not necessarily perceive and prefer Middle Eastern food as the only halal food. Having said that, the majority of Muslim tourists visiting South Korea are from Indonesia and Malaysia.[58] The population of Middle Eastern immigrants residing in South Korea is quite low compared to Central Asian, South Asian, and Southeast Asian immigrants.[59] These kinds of definitions and explanations narrow down, unintentionally, the wide-ranging Muslim identities and populations into a "one block entity" in connection to *Isŭllam-kwŏn* 이슬람권. Another aspect of the homogenized perception of halal food is that the food consists of kebap, curry, naan bread, lamb shashlik, and similar foods. Given this, the variety of halal food and Muslim foodways is overlooked in terms of its local, traditional, and cultural context and distinctions. For Muslims, halal food

and foodways are their own traditional and cultural foods, precisely said to be a potent marker of their cultural identity.

> We do not question halal food in Turkey. Everything becomes halal or haram when you go abroad. (Interview, 13.06.2020)

> On foods 'It contains nothing related to pork' is written but this is not for all kinds of foods. For example, foods prepared in the factories have to write 'halal'. (…) Halal food is just Syrian food. All Syrian food is halal. (Interview, 13.08.2020)

Food as a commodity is related to industry and consumption.[60] Halal became a globalized market in the last decades, and it brought concerns around the branding of halal. Halal as a brand is presented to hold some definite values, customs, and practices.[61] However, a clarification is need on this matter, considering halal discourses centering on halal food as certified meat-based products or "edible" products. In non-Muslim countries, especially, where Islam, Islamic culture, and Muslims are less well-known, it can cause misunderstandings. According to the answers that came out of the interviews, mainstream South Koreans are not aware of halal food and Muslim foodways historical, cultural-religious, and traditional connections.

> Actually, these days there is a very famous falafel restaurant in Chonggak, Seoul. It is called Humus Kitchen. (…) They have lamb meat. It is a halal restaurant. South Koreans visit it a lot and like to go there. I took my brother's girlfriend and she liked it. It is not known as halal food. They think of it as trendy food. (Interview, 16.06.2020)

A popular place for some South Koreans to visit is Itaewon, an old multi-cultural area in Seoul.[62] Due to its multi-national and cultural environment, it allows visitors to experience different cultures and gives the opportunity to enjoy authentic and traditional foodways. In Itaewon, around the Seoul Grand Masjid, there are various foreign restaurants, including traditional authentic restaurants from Muslim countries, such as Arab, Pakistani, Indonesian, and Turkish. Notably, mainstream South Koreans think of the Itaewon area as a place to find or eat foreign authentic food and halal food as well. These days, it is not only the Itaewon area where halal food or foreign halal restaurants can be found. They are located in different parts of Seoul. Considering the interview results, mainstream South Koreans visit trendy cultural or well-being food restaurants that have halal food or go under halal certification without being aware of it. According to the interviews, mainstream South Koreans, especially Evangelical Christians, are careful to avoid consuming halal food in South Korea due to its connection with Muslims, *Isŭllam-kwŏn* 이슬람권, and terrorism.

What "Eating Halal Food" Means in the Korean Context

1. People of Unknown Culture "Eating Halal Food"

Historically, Islam and Muslims have had both periods of encounter and disconnection to the Korean Peninsula. The present South Korean Muslim community was created after Islam was reintroduced during the Korean War (1950–53) by the Turkish troops. The encounter with Islamic culture and Muslims continued outside the peninsula. One such encounter was during the 1970s–80s, when thousands of South Koreans were sent as construction workers to the Middle East. Following the Seoul Olympics (1988), South Korea started to accept foreign workers, among whom various Muslim workers entered South Korea. An increasing flow of Muslim immigrants to South Korea continued through the 1990s into the 2000s. Among this immigrant population are not only workers but also international students and marriage migrants who married Koreans and formed multicultural families.[63]

Contemporary Islam and Islamic culture are unfamiliar for a lot of South Koreans. Muslims are seen as "*morŭ nŭn munhwa saramdŭl* 모르는 문화 사람들," meaning "people of an unknown culture." Among the interviews, two interviewees used the expression "*morŭ nŭn munhwa*" and "*morŭ nŭn munhwa saram*" (unknown culture or people of an unknown culture). A foreign interviewee stated how he was referred to as "a person of unknown culture."

> '*Morŭ nŭn munhwa saram ida* 모르는 문화 사람이다' [A person who came from an unknown culture.]. 'Uriga morŭ nŭn munhwa esŏ wattŏn saram irasŏ chosim haeya haeyo 우리가 모르는 문화에서 왔던 사람이라서 조심해야해요.' [We have to be careful because he comes from a culture we do not know].[64] This means they (South Koreans) do not know about this culture, which means it is bad, and so we (as South Koreans) have to be careful. (Interview, 13.08.2020) (brackets added for clarity)

It cannot be ignored that South Koreans do not have an extensive interaction with Islam, Islamic culture, and Muslims in comparison to Western and some non-Muslim Asian countries. On the contrary, it cannot be said that they did not encounter any Muslims or have never tasted halal food. According to the interviewees, some favorite travel destinations are Indonesia, Malaysia, Turkey, and Morocco. Almost all South Korean interviewees, except one person, had visited a Muslim majority country. I noticed that interviewees described the travel destinations to be beautiful places with nice people and good food. Nevertheless, people from *Isŭllam-kwŏn* 이슬람권 or Muslims, Muslim immigrants, or multicultural families formed by marriage migrants are referred to as from "unknown" or "not well-known" cultures.

If we identify others based on what they eat, we could also make judgments about consumption of the food based upon who eats it. In other words, what Muslims "eat" is "halal food." Following that, within the frame of halal discourses and misrepresentations of Muslim identities, "eating halal food" is linked to "either crime, as a threat, or in relation to a terrorist" or a strategy of Islamization.[65] This can be observed as antithetical to a "Muslim-friendly" discourse. According to the interview results, "eating halal food" is understood as food consumed by Muslims, the *Isŭllam-kwŏn* 이슬람권 people, who are a group of Islamic religious fanatics. In a non-Muslim country, for some South Koreans, consumption of halal food would support those people and Islamization. Another perception is that "eating halal food" means eating meat-based food, which is expensive and hardly affordable for Muslim immigrants and multicultural families. A contrasting perception to this, "eating halal food" is a need that should be provided to Muslim tourists during their visit to South Korea.

2. What Muslims Eat is "Halal"!

K'i Yŏn K'oo's study shows that the South Korean press presents Muslims and Islamic culture as a monolithic religious bloc.[66] Secondly, the Islamic world (*Isŭllam-kwŏn*) is described as a land controlled by Islam and equates Muslims to a group of Islamic religious fanatics. Owing to this, all Middle East related news within the South Korean press is focused on Islam.

> If you say Islam, firstly, it is the religion of people from the Middle East and *Arap-kwŏn* 아랍권 (Arab countries). I did not know back then, when I went to Saudi Arabia, but now Islam is IS (the Islamic State). It is probably not like that because Islam extremist groups seem to be people believing Islam in a weird way. This is how I understand it. (Interview, 15.08.2020) (brackets added for clarity)

Jeon Daye illustrates common stereotypes of Islam, Arabs, and Muslims that link Arab to "Islam" or "a geographic area."[67] Next to this, images of Arabs and Muslims portrayed in the South Korean media, popular culture, and society are portrayed either as oppressed and weak Muslim women, terrorists, or as enormously rich oil princes.[68] A recent negative image of Muslims is closely connected to the world-wide refugee crisis. Yemeni refugees entered South Korea in 2018 through Cheju Island causing huge discussions and protests among South Koreans. Notably, most of the South Koreans were against Yemeni refugees and argued that Muslim men cause trouble. Most of the arguments were based on Islamophobic discourses thinking of the Muslim refugees as be troublemakers and untrustworthy multicultural minorities.[69]

Foreign Muslim interviewees shared their unfortunate experiences with some South Koreans. It was situations in which they were either thought to be a terrorist

before they had been properly introduced or accused of being a terrorist by some random strangers passing by. South Korean interviewees' impressions of Islam and Muslims is formed by stereotypes transmitted through the South Korean news media and Islamophobic discourses after 9/11. Interviewees mentioned a viral video in which a South Korean man was beheaded by the IS terrorist group. Following this statement one interviewee added:

> (South) Koreans do not know what Muslim is but what they eat is 'halal'. (Interview, 20.06.2020)

> What is very amusing is that when you say halal food, it has a very negative image (but) sisters from the church go for a trip to Malaysia. It is a famous vacation spot for honeymoons. A senior at my church went to Malaysia and enjoyed the food there. (Interview, 16.06.2020)

The interviewee was told by her fellow Christians not to spend money on other religion's restaurants or food. She emphasized that she was not able to understand the idea of "you cannot spend money on halal food." Kim Nam-il provides examples that conservative Evangelical Christian groups were strongly against halal food complex projects due to the thought of Islamization.[70] In this context, "eating halal food" means to indirectly support terrorists. It is significant to indicate a difference of perception between "eating halal food" and consumption of halal food products, such as snacks or drinks. Most South Koreans, including interviewees, are not aware of a halal mark on products available in the local markets. These products are taken as imported products "made in a country" rather than halal products. Nevertheless, halal meat supply complexes or halal restaurants are visible in terms of halal discourse and its relation to Islamization.

At the same time, mainstream South Koreans, including anti-halal food supporters, like to travel to Muslim or Muslim majority destinations. Most of the South Korean interviewees who travelled to Muslim countries like Indonesia, Malaysia, Saudi Arabia, or Turkey, stated that they did not realize it was halal food they were eating until this was mentioned during the interviews. Once again, a negative image of "eating halal food" is not linked to local authentic traditional food enjoyed during a trip to a Muslim or Muslim majority country.

3. Eating Halal Food as a Social Economic Status

Halal food symbolizes belonging to an individual and a wider cultural-religious group identity. On the one hand, for Muslims, it is food that one's mother, grandmother, father, or someone in their circle cooked for them. In other words, it is a part of a long historical and traditional foodways that includes broad local-cultural tastes and recipes, just as any other foodways. However, recently, the

halal food concept, considering consumption, has taken a new significance in terms of economic value through its growing share in the global market. Muslims seek for a halal market and industry that takes account of their ethical and moral values, customs, and practices, and contributes to a better society. In opposition, the halal discourse emphasis on meat creates a perception of halal food as mainly a meat-based commodity.

> If you say halal food, meat comes up (to mind) directly. There is such a thing, for instance, kebab just meat, meat, and meat. (South) Koreans always perceive halal food as meat. (Interview, 28.05.2020) (brackets added for clarity)

Foreign Muslim interviewees answered that halal food was their home country's food. It is a challenge to access halal food in a non-Muslim country. They argued that not only halal food but also halal ingredients are mostly expensive, difficult to find, and there are either a lack of options or a lack of taste. South Korean interviewees defined halal food as food they had tasted (kebab, curry, naan, lamb meat) that were available on halal restaurants' menus. It was affordable but expensive compared to South Korean food.

Next to accessibility, another aspect of "eating halal food" is its affordability. According to South Korean interviewees, to be able to consume meat is correlated with wealth and status by older generations. This is seen as relevant with the nation's contemporary economic development process. Another view is regarding migrant workers in South Korea. For most South Koreans, migrant workers from Islamic countries are considered to be economically inferior. South Korean TV programs about multicultural families, including marriages with Muslims, contribute to this view by displaying them with dark skin tones and poor backgrounds, having a difficult life or arguments with their mother-in-law or husbands.

The portrayal of stereotyped Muslim images being migrant workers, with dark skin tones, and poor backgrounds support the idea that Muslims cannot financially afford halal food, because they are working class or economically inferior. In fact, a major problem is insufficient halal food supply, and Muslims are challenged not by their socio-economic status but by the accessibility and variety of halal food. A contrast to this is an increase of halal K-food and halal food restaurants subject to Muslim friendly tourism in South Korea.

4. Muslim Friendly Korea and "Eating Halal K-Food"

South Korea has gained global popularity through exporting cultural content under the name South Korean Wave, Hallyu. Hallyu not only contributed to a boost in the South Korean cultural economy exporting popular culture but, simultaneously, had a positive effect on the South Korean tourism sector. The

local authorities started to focus more on different sectors in tourism, such as a Muslim Friendly Korea with attention on halal K-food. The South Korean Muslim Federation (KMF) has an instrumental role in the advancement of the halal food industry in Korea.[71]

Halal tourism is an emerging market and an estimated 5.3% of the total inbound tourism market in South Korea. The annual growth rate of Muslim travelers visiting from 2010 to 2014 was 32.7%, which indicated a steady increase. It was expected to reach approximately 1.3 million in 2020,[72] but unfortunately, the global pandemic Covid-19 hindered this growth. However, it reached almost 1 million Muslim travelers in 2019.[73] In the meantime, South Korean authorities realized that the facilities were not enough to meet the Muslim travelers' demands and needs; such as food, accommodations, and social environment. Regarding this, diverse facilities were provided in touristic sites for Muslims. On the KTO website "Imagine Korea," a Muslim friendly travel section was added under the theme travel for Muslim tourists. Information about various facilities for Muslims and halal dining places can be searched under this section. A classification of Muslim friendly restaurants is designed to enable Muslims to dine conveniently. E-books available for free download explain the classification of restaurants and guide Muslim travellers for a pleasant stay.

On the contrary, the majority of South Korean interviewees had no knowledge about Muslim friendly tourism and halal K-food. Only two of them were informed of halal K-food restaurants, because one is a tourist guide, and the other one is interested in halal food and Muslim minorities. Meanwhile, foreign interviewees were aware of the changes and E-books published by KTO. One of them talked about her Indonesian friend, who showed her a mini drama on halal food in South Korea. The interviewee was surprised to see halal food explained in a South Korean drama. She added her opinion on the emphasis of Hallyu in the drama content.

The drama she mentioned was K-Food Mini Drama, "Lunch Box," promoting halal food in South Korea and made for the K-Food Fair 2015 in Malaysia, Indonesia, and the UAE.[74] In the drama, "Nasi Goreng" an Indonesian dish is cooked using halal ingredients. Moreover, on the YouTube channel of K-Food Fair 2015, South Korean *ramyŏn* 라면 with a halal mark is promoted, which is not available in the majority of local South Korean markets.

> I do not feel the need to go to a South Korean halal restaurant. It looks like it is for tourists who come to Korea. (Interview, 25.06.2020)

In fact, the facilities and halal restaurants seem to satisfy Muslim travelers rather than Muslim minorities residing in South Korea. Foreign Muslim interviewees shared their positive outlook on the progress made with Muslim friendly Korea;

even so, it did not fulfill their needs. Most of the interviewees gave answers to the question of whether they would prefer to dine with friends in South Korean halal restaurants. A common opinion was high prices and appealing to tourists rather than locals, as well as a lack of options to choose from compared to the wide range of South Korean restaurants. A notable point is that South Korean interviewees viewed it as a good opportunity for Muslim tourists to engage and experience South Korean culture closely. On the other hand, they were indifferent and felt unconnected to the idea of South Korean halal restaurants in general.

Discussion

Taking the principle "You are what you eat" as a starting point; the paper has drawn from the approaches of Walter Lippmann and Edward Said on cultural stereotypes to demonstrate how contradictory representations of Islam, the Islamic culture, and Muslim identities in the South Korean context construct various perceptions leading to the stereotyping of halal food, Muslim foodways, and its consumption. According to the South Korean interviewees, they were mainly informed on Islam, Islamic culture, Muslims, or halal food either through South Korean news, SNS, or media, but also through meeting Muslims or traveling to Muslim countries. Negative perceptions of Islam, Islamic culture, and Muslim identities are mainly shaped through information obtained from South Korean news and media, using translated foreign media content, rather than through interaction with Muslims. The perceptions of South Koreans who experienced Islamic culture and interacted with Muslims are different to the South Koreans who rely on information transmitted through the news and media. Supporting this idea, an older generation of South Koreans, once construction workers in the Middle East, have a positive opinion on Islam, *Isŭllam-kwŏn* 이슬람권, and Muslims. An orientalist view, as understood by Said, seems to exist among younger generations. According to the interviews, younger South Koreans view Muslims or Arabs more in terms of oil rich Arabs from the Gulf area rather than terrorists and have been influenced by online images represented in Instagram, On the contrary, interviewees are not well-informed about halal business and Muslim friendly Korea projects by local authorities. Foreign Muslims, residing in Korea, share an opinion that South Koreans lack accurate information about Islam, Muslims, Islamic culture, and notions of halal. They have an optimistic point of view in terms of Muslim Friendly Korea projects, although they feel their needs as members of the Muslim minority are not provided for within this frame. Furthermore, representations of halal food and guidance about halal restaurants for Muslim travelers portray a different view to Islamophobic and halal discourses challenged by Muslim minorities. This

dichotomy creates contradictory perceptions that lead to the stereotyping of halal food and "eating halal food" in the South Korean context.

Firstly, stereotyping comes from the incomprehensibility of the notion of halal food. Most of the interviewees agreed in thinking of halal food as being a religious food due to the ritualistic method of slaughter in its production. However, Ibrahim H.A. Abd El-Rahim (2020) argues that halal slaughter is a halal method of slaughter for Muslims, not a ritual.[75] He continues that the halal method is the best method of slaughter—according to science—because it minimizes pain, completes the drainage of liquid blood from the carcass, and increases the shelf life and meat quality, safety, and hygiene. According to my observations, halal food is also linked to "wellbeing food" in South Korea and is exhibited with well-being, healthy, or organic foods. Nevertheless, explanations of "slaughtering approved in Islamic law" give the impression of a religious ritual rather than a method used by Muslims in slaughtering.

According to my observations and interviews, many South Koreans are challenged to understand the differences between spiritual and cultural practices, because they are familiar with Confucian ritual practices, an image of ritual or religious food. There is also avoidance towards other religions' food due to differences in belief, such as temple food.

Islam is also a source of legal, ethical, and moral values, and a guide to social standards and practices for Muslims. Therefore, it is necessary to describe a wider notion of halal. Halal, as a rule, is not applied only to food but rather covers various aspects of a Muslim's life, from clothing to speech, to relationships, and all general aspects. Halal as a term that is only applied to food limits its broader frame. Having said that, halal food is not limited to a religious substance to be "edible" but also emphasizes animal welfare, and the processes of production, ranging from feed, slaughter, packaging, logistics, related manufacturing, and finance.

Notably, not sharing the same eating habits or avoiding some foods creates stereotypes in the aspect of "Us" and "Others." As a result, not only halal food but also traditional Muslim foodways are homogenized and stereotyped in this context. The influence of Islamophobic discourses shaping perceptions of Islam and Muslim identities as "a bloc entity" referring mostly as *Isŭllam-kwŏn* 이슬람권, disables an understanding of multi-dimensional Muslim identities with various ethnic-cultural and religious backgrounds. The unfamiliarity with Islamic culture and Muslims gives an image of an "unknown culture" to most South Koreans. Muslims are viewed as though they are all from one place and share the same language, clothing, food, and culture.

Muslim foodways share a common dietary practice but the influences of different ethnic, national, cultural, and historical backgrounds of Muslims

cannot be generalized into a "one bloc entity" located in a specific territory. This would be similar to thinking that Indian food, Chinese food, South Korean food, Japanese food, and Thai food, among others, are the very same Asian food due to the influence of a shared Buddhist religious dietary tradition. In the same way, vegetarian foodways are relatively universal, yet we cannot ignore influences of different local contexts and cultural distinctions.

On the other hand, the stereotyping of "eating halal food" is linked to perceptions of Muslim identities. This is supported by misrepresentations of Muslim images on the South Korean TV, such as migrant workers, marriage migrants, dark skin tones, and economically inferior images. These stereotyped images contribute to a fear of Muslims, multicultural families, and their cultural influences. Another perception is that Muslims are untrustworthy and troublemakers made publicly known through the protests against refugees in South Korea.

Likewise, strong opposition by conservative Christians was shown towards the Iksan Halal Food Complex (2015) before the refugee crisis. A reason for the backlash surrounding the food complex was the linkage of halal food and the idea of supporting terrorists in the Islamization of South Korea. Refering to a study by Paul Thomas and Amina Selimovic, similar connections were made between halal food and Islamization in Norwegian national online newspapers. They argue that Halal food was reflected through a discourse of crime and other dubious frames linked to the topoi of Islamophobia.[76] According to the interviews, to some South Koreans, halal food has a more "negative" image. Interviewees share the fear of some South Koreans, that halal food consumption in Korea would support *Isŭllam-kwŏn* 이슬람권 people and Islamization.

On the other side, some of the South Korean interviewees argue that this is a groundless fear based on negative perceptions of Muslims. As many South Koreans enjoy travelling to Muslim majority countries such as Indonesia, Malaysia, or Turkey, they have a distinctive understanding in terms of halal food and restaurants in South Korea, and travel destinations. The halal food discourse in a non-Muslim country changes to traditional local food that is enjoyed during travel in Muslim majority countries.

In a non-Muslim country, Muslim consumers are challenged by halal food accessibility that is less of a problem in their homeland because everything is halal or certified. Nevertheless, there is a perception that Muslim immigrants are economically inferior to them and cannot afford halal food, considering its meat products. It is more a challenge of accessibility and lack of options rather than affordability. Food is culture embodying tradition and nostalgia, with a rhetorical repertoire of aesthetics, identity, and uniqueness. Halal food is not only a matter

of certain foods being allowed, but rather a broader access to hygienic, healthy, and/or ethically produced products and cultural tastes.

Finally, perceptions formed by halal business and tourism contribute to stereotyping of halal food and "eating halal foodways" in contrasting ways. The South Korean authorities show an interest in entering the halal market through exports and Muslim friendly tourism. Well-known South Korean major companies are exporting halal K-Food, made in South Korea, introduced through K-Fairs. Some of the major export countries are Indonesia, Malaysia, and the UAE. In terms of a Muslim friendly Korea, KTO's official website has a section with explanations separated into Muslim dietary concerns and Middle Eastern food. The Muslim minority population in South Korea consists mostly of immigrants from Central Asia, West Asia, or Southeast Asia. Indonesian and Malaysian tourists to South Korea are a majority in comparison to Muslims from Middle Eastern countries. The categorization of the Muslim diet and Middle Eastern food are not identical, as the Muslim diet is a broader concept compared to a certain regional-cultural food.

Depending on interview results, the Muslim friendly Korea approach gives a feeling of the inclusion of Muslim travelers but not Muslim minorities in general. Muslim interviewees see the Muslim friendly Korea project as a positive progress but do not see themselves as being a part of it. On the KTO website, E-books provide information about food, accommodation, social environment, and other facilities for Muslim travelers. Moreover, a classification of halal restaurants is made to make dining more convenient for Muslim travelers. An interesting point is that most of the facilities are located around touristic sites. I noticed that South Korean interviewees assume that Muslim friendly Korea would offer a chance to Muslim travelers to experience South Korean culture fully by eating halal K-food. However, they are indifferent to halal K-food and feel that it targets tourists visiting South Korea. Even so, they have a positive perception of halal food and visiting a halal restaurant in terms of halal K-food, business, and tourism. This leads to a stereotyping of halal food and "eating halal food" to be something for foreigners, outsiders, or businesses rather than local people. Nevertheless, halal food and Muslim foodways share a spirit of community in ethical and moral social health, and they embody a heritage from the Muslim world with various cultural tastes and practices that embraces its wider populations.

Conclusion

This study has tried to give insights on South Korean perceptions of halal food and "eating halal food," and how it leads to stereotyping in the South Korean context. The contradictory representations and portrayals of Islam, Islamic culture, and

Muslim identities that form conflicting opinions among South Koreans are learned behaviors rather than experiences. With this, South Koreans gain positive and negative perceptions through which they evaluate Islam, Islamic culture, and Muslims. Considering that people make judgements based upon what they eat, mainstream South Koreans not only judge halal food as Islamic food but also judge it through the Muslim images represented in the media. It is unjustified to degrade it to the food of a homogenized religious bloc entity, as well as specific commodities to be consumed by a target group of people. Halal food is firstly only food and additionally everyday life food prepared according to Islamic dietary needs that covers ethical and moral social health. In terms of Muslim foodways, it symbolizes an intersection of food and a cultural-religious identity both for "individual Muslims" and more widely for the wider Muslim world.

Notes

1. PhD Candidate, Cultural Anthropology Department at Hanyang University, E-mail: hnuryasar@hanyang.ac.kr
2. Robin Fox. *Food and Eating: An Anthropological Perspective* (SIRC: Social Issues Research Centre, 2014).
3. Brown Rachel, "'Tell Me What You Eat and I'll Tell You What You Are' The Literal Consumption of Identity for North African Muslims in Paris (France)". In *Everyday Life Practices of Muslims in Europe* edited by Erkan Toguslu (Leuven: Leuven University Press, 2015), pp. 41–56.
4. Foodways are the eating habits and culinary practices of a people, region, or historical period Merriam-Webster.com Dictionary, s.v. "foodways,", accessed 08/05/2019, https://www.merriam-webster.com/dictionary/foodways. Pamela Goyan Kittler and Kathryn P. Sucher explain the term foodways (also called food culture or foodways) to the ways in which humans use food, including everything the selection, choosing, and distribution to who prepares it, serves it and eats it. Refer to *Food and culture* (5th ed.) (Belmont, CA: Wadsworth, 2007), p. 2.
5. Gwen E. Chapman and Brenda L. Beagan,"Food Practices and Transnational Identities", *Food, Culture & Society* 16.3 (2015): 367–386.
6. Lippmann, Walter. *Public Opinion* (New York, NY: Hartcourt, Brace and Company, 1922).
7. Lippmann, *Public Opinion*, pp. 25–29.
8. Edward W. Said, *Orientalism* (London: Penguin Books, 2003).
9. John F. Dovidio et al., "Prejudice, Stereotyping, and Discrimination: Theoretical and Empirical Overview", In *The SAGE Handbook of Prejudice, Stereotyping and Discrimination* (London: SAGE Publications Ltd, 2010) 3–28.
10. Roberta Giovine. "Foodways and the Food-Mediated Identity of Muslim Migrants in Northern Italy", *mediAzioni*, 22 (2017): 1–26.
11. Umma [أمة], is an Arabic word meaning community, and refers to the world-wide Muslim community.
12. Peter Morey. "Introduction: Muslims, Trust, and Multiculturalism", ed. Amina Yaqin, Peter Morey, and Asmaa Soliman, 1 ed., Muslims, Trust, and Multiculturalism New Directions (London: Palgrave Macmillan, 2018), pp. 1–23.

13. See: Doyŏng Song. "Kungnae musŭllim ijuja-dŭl ŭi saenghwal yŏngyŏk kwa ch'oguk-chŏk sŏnggyŏk—Sŏul It'aewŏn ch'urip musŭllim ŭi sarye" *Han'guk isŭllam hakhoe nonch'ong* 2.2 (2014): 113–153; Jŏngguk An. "Han'guk iju tongnam asia musŭllim ŭi hyŏnhwang kwa sahoejŏk yŏn'gyŏlmang," *Han'guk chungdong hakhoe nonch'ong* 29.1 (2008): 67–91; Ali Asma and Jong In Lee. "Factors Influencing the Purchase Intention to Consume Halal Certified Food in Korea: Evidence from International Pakistani Muslims in South Korea," *Han'guk-kukchenongŏpkaebarhakhoeji*, 31.4 (2019): 322–334; Hee Soo Lee. "A Survey Report on Halal Food Consumption among Muslim Students and Housewives in Korea", *Institute of Asian Muslim Studies* (February 28, 2017): 1–107; Hee-Soo Lee and Young Joo Joh. "A Survey of Muslim Immigrants in Korea-Focussed on Adaptation to South Korean Lifestyle and Religious Observation", *han'gukchungdong hakhoenonch'ong* 33.1 (2012): 133–163; Yun-Sil Kim. "Hallarŭi kaenyŏmgwa hallal injŭng yogŏn," *Kukche munhway ŏn'gu* 9.1 (2016): 65–87; Ch'ae, Kyŏng Yŏn and Hŭi Yŏl Lee. "Panghan isŭllam kwan'gwang sijang chŭngjin ŭl wihan hallal t'uŏrijŭm toip pangan e kwanhan yŏn'gu," *Han'guk oesik sanŏp hakhoe* 11.2 (2015): 95–103; Hyun-ho Lee et al. "An Intelligent Recommendation Service System for Offering Halal Food (IRSH) Based on Dynamic Profiles," *Han'gungmŏlt'imidiŏhakhoenonmunji* 22.2 (February 28, 2019): 260–70.
14. See: Ch'ang Hyŏn Lee et al. "Kungnae kŏju oegugin musŭllim ŭi hansik e taehan insik kwa sŏnhodo yŏn'gu—Chŏnbuk Chŏnju-si wa Kyŏnggi Kimp'o-si rŭl chungsim ŭro," *Han'guk siksaenghwal munhwa hakhoeji* 32.4 (August 30, 2017): 275–286; Gyŏng Hŭi Hong and Hyŏnsuk Lee. "Pusan chiyŏk oegugin yuhaksaeng ŭi sik-sŭpkwan mit Han'guk sik-saenghwal chŏgŭng silt'ae yŏn'gu," *Han'guk sik-saenghwal munhwa hakhoeji* 33.2 (2018): 112–124.
15. All of them are Muslims with different Madzhab background and practices; such like Sunni sects Hanefi, Shafi and Shia sect Zaidis (Yemenian). Zaidis is a sect of Shia that is the nearest to Ahl al-Sunnah; refer to Britannica, T. Editors of Encyclopaedia. "Zaydiyyah." *Encyclopedia Britannica*, March 22, 2019. https://www.britannica.com/topic/Zaydiyyah. The interviewee explained that her practices similar to the Sunni and there is not much difference (Interview, 08.08.2020).
16. K'i Yŏn K'oo. "Islamophobia and the Politics of Representation of Islam in Korea," *Journal of Korean Religions* 9.1 (April 2018): 159–192.
17. Jŏngguk An. "Han'guk isŭllam ŭi hyŏnhwang kwa chongp'a punhwa: sia musŭllim ŭl chungsim ŭro," *Inmun kwahak yŏn'gu nonch'ong* 36.3 (2015): 155–181; Dong-Jin Jang and Ch'oe Wŏnjae. "Muslims in Korea: The Dilemma of Inclusion" *Korea Journal* 52.2 (2012): 160–187.
18. As Hyun-Gwi Park notes, South Korean multiculturalism (tamunhwa) is a cultivation of multicultures based on families, rather than through individuals or ethnic communities such like in the cases of Western societies; Hyun-Gwi Park. "The 'Multicultural Family' and the Politics of Selective Inclusion in South Korea," Papers of the British Association for Korean Studies 15 (2013), p. 6.
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