

The Progress of Halal Food Trend in the United Kingdom

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Abstract

The scopes of halal and haram encompass the entire life of Muslim believers covering marital issues, financial matters, devotional practices, raiment, adornment as well as food and beverages. During the initial era of Islam, the Qur'an and sunna established the core halal regulations, specifically those against consuming pork, blood, carrion, and alcohol. Throughout the time, scholars (*mujtahid*) and legal experts have derived more elaborated and detailed regulations from these two fundamental textual sources regarding the science of jurisprudence (*usūl al-fiqh*). The regulations regarding the scope of halal food and the possibility of halal food production in non-Muslim countries directed scholars to issue legal opinions (*fatwā*) related to the halal foods. The needs of Muslims living in Europe and North America have played important roles to arouse Westerner's interest regarding the theoretical concept of halal and its practical application in various areas including food sector. The increasing demand for halal food among Muslim consumers leads enactment of new regulations, introduction of new certification systems, and construction of various delivery industries in the non-Muslim Western countries with the influence of globalisation. The article aims to examine how Muslim immigrants succeed to integrate their religious identity with British food culture and how they influenced the UK food production and consumption systems in a way that suit their specific supply and demand. The research gives a scrutinised explanation regarding the definition of halal food and sheds light on the reasons for the development of halal food production in European countries generally, the UK specifically. The deep analysis of the connection between halal food, religious commitment, and cultural adaptation amongst Muslims who live in non-Muslim Western countries offers new perceptions to evaluate and understand the interests of non-Muslim operated food companies towards halal food production.

Keywords: Halal, halal food, halal market in the UK, cultural transmission

Introduction

The scopes of halal and haram¹ in the life of Muslim believers have all encompassing application including, marital issues, financial matters, devotional practices, raiment, adornment, health, tourism, as well as food and beverages. At the initial step for Muslim believers, the Qur'an (the sacred text of Islam) and sunna (sayings, acts and tacit approvals of the Prophet Muhammad) established the core halal regulations, specifically those against consuming pork, blood, carrion (an animal that dies in a fashion other than ritual slaughter), and alcohol. For the later stages, legal experts, judicial authorities, or scholars (*mujtahid*) have provided more elaborate regulations relaying on the interpretation of those basic textual sources and their legal efforts resulted in huge legal compilations which guided and still guide Muslim believers throughout the history.²

The needs of Muslims living in Europe and North America have played important roles to arouse Westerner's interest regarding the theoretical concept of halal and its practical application in the everyday lives of believers. The increasing demand for halal food products among Muslim consumers leads enactment of new regulations, introduction of new certification systems, and construction of various delivery industries in the non-Muslim Western countries with the influence of globalisation and commercialisation. The expansion of Muslim population in the modern world also results in the establishment of halal foods organisations such as World Halal Food Council (WHFC) (which was established in 1999 to regulate halal standards in the slaughtering, food processing and flavour industry categories)³, the Organisation of Islamic Cooperation (OIC) (an organisation which was established in 1969 with a membership of 57 states and aims to show the collective voice of the Muslim world including halal food area),⁴ the Halal Food Authority (HFA) (an independent organisation which aims to supervise, inspect, audit, certificate halal products and practices in the UK food and beverages industry),⁵ or Halal Monitoring Committee in the United Kingdom (HMC) (an independent registered charity which monitors, inspects, and certifies halal products).⁶ Regarding the efforts of these organisations, it is stated:

A number of Muslim requirements have already been met in the international arena, including an injunction to avoid any substances that may be contaminated with porcine residues or

¹ The words of halal (*halāl*) and haram (*ḥarām*) will be used without italicisation and without obeying the transliteration regulations throughout the article. The widespread use of these Arabic terms by Muslims even in non-Muslim societies has increased the public knowledge and expanded awareness regarding their meaning and definition, refer to Yunes Ramadan Al-Teinaz, Stuart Spear, Ibrahim H. A. Abd El-Rahim, *The Halal Food Handbook* (New Jersey: Wiley & Sons, 2020), 1-5; Mohammad Hashim Kamali, *Principles of Islamic Jurisprudence* (Cambridge: The Islamic Texts Society, 2011), 351.

² Febe Armanios and Boğaç Ergene, *Halal Food: A History* (Oxford University Press: New York, 2018), 35.

³ *World Halal Food Council*, accessed September 10, 2021, <https://www.whfc-halal.com>

⁴ *Organisation of Islamic Cooperation*, accessed September 10, 2021, https://www.oic-oci.org/page/?p_id=52&p_ref=26&lan=en

⁵ *Halal Food Authority*, accessed September 10, 2021, <https://halalfoodauthority.net/Who-are-we.html>

⁶ *Halal Monitoring Committee-UK*, accessed September 10, 2021, <https://halalhmc.org>

alcohol, gelatine, glycerine, emulsifiers, enzymes, flavours and flavourings. In a globalized market these requirements are setting new standards for halal production, preparation, handling, storage, and certification. Optimistically, market players have estimated the value of the halal food market to be around \$632 billion annually.⁷

Taking into consideration the estimated market-share and expected profit, the main purpose of the voluntarily established Muslim organisations is to set the necessary standards for halal food production, certification, marketing, packaging, inspection, and distribution in harmony with the Islamic regulations. There are a great number of valuable academic contributions on the general concept of halal and haram foods, such as Pink's interdisciplinary book which explains changing aspects of halal consumption in various areas ranging from music to foods.⁸ Another valuable contribution, *The Halal Food Handbook*, consisting of 25 chapters, offers practical guidance on the entire food chain and provides the fundamental knowledge regarding the halal regulations.⁹ Fischer in his works *The Halal Frontier* and *Feeding Secularism* explains the important place of halal products within the expanding globalised market and explores the modern interpretation of halal and its practice mainly amongst Malays Muslims in the UK.¹⁰ His other book *Islam, Standards, and Technoscience* highlights the complex relationship between Islam, global market, regulatory institutions, and technology by emphasising the necessity for halal productions.¹¹ Unlike these contributions, the article does not make an ethnic division among Muslim minorities of the UK and focuses on the definition of halal in Islamic law and the reasons for the improvement of halal food productions in the UK. The research also specifically focusses on the improvement of halal food sector among non-Muslim countries especially the UK rather than focusing on the halal consumption in the daily lives of Muslims in a global market. The article examines how Muslim immigrants in the UK succeed to integrate their religious identity with British food culture and how they influenced the UK food production and consumption systems in a way that suited with their specific supply and demand. The research gives a scrutinised explanation regarding the definition of halal food and sheds light on the reasons for the development of halal food production in European countries generally and the UK specifically. The deep analysis of the connection between halal food, religious commitment and cultural adaptation amongst Muslims who live in non-Muslim Western countries offers new perceptions to evaluate and understand the interests of non-Muslim operated food

⁷ Florence Bergeaud-Blackler, Johan Fischer and John Lever, "Studying the Politics of Global Halal Markets," in *Halal Matters: Islam, Politics, and Markets in Global Perspective*, edited by Florence Bergeaud-Blackler, Johan Fischer and John Lever (London and New York: Routledge, 2016), 1.

⁸ Johanna Pink, *Muslim Societies in the Age of Mass Consumption; Politics, Culture and Identity between the Local and the Global* (Newcastle: Cambridge University Press, 2009), ix-xvii.

⁹ Al-Teinaz, Stuart Spear, Ibrahim H. A. Abd El-Rahim, *The Halal Food Handbook* (New Jersey: Wiley & Sons, 2020), xxxiii-xxxv.

¹⁰ Johan Fischer, *The Halal Frontier: Muslim Consumers in a Globalized Market* (New York: Palgrave Macmillan, 2011), 1-12; "Feeding Secularism: Consuming Halal among the Malays in London," *Diaspora*, vol. 14/2-3 (2005), 275-278.

¹¹ Johan Fischer, *Islam, Standards, and Technoscience: In Global Halal Zones* (New York: Routledge, 2015), 1-8.

companies towards halal food production. After giving a detailed explanation of halal and haram related to food and beverages, the article focuses on the improvement of halal food production in the UK by emphasising the animal slaughtering regulations and the products of non-Muslims. The analyses regarding the religious commitment during the cultural transmission process and the financial growth agenda of food companies not only explain the improving halal trends in the UK but also provide insight into the future developments concerning halal food sector in the UK.

1. The Terminological Definition of Halal

The orders or commands of God in the Qur'an are explained in a variety of forms which include *halal* (permissible), *ḥarām* (impermissible), *mandūb* (commendable), *makrūh* (abominable), and *mubāḥ* (indicative of permissibility). The acts of each believer are evaluated regarding these five categories and this division also covers the regulations related to food area. The Arabic word *halāl* literally means permissible and lawful. It terminologically refers to objects, practices, acts, and things which are regarded as lawful, legitimate, and permissible according to Islamic law. The term *ḥarām* (as the opposite of *halāl*) means objects, practices, acts, and things regarded as forbidden, sinful, illegitimate, unlawful, and impermissible according to Islamic law. Ibn Manẓūr defines these two terms: "Everything that Allah has permitted is *halāl*, and that which he has prohibited is *ḥarām*."¹² The term *mandūb* refers to commendable and advisable things which carry benefit and indicate the legal and permissible acts. The term *makrūh* (as the opposite of *mandūb*) refers to abominable and doubtful things which carry suspicious and problematic factors. The *makrūh* things are mainly advised to be avoided since they may cause or lead for the believer to commit a sin. As being placed in the middle of the five category, the term *mubāḥ*, mainly refers to indication of permissibility as well as the thing which is neither permissible nor rejectable. These categories basically shape the daily life of each Muslim believer ranging from economy, marriage, medicine, rituals as well as eating habits. The Islamic regulations primarily divide food into two basic categories: *halāl* (permissible, lawful, and legitimate) and *ḥarām* (forbidden, impermissible, and illegitimate) things. Besides the categorisation of *halāl* and *ḥarām*, the supplementary categories such as permissible (*mubāḥ*) and impermissible (*makrūh*) classifies additional foods according to their substances, ingredients, or procedure.¹³ Selling and buying directly prohibited products such as alcohol and pig are also evaluated among the forbidden and punitive acts according to Islamic law.¹⁴ While the textual religious sources (which are the Qur'an and sunna) sometimes provide clear definition regarding the permissibility of a particular items, they occasionally offer a general framework for the core halal food rules. The permissible and lawful things are considered as good and

¹² Mukerrem Ibn Manẓūr, *Lisān al-‘Arab* (Beirut: Dār Sadr, 1994), vol. 11, 167.

¹³ Döndüren, *Delilleriyle İslam*, 87-91.

¹⁴ Hayreddin Karaman, *Anahatlarıyla İslam Hukuku* (İstanbul: Ensar Neşriyat, 2008), 109.

pure (*tayyīb*) while the forbidden and unlawful things are considered dirty and unclean (*khabā'ith*) regarding the verse:

...He enjoins upon them what is good and forbids them what is evil. He makes the clean things lawful to them and prohibits all corrupt things and removes from them their burdens and the shackles that were upon them...¹⁵

The verse clearly determines the main criteria for the nature of legitimate and illegitimate things, acts, and foods. Additionally, a *hadīth* (the Prophetic narration) announces: “The lawful is that which Allah made lawful in His Book, the unlawful is that which Allah made unlawful in His Book, and what He was silent about; then it is among that for which He has pardoned.”¹⁶ The main textual sources of Islam, therefore, draw a broad framework for the division between *halāl* and *ḥarām* things and it is the responsibility upon Muslim believers to obey these rulings. The restrictions of Qur’an and sunna regarding *halāl* and *ḥarām* things cover all acts and interactions of a human life and aim to guide for the salvation of obedient believers. In addition to general regulations, rules for specific types of foods are provided in a limited number of Qur’anic verses. A verse from the Qur’an states:

Prohibited to you are dead animals, blood, the flesh of swine, and that which has been dedicated to other than Allah, and [those animals] killed by strangling or by a violent blow or by a head-long fall or by the goring of horns, and those from which a wild animal has eaten, except what you [are able to] slaughter [before its death], and those which are sacrificed on stone altars, and [prohibited is] that you seek decision through divining arrows. That is grave disobedience. This day those who disbelieve have despaired of [defeating] your religion; so fear them not, but fear Me. This day I have perfected for you your religion and completed My favor upon you and have approved for you Islam as religion. But whoever is forced by severe hunger with no inclination to sin - then indeed, Allah is Forgiving and Merciful.”¹⁷

“O, you who have believed, indeed, intoxicants, gambling, [sacrificing on] stone altars [to other than Allah], and divining arrows are but defilement from the work of Satan, so avoid it that you may be successful.”¹⁸

The verses draw a general framework for the prohibited things and forbid Muslim believers the use of mentioned foods. It should be noted that if the animal except fish dies before being ritually slaughtered, it becomes unlawful and prohibited regarding the religious rule and the potential physical damages of

¹⁵ *The Noble Quran*, A’raf 7/157, accessed 28 August, <https://quran.com>

¹⁶ Muhammad al-Tirmidhī, *English Translation of Jāmi’ al-Tirmidhī* (Riyadh: Darussalam, 2007), vol. 3, 456.

¹⁷ Māida 5/3. Other relevant verses of the Qur’an are “Say, “I do not find within that which was revealed to me [anything] forbidden to one who would eat it unless it be a dead animal or blood spilled out or the flesh of swine - for indeed, it is impure - or it be [that slaughtered in] disobedience, dedicated to other than Allah.1 But whoever is forced [by necessity], neither desiring [it] nor transgressing [its limit], then indeed, your Lord is Forgiving and Merciful.”” (6: 145); “He has only forbidden to you dead animals, blood, the flesh of swine, and that which has been dedicated to other than Allah. But whoever is forced [by necessity], neither desiring [it] nor transgressing [its limit] - then indeed, Allah is Forgiving and Merciful.” (16; 115); “He has only forbidden to you dead animals, blood, the flesh of swine, and that which has been dedicated to other than Allah. But whoever is forced [by necessity], neither desiring [it] nor transgressing [its limit], there is no sin upon him. Indeed, Allah is Forgiving and Merciful.” (2:173).

¹⁸ Māida 5/90.

the animal.¹⁹ The prohibition of alcohol consumption is straightforwardly expressed in the verses and the restriction covers all intoxicating beverages through the way of legal analogy (*qiyas*).²⁰ It needs to be mentioned that upon facing the detrimental conditions, harmful situations, or emergencies, the believers are allowed to use or consume these prohibited things which is a restricted permission up to the amount of necessity. The permissibility, known as concession (*rukhsa*), is given regarding the protection of five essential values namely religion, life, intellect, lineage, and property.²¹

Regarding the fundamental system of dietary rules in the Qur'an and sunna, Muslim scholars developed complex regulations throughout time under the influence of cultural, economic, and geographical factors. The halal foods according to textual sources and interpretation of scholars might be listed: "All plant and their products. Halal slaughtered meat, poultry, game birds and halal animal ingredients which include sheep, lamb, goats, cattle, buffalo, camel, rabbit, and grasshoppers. Wild animals that are non-predatory, e.g. deer, big horn sheep, gaurs, and the antelope. Non-predatory birds, e.g. chicken fowl, quails, turkey, hens, geese, pigeons, sparrows, partridges, ostriches, and ducks. All water creatures, fish, crustaceans, and mollusks. There is no prescribed method of killing them. Dying fish must not be made to suffer or cut open while alive and shall not be cooked alive."²² It needs to be noted that the general tendency amongst scholars is to title the suspicious foods and drinks (which is not easy to determine or evaluate the ingredients) under the category of abominable ones by taking the side of caution.

The Muslim jurists applied, and still apply, the science of Islamic jurisprudence (which was established by the scholars of early generations) to solve the recent and nascent problems regarding all areas including foods and drinks. From the twentieth century onward, the increasing appearance of the Muslims in the non-Muslim countries, particularly in Europe and North America, entailed the evaluation of issues related to Muslim minorities separately which resulted in establishing the concept of Islamic jurisprudence of Muslim minorities (*fiqh al-aqalliyāt*).²³ Therefore, the daily problems of Muslim minorities, including halal and haram foods, are evaluated and solved according to their own environment regarding their specific circumstances.

2. The Main Concerns Regarding Animal Slaughtering and Non-Muslim's Productions

¹⁹ "Tafsir Ibnu Katsir," *Tafsir*, accessed August 15, 2021, <https://tafsirq.com/en/5-al-maaida/verse-3#tafsir-ibnu-katsir>; Hamdi Döndüren, *Delilleriyle İslam İlmihali İnanç, İbadet, Günlük Hayat* (İstanbul: Erkam Yayınları, 2018), 819; Ömer Nasuhi Bilmen, *Büyük İslam İlmihali* (İstanbul: Merve Yayınları, 2018), 439.

²⁰ Karaman, *Anahatlarıyla İslam*, 100.

²¹ Mohammad Hashim Kamali, *Principles of Islamic Jurisprudence* (Cambridge: The Islamic Texts Society, 2003), 249, 356.

²² Yunes Ramadan Al-Teinaz, "What is Halal Food?" *The Halal Food Handbook*, edited by Yunes Ramadan Al-Teinaz, Stuart Spear, Ibrahim H. A. Abd El-Rahim (New Jersey: Wiley & Sons, 2020), 15-16; For detailed categorisation of animals according to different schools of law see; Armanios and Ergene, *Halal Food*, 151, 163.

²³ Emine Enise Yakar and Sumeyra Yakar, "The Critical Analysis of Taha Jabir Al-Alwani's Concept of Fiqh al-Aqalliyāt," *Hitit Theology Journal* vol. 20/1(2021), 383.

The scope of alcohol prohibition or the slaughtering of certain types of animals has immutable regulations, but the genre of vegetables, the consumption of seafood types, or the genre of animals show plurality and variety across different countries regarding the environmental and geographical factors. The contemporary scholars are considered responsible to provide solution for nascent issues by referring to legal principles and methods of the science of Islamic jurisprudence. However, issuing legal verdicts (*fatwās*) regarding the permissibility or non-permissibility of recently encountered food in new regions is amongst the inevitable responsibilities of the Muslim scholars. The Qur'anic concept of wholesome and pure (*tayyib*) and its interpretation according to the science of Islamic jurisprudence elaborate on the framework of halal food and give fundamental criteria for the eatable things.²⁴ The wholesome and pure food reflects God's blessing of food and nutrition for peoples' moral sanctification and physical well-being.²⁵ The religious law and original texts are considered absolute and eternal, but the interpretation of them by scholars or judges has developed over time and shaped the routine of the communities by providing continuity and alteration simultaneously.²⁶ Although there are certainly immutable rules regarding the halal food, the scope and interpretation of the halal food have continuously shifted and expanded its borders regarding the changing circumstances, time, and place. The necessities of Muslim minorities and their increasing communication with non-Muslims have inevitably directed Muslim scholars to produce the pragmatic and practical solutions related productions of non-Muslims by referring the mutable regulations of Islamic law.

The religious permissibility or impermissibility of consuming non-Muslim's food emerges as an important factor which shapes the halal regulations and the relationship of Muslims with them. On the issue, the Qur'an does make a distinction between the people of the book (Jews and Christians) and the believers of other religions. A verse from the Qur'an states: "This day [all] good foods have been made lawful, and the food of those who were given the Scripture is lawful for you and your food is lawful for them..."²⁷ If the food is prepared or an animal is slaughtered by a Jewish or Christian believer, it is considered among the eatable things (upon not including the prohibited substances and done in the name of God).²⁸ Practices and diets regarding what to eat or what to avoid distinguish Muslims from Jews, Christians, or the followers of other religions. For instance, the obedience to follow kosher²⁹ regulation is compulsory for Jews and regularises the food choices of each believer by giving them a religious

²⁴ Al-Teinaz, "What is Halal," 17.

²⁵ Döndüren, *Delilleriyle İslam*, 815.

²⁶ Clay, at all., "Kosher and Halal Meals," 602.

²⁷ Māida 5/5.

²⁸ Bilmen, *Büyük İslam*, 440.

²⁹ Kosher refers to proper food that is in harmony with the Kasrut (the Jewish dietary laws) which is part of Halacha. The sign 'K' mainly symbolises kosher regulation. Refer to, Yunes Ramadan Al-Teinaz, Joe M. Regenstein, John Lever, A. Majid Katme and Sol Unsendorfer, "The Halal and Kosher Food Experience in the UK," *The Halal Food Handbook*, edited by Yunes Ramadan Al-Teinaz, Stuart Spear, Ibrahim H. A. Abd El-Rahim (New Jersey: Wiley & Sons, 2020), 339.

identity. The regulations regarding the food practices and preferences, therefore, perceptibly give believers a kind of symbolic identity and differentiate them from the believers of other religions.

Animal slaughter regulations is another factor which makes the animal legally eatable and licit food according to Islamic law. Halal slaughter also differentiates eatable animals from carrion whose consumption is titled unlawful according to textual sources of Islam. The Qur'an does not explicitly state the methods of proper slaughter or the reasons for the prohibition of particular things such as pork and blood. However, the scope of prohibition and the proper way of slaughtering are mainly deduced from the sunna sources or the explanations of the Companions of the Prophet Muhammad. Therefore, the sunna sources generally offer more elaborated, systematised, and practised solutions to scrutinise the conditions and to classify the foods for the later generations.³⁰ The animal needs to be slaughtered with the name of God that is also a religious rule for the people of the book. The apostle Paul clearly explains that: "Christians should not eat meat scarified to idols, because it may confuse immature persons of faith who may become drawn to or offended by the idol, because it may falsely imply an endorsement of the idol or appear to compromise the integrity of the community."³¹ Therefore, if an animal is scarified to God by the people of the book, it also becomes halal and permissible for Muslim believers. Religious slaughter which is known as a humane method of slaughter results in the release of endorphins which enable the animal to die less painfully.³² On the other hand, the modern slaughtering methods require pre-stunning of the animal which is inevitably a rejectable technic according to Islamic regulations because of animals' suffering. Since the rules for halal slaughter was mainly formulated during the preindustrial periods, the possibility of using new technologies or mass production systems for animal slaughter results in debates amongst Muslim scholars after the industrialisation period.³³

Preslaughter stunning procedure was adopted around twentieth century by the Western countries regarding the safety of slaughterer, animal rights campaigns, animal welfare concerns, or regressive cost of production.³⁴ Although preslaughter stunning became mandatory for nonreligious commercial meat producers, the exemption from this regulation is given to non-stun religious slaughter regarding the demands for religiously appropriate slaughtering.³⁵ In the UK, the religious slaughtering is required to take place in a licensed abattoir certified by the Food Standards Authority (FSA) which is an independent government organisation working to protect public health and consumers' interests in relation to food

³⁰ Armanios and Ergene, *Halal Food*, 109-111.

³¹ Clay, at all., "Kosher and Halal Meals," 598.

³² Clay, at all., "Kosher and Halal Meals," 605; Germana Salamano, et al., "Acceptability of Electrical Stuning and Post-Cut Stunning Among Muslim Communities: A Possible Dialogue," *Society & Animals*, vol 21, (2013): 443-446.

³³ Al-Teinaz, "What is Halal," 20

³⁴ Armanios and Ergene, *Halal Food*, 210-211.

³⁵ Armanios and Ergene, *Halal Food*, 215.

in England, Wales, and Northern Ireland.³⁶ In addition to obtaining a certificate of competence for a slaughterer, the non-stunned religious slaughter needs to be completed under the inspection of a veterinary officers in the UK.³⁷ It needs to be clarified that, non-stunned slaughter is a given permission only for the followers of particular religions not for everybody. Although there are a group of people who are opposed to halal slaughtering and aim to ban this method by pressuring the UK and EU governments, the state authorities permitted and still permit halal slaughtering upon the condition of hygiene, certification, compassion, and humaneness.³⁸

The changing borders, the expansion of Muslim population or the increase in the number of Muslims who are living in non-Muslim countries result in close contact with new cultures, religious traditions, denominational differences, ethnic diversities, environmental differences, and geographical ingredients which all have an influence to shape the dietary habits of people.³⁹ The necessity for continuous production, especially in animal, dairy and bakery areas, plays an important role for the followers of Islam, Christianity, and Judaism to collectively own and operate in these areas that enable them to function without impinging on any of their religious observances.⁴⁰ The issues and problems emerging from these interactions are mainly solved referring to the concept of Islamic jurisprudence of Muslim minorities. Since there is a mutual interaction amongst various segments of society, many Western non-Muslims, therefore, are familiar with the religious term ‘halal’ due to the public discourse and halal signs that are an inevitable character of Muslim retail outlets selling food and meat products.⁴¹

3. The Reasons for the Improvement of Halal Food Production in the UK

Socioeconomic developments, financial status, religious commitment, demands for experiencing different tastes, or cultural transmission of the Muslim believers might be counted amongst the fundamental factors that have elevated and influenced modern day halal food production in the United Kingdom. The certification and standardisation of halal food production system after globalisation period have resulted to intensify competition amongst food markets and business area. Additionally, Muslim countries have started to import food products from non-Muslim operated companies regarding increasing globalisation and international trade systems during last decades. The enthusiasm of entering the broad Muslim market has whet non-Muslim companies’ appetite and some of them started to

³⁶ The Food Standards Agency, accessed September 13, 2021, <https://www.food.gov.uk/about-us/who-we-are>

³⁷ Al-Teinaz, at all., “The Halal and Kosher Food,” 339.

³⁸ Al-Teinaz, at all., “The Halal and Kosher Food,” 340-341.

³⁹ Armanios and Ergene, *Halal Food*, 39.

⁴⁰ E. Clay, M. M. Chaudry, M. Riaz, H. Siddiqui, J. M. Regenstein, “Kosher and Halal Meals,” in *Meals in Science and Practice Interdisciplinary Research and Business Applications*, edited by Herbert L. Meiselman (New York: CRC, 2009), 627.

⁴¹ Mufti Mohammed Zubair Butt, “Halal and Shariah Law,” *The Halal Food Handbook*, edited by Yunes Ramadan Al-Teinaz, Stuart Spear, Ibrahim H. A. Abd El-Rahim (New Jersey: Wiley & Sons, 2020), 27.

generate productions in harmony with the halal regulations which is an inevitable requirement for Muslim believers.

The insistency for consuming halal products amongst Muslim population living in non-Muslim regions, including the UK, has led the non-Muslim operated companies to produce halal and suitable productions regarding their demand.⁴² The food industry aiming to increase its profit and costumer diversity, therefore, has started to pay attention to the demands of multiple religious and secular groups, as well as to the requirements of scientific research and government policy. Although the verse of the Qur'an allows Muslims to eat the meat of animal which is slaughtered by the people of the book, there are debates regarding the interpretation of the verse and the permissibility of consuming these foods. It needs to be noted that the concept of doubt (*shubha*) is amongst the important factors which makes Muslims to insist on having halal food rather than relying on food products of the people of the book.⁴³ The general tendency of the scholars regarding the permissibility of suspicious foods is that: "... if a Muslim has doubts about whether a particular act is lawful or unlawful in terms of its nature or consequences, it is best to avoid such an act just to be safe."⁴⁴ The approach mainly puts doubtful foods into avoidable and impermissible things because of including uncertain and questionable ingredients. The extension of doubt concept is also used for the prohibition of all alcoholic beverages by way of analogy regarding intoxication as an effective cause (*'illa*). The Qur'an uses *khamr*, wine-drinking, for the prohibited product and the term is generally translated as a wine made from fermented grapes.⁴⁵ Since the effective cause of alcohol's prohibition is linked with the status of intoxication, all intoxicated drinks are mainly evaluated under the scope of prohibited things. The opinion and interpretation of scholars for the things which are not mentioned in the textual sources range from permissibility to impermissibility regarding the legal principles and methods. The variety of foods and drinks according to cultural and geographical differences continuously forces Muslim scholars to provide solution for the new products which is possibly encountered in the UK.

Although the religious supervision in the food production facilities was traditionally provided by the local religious authorities and well-trained members of the community for the previous decades, the validation process of food in the contemporary period has changed and become more systematic regarding the technological developments and governmental regulations.⁴⁶ The Secretary General of Organisation of the Islamic Cooperation (OIC) underlines the standardised quality of halal food by supporting to develop more effective and efficient short, medium, and long-term strategies to improve

⁴² Armanios and Ergene, *Halal Food*, 203.

⁴³ Intisar A. Rabb, *Doubt in Islamic Law A History of Legal Maxims, Interpretation, and Islamic Criminal Law* (New York: Cambridge University Press, 2014), 185-190, 203.

⁴⁴ Armanios and Ergene, *Halal Food*, 224.

⁴⁵ Māida 5/90-91; Kamali, *Principles of Islamic*, 268, 280; Karaman, *Anahatlarıyla İslam*, 100-101.

⁴⁶ Clay, at all., "Kosher and Halal Meals," 603.

OIC countries food production capacities around the world.⁴⁷ The Halal Monitoring Committee as a voluntary organisation is established in the UK to certificate, inspect, and control the suitability of foods including meats and beverages with the Islamic regulations. Establishing halal standards certification system and improving strategies for the production of key food commodities aim not only to standardise the food manufacturing processes but also pay attention to purity and sustainability of the products. The possible reasons behind the harmonised and regularised halal standards and certification through systematisation might be to guarantee ethical food production, secure confidentiality, improve efficiency, and strengthen the distribution of halal products in the global food market. The stipulated standards and requirements of certification play major role to introduce the necessary process of halal food manufacturing for both Muslim and non-Muslim owned food companies. The productions of UK-based and non-UK based companies needs to meet the standards that compelled by the Food Standards Agency in order to obtain the distribution and selling right in the UK. In addition to these governmental requirements, halal food producers need to comply with the certification criteria of Muslim-based organisations such as The Halal Monitoring Committee,⁴⁸ The Halal Food Authority,⁴⁹ The World Halal Authority,⁵⁰ or The World Halal Food Council⁵¹ in order to obtain the halal sing and certification.

4. The Religious Commitment within the Cultural Transmission Process

The mass emigration of Muslims to the non-Muslim Western countries especially after the nineteenth century leads the integration of their local cultures into the host countries cultures. The immigrants have transferred their cultural and traditional elements into their host country without even realising the situation through time. The cultural transmission process of immigrants has involved elements from local values, traditional clothes, communication styles, family structures as well as diet habits. Religious rules regarding food preparation methods, local dishes, consumable ingredients, or animal slaughtering are all included within the cultural transmission process without even realising the reality. The tension becomes unavoidable between national unity and cultural diversity or social integration and religious differentiation that Muslim immigrants experience during the cultural transmission. Since foods are indirectly used as a symbol of nationality, a form of identity or a representation of culture, the ethnic origin of immigrants has increased the variety of food, cuisine, and meal culture. Therefore, halal market

⁴⁷ The main objective of the organisation is to strengthen cooperation and solidarity among the Member States and to protect the rights and interests of the Islamic World. See: "The Secretary General Urges For More Effective And Efficient Strategies To Build OIC Member States' Food Production Capacities," *Organisation of Islamic Cooperation The Collective Voice of the Muslim World*, 9 September 2021, accessed 10 September 2021 https://www.oic-oci.org/topic/?t_id=29422&ref=18501&lan=en

⁴⁸ The Halal Monitoring Committee, accessed September 12, 2021, <https://halalhmc.org>

⁴⁹ The Halal Food Authority, accessed September 13, 2021, <https://halalfoodauthority.net/index.html>

⁵⁰ The World Halal Authority, accessed September 13, 2021, <https://www.wha-halal.org>

⁵¹ The World Halal Food Council, accessed September 13, 2021, <https://www.whfc-halal.com/about-us/vision-mission>

sector in the UK has obtained highly competitive character amongst Muslim diaspora groups with its extremely multicultural, fragmented, and complex segments. The halal exhibition at the major World Food Market (WFM) in London was organised for the first time in November 2005 and contained an Ethnic Specialty Food Exhibition which religio-ethnic minorities opened special local food stands.⁵² It might be claimed that people from different communities inevitably engage each other and the increasing intermingling amongst various religious groups, interaction among the members of same religion, and their ethnic diversities occasionally lead alteration in the culture of host community regarding reassessment and respect towards religious regulations. The increasing demand to taste and access to popular foods or local dishes has also affected the level of religio-cultural transmission.⁵³

The Muslim immigrants in the UK and their children have started to share same social areas and required to obey the same regulations with British people. Although the adaptation and alteration process have been noticed in the local practices of immigrants, they act reluctantly to change their religion-based acts and regulations, especially in food area which occasionally enforces the UK authorities to reconfigure the regulations. A relevant example on the issue is that Muslim children occasionally faced dietary problems regarding school foods and parents ask school administrators to provide pork-free meals or ritually slaughtered animals for their children.⁵⁴ The efforts of Muslim families in different part of the UK have increased the level of awareness regarding halal food and led the integration of religious dietary requirements within the British school services and culture. Although the school administrations tend to diversify the food options regarding the request of religious minorities, there are various groups opposing the idea of serving halal food. The rejective approach of first group finds its origins in religious conservatism or radicalism.⁵⁵ Supporters of this group aim to eliminate the alternative solutions with the aim of enforcing assimilation procedure upon religious minorities. The provocative attempts of this group have minimalised and restricted by the governmental regulations and the rights of religious diversities have been protected regarding the principle of equality and the freedom of religion among British citizens including minority communities. Article 9 of the Human Rights Act maintains the religious demands of citizens which states: “The right to freedom of religion and belief is one of the rights protected by the Human Rights Act.”⁵⁶ The second rejective approach finds its origin in the protection of cultural identity and in the hesitation of excessive acculturalisation. The supporters of this

⁵² Johan Fischer, “Halal, Diaspora and The Secular in London,” in *Halal Matters: Islam, Politics, and Markets in Global Perspective*, edited by Florence Bergeaud-Blackler, Johan Fischer and John Lever (London and New York: Routledge, 2016), 143-144.

⁵³ Armanios and Ergene, *Halal Food*, 220.

⁵⁴ Armanios and Ergene, *Halal Food*, 30.

⁵⁵ Clay, at all., “Kosher and Halal Meals,” 632.

⁵⁶ “Your Right to Freedom of Religion and Belief,” *Citizens Advice*, accessed September 10, <https://www.citizensadvice.org.uk/law-and-courts/civil-rights/human-rights/what-rights-are-protected-under-the-human-rights-act/your-right-to-freedom-of-religion-and-belief/>

group claim that the demand for serving halal food at the British schools is an attack on fundamental 'British values' and established eating practices.⁵⁷ Regarding the conservative character of British towards alteration of diets, Marshall states: "British meals remained relatively resilient to change, despite the proliferation of new products, the rise in eating out, and greater exposure, through the media, to new cuisine."⁵⁸ However, since the insistency of Muslim families for halal food originates from the religious commitment rather than the rejection of British values or British eating habits, the majority of school administrations in the UK have gradually started to serve halal food at the school restaurants for their Muslim students and to offer various food options for students belonging to different religious minorities. The respect towards the religious choices of individuals and families have recently become the preferred and adopted approach of school administrations in the UK regarding the interests of the children.

In an interview, a Muslim consumer in the United Kingdom expresses the impact of certification over his shopping tendency by saying: "Halal food philosophy for me is that it is hygienic and fresh, where meat is slaughtered in the name of Allah (provider of sustenance) and it is without free radicals. Halal certification by a national or worldwide representative organization lends the credibility to the food being halal."⁵⁹ It might be claim that the 'halal' mark or symbol over the products ordinarily influences the decision of majority of Muslim consumers whether to buy a particular product or not. The halal symbol is used as a proficiency criterion which eliminate the fear of exceeding permitted borders when tasting and experiencing unknown and unfamiliar products. The standardisation of certification process has also assisted the non-Muslim operated companies to learn the requirements for halal production and to distribute their suitable products in Muslim majority countries.

5. Financial Growth Agenda of Food Companies

The potential income of entering halal food market has been attracted grocery store chain's attention during last decades and these store chains put effort to reconfigure and increase the diversity of their products according to their appropriateness and suitability for different religious groups. For instance, the increasing number of Muslim minority population in Western countries including the UK and the importation of meat supplier companies to Muslim countries have led changes regarding the preslaughter stunning regulations. The legal authorities have mainly excluded or moderated the rules for the companies that do not follow the preslaughter stunning regulations because of religious purposes.⁶⁰ The demand or religious commitment of Muslim believers to follow the religious rules for the animal

⁵⁷ Armanios and Ergene, *Halal Food*, 30.

⁵⁸ David W. Marshall, "British Meals and Food Choice," in *Dimensions of the Meal, the Science, Culture, Business and Art of Eating*, edited Herbert L. Meiselman (Maryland: Aspen, 2000), 216.

⁵⁹ *State of the Global Islamic Economy Report; Thriving in Uncertainty*, 56, accessed August 14, 2021, <https://cdn.salaamgateway.com/reports/pdf/456642acf95a783db590e5b104cae94046047101.pdf>

⁶⁰ Armanios and Ergene, *Halal Food*, 221.

slaughter has resulted in giving them exceptions regarding the right of religious freedom. For example, the percentage of cattle and sheep slaughtered according to non-stun halal prescriptions increased by approximately a third to one-half between 2011 and 2013 according to a survey which was conducted by the Food Standards Agency.⁶¹

In addition to the expansive marketing opportunity of Muslim countries, the increasing population of Muslims living in non-Muslim countries, approximately 2.8 million in the UK,⁶² has also directed the food retail markets to produce appropriate products for Muslim citizens. The State of the Global Islamic Economy Report 2020/2021 informs that the UK based retailer company Mark and Spencer Food informed customers its own range of Western cuisine halal ready-meal in the United Kingdom.⁶³ The another UK based company, Frankie's Farm, has launched Streaky Lamb Macon production campaign, a pork-free bacon alternative to be sold as Asda markets' halal chilled aisles.⁶⁴ With these pragmatic and functional strategies, the food companies aimed not only to increase the satisfaction of their Muslim costumers but also to expand the range of customers diversity for the economic growth and annual profit. The famous food producer companies have also started to pay attention to halal regulations and expressed their sympathy for religious rules towards social media. A relevant example on the issue is that the social media respondent of the US-based brand Nutella responded one Manchester-based Twitter user's question regarding its suitability for halal diet in September 2020⁶⁵ and the tweet of the respondent stated: "No, they are not halal." Upon this tweet, the social media users launched a campaign against the consumption of this product and Nutella's Twitter account denied the allegations and clarified its original post by stating: "All Nutella sold worldwide is suitable for Halal consumption. Over 90% of the industrial plants producing Nutella are already Halal certified by a third party and we are in the process of certifying the remaining plants. We apologize for the mistake made in our earlier tweet."⁶⁶ The analysis of the Tweet elucidates that the company does not want to lose both its Muslim consumers and the huge marketing opportunity in Muslim countries. The event shows not only the importance of obtaining a halal certification and its positive influence over Muslim consumers, but also highlights the importance of having a proper knowledge regarding the religious regulations of different religions. The

⁶¹ John Stone, 'Halal Slaughter: Large Increase Reported in Number of Animals not Being Stunned at Abattoirs,' *Independent* 30 January 2015, accessed 1 September <https://www.independent.co.uk/news/uk/home-news/increase-animals-not-being-stunned-they-are-halal-slaughtered-10012559.html>

⁶² "World Directory of Minorities and Indigenous People United Kingdom," *Minority Rights Group International*, October 2020, accessed <https://minorityrights.org/country/united-kingdom/>

⁶³ *State of the Global Islamic*, 45.

⁶⁴ *State of the Global Islamic*, 45.

⁶⁵ "Nutella Creates Internet Meltdown After Claiming Product 'Not Halal'," *Middle East Monitor*, September 16, 2020, <https://www.middleeastmonitor.com/20200916-nutella-creates-internet-meltdown-after-claiming-product-not-halal/>

⁶⁶ https://twitter.com/Gokf13/status/1305847032364625925?ref_src=twsrc%5Etfw%7Ctwcamp%5Etweetembed%7Ctwtterm%5E1305847032364625925%7Ctwgr%5E%7Ctwcon%5Es1_&ref_url=https%3A%2F%2Fwww.middleeastmonitor.com%2F20200916-nutella-creates-internet-meltdown-after-claiming-product-not-halal%2F

contribution of voluntary Muslim organisations such as WFM needs to be emphasised because they arrange seminars and courses on the business potential of halal in the rapidly growing ethnic food and world food sector.⁶⁷ The representatives of Muslim organisations, individual Muslim consumers, investment counsellor of some markets, and officials of government institutions such as schools, hospitals or prisons are amongst the participants of these seminars. The food production companies, therefore, have recently supported the collaborative work between scientific research, technological developments, and religious regulations in order to extend their customer portfolio.

The vegan or vegetarian people intentionally abstain from the use of animal products and animal derived ingredients, and they do not eat any meat, poultry, game, fish, shellfish, or by-products of animal slaughter.⁶⁸ Various factors ranging from lifestyles, philosophies, geographies to religions affect the choice of people regarding veganism and vegetarianism. Veganism and vegetarianism are not a particular religion so that the followers of various religious denominations including Muslims, Christians, Jews, Hindus, Buddhist, or Jains might practice these eating styles to some extent. Their diet mainly contains level of fruits, vegetables, grains, pulses, nuts, seeds which are considered clean, pure, and eatable according to halal food regulations of Islamic law.⁶⁹ The development of tofu burgers, tofu dogs, and tofurkey productions which resembles meat without including meat products allow vegetarians and Muslims to consume these foods.⁷⁰ The vegan and vegetarian foods, which by their nature are subject to ore compliance and traceability provide greater assurance to Muslim consumers of its safety and purity from religious dimension. The difficulty of access or the shortage of halal products has also directed Muslim customers to consume vegan or vegetarian food for the sake of their religious commitment. This might be one additional reason for the significant expansion of plant-based vegan and vegetarian food sector in the areas which are mainly Muslim dominated. The compatibility of vegan and vegetarian foods with the halal standards has included Muslims into the potential target group for the producers of these foods. Easy access to vegetarian or vegan foods at the work, school, university, restaurant, or market during the day has made considerable number of Muslims consumers of these foods and the producer companies have paid attention to the compatibility with the religious criteria to increase their profit.

Conclusion

⁶⁷ Fischer, "Halal, Diaspora," 143.

⁶⁸ Mian N. Riaz and Munir M. Chaudry, "Comparison of Kosher, Halal and Vegetarianism," in *Handbook of Halal Food Production*, edited by Mian N. Riaz and Muhammad M. Chaudry (Florida: Taylor Francis Group, 2019), 275.

⁶⁹ Alina Petre, "Vegan vs Vegetarian – What's the Difference?" *Healthline* 5 August 2016, accessed <https://www.healthline.com/nutrition/vegan-vs-vegetarian>.

⁷⁰ Clay, at all., "Kosher and Halal Meals," 632.

The importance of accessing to halal foods for Muslims living in non-Muslim countries, including the UK, have resulted in the expansion of halal food productions in these countries. The main textual Islamic sources draws a general framework for the permissible (*halāl*) and prohibited (*ḥarām*) things, including in the scope of foods. Within this broad border, each Muslim individual is responsible to control her/his practices to obtain the reward of God and to reach the salvation according to Islamic law.

The deep analysis of the connection between the improvement of halal food production and religious commitment within the cultural adaptation amongst Muslims who live in non-Muslim Western countries offers new perception to evaluate and understand the interests of non-Muslim operated food companies towards halal food production. The transmission of cultural elements including dietary habits shaped the improvement of halal food production and increased the awareness of halal food regulations amongst non-Muslims. It might be claimed that the increasing number of Muslim population in Western countries played and still play a catalysator role for the development of halal food production in non-Muslim dominated countries.

The demand of Muslim minorities to consume halal food and the increasing exportation of food productions to Muslim majority countries affected the industrial and competitive strategies of food companies. The potential increase in the annual profit has also directed Muslim and non-Muslim operated food companies to sell halal and vegetarian foods. Although, the initial aim of the UK based companies was mainly to satisfy and supply the needs of British Muslim citizens, these Muslim and non-Muslim operated companies latterly started to make an endeavour to expand their customer portfolio and to export their products throughout Muslim countries.

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