

HALAL IN THE UNITED KINGDOM AND THAILAND: MARKETIZATION, POLITICIZATION, AND THE RELIGIOUS PRACTICES OF MUSLIM MINORITIES

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Abstract

This article examines the transformation of halal in Muslim minority contexts through a comparative study of the United Kingdom and Thailand. It approaches halal as a multidimensional phenomenon situated at the intersection of religious practice, market relations, and institutional governance. The study aims to explain how halal is practiced, marketized, and politicized within different social and institutional settings. Using a Systematic Literature Review (SLR), the study synthesizes scholarly publications on Muslim minority communities, halal consumption, certification, governance, and halal industry development in both countries. The findings show that halal functions as an identity marker through which Muslim minorities express religious commitment and negotiate their presence within wider society. Halal also operates as a market category through certification, branding, commercial services, and everyday consumption, reflecting the materialization of religious commitments within contemporary market structures. At the institutional level, halal becomes an arena in which religious authority is distributed and negotiated among Muslim communities, certification bodies, state institutions, scientific organizations, and market actors. The comparison reveals two distinctive configurations: the United Kingdom represents a relatively fragmented and negotiated field of halal authority, while Thailand demonstrates a more coordinated institutional configuration linking religious authority, science, industry, and state institutions. The study concludes that halal in Muslim minority contexts operates simultaneously as an identity marker, market category, and field of institutional authority. These findings provide a comparative perspective on how different institutional configurations shape the negotiation of religious identity, economic value, and regulatory authority within contemporary halal governance.

Keywords: Halal Governance, Muslim Minorities, Halal Certification, Halal Market

Abstrak

Artikel ini mengkaji transformasi konsep halal dalam konteks minoritas Muslim melalui studi perbandingan antara Inggris dan Thailand. Studi ini memandang halal sebagai fenomena multidimensi yang berada di titik temu antara praktik keagamaan, hubungan pasar, dan tata kelola kelembagaan. Tujuannya adalah untuk menjelaskan bagaimana halal dipraktikkan, dipasarkan, dan dipolitisasi dalam berbagai latar sosial dan kelembagaan. Dengan menggunakan metode Systematic Literature Review (SLR), studi ini menyintesis berbagai publikasi ilmiah mengenai komunitas minoritas Muslim, konsumsi halal, sertifikasi, tata kelola, serta pengembangan industri halal di kedua negara. Temuan studi menunjukkan bahwa halal berfungsi sebagai penanda identitas yang digunakan minoritas Muslim untuk mengekspresikan komitmen keagamaan dan menegosiasikan keberadaan mereka di tengah masyarakat luas. Halal juga beroperasi sebagai kategori pasar melalui sertifikasi, branding, layanan komersial, dan konsumsi sehari-hari, yang mencerminkan perwujudan komitmen keagamaan dalam struktur pasar kontemporer. Pada tingkat kelembagaan, halal menjadi arena di mana otoritas keagamaan didistribusikan dan dinegosiasikan di antara komunitas Muslim, badan sertifikasi, lembaga negara, perguruan tinggi, dan pelaku pasar. Perbandingan ini mengungkap dua konfigurasi yang khas, yakni Inggris merepresentasikan ranah otoritas halal yang relatif terfragmentasi dan bersifat negosiasi, sementara Thailand menunjukkan konfigurasi kelembagaan yang lebih terkoordinasi, yang menghubungkan otoritas keagamaan, sains, industri, dan lembaga negara. Studi ini menyimpulkan bahwa dalam konteks minoritas Muslim, halal beroperasi secara simultan sebagai penanda identitas,

kategori pasar, dan ranah otoritas kelembagaan. Temuan ini memberikan perspektif komparatif mengenai bagaimana konfigurasi kelembagaan yang berbeda membentuk negosiasi identitas keagamaan, nilai ekonomi, dan otoritas regulasi dalam tata kelola halal kontemporer.

Kata Kunci: Kata Kunci: Tata Kelola Halal; Minoritas Muslim; Sertifikasi Halal; Pasar Halal

1. Introduction

The global halal industry has undergone a fundamental transformation in the way halal is understood in contemporary life. Halal, which was originally positioned as a religious norm governing the consumption practices of Muslims, has increasingly become part of global governance structures encompassing food, pharmaceuticals, cosmetics, finance, logistics, and tourism. The State of the Global Islamic Economy Report indicates that consumption and trade in halal products continue to grow, making it one of the most dynamic economic segments worldwide. This development demonstrates that halal has become an object of regulation, standardization, and transnational competition involving religious, economic, and public policy dimensions (Bergeaud-Blackler et al., 2016; DinarStandard, 2024).

This transformation unfolds through the interaction of multiple actors with distinct authorities and interests. States develop regulatory frameworks and certification systems, religious authorities produce normative legitimacy, business actors expand halal markets as part of economic strategies, while Muslim communities maintain halal as a lived religious practice. Within this configuration, halal emerges as an arena where social practices, market mechanisms, and state governance intersect, requiring analytical approaches that go beyond fiqh-based or consumption-centered perspectives.

This development reveals an interesting phenomenon within the global halal industry landscape. Several countries with Muslim minority populations demonstrate strong capacities in building competitive certification systems, governance structures, and halal industries. The United Kingdom has emerged as one of the key hubs for halal production and distribution in Europe, while Thailand has positioned itself as a major halal producer and exporter in Asia through state policy support and institutional strengthening of halal governance. A similar pattern is also evident in Singapore, which has developed a halal certification system with high international recognition. These cases raise important questions regarding the relationship between demographic composition, institutional capacity, and the development of halal governance in Muslim minority contexts (Lever & Miele, 2012).

This phenomenon suggests that the development of halal is not solely determined by the size of the Muslim population or the status of Islam as a majority religion. Instead, state capacity in building regulation, the credibility of certification bodies, integration with international standards, and the ability to align economic interests with religious legitimacy appear to play a more decisive role in shaping the trajectory of halal industry development. In this regard, the United Kingdom and Thailand represent two distinct governance models shaped by different institutional configurations, offering an important analytical space for understanding halal transformation in Muslim minority societies.

Scholarly work on halal has developed along several main trajectories. The first strand views halal as a consumption practice and a means of constructing Muslim identity in modern society. This perspective highlights how halal consumption is linked to religious identity expression, trust in certification bodies, and Muslim consumer preferences (Bonne & Verbeke, 2008). The second strand situates halal within global market development through processes of commodification, branding, and industrial expansion, reflecting the increasing economic value of halal within global capitalism (Fischer, 2011).

A further strand conceptualizes halal as governance and a political arena. Bergeaud-Blackler et al. (2016) demonstrates that halal standardization results from interactions between states, certification bodies, and global corporations. Studies on Malaysia and Thailand similarly highlight the crucial role of the state in constructing halal institutions through regulation, certification, and support for national industries (Abu-hussin, 2026; Yakub & Zein, 2022). However, most existing studies still treat consumption, market dynamics, and regulation as separate analytical domains. The interrelationship between Muslim religious practice, halal marketization, and state-led politicization has not been sufficiently examined as a simultaneous and interconnected process, particularly in Muslim minority contexts.

Based on this literature, this study addresses an analytical gap in halal scholarship. It conceptualizes halal as a relational arena shaped by the interaction between state, market, and Muslim communities. This approach enables a more comprehensive analysis of halal dynamics in the United Kingdom and Thailand, while also revealing how different institutional configurations produce distinct models of halal governance. Building on this framework, the study addresses two main research questions. First, how do religious practice,

marketization, and politicization shape the development of halal in Muslim minority contexts in the United Kingdom and Thailand? Second, why are countries with Muslim minority populations able to develop competitive halal governance systems and industries within the global landscape?

This article argues that the transformation of halal in Muslim minority societies occurs through the simultaneous interaction of community-based religious practice, market-driven expansion within the global economy, and state-led regulation and governance. Differences in institutional configurations between the United Kingdom and Thailand produce distinct models of halal development, yet both cases demonstrate that institutional capacity, religious legitimacy, and integration with market mechanisms are key elements in shaping contemporary halal governance.

2. Research Method

This study employed a qualitative approach using a structured literature review to examine the development of halal practices and governance within Muslim minority communities in the United Kingdom and Thailand. This approach was chosen because it enables researchers to integrate findings from different types of literature, identify conceptual patterns, and develop a more comprehensive understanding of a particular field of study (Snyder, 2019). Relevant literature was identified through Scopus, Web of Science, and Google Scholar using combinations of the following keywords, i.e., halal governance, halal certification, halal market, Muslim minority communities, United Kingdom, Thailand, marketization, and politicization. The search yielded 25 sources that were included in the analysis, comprising 16 journal articles, 8 academic books, and 1 book chapter. Journal articles served as the primary sources for the synthesis, while books and book chapters were used to develop the theoretical framework and provide interpretive context. Institutional reports were used selectively to explain halal-related policies and institutional arrangements in each country. The literature was selected based on its relevance to religious practices, markets, certification, regulation, and halal governance, as well as its connection to Muslim minority communities. Studies that addressed only the technical aspects of halal products without considering their social, economic, religious, or institutional dimensions were excluded. To clarify the evidentiary role of each source, the literature was divided into two groups. The first consisted of four main articles that directly examined the United Kingdom or Thailand, as presented in Table 1.

Table 1. Main studies on halal practices and governance in the United Kingdom and Thailand

Country	Main study	Primary focus
United Kingdom	Annabi & Ibidapo-Obe (2017)	Halal certification organizations and religious authority
United Kingdom	Fuseini et al. (2020)	Differences in halal standards and slaughter practices
United Kingdom	Ibrahim et al. (2026)	Negotiation of halal consumption in everyday life
Thailand	Mohd Nawawi et al. (2019)	Halal governance and industry development

Source: Compiled by the authors from the selected literature

The second group comprised five articles on Muslim minority communities and transnational networks in other countries and seven general articles addressing halal standardization, certification, consumer trust, and marketization. These articles were used to strengthen the comparative framework and thematic interpretation rather than as direct evidence concerning the United Kingdom and Thailand. Books, book chapters, and selected institutional reports were similarly used to support the theoretical interpretation and provide relevant policy and institutional context. All selected sources were mapped according to publication type, geographical context, thematic focus, institutional actors, and key findings. The data were analyzed through close reading, coding, categorization, and cross-source comparison. The synthesis focused on three main themes: halal as a religious practice and marker of identity, the marketization of halal, and the politicization and institutional governance of halal.

The findings from the United Kingdom and Thailand were subsequently compared to identify differences in the relationships among Muslim communities, certification bodies, market actors, religious institutions, and the state. Because no previous study was found that directly compared halal governance in these two countries, the comparison presented in this article constitutes an analytical synthesis developed

from the selected literature. Finally, the findings were interpreted through Foucault's concept of governmentality, Bourdieu's field theory, and a political economy approach to explain the different configurations of halal governance in the two countries.

3. Result and Discussion

Halal Practices among Minority Muslims: Diaspora as Social and Cultural Actors

The synthesis of recent literature indicates that halal practices among Muslim minority communities extend beyond religious compliance and function as social practices through which religious identity is expressed, communal solidarity is reinforced, and the public visibility of Muslim communities is negotiated within non-Muslim societies (Fischer, 2011; Noor, 2025; Said et al., 2020). Halal is not merely understood as compliance with sharia norms, but as a medium that connects religious practice, social solidarity, and economic activity. These findings indicate that the Muslim diaspora plays an active role in producing, maintaining, and reconstructing the meaning of halal in accordance with their respective social contexts. From a Bourdieuan perspective, this practice reflects how Muslim communities construct position and legitimacy within a field where the state, market, and religious authority intersect (Bourdieu, 1977).

These findings differ from earlier perspectives in European migration studies. Berger (2011) and Nielsen & Otterbeck (2015) viewed religion as an identity expected to undergo privatization alongside modernization processes. More recent literature presents a different direction. Chen & Dean (2023) and Fahrullah & Musafak (2024) argue that Muslim diaspora communities maintain religious practices through more adaptive forms, including halal consumption, the development of economic networks, and the establishment of certification institutions. Thus, halal evolves as an expression of collective identity that remains present in the public sphere of secular societies.

The case of the United Kingdom illustrates a bottom-up pattern of halal development. The literature shows that the halal ecosystem grows through Muslim community initiatives that establish networks of halal shops, restaurants, certification bodies, and halal festivals as spaces for identity expression and community economic empowerment (Annabi & Ibidapo-Obe, 2017; Ibrahim et al., 2026; Jorgensen, 2020). This development demonstrates that the diaspora not only generates demand for halal products but also builds the social infrastructure that sustains the halal industry. These findings reinforce Fischer's (2011) argument on halal as part of a halal lifestyle, positioning the community as a crucial foundation for the development of the halal ecosystem.

At the same time, halal practices in the UK unfold within a public sphere characterized by negotiation. Issues such as animal welfare, certification transparency, and increasing sensitivity toward religious symbols indicate that halal has become part of public discourse on multiculturalism, integration, and religious freedom. Lever & Miele (2012) and Bonne & Verbeke (2008) show that debates on halal extend beyond consumption issues to questions of legitimacy, regulation, and Muslim identity in European societies. These findings suggest that halal practices constitute an arena of negotiation between religious values, market interests, and state regulation.

The literature on Thailand presents a different configuration. Halal practices develop within a top-down model, where the state plays a central role in constructing halal governance through policy frameworks, certification systems, institutional support, and integration with national economic development strategies. Studies show that Thailand's halal industry development is supported by the synergy between the Central Islamic Council of Thailand, the Halal Science Center at Chulalongkorn University, industrial sectors, and national export policies (Mohd Nawawi et al., 2019). In this configuration, Muslim communities still play an important role as sources of religious legitimacy, while the state directs halal development as part of its economic competitiveness strategy.

Compared to the UK, the position of the Muslim diaspora in Thailand develops more through adaptation to pre-established institutional structures. Various studies indicate that Muslim communities participate in certification systems, the halal industry, and economic networks without positioning resistance as a primary strategy. These findings suggest that halal practices in Thailand result from the interaction between the religious legitimacy of Muslim communities and the institutional capacity of the state in managing the halal industry.

Comparatively, this synthesis shows that halal practices among minority Muslim communities develop through two distinct configurations. The UK represents a community-based (bottom-up) model, while Thailand reflects a state-driven (top-down) model. Despite differences in institutional patterns, both models demonstrate that the Muslim diaspora remains a central actor in maintaining the legitimacy of halal

practices. These findings complement Fischer (2011) and Bergeaud-Blackler et al. (2016) who emphasize the market and governance dimensions of halal, by showing that diaspora religious practices constitute a foundational element enabling the ongoing marketization and politicization of halal. In minority Muslim contexts, halal emerges as a religious practice continuously negotiated through the relationship between community, market, and state.

Halal as an Identity Marker: Negotiating Meaning in Minority Contexts

The literature shows that halal has a more visible social meaning in Muslim minority communities. When halal is not the dominant social norm, choices related to food, restaurants, certified products, and certification bodies become spaces where religious identity is expressed and negotiated. In this context, halal functions as a boundary marker that maintains symbolic distinctions between Muslim communities and their wider social environment. This perspective is consistent with Barth's (1998) concept of ethnic boundaries and extends Fischer's (2011) discussion of halal consumption as part of Muslim identity formation in modern consumer societies. Halal can therefore be understood as a form of lived religion, in which religious norms are expressed through everyday choices and practices.

The findings also show a shift from halal based mainly on community trust toward halal that is increasingly mediated by institutions. In complex production and distribution systems, halal status is communicated through labels, certification, audits, and standards (Akbar et al., 2023; Latif, 2020). This finding is consistent with Bonne & Verbeke (2008) and Nazri et al. (2025), who highlight the importance of credible halal information in building consumer trust, and Bergeaud-Blackler et al. (2016), who shows how standardization turns halal into a category that can be recognized and exchanged within modern market systems. From this perspective, certification serves as a mechanism for representing religious identity and establishing legitimacy.

The United Kingdom presents a relatively decentralized halal certification landscape, characterized by multiple certification bodies operating with different interpretations and standards. These differences are particularly visible in slaughter practices, including the acceptance of pre-slaughter stunning, manual slaughter, and certification procedures (Annabi & Ibidapo-Obe 2017; Fuseini et al., 2020; Lever & Miele, 2012). This fragmented structure places Muslim consumers in a more active position when assessing halal labels and the credibility of certification authorities. Halal in the UK therefore becomes a space where religious identity is negotiated through consumption choices and preferences for particular religious authorities. This finding extends Fischer's (2011) discussion of the halal lifestyle by showing that halal consumption also involves choices about which religious authorities are considered legitimate within a diverse Muslim community.

Thailand presents a different configuration. The literature describes a more coordinated halal governance system involving the Central Islamic Council of Thailand (CICOT), government institutions, industry actors, and the Halal Science Center at Chulalongkorn University. Within this structure, religious legitimacy interacts with standardization, scientific testing, and industrial interests (Mohd Nawawi et al., 2019). Halal identity in Thailand is therefore expressed through a more structured institutional framework than in the UK. Muslim communities remain an important source of religious legitimacy, while standardization and scientific infrastructure provide an institutional framework through which halal can be recognized in domestic and international markets.

The comparison between the UK and Thailand reveals two different forms of institutionalizing halal identity. In the UK, the presence of multiple certification bodies creates a more fragmented field of authority and gives consumers and Muslim communities greater space to choose their preferred halal references. In Thailand, halal authority is organized through more formal coordination among Islamic authorities, scientific institutions, the state, and industry. These differences can be interpreted through Bourdieu's concept of field, in which halal legitimacy is negotiated among actors with different forms of authority and resources. Foucault's concept of governmentality also helps explain certification as a form of governance that translates religious norms into procedures, classifications, audits, and standards.

Overall, the findings suggest that certification does more than communicate a halal status already defined by religious communities. It also shapes how halal is recognized, verified, and communicated in modern society. The movement from interpersonal trust toward institutional verification reflects a broader change in halal authority. Religious scholars and Muslim communities remain important, while certification bodies, laboratories, regulators, and industry actors increasingly participate in defining and legitimizing halal. This finding is consistent with Fischer (2011) and Bergeaud-Blackler et al. (2016) on the standardization and commercialization of halal, while adding a specific emphasis on Muslim minority contexts. In these contexts,

halal operates as both an identity marker and an institutional category, whose meaning is continuously negotiated among Muslim communities, religious authorities, the state, science, and the market.

Marketization of Halal: From Religious Ethics to the Logic of the Global Market

The literature synthesis shows that halal has increasingly entered global systems of production, certification, branding, distribution, and consumption (Al-shami & Abdullah, 2023; Bux et al., 2022). Religious principles that were traditionally practiced through personal and communal forms of trust are now expressed through standardized products, labels, certification schemes, and commercial services. Halal therefore operates as both a religious category and a market category with economic value. This finding is consistent with Fischer (2011), who describe the emergence of the halal consumer, and Wilson & Liu (2010) Noor (2026), who show how halal has developed into a recognizable commercial brand. Marketization, in this context, refers to the translation of religious values into products and services that can circulate within modern markets.

This transformation is particularly visible in Muslim minority contexts. The absence of a taken-for-granted halal environment gives commercial actors an important role in providing products that meet Muslim religious requirements. Halal restaurants, retail products, certification services, tourism, cosmetics, and other sectors provide spaces where religious consumption intersects with commercial activity. The market does not simply provide halal products; it also creates categories, labels, and forms of visibility through which consumers identify what is considered halal. Wiyono et al. (2022) describe this development as part of the formation of Muslim consumer subjectivities, in which religious commitment is increasingly expressed through everyday market choices.

The United Kingdom illustrates a largely market- and community-driven form of halal marketization. Its halal sector operates within a plural commercial environment involving Muslim consumers, retailers, restaurants, food producers, supermarkets, and multiple certification organizations. The diversity of certification standards also produces different halal market segments, particularly around issues such as stunning and slaughter methods (Fuseini et al., 2020; Lever & Miele, 2012). From this perspective, religious differences can acquire commercial meaning: certification standards function as markers through which consumers distinguish between products and authorities. The UK case therefore shows how religious commitment, consumer choice, and market differentiation intersect within a decentralized halal landscape.

Thailand presents a different configuration. The literature describes halal as part of a more coordinated economic and institutional framework involving religious authorities, scientific institutions, industry actors, and government agencies. Halal certification, scientific testing, food production, tourism, and international promotion are integrated into Thailand's broader engagement with the global Muslim market (Mohd Nawawi et al., 2019). The Thailand case illustrates a form of marketization in which halal is positioned within national economic strategies while retaining religious legitimacy through Islamic certification institutions. Compared with the UK, halal marketization in Thailand is therefore more closely connected to organized institutional and economic planning.

These findings provide a more complex picture than an interpretation of halal as simple commercialization. Marx's concept of commodity fetishism offers one critical perspective: a halal label may present religious legitimacy as a property of the commodity, while the social and institutional processes behind certification become less visible to consumers (Marx, 1990). Yet this interpretation alone cannot fully explain contemporary halal markets. Muslim consumers remain active in evaluating certification bodies, checking ingredients, selecting products, and distinguishing among competing halal standards. Halal commodities therefore carry economic value alongside religious meanings that remain open to interpretation and negotiation.

Foucault's concept of governmentality provides another perspective on this transformation. Certification, labeling, and standards create practices through which consumers are encouraged to examine, classify, and select products according to particular definitions of halal. In this sense, marketization is related to the formation of a particular type of religious consumer: one who expresses religious commitment through informed consumption and self-monitoring. This interpretation is consistent with Fischer (2011), while also connecting halal consumption with broader discussions of piety and neoliberal economic practices.

The comparison between the UK and Thailand reveals two forms of halal marketization. In the UK, marketization develops within a decentralized field where communities, businesses, consumers, and certification bodies negotiate halal through market practices. In Thailand, marketization is more closely connected to coordinated institutional arrangements and national economic interests. Despite these

differences, both cases show that religious legitimacy remains important to the economic value of halal. Market value and religious authority therefore coexist within the halal economy rather than representing two completely separate spheres. The synthesis of these findings points to what this study describes as the materialization of piety religious commitment becomes increasingly visible through certified products, labels, services, and consumption practices. This concept does not imply that piety is reduced to consumption. Rather, it highlights how religious values acquire material and institutional forms that can circulate within modern markets.

Politicization of Halal: Authority, Regulation, and the Production of Power

The literature synthesis shows that the expansion of halal within modern production and trade is accompanied by the growing importance of formal institutions in defining, verifying, and regulating halal. Religious authorities, certification bodies, government agencies, scientific institutions, and industry actors participate in this process through standards, audits, regulations, and accreditation mechanisms. Halal therefore operates within an institutional field where religious legitimacy interacts with regulatory and economic interests. This development is consistent with Bergeaud-Blackler's et al. (2016) argument that contemporary halal is shaped through interactions among religious authorities, markets, and regulatory institutions.

The United Kingdom illustrates a relatively decentralized configuration of halal authority. Multiple certification bodies operate with different interpretations and standards, particularly regarding slaughter methods and the acceptance of pre-slaughter stunning (Annabi & Ibidapo-Obe, 2017 & Fuseini et al., 2020). The Halal Food Authority (HFA), for example, accepts certain forms of reversible stunning under specified conditions, while other certification organizations apply stricter requirements. This plurality indicates that halal authority in the UK is not concentrated within a single institution. Instead, legitimacy is negotiated among certification bodies, Muslim communities, consumers, businesses, and religious scholars. Certification thus represents both religious verification and an institutional claim to the authority to define acceptable halal practices.

The politics of halal in the UK also extends into public regulation. Debates over religious slaughter place halal within broader discussions of animal welfare, consumer information, religious freedom, and public ethics. Studies of European halal meat markets show that slaughter practices are evaluated through both religious requirements and secular regulatory frameworks (Lever & Miele, 2012). Halal therefore enters the public sphere as a negotiated regulatory category. The state does not define Islamic doctrine, but legal frameworks concerning food production, slaughter, animal welfare, and consumer protection establish the regulatory environment within which halal practices operate. Politicization in this context emerges through the interaction of religious claims with wider public norms and regulatory frameworks.

Thailand presents a different institutional arrangement. Studies describe a more coordinated halal governance structure involving the Central Islamic Council of Thailand (CICOT), government institutions, scientific organizations, and industry actors. CICOT holds an important position in religious certification, while the Halal Science Center at Chulalongkorn University contributes scientific testing, research, and technological expertise. These institutions operate within Thailand's broader engagement with international halal production and trade (Mohd Nawawi et al., 2019). Halal in Thailand therefore occupies a dual institutional position: it represents the religious interests of a Muslim minority while also forming part of the country's economic engagement with the global halal market.

The comparison between the UK and Thailand reveals two different modes of halal politicization. In the UK, halal authority is relatively fragmented and negotiated among multiple certification bodies, Muslim communities, market actors, and regulatory institutions. In Thailand, halal governance displays stronger institutional coordination among religious authority, science, industry, and state institutions. These findings extend previous studies that have primarily examined certification as a mechanism of consumer trust or market assurance. From a political perspective, certification also concerns the distribution of authority: who can define halal, whose standards receive recognition, and which forms of religious knowledge can be translated into formal regulatory procedures.

Foucault's concept of governmentality provides a useful framework for interpreting this process. Standards, audits, accreditation, laboratory testing, and certification can be understood as technologies of governance through which halal becomes measurable, verifiable, and administratively manageable. Power in this framework does not operate only through direct state intervention. It is distributed across institutions and practices that produce categories of acceptable halal conduct. Bourdieu's concept of field further highlights competition over legitimacy within this institutional space. Certification bodies, religious authorities,

scientific institutions, regulators, and businesses possess different forms of religious, scientific, economic, and symbolic capital, which position them differently in defining legitimate halal standards.

The findings therefore suggest that the politicization of halal is best understood as a process of institutionalizing and distributing religious authority, rather than simply as state control over religious practice. The UK demonstrates a plural and contested field of halal authority, whereas Thailand reflects a more coordinated institutional configuration. In both cases, however, halal standards emerge from interactions among religious norms, regulatory systems, scientific knowledge, and economic interests. This study thus extends previous discussions of halal governance by showing that, in Muslim minority contexts, halal is also an arena in which religious authority is translated, negotiated, and recognized within modern systems of governance.

4. Conclusion

This study shows that halal in Muslim minority context operates as a dynamic social practice shaped through interactions among religious communities, markets, and institutional authorities. In both the United Kingdom and Thailand, halal provides a space through which Muslim communities express religious identity, maintain communal boundaries, and participate in wider social and economic life. However, the institutional forms of these practices differ. The UK represents a relatively decentralized configuration, where Muslim communities, businesses, consumers, and multiple certification bodies negotiate halal standards and legitimacy within a plural social and regulatory environment. Thailand displays a more coordinated configuration, where religious authorities, scientific institutions, industry actors, and state institutions are closely connected within the halal ecosystem. These differences indicate that the development of halal in minority contexts cannot be explained primarily by the size of the Muslim population, but should be understood through the institutional arrangements and relationships among the actors involved.

The findings further demonstrate that halal simultaneously operates as an identity marker, market category, and field of institutional authority. Its integration into certification, branding, scientific testing, regulation, and global trade reflects what this study identifies as the materialization of piety, in which religious commitments acquire visible and institutional forms through products, labels, standards, and everyday consumption practices. At the same time, the politicization of halal reflects the institutionalization and distribution of religious authority among communities, certification bodies, states, scientific institutions, and market actors. The comparison between the UK and Thailand therefore suggests two distinctive configurations fragmented and negotiated halal authority in the UK and coordinated halal authority in Thailand while both demonstrate the continuing negotiation between religious ethics, market interests, and regulatory power. This perspective extends previous studies that have treated halal mainly as a matter of religious compliance, consumer behaviour, or certification by positioning halal as a multidimensional arena where religious identity, economic value, and institutional power are continuously negotiated in Muslim minority societies.

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