

Globalization: Explaining the dynamics and challenges of the *ḥalāl* food surge

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Abstract: Western dietary regulations are not in conformity with Islamic prescriptions for eatable meat (*ḥalāl* meat). This has led to the mushrooming of privately-driven *ḥalāl* regimes in many countries. This paper examines the increasing interest in *ḥalāl* food, analyses the factors behind this surge, its complexities, dynamics, progress and challenges. It investigates the interrelatedness of globalization, religious identity and multiculturalism in the context of *ḥalāl*, and the growing expression of Islamic cultural identity in a globalized world. A survey and analysis of thirty-six *ḥalāl* certification agencies in 18 countries, where foods are exported to Muslim countries, show that *ḥalāl* certification is largely championed by private and non-governmental bodies that seek to entrench Islamic food codes in the national laws. The paper identifies some countries that have institutionalized *ḥalāl* certification regimes for all food imports and exports.

Key words: globalization, *ḥalāl*, religion, identity, multiculturalism, transmigration, ritual slaughter

Abstrak: Peraturan diet Barat mengenai makanan daging tidak memenuhi syarat Islam yang mana daging harus halal. Hal ini telah menyebabkan penambahan rejim *ḥalāl* swasta di kebanyakan negara. Kertas kerja ini mengkaji penambahan makanan *ḥalāl*, menganalisis factor-faktor disebalik penambahan ini, kerumitan, dinamik, kemajuan dan cabaran-cabarannya. Ia meneliti hubungkait antara globalisasi, identiti keagamaan dan kepelbagaian budaya dalam konteks *ḥalāl*, dan penambahan ekspresi identiti

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budaya Islam dalam dunia globalisasi. Tinjauan dan analisis ke atas 36 lembaga pensijilan halal di 18 buah negara, yang mengeksport makanan kepada negara-negara Islam, menunjukkan bahawa pensijilan halal ini kebanyakannya dipelopori oleh pihak swasta dan badan bukan kerajaan yang bertujuan memperkenalkan kod makanan Islam ke dalam undang-undang negara. Kertas kerja ini mengenalpasti beberapa negara yang telah melembagakan rejim pensijilan halal untuk semua makanan yang diimport dan eksport. Ia, walau bagaimanapun, menganjurkan bahawa trend yang berkembang di pasaran makanan halal ini menandakan satu pemuliharaan positif dan penghormatan ke atas nila-nilai budaya Islam dan pembangunan manusia.

Kata kunci: *globalisasi, halal, agama, identiti, kepelbagaian budaya, transmigrasi, amalan korban*

Muslims are enjoined to follow religious prescriptions in all facets of their lives. As Islam is a complete way of life, both the mundane and spiritual aspects of a Muslim's life are regulated by Islamic laws. In particular, Islam prescribes and forbids certain foods for the Muslims. However, these prescriptions are not included in the Western dietary practice which tends to rely on scientific prescriptions for nutritional and hygienic requirements. This imposes certain challenges on Muslims who migrate to Western countries and other secular societies. These diasporic Muslim populations do not encounter such challenges in their traditional societies, where abattoirs that follow Islamic regulations operate.

In Arabic, *halal* simply means permissible or lawful. In the context of this paper, it refers to food permissible under Muslim dietary laws, such as meat from animals slaughtered in the correct ritual fashion as well as additives and preservatives from animal products. In addition to *halal*, there are a number of other Islamic legal words covering food: *haram* means 'prohibited,'; *mashbuh* means suspect or questionable; *mubah* refers to food that is allowable/permissible; *makruh* covers products that are disliked. *Haram* foods, according to the Qur'an (2:173), include:

...the *maytah* (dead animals), and blood, and the flesh of swine, and that which is slaughtered as a sacrifice for other than Allah (or has been slaughtered for idols, on which Allah's Name has not been mentioned while slaughtering).

Thus, Islam prohibits meat from an animal which has not been properly handled and slaughtered. Particularly, the flesh of the pigs is declared *ḥarām* because it is *rijs*, an “abomination”. In the same vein, eating of carrion, consuming blood and slaughtering animals by dedicating to deities other than the only God are declared *ḥarām* (Qur’ān, 2:172-3; 5:3). Rippins (2005) asserts that the law which the Qur’ān proclaims “is reminiscent of the Jewish law in matters such as its continuation of the prohibition of pork and the institution of ritual slaughter (e.g. Qur’ān, 2:173, 5:1-3), [and] some purity regulations....” (p.29).

Prophet Muhammad (SAW) also enjoined Muslims to follow certain guidelines when slaughtering animals. He said, “Verily Allah has prescribed proficiency in all things. Thus, if you kill, kill well; and if you perform *dhabīḥah* (slaughtering), perform it well. Let each one of you sharpen his blade and let him spare suffering to the animals he slays” (Muslim, 11: 4810). Generally speaking, the *ḥalāl* product labelling regulation, which nowadays has evolved into a regime, is designed to institute standards for foods and goods in order to safeguard Islamic cultural and religious prescriptions. It also seeks to scrutinize all consumer products regarding the condition under which they are produced to ensure their conformity with *ḥalāl* guidelines.

This paper focuses on the *ḥalāl* regime with particular emphasis on the surge in *ḥalāl* food products in relation to religious identity, transmigration, ethico-cultural practices and multiculturalism, which are consequences of globalization and the internationalization of cultural norms and practices. After a brief discussion on globalization, this paper seeks to explain the factors, dynamics, progress and challenges of the institutionalization of *ḥalāl* food labelling. The thrust of the paper is that factors such as the spread of Muslim diasporic communities, the persistent change in the cultural and religious landscape of world politics, and the sustained pattern of world migration from developing to the developed countries are responsible for the increased visibility of Islamic dietary practices in Western societies. It also analyses the global *ḥalāl* food market, its size and potential, and the countries that have capitalized on the *ḥalāl* food market, by juxtaposing them with Muslim-majority countries.

Globalization and *ḥalāl*

Globalization connotes, “processes whereby social relations acquire relatively placeless, distanceless and borderless qualities” (Scholte, 1996, p.15). It is often used interchangeably with world society, interdependence, centralizing tendencies, world system, globalism, universalism, internationalization and globality—all terms depicting the crumbling of age-long territoriality and interstate barriers (Rosenau, 2006, p.83). Broadly speaking, globalization entails the contraction of geographical entities and bringing together of disparate distances in a global “village” through the instrumentalities of information and telecommunication technology, and improved transportation modes. Globalization also covers the entire gamut of stateless and uncoordinated developments that are transnational in scope and impact even with diminishing respect for national borders (Lynch, 2006). These phenomena are diffused through a three-pronged process of marketization, information and communication technologies and labour migration. Scholte (2000) exposes four “redundant” concepts of globalization: understanding it as internationalization, liberalization, universalization or westernization. He defines globalization as “deterritorialization or...growth of supraterritorial relations between the people” (p.46). Scholte avers that “global conditions cannot be understood in terms of territoriality alone; they also reside in the world as a single place, that is, in a *transworld* space” (p.48). Among all the trends associated with globalization, the globalization of production has been identified as the most historically unprecedented. This globalization of production in turn exerts pressure on marketization and exchange of goods and services, which relates to how much is exchanged and what is for sale.

Kirshner (2006), however, cautions against overstating the consequences of globalization. He asserts that in spite of globalization pressures, there is room for cost-benefit calculus of various policy choices. Rosenau (2006) argues that the globalization process effuses its impact alongside the localizing process in all aspects of human activities including cultural, social, economic and political spheres. He conceptualizes globalization as “not as referring to developments and orientations that are global in scope, but rather as denoting expansivity, which may or may not eventuate in global phenomena”

(p.26). Notwithstanding Kirshner's caution, the pervasive impact of globalization and international migration processes call into question the cultural basis of a state's identity as multiculturalism is now the vogue. States are taking up more liberal and expansive national identities. In this context, the *ḥalāl* surge can be explained by the preference of migrants to uphold their cultural and religious identities in the face of globalizing tendencies of assimilation in the host societies, a phenomenon that Rosenau describes as "localization."

***Ḥalāl* food production and modernization**

In spite of the resurgence and reawakening of religious identity, the major meat-supplying countries to the Muslim world have varying legislations regarding ritual slaughter. These legislations are not fully in conformity with the rules laid down in the Qur'an and the Sunnah. While trying to ensure food hygiene and safety, good working conditions and animal welfare, the Council of Europe under its European Convention for the Protection of Animals for Slaughter, exempts ritual slaughter from the mandatory stunning requirement when animals are being slaughtered for religious purposes (EU Directive 93/119/EC of 22 December 1993).

Sweden, Norway, Iceland and Switzerland and six Austrian regions do not permit exception for ritual slaughter. France, the United Kingdom, Belgium, Denmark, Italy, Ireland, the Netherlands, Portugal and Spain allow dispensatory status. However, Spain does not allow dispensatory status for cattle and ritual slaughter still faces serious opposition in Germany, the United Kingdom, the Netherlands and Denmark. Bergeaud-Blackler (2007) explains that even in those countries where ritual slaughter is outlawed, "pre-stunning had been introduced primarily in the interest of safety, that is, to protect the slaughterer from injury by any unpredictable spasms of the dying animal and only secondarily to reduce its suffering" (p.966).

In accordance with the Humane Methods of Slaughter Act of 1978 in Britain, all livestock are made insensible before they are killed. Hogs are often immobilized painlessly through gassing. For cattle and sheep, a captive bolt, a type of gun designed for stunning, is generally used although the permissibility or otherwise of stunning in the slaughtering of animals remains controversial in *ḥalāl*

discourse (Bergeaud-Blackler, 2007). In 2003, air-injection stunning, in which air is blasted into the animal's skull to render it unconscious, was linked to bovine spongiform encephalopathy (BSE), a fatal infectious disease that can be passed to humans in a form of Creutzfeldt-Jakob disease, thereby exposing the risk of stunning. It is noteworthy that the Muslim Council of Britain (MCB) draft unequivocally outlaws stunning. MCB insists that all lawful land animals should be slaughtered in line with the requirements of the Islamic law; the animal should be alive at the time of slaughtering and it must not be stunned, anaesthetized or made wholly or partially insensible before slaughter and it must be fully conscious during slaughter.

Some scholars, however, accept stunning provided the animal remains alive before being slaughtered. However, the permissibility or otherwise of stunning in Islamic ritual slaughter continues to generate disparate views among Muslim scholars. Bergeaud-Blackler (2007) asserts that West Germany, in 1982, secured from Shaykh Muhammad al-Najjār, from al-Azhar University in Cairo, a *fatwā* which ruled that stunning was not illicit and, therefore, the animal meat was *ḥalāl* unless it causes the death of an animal directly. Bergeaud-Blackler (2007) states further that 20 years later, in 2002, the German constitutional court granted authorization to slaughter according to Islamic rites to a Muslim butcher ostensibly due to pressures from Muslim migrants.

Riaz and Chaudry (2004) advise that animals should be slaughtered without stunning. However, apparently realizing the need to meet the legal requirements for animal slaughter regulations in some Western countries, the authors endorsed "non-lethal methods of stunning" provided the animal was alive at the time of slaying and that the animal died of bleeding instead of a blow or electrocutions. The authors listed captive bolts, stunning, electric stunning, mushroom-shaped hammer stunners, and carbon-dioxide stunning or gassing as variants prevalent in Western societies but observed that gassing is equivalent to chemical strangulation and hence is unequivocally prohibited in Islam. Some scholars allow the use of low voltage stunning for *ḥalāl* slaughtering because low-voltage stunning does not kill. They, however, cautioned against the use of higher voltage for turkeys and broilers suggesting that

each plant establish its own working procedures depending on the size and age of the birds to ensure that the birds do not die of electrocution (Riaz & Chaudry, 2004, pp.61-62).

How do countries get around this issue and maintain a balance between ritual slaughter and the vocal animal rights activists who insist on methods clearly opposite to Islamic prescriptions? The outlook is somewhat disparate even in EU countries, many of which supply meat products to Islamic countries. Bergeaud-Blackler (2007) says Italy and Spain have adopted the European Convention on the Protection of Animals at Slaughter and incorporated Directive 93/119/CE of the European Community into their regulations. Greece, Luxembourg, Switzerland and Norway continue to require pre-stunning while Sweden prohibits exemption as it subsidizes *halāl* meat imports from Denmark. On the other hand, Finland and some Austrian regions use post-stunning instead of pre-stunning. In spite of these disparate and clearly contentious national regulations, the surge in *halāl* meat demand continues and this compels an explanation of the factors that propel the burgeoning of the *halāl* market.

Factors influencing the *halāl* surge

There are many factors that contribute to the increase in *halāl* food exports over the years (Chawk 2001, cited in Halal Economy, 2009). These include the increasing demand for *halāl* imports from Muslim-majority countries, coupled with rising personal incomes and population growth; the growing number of Muslims in Western countries and the stimulatory effect of this growth on *halāl* exports; and the development of *halāl* monitoring agencies in countries which facilitate the export of *halāl* foods. Other factors are the development of structures, rules, processes and procedures by some of the importing countries and their cooperation with exporting countries' government control agencies and with local Islamic organizations to ensure the integrity of *halāl* foods, as well as the increasing awareness by food exporters of the immense potential of the *halāl* export market and their desire to maximize their opportunities in this market. In general, the *halāl* food surge is related to factors such as transmigration, multiculturalism, increased manifestation of religious and cultural identity, globalization of production, growth

of the Muslim population, international norm diffusion as well as the pervasive impact of tourism and its attendant “commodification of culture” on local economies. These factors are explained below.

Transmigration

The International Organization for Migration notes in a report that “the rising tide of people crossing frontiers is among the most reliable indicators of the intensity of globalization” (IOM, 2003, p.4). The report identifies declining transportation costs and the growing ease of travelling, the widening economic inequality among states, the opening of hitherto closed borders to migrants, insidious refugee-generating internal conflicts and sectarian violence, unfavourable state policies as well as sophistication in the human smuggling networks as factors promoting migration worldwide.

Adamson (2006) observes that transmigration has moved to the top of international discourses and more importantly, she situates migration in the context of the globalization process as both its causes and its effects. She asserts that transnational migration remains a crucial process in the diffusion of cultural patterns across the world. Tharoor (1999) reckons that the movement of people has been so extensive that around five percent of the people alive today are estimated to be living in a country other than where they were born (Rosenau, 2006). A large Muslim community—estimated at 15 million—of mostly Maghrebians, Turks, ex-Yugoslavians, Pakistanis, Indonesians and Sub-Saharan Africans began to arrive in Europe since the 1970s, resulting in national laws being relaxed to accommodate Islamic ritual slaughter. Relative ease of travel, advanced communication technologies and the ubiquitous global media infrastructure afford the migrant the opportunity to keep contact with the homeland and exchange cultural ties and obligations, also ensuring the sustenance of multiculturalism in the diaspora settings, and hence raising the demand for *ḥalāl* food.

Salience of religious identity

Another factor related to *ḥalāl* food surge is the salience of religious identity in spite of the “Westernization” of values through globalization. Ripplin (2005) insists that religion is about identity, destiny, shared values and meanings. In this vein, eating *ḥalāl* food,

for example, is obligatory for every Muslim. Observance of religious cultural practices is growing as a corollary of the rising importance of religious beliefs and phenomenal human migration from the South to the North. This is characterized by cultural and religious pluralism on the international plane. More importantly, most of the consumer goods and foods ordinarily covered by the Islamic ethical rules are produced by the Judeo-Christian Western societies located in the developed countries. As a consequence of the resurgence and reawakening of religious identity, the size of the *halāl* meat market has also grown steadily over the last 15 years, hitting an all-time high of US\$150 billion in 2006 (Bergeaud-Blackler, 2007).

Stodolska and Livengood (2006) concluded from their study that incentives to preserve traditions such as dress, diet, and leisure styles among Muslim minorities are strong enough to counteract pressure from the out-group because these customs have strong spiritual underpinnings in addition to cultural roots. In addition, the authors posit that assimilation among ethno-religious minorities is slower than among ethnic groups defined by their national origin. Similarly, as Sekhon and Szmigin (2005) discovered, even second-generation immigrants are still integrating into the dominant culture rather than becoming part of it because they have the desire to stay loyal to the older generation, the home country, and even Eastern values. Rippin (2005) notes that rituals and their associated buildings, clothes and identities “provide the emblems of a religion and become, for the members of the religion themselves, modes for the expression of their identity” (p.103). It has been estimated that 75 percent of Muslims in the United States follow their religious dietary laws (Hussaini, 1993), meaning that even after having emigrated to one of the most advanced countries of the world, most Muslims still eat *halāl* food. Another study revealed that 84 percent of Muslims in France always eat *halāl* meat (Bergeaud-Blackler & Bonne, 2007). *Halāl* meat regulation, which is the most popular aspect of the Islamic ethical food discourse, is part of the socio-cultural and, in some cases, national core values diffused by forces of globalization across borders.

As articulated by Kuran (2004), various faiths—the Islamic faith included—share the common tendency to establish economic prescriptions on normative religious sources which guide the faithful.

He argues further that economic activities are basically inseparable from other realms of human activity. Nations and non-state actors are, therefore, saddled with the responsibility to ensure frictionless relations between state policies under the all-pervading globalization of world politics, trade and policies. Most religious or cultural groups have refused to be subsumed under the influence of globalization (Geertz, 1968).

In recognition of the increasing migration of culturally distinct ethnic groups to various parts of the world, the role of religion and religious cultural practices in shaping international relations has begun to engage the attention of scholars from diverse fields (Marty & Appleby, 2004; Norris & Inglehart, 2004) even though these works offer divergent opinions on the status and relevance of religion in modern human life. As argued by Thomas (2005, p.26):

The global resurgence of religion is the growing salience and pervasiveness of religion, that is, the increasing importance of religious beliefs, practices, and discourses in personal and public life, and the growing role of religious or religiously-related individuals, non-state groups, political parties, and communities, and organizations in domestic politics, and this is occurring in ways that have significant implications for international politics.

Many government and policy advisers are aware of the pervasive trend of resurgence in religion in the international arena. As observed by Albright (2006), religion nowadays deeply affects the way in which political issues are viewed and framed, and it cannot and should not be kept out of foreign policy. This view is also echoed by Goldewijk (2007) who says “the relation between religion and international affairs seems to have become one of the remarkably most creative areas in the public domain, in international policy orientation and academic exchange” (p.85).

Contrary to the orthodox theory that sees an upsurge in secularization and decline in the influence of religion, Norris and Inglehart (2004) assert that the role of religion in the modern age has not withered when compared to what it was several decades ago. Secularization, in general, connotes a systematic erosion of religious practices, values and beliefs. Norris and Inglehart argue that religiosity is increasing in all societies due to pervasive

“existential threats” that tend to exacerbate existential insecurity, although this trend is more pronounced among the poor populations of the world. In other words, rather than see a decline of religiosity through secularization, the world is witnessing its resurgence. Berger (1999, p.2), who promoted the secularization theory, repudiated his earlier stand of living in a secularised world arguing instead that the world is as furiously religious as it ever was. This might have led Stark and Finke (2004, p.4) to conclude that the secularization doctrine has failed and subsequently suffered a natural death.

As the precursors of secularization theory seem to jettison the idea, Norris and Inglehart (2004) advocate upholding the classical version of the theory, albeit with little modifications through developing an “alternative theory of secularization” based on the relation between religion and the conditions of existential security. Norris and Inglehart contend that people of virtually all advanced industrial societies have been moving toward more secular orientations during the past 50 years, although the world as a whole now has more people with traditional religious views than ever before—and they constitute a growing proportion of the world’s population. They argue that human prosperity and economic development shape religious identity and affiliation, and determine their pattern of religious practices and that the more affluent people become, the less they have recourse to religion. Once people “escape the Hobbesian condition where life is nasty, brutish, and short, they often become more secular in their concerns” (p.69). This assertion does not explain why Muslims in affluent countries seek *ḥalāl* foods.

Globalization of production

A visible corollary of globalization is the de-territorialization of production by multinational corporations (MNCs) and their numerous subsidiaries spread all over the world. As observed by Bergeaud-Blackler (2007), “in all industrialised countries, the internationalisation of the market in food intended for religious consumption has been ongoing for at least two decades, in particular because of the development of the *ḥalāl* market” (p.969). Generally, the national laws regarding ritual slaughter has also continued to favour the burgeoning of the market for religious food in Western Europe as well as North America through the development of global

food exchange. As a result, consumer information is now regarded as “essential” by all despite the fact that they do not share the same interests. Thus, labelling has been accepted by consumer groups, environmentalists, animal rights activists and those that promote fair trade “to express their disapproval by actions, whether boycott or destruction” (Bergeaud-Blackler, 2007, p.973).

Thus, McDonalds, Nestle, KFC, among other food outlets with global reach and production plants, have consistently striven to meet the local demands and international diversity of their consumers through building of separate lines for *halāl* and non-*halāl* products in order to attract their customers. Some estimates that Nestle is the biggest food manufacturer in the *halāl* sector with more than US\$3bil (RM10.8bil) in annual sales in Islamic countries (Razak, 2009). Bergeaud-Blackler (2007) asserts that the EU must act to reconcile the *halāl* industry with national and regional laws. If the Union and other regional groupings are desirous of free flow of goods, they should bring the policy from the private to the public realm, because religious authorities cannot exert any influence without public policy authority and this authority can only be invoked through consumer protection and human rights laws.

Adamson (2006) offers a more suitable explanation for the upsurge of Muslims in Western countries by identifying globalization and the improved accessibility for migration as reasons. She says (p.3) that:

The globalization of trade, finance, and production, and the general trend towards greater global economic integration—all contribute to the emergence of new and more mobile pools of labour... that provide new avenues and opportunities for migration. These economic processes are reinforced by cheaper and more accessible forms of transportation and communication technologies, as well as an emerging global infrastructure of services, that link national economies and undergird the formation of international migration networks.

The sustained diffusion of international norms such as human rights and human security and multiculturalism as well as “economic imperatives resulting from the changing global structure of production” combined to “delegitimize the use of ethnic and racial

criteria in the formulation of immigration policy” (Adamson, 2007, pp.10-11).

Growth of Muslim population

There is an asymmetric demographic shift in population between the developed countries, called the North, and the developing world, the South. Jenkins (2002) says the North accounted for 32 percent of total world population in 1900 but this region has seen a constant population decline to 29 percent in 1970, down to 18 percent in 2000. It is projected that the decline will further dip to between 10 and 12 percent in 2050. Thomas (2006) argues that increased migrant communities and the persistent spread of Muslim diasporic communities have changed the cultural and religious landscape of the world.

The United Nations, in its centennial population outlook (1950-2050), projects that India’s population will grow by 1.8 billion people, followed by China with 962 million. Significantly, the third largest population growth will be Pakistan, with an increase of 318 million people. The next seven countries with the highest population growth are: Nigeria (+306 million); Indonesia (+239 million); Ethiopia (+194 million); the United States of America (+190 million); Brazil (+189 million); Bangladesh (+176 million) and Iran (+153 million), all of which have large Muslim populations, except USA and Brazil (Halal Economy, 2009). Generally, Muslim population growth is on the ascendancy and this trend validates the assumption that the *ḥalāl* food market will continue to grow in size if the other factors analyzed above remain supportive. Some estimates say that there are approximately 1.8 billion Muslims who are potential consumers of *ḥalāl* foods worldwide. As such, the *ḥalāl* food market might soon become the largest ethical food market in the world. Assuming the growth rate of the Muslim population currently at 2.9 percent annually is sustained, the Muslim population is then expected to be 30 percent of the total world population by 2025 (Chawk, 2001, cited in Halal Economy, 2009).

Ḥalāl norm diffusion

Relying on Van Waarden’s (1992) typology of regulatory rules, it is argued that internationalization of *ḥalāl* regulations is already at the

pragmatic stage, though informal and flexible, in both its policy formulation and implementation aspects. However, the importance of Islamic ritual slaughter and ethical foods cannot be overemphasized. International norm is a persuasive force in galvanizing change through “assimilative reform strategies”; Keck and Sikkink (1998) posit that transnational organizations are often responsible for the expression of international norms. They argue that non-state actors and other actors exert subtle influence and set agendas for norm diffusion in international relations. “Networks generate attention to new issues and help set agendas when they provoke media attention...this stage of influence may require a modification of the value ‘context’ in which policy debates take place” (p.98).

Finnemore and Sikkink (1998) identify three stages of the life cycle of international norms which aid multiculturalism: norm emergence, norm cascade and norm internalization. The norm emergence stage is characterized by persuasion by norm entrepreneurs who try to convince other states to embrace the new norms, by calling attention to issues or by constructing “language that names, interprets and dramatizes them”. The norm entrepreneurs also try to establish “frames...that resonate with broader public understandings and are adopted as new ways of talking about and understanding issues” (p.897). Baylis, Smith and Owens (2008) assert that “norm entrepreneurs need a launching pad to promote their norms, and they will frequently work from non-governmental organizations and with international organizations and states” (p.170). Pioneer *halāl* countries such as Malaysia, Singapore, and Brunei, can be categorized as the norm entrepreneurs and their launching pad is the World Halal Forum (WHF), which is widely supported by the Organization of the Islamic Conference (OIC). More importantly, Finnemore and Sikkink (1998) identify institutionalization in specific sets of international rules and organizations after norm entrepreneurs have convinced many states to become norm leaders and adopt new norms, as a crucial requirement for a norm to mature and move to the next evolutionary stage or what is termed “a critical threshold or tipping point” (p.901).

This second stage, according to Finnemore and Sikkink (1998), involves the norm leaders trying to socialize other states to accept

the norm. At this stage, the norm “cascades” through state leaders under pressure for conformity with a need to enhance international legitimation, and quest for self-esteem. In the third stage, called norm internalization, norms are taken-for-granted and are no longer subjected to public debate and thus are automatically honoured. International law and norms operate through several levels of actors and factors, which comprise the international system, the state, individuals, and groups that make up the state as they operate interactively and not exclusively.

In a systemic environment, all relevant parts are engaged in continuous interaction whereby systemic norms are assimilated. International *halāl* labelling policy is being implemented through assimilative means. Assimilative techniques include holding conferences, working with grassroots agencies, and discussing legislative and political changes with governments. This may be achieved through discourse with nation-states or by working with local organizations to implement the value in question. Fundamentally, assimilative strategies seek to persuade nation-states to adopt the dominant cultural model, through an informal, ad hoc incorporation of international legal principles in judicial, legislative, and non-governmental activities of a country. Though this may be slow, many nations are already accepting the imperatives of instituting *halāl* regimes in their countries.

The world *halāl* market

The global *halāl* food market is worth \$632 billion. Although the World Halal Forum (WHF) says the European *halāl* food market is worth \$67 billion in 2009, the United States Department of Agriculture Foreign Agricultural Services (USDA) estimates a European *halāl* food market valued at 15 billion Euro in 2006 (WHF, 2009; USDA, 2006). Based on research by the WHF, quoted in TIME Magazine (May 2009), the total global *halāl* market (food, non-food products and services) is estimated at between US\$1.2 trillion and US\$ 2 trillion (Halal Economy, 2009). At the centre of these dazzling financial figures is the purchasing power of 1.8 billion Muslims worldwide, out of which an estimated 50 million, spurred by international migration, live in Europe, indicating an increase of over 140 percent in the last decade. No part of the world is spared

the concomitant *ḥalāl* surge. The Canadian International Markets Bureau (2006) reported an international *ḥalāl* food trade worth \$150 billion a year. Riaz (1999) also estimated that Muslims in the United States spent \$12 billion in 1999 out of which \$3 billion was for meat and poultry products.

Bonne, Vermeir and Verbeke (2009) argue that the potential *ḥalāl* market size as expressed in terms of the Muslim population in the European Union is substantial. They estimated between 12 and 18 million individuals before EU enlargement (BBC News, 2005; Buijs & Rath, 2006). Bonne, Vermier & Verbeke estimate that 75 per cent of migrant Muslims in the United States still follow their dietary rules, meaning that even after having emigrated, most Muslims still eat *ḥalāl* foods. For Muslims in Europe, who are mostly migrants too, they estimated a potential *ḥalāl* food market of about 10 million consumers (Bonne, Vermeir & Verbeke, 2009). This burgeoning market is propelled by factors explained above although the market is still at its formative stage. As the forces of globalization close in on the yet-to-be-opened national enclaves and more Muslims spread across the globe, the world *ḥalāl* market is expected to hit the trillion dollar mark with further acceleration of the globalization of production.

Countries that capitalize on *ḥalāl* food surge

In countries such as Malaysia, Indonesia, Brunei, and Singapore, *ḥalāl* food labelling is no longer debated as a political and consumer issue because the norm has either been institutionalized or the populace have been attuned to *ḥalāl* labelling, its demands and standards. Therefore, Muslim countries have a lot to learn from Malaysia, undoubtedly the pioneer and hub of *ḥalāl* food regulations, in terms of policies, institutions and research activities. Malaysia's *ḥalāl* standard agency, Jabatan Kemajuan Islam Malaysia (JAKIM) is at the forefront of regulating policies as they relate to *ḥalāl* foods and other Islamic issues. In Malaysia, for example, many formal and informal actors—public officials, the bureaucracy, the mass media and interest groups—are involved in public policy agenda setting. Specifically, the mass media helps to highlight to the public discussions deemed relevant to societal needs, leading to agenda setting by advocates interested in a particular issue of policy. These

organs can be explored by other countries to sensitize the public on the crucial importance of *ḥalāl* food in the lives of Muslims.

Malaysia leads the league of *ḥalāl* regulation countries as its *ḥalāl* certification and logo are accepted worldwide. Prime Minister Najib Tun Razak disclosed that Malaysia's MS1500: 2004 has been adopted as the international *ḥalāl* standard by the Codex Alimentarius Commission, thus becoming "the only reference on *ḥalāl* under the World Trade Organization (WTO), which provides guidelines on labelling of *ḥalāl* products" (Najib, 2009). In recognition of the country's giant stride in promoting *ḥalāl* labeling, JAKIM is now used by MNCs such as Nestle, Colgate Palmolive, Ajinomoto and Unilever. The Malaysian Prime Minister also asserted that the implementation of the *ḥalāl* industry master plan in 2008 and the creation of the Halal Development Corporation (HDC) were aimed to boost participation by local companies in the global market. Besides Malaysia, other *ḥalāl* authorities worldwide are listed in Table 1.

An analysis of the 36 *ḥalāl* authorities spread across 18 countries worldwide shows that only two are based in two Muslim-majority countries—Malaysia and Brunei (Table 1). The rest are private-sector organizations instituted in Muslim diasporic countries and this development further validates our argument that the *ḥalāl* food surge is aided by the forces of globalization.

Conclusion

Most of the *ḥalāl* food-importing countries are those with some of the highest per capita incomes and the fastest growing middle classes. A significant proportion of their food needs are imported, and they have the highest rates of population growth in the world. Notwithstanding these positive indicators, *ḥalāl* regulation presently faces imminent corruption in line with the "capture theory" that suggests that regulatory agencies may eventually become captives of the major industry players that they are supposed to regulate (Buchholz, 1992). A survey of 18 countries where *ḥalāl* certification is being practiced worldwide shows that regulation is mainly championed by non-state actors or interest groups desirous of entrenching Islamic cultural life. Businesses are, therefore, at liberty

to choose their preferred regulator, based on their whims and caprices. There is no transnational monitoring mechanism to track likely abuse of the *ḥalāl* logo. Besides, it is arguable how much influence these organizations can exert on food product companies without the requisite public policy backing.

Therefore, there is urgent need to coordinate and standardize *ḥalāl* certification akin to the International Standards Organization (ISO) model. Global *ḥalāl* platforms can be instituted to secure the active participation of national governments and guarantee the legitimacy of the scheme in view of increasing global human migration and the need to safeguard the cultural rights of over one-fifth of the world's population. It must be noted that the social and cultural rights are enshrined in articles 22 to 28 of the Universal Declaration of Human Rights (UDHR) and are also included in the International Covenant on Economic, Social and Cultural Rights (ICESCR).

Meat producers and Islamic agencies have yet to collaborate to develop a global network of *ḥalāl* food chains through international synergies, and monitoring of producers and suppliers to ascertain conformity with *ḥalāl* guidelines. Naturally, the forces calling for the abolition of ritual slaughter under the pretext of “humane treatment for animals” and “animal rights” are not relenting and these formidable lobbies that have grown in leaps and bounds must be assuaged and confronted with superior arguments to guarantee the right to *ḥalāl* foods for Muslims. All parties agree that labelling of food would provide information and choices to consumers irrespective of the food sources and this opportunity should be judiciously utilized by *ḥalāl* bodies to institutionalize a global network of certification rather than the *ad hoc* state-based programmes that are fraught with likely abuses.

Halal Assessment at Critical Control Points (HalACCP), already broached by the MCB, is a step in the right direction, and this could be pursued with strong intellectual, technological and scientific partnerships among food producers who wish to benefit from the ever-expanding global *ḥalāl* market.

Table 1: *Halāl* authorities worldwide

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1. Argentina - The Halal Catering Argentina
 2. Australia - The Australian Federation of Islamic Councils, Gold Coast Halal Certification Services, Australian Halal Food Services, Halal Certification Authority Australia, Islamic Coordinating Council of Victoria, Islamic Coordinating Council of Victoria, Halal Australia.
 3. Brazil - Centrode Divulgaodo Islam Para America Latina.
 4. Brunei - Brunei Halal.
 5. Canada - ISNA Halal Certification Agency, Halal Monitoring Authority.
 6. Germany - Halal Control
 7. Ireland - Islamic Foundation of Ireland.
 8. Kenya - Kenya Bureau of Halal Certification.
 9. Malaysia - Jabatan Kemajuan Islam Malaysia (JAKIM).
 10. New Zealand - Federation of Islamic Associations of New Zealand.
 11. Russia - Centre for Halal Standardization and Certification.
 12. Singapore - Majlis Ugama Islam Singapura.
 13. South Africa - South African National Halaal Authority, National Independent Halaal Trust.
 14. Spain - Instituto Halal.
 15. Thailand - Halal Standard Institute of Thailand.
 16. The Netherlands - Halal Correct, Halal Feed and Food Inspection Authority.
 17. United Kingdom - World Islamic Foundation, Halal Monitoring Committee, Halal Food Authority, Muslim Food Board, UK Halal Corporation Ltd.
 18. United States- Islamic Food and Nutrition Council of America (IFANCA), Islamic Services of America, Authentic Halal Services, Halal Food Council International, ISWA Halal Certification.
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Source: Zabihah. The world's largest guide to halal restaurants and products, 2011, <http://www.zabihah.com/ai.php> (Retrieved January 11, 2011).

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