



## WP 4.2 Deliverable

# 'A comparative report of the public debates on religious slaughter in Germany, UK, France and Norway'

DIALREL – Encouraging Dialogue on Issues of Religious Slaughter

Comparative report :

Lill M. Vramo & Taina Bucher

*SIFO – National Institute for Consumer Research*

*National reports (in appendix):*

*Florence Bergeaud-Blackler (French report), Adrian Evans (UK report),*

*Taina Bucher, Lill M. Vramo & Ellen Eser (German report),*

*Taina Bucher, Laura Terragni & Lill M. Vramo (Norwegian report)*

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WP Coordinator  
Unni Kjærnes  
SIFO – National Institute for  
Consumer Research  
P.O. BOX 4682 Nydalen  
N-0405 Oslo  
Norway  
Telephone: +47 22043530  
Fax: +47 22043504  
e-mail: unni.kjarnes@sifo.no  
www.dialrel.eu



Lill M. Vramo & Taina Bucher

SIFO - National Institute for Consumer Research

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DIALREL

Encouraging Dialogue on issues of Religious Slaughter

**EC funded project involving partners in 11 countries.**

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# 1. Introduction

This comparative report draws its material from a systematic empirical analysis of the media discourses and public debates on religious slaughter in four European countries over the past two years (2006-08). The report is part of the DIALREL project: *Religious slaughter: improving knowledge and expertise through dialogue and debate on issues of welfare, legislation and socio-economic aspects*. DIALREL is funded by EU's sixth framework programme and was initiated as a specific support action addressing issues relating to the practice of religious slaughter, the market and the consumers. The project includes a review of national legislation and research, an analysis of the scale of practices, the influence of diverse religious beliefs on slaughter practices, and the extent to which food consumption patterns are affected, as well as public and consumer concerns for the welfare of animals intended for human consumption. One principle aim of the project is to explore *the conditions for promoting dialogue* between interested parties and stakeholders and facilitating the adoption of good religious slaughter practises. An important part of exploring the conditions for promoting dialogue has been to monitor and address potential conflicts in public debates on religious slaughter practices. This report refers to media debates in four European countries and compares the media representations of religious slaughter. The report discusses how and why different public debates appear in the different national contexts. The countries selected are Germany, UK, France and Norway. The aim is to get an overview of discourses on religious slaughter in the various countries, to identify the extent of media attention given to issues related to religious slaughter, and the level of controversy.

Religious slaughter has been performed in Europe for centuries alongside with conventional slaughter involving pre-slaughter stunning. Objections to the practices of religious slaughter on welfare grounds started in the 19<sup>th</sup> century. Relevant legislation, such as the *Council Directive 93/119/EC on the protection of animals at the time of slaughter or killing* (1993) of the European Union, allows derogations so that Member States can retain the right to authorise religious slaughter without pre-stunning in their own territory under official veterinary involvement. This means dissimilarities in legislation on religious slaughter among EU countries.

There are principally two types of religious slaughter we are considering in the DIALREL project: Muslim methods for the production of Halal meat and Schechita for obtaining Kosher meat for Jewish consumers. In recent years, the demand for religiously slaughtered products has increased extensively in most European countries and as a result their market share is now of considerable size. Religious slaughter has always been a controversial and emotive subject. Animal welfare considerations, human rights, freedom of religion, consumer rights, and market shares and market power are some of the issues involved. However, there are considerable variations in current practises and the current public debates related to religious slaughter are quite diverse in the contexts we are investigating.

In this comparative report we will provide an overview of the issues that have been debated within the media during the past two years, and look at the ways in which these issues have been framed and contextualised. We will furthermore consider the different actors who are taking part and/ or are having a voice in the media debates in the different contexts: Who are the players on the media arena? What are their positions? And what are the main conflict alignments in the different contexts? This report takes the data a step further and compares the debates from the different national contexts on a general level. We will first give a brief presentation of the different national contexts in relation to *demography* and *market*

*legislation, politics, and history* of religious slaughter. (The country specific reports are included as appendixes to this report).

## **1.1 France**

France has an estimated population of 65.1 million people (2009). According to French National Institute for Statistics and Economic Studies France has an estimated 4.9 million foreign-born immigrants, of which 2 million have acquired French citizenship. The current Jewish community in France numbers to around 600,000 according to the World Jewish Congress and is the largest Jewish population in Europe. The Jewish community amounts to slightly more than 1% of the total population of France. Around 300.000 Jews live in Paris region. Approximately 25% of the French Jews observe kashrut and the number of kosher butchers, restaurants and shops in Paris and elsewhere is growing (Florence Bergeaud-Blackler 2008).

As a consequence of France's colonial history and the politics of migration over the last 50 years, France has today the largest Muslim population in Europe. Islam is France's second largest religion (10 %) behind Catholicism (85%), and far in front of Protestantism (2%) and Judaism (1%). The Muslim population is predominately of Arab and North African origin, followed by Turkish and West African populations. The Muslim population<sup>1</sup> of France counts approximately 3 million people to date, of which 2.900.000 are of North African origin (Algeria, Morocco, Tunisia).

From 1905 France has had a law on the separation of the Church and State. The exercise of religious worship is governed by the law of December 9, 1905 which stipulates that the Republic "guarantees freedom of conscience" and "freedom of religious worship" but "does not recognise, employ nor subsidize any one religion." Decree (Arrêté) of 15. December 1994 is related to the approval of a religious body empowering ritual slaughterers. The Great Mosque of Paris involving the company of the habous and Holy Places of Islam is approved as a religious body to empower slaughterers permitted to practice ritual sticking. Three mosques were given approval by the Minister of Agriculture to issue licences for religious slaughter men, which allow abattoirs to work as well as undertake 'ritual' slaughter during festivals. The decrees (Arrêtés) of 27 of June 1996 concerning the approval of religious bodies empowering ritual slaughterers were granted approval for the practice of ritual sticking (Florence Bergeaud-Blackler 2008).

## **1.2 Germany**

In 2005 the total population in Germany was approximately 82.5 million. Among these there are about 15 million inhabitants with a migration background (Statistisches Bundesamt, Statistisches Jahrbuch 2007). The number of Jews in Germany today is more than 200.000. Germany has the fastest growing and the third-largest Jewish population in Europe today (after France and the United Kingdom). About 108.000 Jews in Germany are officially registered in Jewish religious communities. The two largest umbrella organisations for the Jewish religious communities are the Central Council of Jews in Germany (Zentralrat der

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<sup>1</sup> In addition to the high number of Muslims in France of Arab and North African origin, 100.000 come from the Middle East (Libya, Syria, Iraq, Egypt), 315.000 are of Turkish or Kurdish origin, 250.000 are of African origin (black), 100.000 Muslims are of Asian origin. Moreover 40.000 have converted to Islam and 'others' are estimated to 450.000.



Juden in Deutschland) and Union of Progressive Jews in Germany (Union progressiver Juden in Deutschland).

As a consequence of work immigration in the 1960s and several waves of political refugees since the 1970s, the Muslim population in Germany is considerable. In 2006, 3.3 million Muslims were living in Germany – 4 % of the population. Of these, 1 million are German citizens (1.3 %). Most of the Muslims – 98 % – live in former West Germany and in Berlin. This makes Islam the largest minority religion in Germany (the Protestant and Roman Catholic confessions are the majority religions). Most Muslims living in Germany are of Turkish origin (1.878.000 in 2004). Smaller groups originate from Bosnia and Herzegovina (167 000 in 2004), Iraq, Iran, Morocco, Afghanistan, Kazakhstan and Lebanon.

Concerning slaughter of animals, it is stated in article 4a in the German Animal Protection Law (1986) that warm-blooded animals must be stunned before slaughter. There are two main exceptions to this act. One exception is emergency situations where stunning is not possible. The other exception is religious slaughter. The exceptional permission related to religious slaughter is granted in order to meet the needs of members of certain religious communities, where the argument is based on freedom of religion. The exception is mainly given to protect Jewish practice, which holds a strong position due to the German history of extreme anti-Semitism. In 1995 The Supreme Court (Bundesverfassungsgericht) denied Muslims the right to obtain the same permit as Jews. On 15<sup>th</sup> of January 2002 a legislative decision of the Federal Constitutional Court gave permission for a wider practice of slaughter without stunning. Before 2002 slaughter without stunning had only been permitted with an exceptional permission to the Jewish community. After January 2002, the constitutional change permits slaughter without stunning on the grounds of personal religious belief.

### **1.3 United Kingdom**

According to the most recent census in 2001 the total population of the United Kingdom counted about 59 million. By mid-2007, this number was estimated to have grown to nearly 61 million. As of 2001, 92.1% of the UK population identified themselves as White, leaving 7.9 % of the UK population identifying themselves as mixed race or ethnic minority. Christianity is the largest religion, followed by Islam, Hinduism, Sikhism and then Judaism in terms of number of adherents.

At the 2001 census, there were 1,536,015 Muslims in England and Wales, forming 3% of the population. Muslims in Scotland numbered 42,557 representing 0.84% of the population. There were a further 1,943 Muslims in Northern Ireland. The biggest groups of Muslims are of Pakistani, Bangladeshi and Indian origin.

According to the 2001 census the Jewish population numbered 267,373 accounting for 0.47% of the general population in the UK. The combined figure of the Muslim and Jewish population is therefore 1,856,263, accounting for 3.25 % of the general population. Ansari argues that the figures for the Muslim population is probably an underestimate, and suggests 2 million Muslims as a more accurate figure for the UK (Ansari, 2004: 172; 2005: 2).

Religiously slaughtered animals are exempt from the legal requirement for pre-slaughter stunning in the UK. The exemption for Schechita dates to the first slaughter legislation of 1933. This exemption has existed continuously since then. The addition of an exemption for Muslim religious slaughter dates from the 1967 Slaughter of Poultry Act and the 1974

Slaughterhouses Act. Likewise, this exemption has remained in effect since these dates (Anssari, 2005: 7 in Cole 2007).

## **1.4 Norway**

At the most recent census the Norwegian population counts 4, 8 million. There are 381 000 immigrants and 79 000 Norwegian-born persons with immigrant parents living in Norway. Together, these two groups represent 9.7 per cent of Norway's population (Statistics Norway 19.02.09). Data from Statistics Norway indicate that there are 72.000 Muslims living in Norway, of which most are living in the capital city Oslo. Pakistanis were prominent in the first wave of work immigrants in the 1970's and Pakistanis still represent the largest Muslim community in Norway. In recent years there has been a growth of immigrants of Somali origin. According to Vogt about 500 ethnic Norwegians have converted to Islam. The first Mosque in Norway was opened in Oslo in 1974 by the Islamic Cultural Centre. The Muslim community have a manifold of organisations, partially reflecting the ethnic background and their specific faith (Vogt, 2000). The Islamic Council (Muslimsk råd) serves as an umbrella organisation and is one of the most prominent voices of the Muslim community in Norway.

Today there are about 2000 Jews in Norway. Most of the Norwegian Jews are living in Oslo. The Jewish Community (Det Mosaiske Trossamfund) was established in Norway in 1892 and is the largest Jewish community in Norway.

According to Norwegian law all animals have to be stunned before slaughter or at the same time as the stunning (Animal act § 9, 1974 – and Otp.prp. nr 15 (2008-2009)). There are two exceptions to this rule. One exception involves emergency situations where stunning is not possible. The other exception is given to the Sámi minority group. They are given exception from the law of pre-stunning for being allowed to slaughter reindeer with a special curved knife.

Some form of compromise related to the practice of religious slaughter has been reached with large parts of the Muslim community in Norway who have agreed on pre-stunning. Such a solution is not found for the Jewish community. Kosher meat is therefore imported from other countries allowing religious slaughter without pre-stunning.

## **2 Method**

A simple but systematic content analysis of media texts has been conducted by partners in the respective countries. It has to be pointed out that this is more a mapping of the media situation and discussions related to religious slaughter, than a comprehensive analysis.

Therefore the items and procedures for the collection of relevant media coverage on religious slaughter in the participating countries differ somewhat from each other. The Norwegian report used a media database, the German, French and British reports all concentrated on three-four newspapers of their selection.

The different methodological approaches used for the collection of data have resulted in challenges in relations to comparing the individual reports with each other. The combination of using different selection criteria on the sources and articles to be elicited, the keywords

consulted and the time span for the investigation makes the media analyses of the participating countries quite different. Therefore we have to make reservations regarding the extent to which we can generalize or make in-depth comparisons. Nevertheless all the reports point towards their country specific discourses on religious slaughter and the social mechanisms that are involved.

In the following a short description is provided on the kinds of sources consulted by the different reports:

### France

- **Le Monde:** Situated at the centre of the political spectrum, the daily evening newspaper functions as a point of reference for French journalists. It has an average circulation of 358 655 copies.
- **Libération:** Situated at left political spectrum. Circulation of about 139 959 copies.
- **Le Figaro:** One of France's leading morning newspapers with an average daily circulation of 327 500 copies. Its editorial line is conservative.

### Germany

- **Die Welt:** Situated at the conservative political spectrum. Has an average daily circulation of 209,000 copies.
- **Frankfurter Allgemeine Zeitung:** Promotes a classical liberal stance with occasional conservative views. It has a daily circulation of about 360,000 copies. It has the highest international reach of the German broadsheet newspapers
- **Süddeutsche Zeitung:** The biggest national subscription paper, with an average daily circulation of 457,353 copies. Situated at the liberal political spectrum. In a survey among German journalists, the SZ was named as the most important point of reference.
- **Die Zeit:** Germany's most widely read weekly newspaper with a circulation of about 488,000 copies. It is well known for its reputation for quality journalism.

### United Kingdom

- **The Guardian:** Generally situated to the left of the political spectrum. Has a daily circulation of 348,878 copies.
- **Mail (Daily & Sunday):** An average circulation of 2,139,178 copies, which makes it the UK's second highest selling newspaper after The Sun. The paper is published in a tabloid format and seeks to promote what it view as being old-fashioned conservative family value in the face of what it sees as a left-wing establishment.
- **The Birmingham Post:** Has an average daily circulation of 12,550 copies, making it the largest selling broadsheet in the West Midlands region.

### Norway

- **Atekst:** A national media archive owned by the Norwegian media company Retriever Norge AS. The archive offers over 50 Norwegian newspapers and magazines.

- **Dagbladet:** The third largest newspaper in Norway with a total circulation of 146.512 on weekdays and 247.555 on Saturdays. The paper promotes a social/cultural liberal stance and is one of Norway's leading newspapers published in a tabloid format.
- **Aftenposten:** The biggest national subscription newspaper and the second biggest paper overall. Has an average daily circulation of 250 200 copies (mon.-sat.). Situated at the centre-conservative political spectrum.

The country specific reports not only differ with regards to their methodological approaches in selecting sources and keywords, but also in their general approaches to media analysis and what they have chosen to look for and highlight in their analysis. In contrast to the other reports, the British report for instance deals to a great extent with the specific media related features that can be said to have an influence on the nature of media coverage. As such, ideological leanings of the specific newspapers in question, type of article genres and tone of voice are emphasized. These are doubtless important aspects of an analysis of media debate. In addition the British report also searched Google for sources on religious slaughter, which makes for an important aspect when investigating the public debate, as most people access online sources through this popular search engine.

The French report on the other hand puts much more emphasis on the political climate and surrounding context in which debates on religious slaughter takes place, or does not take place. It has a thorough description of the standpoints of public authorities, religious communities and animal welfare organisations.

The Norwegian report used a centralized media database to elicit articles from both major national newspapers as well as from smaller local newspapers. The advantage of this is that it provided a good overview on the many kinds of issues and events that brought about media attention. An important aspect regarding religious slaughter relates to agriculture and the farmers involved, whether they are directly or indirectly involved in halal or kosher slaughter. Hence, issues and events related to religious slaughter are often more interesting to local media than to the national newspapers and can easily be missed if only national major press are consulted.

The German report puts more emphasis on the historical background.

### **3 Media debates in the different national contexts**

#### **3.1 France**

The issue of halal is rarely discussed in the general press in France. However, it seems to be found increasingly discussed in specialized 'cyber-press'. The fact that the general press has paid little attention to the issue of halal and religious slaughter is quite remarkable in itself. The halal products distributed in the French market are not all guaranteed halal and when they are, there is no indication that these guarantees are backed up by any independent certification. As a result of the existing uncertainty in terms of halal certification and labelling, there have been several incidents relating to trade in "fake" halal meat. Scandals around "fake" halal appeared intermittently in the press until 2005, when the government commissioned a report with an investigation into "the market of halal".

The COPERCI report was initially destined to be available to the general public, but has up to the present date been kept confidential. The failure to communicate the findings of the inquiry to the general public might be the implications that the findings would have had on the French meat industry which sees no reason to change their practices. In France, the political clout of the meat industry dwarfs that of animal welfare NGOs, which do not have any widespread public support. In order to make the smothering of the report less apparent, it was sent to a journalist of the newspaper *le Figaro* (politically on the right), a non-specialist in this matter, who gave a brief account of the report, vague and without any citations from the text. The commissioned COPERCI report can be said to constitute an important contribution to the public knowledge on issues of halal and religious slaughter, except that it was not made publicly available. This silencing of a government initiated public information project and its non-existence in the media debate marks a significant finding in terms of the state of the French media debate on religious slaughter.

Community websites for French of African descent and French speaking Muslims have, on the other hand, been engaged in extensive debates on the halal market in 2006. These have been published in the daily French-speaking Algerian paper “*Le Soir d’Algérie*”. Furthermore there are several blogs and other online news sources that quite actively report on issues relating to halal. These are mostly consumer and market oriented, aimed at providing Muslims with appropriate information regarding halal foods.

Debates on kosher are largely left out of the French newspaper coverage. From the newspaper covered in this report, there are no signs of a major conflict related to religious slaughter with regards to kosher. The debates present within the two year frame (2005-2007) covered; include a debate over the draft national rabbinic tribunal and the Jewish Consistory of Paris being in financial crisis.

Among the players in debates on religious slaughter, or expected players, the meat industry has kept a low profile. During the examined time period, the meat industry has only intervened once in the public debate to reject categorically a compulsory levy on halal meat intended to finance Islam in France, through the new Foundation for Islamic works in France proposed by the Minister of Interior Affairs D. de Villepin in 2005. The FNICGV, which is a professional organization whose members include meat industry and wholesale businesses, received assurances that the plan to finance the Foundation through a tax on halal meat would be scrapped.

The animal welfare NGOs primarily target the general public, but their concerns and demands are rarely paid attention to by the French press. There are two main NGOs with a strong position on religious slaughter. The OABA wants to improve the conditions of religious slaughter and demands that existing rules be complied with. These rules currently allow derogation from stunning for religious slaughter. The Bardot Foundation demands that this derogation from stunning are removed.

- There seems to be a discrepancy between the general and the specialized online press in terms of media coverage, where issues of halal are not deemed important in the general press.
- There are no signs of major conflict alignments in terms of religious slaughter in France. Media coverage tends to be centred on very specific incidents, if at all.
- Debates on kosher are largely left out of the French newspaper coverage.

- Key players are animal welfare NGOs that try to target the general public, but who are not paid attention to by the press. The meat industry plays an important role, not so much as a visible voice in the media, but behind the scenes at the policy level.
- On community websites people engage in website debates related to issues relating to halal. Several blogs and online news sources are active in providing Muslims with appropriate information regarding halal foods.

### 3.2 Germany

The German media debate on religious slaughter has been heavily influenced by the legislative decision of the Federal Constitutional Court on 15 January 2002 to permit a wider practice of slaughter without stunning. Before 2002 slaughter without stunning had only been permitted with an exceptional permission. Although this continued to be the case also after January 2002, the constitutional change now permitted slaughter without stunning on the grounds of personal religious belief. In the aftermath of this event the media debates centred heavily around the issue of slaughter without stunning. The anti-Semitic prohibition for Jews to practice religious slaughter put down by the Nazi regime and the invalidation of the prohibition after Second World War puts Jewish religious slaughter in a distinctive position. The fact that Jews today mostly get the exceptional permission to slaughter without stunning has rarely been debated as such due to this troublesome history. Only after 2002, when the constitutional right to slaughter without stunning also applied to Muslims, the debate began to surface significantly. Critique of the Jewish *Schechita* (religious slaughter practice without stunning) is still largely felt to echo anti-Semitism and is therefore strongly silenced by the German media.

A public debate about religious slaughter was initiated by the Turkish butcher Rüstem Altinküpe, who went all the way to the Federal Constitutional Court to acclaim his right to slaughter animals without stunning. History was written when, in early 2002, animal rights had to back off in favour of the freedom to freely practice one's religion. The case of Rüstem Altinküpe received a lot of media attention and the level of controversy surrounding this was high. The case was illustrative of the various issues at stake in debates on religious slaughter, including religious views, traditions, beliefs, animal welfare and rights, constitutional rights, freedom of religion, freedom of profession, integration, identity, national history, as well as the heterogeneity of religious groups.

The key players in the public debate on religious slaughter are animal welfare defendants on the one side, and defenders of freedom of religion, on the other. However, media coverage tends to favour contra-religious slaughter views and only a few really pro-religious slaughter positions are made visible in the general press. Common positions taken by animal welfare defendants centre around the pain felt by the animals and the time it takes for the animal to die. Whereas the conditions surrounding the death of the animals seems to be at stake, others prompt the need for asking questions about the living conditions of these animals, pointing towards animal husbandry and the transport of animals. For instance, is hunting any less painful than religious slaughter? A liberal democratic position taken in the media often revolves around equal rights between religious groups, that is, if the Jews are allowed to slaughter without stunning, Muslims should be allowed too.

Also very evident in the media discourse are questions concerning integration. How far should a country's laws be stretched in order to grant for the freedom of religion? Here the

rights of a society as a whole are put against the rights of specific groups in society. Some players take on the role of “defending” the society against the “intruding” other, arguing that foreigners who wish to live in Germany should amend to German law. The few religious players noticeable in the discourses in the general press to a large degree take on an informative position, trying to explain or give a neutral account of what religious slaughter means to them. An interesting position in this regard is the question about death and pain; is there such a thing as painless death? How about industrial slaughter? Many contributions to this debate in the media also raise broader questions regarding morality, about a society’s notions of right and wrong. Discussions about tradition versus modern science are apparent as well.

The public and media debate in Germany demonstrates that religious slaughter is an ongoing issue for discussion. Although most of the debate and media coverage tends to cluster around specific events, like juridical matters, the issue remains controversial, sensitive and unresolved. Caught between religious viewpoints, animal welfare concerns and human right issues, media coverage tends to balance between a neutral and informative stance and a contra religious slaughter without stunning position. Particularly evident are animal welfare considerations, advocating a discourse against animal cruelty and suffering. There is also strong emphasis on Muslim slaughter practices, whereas Jewish slaughter practices are mostly left out of the debate. This makes Germany a particularly interesting case, as the debate is layered with historical controversies, evidently demarcating religious slaughter as an emotional topic of discussion, but with referee to the protection of rights of citizenship.

- The main conflict alignment in the German media debate has centred on the demand for and protests against slaughter without stunning.
- Due to German history, critique of the Jewish *Schechita* is largely absent in the debate.
- The key players in the debate have been animal welfare defendants on the one side and defenders of freedom of religion on the other.
- The issue of integration is very visible in the media debate on religious slaughter.

### **3.3 United Kingdom**

The British media debate on religious slaughter in the past two years has not centred on a particular event or conflict, as was the case in Germany. Media attention, however, has been fairly even over the two-year period in the three newspaper that were selected, with at least one or two stories per month relating to the issue of religious slaughter and to the consumption of halal and kosher foods.

Newspaper articles that adopt a particular stance in relation to issues of religious slaughter and to the consumption of halal and kosher foods tend to do so in relation to issues of identity, and social integration/segregation rather than in relation to animal welfare issues.

Furthermore, whilst left-wing newspapers such as The Guardian broadly support the consumption of halal and kosher foods as a sign of pluralism and multiculturalism, right-wing newspapers, such as The Daily Mail, tend to express a concern that the consumption of halal (along with an adherence to other facets of Muslim religious culture) could lead to problems of social segregation and to an erosion of mainstream British culture.

Media coverage on the consumption of halal food tends to be bundled together with a number of other facets of Muslim religious/cultural identity (such as prayer, the growing of beards and

particular views about sex education). Furthermore, the consumption of halal is often framed within much broader debates about social integration and segregation.

While issues concerning identity and multiculturalism are the most reoccurring themes within the British media debate on religious slaughter, the second most debated issue relates to the growing economic importance of halal food within the UK market. Articles related to this issue tend to be more neutral/passive in tone and tend to report these changes in terms of economic opportunities to invest in new markets rather than in terms of any animal welfare or social-segregation issues.

Surprisingly, animal welfare arguments are not very visible in the media coverage of the British general press.

The different themes often form the contexts in which and through which issues of religious slaughter and the consumption of halal and kosher foods are framed. For example, economic articles about the growing importance of the market for halal foods tended to be fairly neutral in tone, whereas articles that mentioned halal foods in the context of broader debates about social segregation tended to be far more opinionated. However, the vast majority of articles were neutral and either expressed no clear opinion or a balanced opinion about these issues.

- No specific conflict alignments in the British media debate on religious slaughter.
- The most salient issue of debate concerns questions on identity and multiculturalism.
- Animal welfare arguments are not very visible in the media debate.
- The market for halal foods is a very important issue in the debate.
- Debates on kosher are largely left out.

### **3.4 Norway**

Media coverage on issues related to religious slaughter are characterised by some “peaks” followed by periods in which religious slaughter has not been a main issue. In the autumn 2007, however, religious slaughter became breaking news in the main newspapers and TV channels. The main reasons for this debate were the threat of a new EU directive that would challenge the Norwegian ban on pre-stunning, and at the same time, discussions about a potentially new Norwegian Law on animal welfare. These debates lasted for some months. During autumn 2008 halal received renewed media attention when debates flourished on several different accounts. Three storylines were particularly evident in the media. First, what has been defined as an “historical agreement on halal slaughter” between the Islamic Council and Norway’s leading producer and supplier of meat and eggs Nortura, aimed at certifying halal meat - Norway’s leading producer and supplier of meat and eggs. Second, there was a debate about the right of Muslim prisoners in Norway to have access to halal meat, which was most prominently advocated by the lawyer and politician Abid Raja. And, third, coverage on rumours surrounding the disappearance of sheep from farms in the northern part of Norway believed to have been illegally slaughtered and processed into halal-meat.

The debate relating to the threat of changes in EU legislation on religious slaughter was often framed in terms of a general discussion on integration. Particularly evident were the veterinarian standpoint using scientific arguments in favour of animal welfare, on the one hand and arguments in favour of religious freedom, voiced by the Norwegian Islamic Council, on the other hand. The pro-animal welfare position can be regarded as representative of most



players within the Norwegian food system, supporting the unacceptability of slaughter without stunning. Although the pro-animal welfare position is the most evident standpoint in the media debate, animal rights organisations such as Noah and Dyrevernalliansen have not been particularly visible in the debate.

The issue of illegal halal-slaughter has been evident from time to time and is often mentioned as a fact when it comes to debates on halal, also as part of articles that do not primarily deal with the aspect of illegal halal-slaughter per se. It is not uncommon for media coverage to mention that illegal halal-slaughter is a widespread practice. As to date, such statements are more grounded on rumours and myths than real facts, as there are no numbers or statistics available for such a claim to be substantiated. When incidents such as animal cruelty has been exposed on farms, or cattle and sheep have gone missing, particularly local newspapers show the tendency to frame the incidents and point suspicion towards illegal halal-slaughter. A recurrent aspect emerging in the media debate refers to the ways in which it is left for the public to imagine how religious slaughter is performed; often leading to misinterpretations. Such media discourses are still in 2009 standing uncontested, fuelling assumptions that religious slaughter is brutal and something different to the ways “we do it in Norway”. Unfortunately, religious minorities are seldom taking an active role in the public debate regarding religious slaughter, making it more likely that beliefs and rumours stay uncontested within the public debate.

However, when religious communities in Norway do raise their voice on religious slaughter the main areas of concern have been the uncertainty about current slaughter methods in terms of the assurance that animals do not die during pre-stunning, as well as the authorisation for imports of kosher meat. In addition, religious communities have called for better and clearer information on food additives.

Debates on kosher are largely left out of the Norwegian press, probably due to the fact that the market for such products is marginal. In contrast, the media have increasingly reported on the market for halal foods, due to the market being on the rise. Sales in halal products thus seem to fuel media coverage on issues of halal. Market actors in halal have to a certain extent put on an informative voice in the Norwegian media debates, trying to normalise halal products by producing and promoting equivalent products to “Norwegian products”, such as halal burger and halal hotdogs.

Interestingly, photos accompanying newspaper articles dealing with issues of religious slaughter tend to be illustrated with ‘direct and bloody pictures’, thus fuelling the ungrounded assumptions of halal slaughter (with pre-stuning) as more cruel than conventional slaughter.

- There is high consensus among main actors within the food and agricultural authorities concerning religious slaughter ejecting the possibility of allowing slaughter without stunning referring to the scientific evidence that slaughter without previous stunning increases the suffering of the animal.
- Animal rights organisations have not played a central role in the recent debate on religious slaughter in the Norwegian context.
- Religious slaughter is framed as something that is related to “others” and words such as “western civilisation” and “barbaric” are used in the media as well as on web-rooms
- Market actors in halal have to a certain extent put on an informative voice in the Norwegian media debates.

- Kosher does not appear in the media debate, probably due to the fact that the market for such products is marginal.

## 4 Comparative analyses

### Similarities:

- Questions and issues concerning integration are part of the debate in all countries involved. Arguments that involve a framing in terms of “us” versus “them” are not uncommon.
- The market for halal (and kosher) is reported on by the media in every participating country and is a very prominent theme especially in the UK.
- Debates on kosher are, for various reasons, largely left out in all the four countries’ media debates.

### Differences:

- Muslim and Jewish inhabitants in each country differ significantly, whereas France, Germany and the UK have a considerable Muslim and also Jewish population, Norway has only 2000 Jewish inhabitants. This makes the markets for halal and kosher food quite different from the beginning in each country.
- Different historical contexts in each country, especially in terms of immigration and political history. Different reasons for immigration in each national context. Particularly the German history in relation to Jews stands out as an exceptional context.
- Different discourses in each country and different issues make the main conflict alignments differ; German media debate is very much centred on the issue of pre-stunning, with animal welfare concerns on the one side and religious viewpoints on the other side. The British media debate surround mostly around questions of identity and multiculturalism. The Norwegian media debate is characterised by a high consensus among actors within the food and agricultural authority’s concerning religious slaughter, referring to scientific evidence that slaughter without previous stunning increases the suffering of the animal. In the Norwegian media debate, issues of identity or multiculturalism is lacking while the debate is more centred on integration and animal welfare concerns. In France there are no sign of major conflict alignments in terms of religious slaughter that shows in the general press. In UK animal welfare arguments are not very visible in the media debate, while the market for halal, availability etc is a main discourse and issue in the UK debate related to questions of identity and multiculturalism. The British media debate on religious slaughter show no specific conflict alignments.
- Different voices are dominant in each public debate; In Norway market actors in halal have to a certain extent put on an informative voice in the media debate. In France the meat industry has kept a low profile. In France NGOs are key players, but are not deemed important in the general press. In Germany the key players in the debate have been animal welfare defendants on the one side and defenders of freedom of religion

on the other. Animal rights organisations have not played a central role in the recent debate on religious slaughter in the Norwegian context, while actors within the food and agricultural authorities are defending a status quo by referring to scientific evidence that slaughter without previous stunning increases the suffering of the animal.

- Different channels for information: In France, blogs and several online news sources have provided consumer and market oriented information regarding halal food. In UK particularly market oriented debates and information reach the public through the general press.

#### **4.1 Concluding remarks**

This report refers to media debates in Germany, UK, France and Norway and compares the media representations of religious slaughter. The report has discussed how and why different public debates appear in the different national contexts. We have given an overview of discourses on religious slaughter in the various countries and identified the extent of media attention given to issues related to religious slaughter, and the level of controversy. Our findings so far make us conclude that more Research is needed in the field.



## Appendix

### **5.1 Religious slaughter: public debates, media analyses. WP 4.2. – France.**

Written by Florence Bergeaud-Blackler. Université de la Méditerranée, France

### **5.2 Religious slaughter and the consumption of kosher and halal foods in the UK: the media debate.**

Written by Adrian Evans. The School of City and Regional Planning, Cardiff University, UK.

### **5.3 Religious slaughter: Public debates, media analyses. WP4.2- Germany.**

Written by Taina Bucher, Lill M. Vramo (SIFO - National Institute for Consumer Research, Norway) & Ellen Eser (BSI Schwarzenbek, Germany)

### **5.4 Religious slaughter in Norway: Main issues in the media debate.**

Written by Taina Bucher, Laura Terragni, and Lill M. Vramo. SIFO - National Institute for Consumer Research, Norway.





Université de la Méditerranée, Partner 3

# Religious slaughter: public debates, media analyses

## WP4.2 – France

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## Sources :

### **Period under review : 2005-2007**

To cover the popular press, the three major French daily newspapers were chosen: *Le Monde* (centre of political spectrum), *Libération* (Left) and *Le Figaro* (Right). Between them they cover the main political positions in France.

Situated at the centre of the political spectrum, *Le Monde* is the "journal de référence" (reference newspaper) of the French press and the francophone press worldwide. It was created in 1944 by Hubert Beuve-Méry under the suggestion of General De Gaulle, who saw it as a vehicle to promote France. *Le Monde* uses a wide network of correspondents both in France and abroad. It has recently changed its coverage, in particular a more aggressive take on business news and greater focus on social issues.

*Libération* was founded by a group of militant Maoists in 1973 with the support of Jean-Paul Sartre. It was one of the major French newspapers, considered as 'curious, impertinent and serious'. Its recent financial difficulties have seen the paper realign itself more towards the centre politically and follow a less ideologically leftist editorial line. The paper, nonetheless, remains paper of reference for those with Leftist political leanings.

Established in 1826, *le Figaro* has become the principal of the Right in France.

As representative of press campaigns and 'position papers' of animal welfare organisations, we have selected the websites of the OABA - œuvre d'assistance aux bêtes d'abattoirs ([ww.oaba.fr](http://www.oaba.fr)) and the Brigitte Bardot Foundation (FBB <http://www.fondationbrigittebardot.fr/>). Less well known than the FBB, OABA is more specialised, concentrating on farm animal welfare. The FBB is, along with the SPA, the most widely publicised animal welfare NGO, largely due to the media presence of Brigitte Bardot.

The opinions of religious authorities were also collected from:

*Muslims* : the websites Saphirnews.com (<http://www.saphirnews.com/>) and Oumma.com ([www.oumma.com](http://www.oumma.com)), both news sites whose audience are French speaking Muslims throughout Europe, as well as the websites of three mosques France who certify Muslim slaughterers (the Grande Mosque de Paris, <http://www.mosquee-de-paris.org/>, the Grande Mosque of Evry Courcouronnes <http://www.mosquee-evry.fr>, the Grande Mosque of Lyon <http://www.mosquee-lyon.org/>), and the Union of Islamic Organisations of France (<http://www.uoif-online.com>), which is an umbrella organisation which plays an important role in the Islamic community in France and which in turn is a member of FOIE (European Federation of Islamic Organisations)

*Jews* : the website of the Israelite Consistory of Paris and the website of the Jewish community magazine Alliance.fr. On the Alliance website, there is an online document detailing Kashrut dietary laws which is one of the most detailed on French-speaking internet.

Material from regulatory authorities, in particular official reports, were accessed through the websites of the Ministry of Agriculture (<http://agriculture.gouv.fr/>), of the National Assembly (<http://recherche2.assemblee-nationale.fr/>). We also used extensively the reference list of the website <http://www.droitdesreligions.net/> (Religious rights), one of the most comprehensive websites on legislation and religions.

## 1-PUBLIC AUTHORITIES

The period between 2005 and 2007 were marked by pronounced interest by the French State in the market for Halal products after a relatively quiet decade after the failure of the attempt to set up a central Halal authority (see box below)

In 1995 the Government attempted to organise a central Halal authority based on the model of the Israelite Consistory of Paris, but the project in the end failed, in part due to the resistance of the meat industry, who did not have any interest in a central Halal authority with the power to drive up the costs of Halal production. In fact, this gambit by the State has only increased the scepticism of the meat industry, who continues to oppose any State intervention in the Halal market. Every time that politicians, for reasons more populist than realistic, talk of supported financially Muslim congregations by rationalising the Halal market, the meat industry quickly make clear their disapproval (Bergeaud-Blackler, 2005). (Extract from the WP4-1 report)

The Government commissioned two reports that were initially destined to be available to the general public. However, up to the present date, the Ministry of the Interior has kept the reports confidential, citing doubts over the reports' accuracy.

These two reports are :

1- The report of the public inquiry COPERCI, a commission of 'audit and inspection' with the title 'the state of Halal'<sup>1</sup>.

2- A second report commissioned after the publication of the COPERCI report, written by the Veterinary Academy of France, which brought together scientific and technological expertise on the issue of reversibility of pre-slaughter stunning in animals.

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<sup>1</sup> Title : Investigation into the Halal market, Authors : Simon BABRE, Jean-Marc BERLOZ et Ramiro RIERA, Inspecteurs généraux de l'intérieur, Françoise VERLIAC, Inspectrice générale et M'HAMED FENINA, chargé de mission de l'Inspection générale de l'agriculture, Jean-Michel BERGES, Inspecteur général de la santé publique vétérinaire. This report has not been published, we therefore refer here to the overview published in the commission report of 2005 <http://agriculture.gouv.fr/sections//publications/rapports/rapport-d-activite-2005-de-l-inspection-generale-de-l-agriculture>

## The political context surrounding the publication of these reports

In 2005, D. de Villepin, the Interior Minister of a government formed by the UMP, a political party of the Right, led by JP Raffarin, proposed the creation of Foundation for Islamic affairs in France in order to manage, in a transparent manner, private bequests (both from France and abroad) donated for the creation and maintenance of Islamic places of worship in France, whose current number does meet not demand<sup>2</sup>. In particular, he proposed that the market for Halal meat in France could serve to support the Muslim congregation (see box below) with it seems, being aware of the failure of his predecessor, M Pasqua, on this issue a decade earlier.

### **Excerpt from the National Assembly debate<sup>3</sup>**

**Minister of the Interior:** «in creating the Conseil français du culte musulman (French Council of Islamic congregation). But we need to go further, with, for example, the training of Imams and the creation of chaplaincies in prisons. Equally, we need to further with the financial support of Islam. There are different solutions open to us, within this framework and with respect to the law of 1905. It is financial support by the congregation itself.. »

**Mme Odile Saugues** « No! »

**Minister of the Interior..** «as is the case with all other faiths, with a rationalisation of alms and the halal meat market »

A mission statement, dated 21st February 2005 and signed by all the cabinet directors of the Ministries of the Interior and Agriculture, was sent to the general agricultural inspectorate in order to establish an inquiry on the halal market in France. It is the most wide ranging inquiry conducted in France, in terms of its methods of investigation and scope of the report.

## Method and conclusions of the COPERCI report

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<sup>2</sup> H.El Ghissassi, Quel islam pour quelle laïcité ? *Le Monde* 21 Janvier 2005.

<sup>3</sup> 03/11/2004 « 1905 Law on the separation of the Church and State. Perspectives, 12ème législature Question N° : 1619 de M. Charzat Michel ( Socialiste ) suivi du débat. Source : site de l'Assemblée Nationale <http://recherche2.assemblee-nationale.fr/visualiser.jsp>

*Method of investigation* : documentary research, interviews with recotrs and other representatives of mosques (Paris, Évry, Lyon and Marseille) and Muslim associations, researchers, wholesalers and retailers, professional organisations and animal welfare NGOs. Visits to abattoirs and processing plants. Interviews with officials representing the Directorates responsible for food (DGAL), and economic and international policies (DPEI) at the Ministry of Agriculture, the Office of Religious affairs at the Interior Ministry, Directors of the Veterinary Services in those counties (departments) that were part of the study, office of fair trading and trading standards of the Economy, Finance and Industry Ministry. Requests for statistics from the customs service, abattoirs, agricultural authorities, from the Statistics Office (SCEES).

Scope of the inquiry: the entire supply chain, from production to distribution and retail, is examined along with regulation. However, consumption of halal products falls outside the remit of COPERCI inquiry.

Conclusions from the report:

- 1- The report affirms that State should play no role in defining Halal standards: “national regulation, following the principles of secularism and the separation of the Church and State, as well conforming to EU law, does not provide any definition of religious slaughter, nor, a fortiori, any definition of Halal slaughter. This responsibility is that of religious authority”
- 2- The report expresses reservations about the legitimacy of the training and certification of ritual slaughterers by the three mosques. “This form of regulation presents several difficulties. First of all, the chosen system for the training of ritual slaughterers, which allows the three mosques to share a veritable monopoly, is not defensible by any objective justifications”
- 3- The report criticizes the absence of any official definition of halal slaughter which prevents the State from exercising fully its sovereign duties of control and prevention of fraud.
- 4- The revisits the hypothesis that on of the greatest potential controversies is that of the consumption of halal meat by non-muslims without their knowledge through inadequate labelling (Bergeaud-Blackler, 2004).

Recommendations of the report:

- 1- It is the responsibility of Muslims in France, through the mediation of their representatives, to come to a definition of halal that is supported by the majority, and to put in place, in collaboration with other actors/organisations involved in the halal market, the legal tools to ensure compliance with this definition.
- 2- The authors suggest that these actions be supported by the state, but within the spirit of free competition in the market for certification and on behalf of

religious freedom. “Of course, these actions would not exclude other efforts to promote alternative meanings of halal and other methods of ensuring their compliance with this on behalf of religious freedom”.

3- The report underlines the compatibility of the solutions advocated with the fact that animal welfare NGOs could access to more information on the methods of slaughter used.

### Reception and response to the publication of the COPERCI report

The COPERCI report **has not been published, nor been made available online**. The summary which appeared in the report of the inquiry commission and available online, had been erased of all the principle points of conflict. Representatives from the meat industry have maintained that they never even received a copy of this document and therefore have not been in a position to comment.

How should we interpret this failure to communicate the findings of the inquiry to the general public?

By calling into question the approval of the three major mosques (Paris, Evry, Lyon), the mission could not have had the support of the CFCM (Muslim religious organizations) chaired by one of the mosques (Paris). On the other hand, by suggesting animal welfare NGOs could legitimately demand more transparency in terms of abattoir practices, including those used in ‘conventional’ production, the COPERCI inquiry commission must have antagonised the meat industry in France, who see no reason to change their practices. In France, the political clout of the meat industry dwarfs that of the animal welfare NGOs, who do not have widespread public support. The intervention of the Minister of Agriculture could only have been made in favour of the former. In order to make the smothering of the report less apparent, it was sent to a journalist of Figaro magazine (politically on the Right), a non-specialist in this matter, who gave a brief account of the report, vague and without any citations from the text (indeed the reports were not even identified), and without any possibility for comment. (Figaro article, 29 July 2006, « Les boucheries halal passées au crible des autorités »).

The report from the Veterinary Academy of France

In October 2006, the Minister of Agriculture and Fisheries requested the Veterinary Academy of France bringing together scientific and technological expertise on the issue of reversibility of pre-slaughter stunning in animals **as it is practiced in France today**.

The conclusions of the AVF report are as follows:

- The passing of an electric current between two electrodes placed on the temporal region, on either side of the head, does not lead to the death of an animal, whatever the species, with the proviso that the current be produced under recognised technical specifications (head-only stunning)
- Some improvements are needed in terms of the configuration of the stunning methods employed, and the training of slaughtermen.

- The report brings together existing work (mainly from Anglo-Saxon veterinary literature) and only fulfils half of its remit in that it gives no accurate indication of the current methods used in abattoirs in France.  
This very technical report is available online and therefore in the public domain. However, its degree of technicality renders it virtually incomprehensible to all but readers with specialist knowledge in this field.

## 2-RELIGIOUS COMMUNITIES

### A-MUSLIM COMMUNITY

#### Muslim Council of France without influence on the halal market

Islam is France's second religion and counts around 5 million followers. There are no official statistics on the number in Muslims in the country as the census is not authorised to collect data on religious faith from the population.

The exercise of religious worship is governed by the law of December 9, 1905 which stipulates that the Republic "guarantees freedom of conscience" and "freedom of religious worship" but "does not recognise, employ nor subsidize any one religion."

The main Muslim organisations in France<sup>4</sup> play in a minor in both abattoir industry and the halal market.

Nevertheless, since the 1990s, successive governments have attempted to encourage a representative centralized Muslim organisation, in part to make it easier for the State and local authorities to have a single organisation to liaise with to discuss cultural issues such as: constructions of mosques, Muslim plots in cemeteries, the appointment of chaplains in schools, hospitals and prisons, the training of imams and religious slaughter. It is also a matter of helping the religious community to organize the means to be financially self-sufficient, and little by little rely less on the financial support of the countries of origin of the majority of Muslims in France.

The Council of Muslim congregation of France (Le Conseil Français du Culte Musulman) was finally formed under the initiative of the Ministry of the Interior (directorate of religious affairs) in 2003, bringing together some of the Muslim organisations already mentioned.

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<sup>4</sup> 1-The Muslim Institute of the Paris Mosque was created after the First World War in 1916. It has historical ties to Algeria. 2-UOIF Union of Islamic Organisations of France. Founded in 1983, UOIF is the most important of the Muslim federations in France. IT has close linked to the Muslim Brotherhood. 3-FNMF National Federation of Muslims in France was created in 1985. FNFM is supported by Morocco. 4- Tabligh, French branch of Jama'at al Tabligh. It represents a pietist branch founded in India in 1927. 5- French Federation of Islamic associations of Africa, the Comores and Antilles. Founded in 1989, this organisation brings together Muslims following an Islam grounded in African and Antilles culture. 6- Committee for the coordination of Muslim Turks in France. Ties with Turkey. 7- Federation for Faith and practice (Source: Ministry of Foreign Affairs, 2007).



The CFCM has amongst its members (accurate to May 2008), the FNMF (French Federation of Muslims in France) – 19 seats, the Grand Mosque of Paris – 10 seats, UOIF (Union of Islamic Organisations of France) – 10 seats, CCMTF (Coordination Committee of Muslim Turks in France) – 1 seat, independents – 3 seats.

The CFCM is relayed to prefectures and local officials by the intermediaries of regional councils of Muslim congregation (CRCM). Without any religious authority, the CFCM has as its mission to: “defend the dignity and interests of the Islamic congregation in France, to promote and organize the sharing of information and services between the places of worship, to encourage dialogue between religions, to ensure the representation of the Muslim congregation with government at the local and national level.

The funding of the Muslim congregation is met by its members, Muslim organisations, and donations from abroad. The Foundation Islamic Public Works (Fondation des Œuvres de l’Islam de France), recognized as a public utility and whose statutes were approved by the decree of 25 July 2005, aims to raise the funds needed for construction and renovation of places of worship, the training of imams and to provide the means of operating the CFCM.

In 2004, an Eid el Kebir Commission was established by the Minister of the Interior, Internal Security and Local Freedoms and the Minister of Agriculture, Food, Fisheries and Rural Affairs, which was associated with representatives of the CFCM, in order to improve the conditions of ritual slaughter, notably during the religious holiday of Eid-el-Kabir. Its aim is to eradicate the "derogatory sites of slaughter that do not comply with existing regulations and the creation of temporary slaughterhouses that meet the regulatory standards" and to discuss "other issues related to the celebration of the feast, such as the transportation of animals, and making use of the full capabilities of existing slaughterhouses as well as the strict observance of sanitary rules and animal welfare<sup>5</sup>.

In addition to this, a Halal Commission was created within the CFCM in 2005 with the aim of helping to organise the halal market. In contrast to the Commission Aid el Kebir, the composition of this group (religious federations and representative of MI) was without representative from the meat industry, and therefore cannot begin to address the problems of traceability and funding. The commission has no results to neither speak of nor have met since 2006<sup>6</sup>.

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<sup>5</sup> Response of the Minister of the Interior published in the JO senate 26/08/2004 - page 1956 ([www.droitdesreligions.net](http://www.droitdesreligions.net))

<sup>6</sup>(please see also <http://www.saphirnews.com/Quel-role-peut-jouer-le-CFCM-sur-le-dossier-de-la-viande-halal-a3368.html>).

The commission's work has not been relayed to the regional level of CRCM, their impact on the general public is virtually nil. Confidentiality in the management of Muslim affairs remains in place, and if the State, through the Office of religious affairs of the Interior Ministry, remains ubiquitous, there is little accountability to the French taxpayer.

### Public opposition to the Ministerial approval giving the three major mosques monopoly to certify religious slaughter men.

Three mosques were given approval by the Minister of Agriculture to issue licences for religious slaughter men, which allow those who have them to work in abattoirs as well as undertake 'ritual' slaughter during festivals<sup>7</sup>.

The monopoly of these three mosques is now being publicly challenged. It was initially criticized within Muslim organisations for its purely political agenda without regard for religious issues. It is now publicly disavowed by the Inter-Ministerial commission of COPERCI because it gives a monopoly to mosques who pass their right to grant licences as a form of certification. The CFCM have remained relatively silent, either they support the three major mosques, or they have as yet no alternative strategy to profit most from the benefits of halal market which remain in the hands of the meat industry.

CFCM have not engaged in no other public debate around religious slaughter and the halal market.

Several mosques offer halal certification, playing upon the confusion between granting licences for slaughter men and certification itself. Most notably the Grand Mosque of Paris, which is close to Algerian government, but also, to a lesser degree, the Grand Mosque of Evry, which has close connections to the Moroccan government. The commercial division of the Ministry of Foreign Affairs in France and embassies also play a role in promoting the certification schemes of these two mosques, in publicising the addresses of these two mosques, even while the market for halal certification is unregulated, without any government control.

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<sup>7</sup> Decree (Arrêté) of 15 December 1994 relating to the approval of a religious body empowering ritual sacrificators established that: Great Mosque of Paris involving the company of the habous and Holy Places of Islam is approved as a religious body to empower sacrificators permitted to practice ritual sticking. (cf. annex A). Decrees (Arrêtés) of 27 June 1996 concerning the approval of religious bodies empowering ritual sacrificators, grant approval for the practice of ritual sticking and the sacrificator card issuance: at the Great Mosque of Lyons falling within the competence of the ritual Association of the Great Mosque of Lyons, and to the great Mosque of Evry falling within the competence of the Religious organization of the Ile-de-France Muslims.

The issue of halal is rarely discussing in the general press but it to be found increasingly in specialized 'cyber-press'

The guarantees of halal are many, for the most part ephemeral and virtually uncountable insofar as they are often created by companies that employ them to certify their products. The halal products distributed on the French market are not all guaranteed halal and when they are, there is no indication that these guarantees are backed up by any independent certification. Entries referring to halal or an Islamic control are numerous. This situation stems from the lack of government control on so-called religious claims, lack of religious control on a fairly recently formed market, whose profits have as yet been reaped by the industry rather than religious institutions (unlike the situation with Jewish religious slaughter).

Although it would probably assure itself carry out audits of these companies, independent agencies certification can be counted on the fingers of one hand. Examples AVS, .., the great Mosque of Lyon. It should be added the foreign agencies that certify halal products distributed in France HMC for example (jarred baby) but are still few in number.

Independent certification agencies are most likely needed to provide assurance to these claims, though as yet, actual instances of this happening are very few. We can cite the example of the Grand Mosque of Lyon and AVS as well as foreign certification schemes such HMC (Halal Monitoring Committee) operating in France certifying baby food.

## Halal meat and market issues in the general Press

### Scandals around 'fake' halal meat

The general press has given very little coverage to the scandals relating to trade in "fake" halal meat in the past two years. These stories appeared intermittently in the press, until 2005 when the mission COPERCI was tasked by the government with an investigation into "the market of halal." That the government was going to provide an overview of the halal market, from production to consumption did not elicit interest in the media, who did not report on this initiative at all, with the exception of the Figaro. The desire to clarify a very complex subject, so far rendered opaque by the commercial secrecy, which includes to some extent both the Muslim and Jewish communities, was probably less 'newsworthy' than scandals of fake halal meat.. But more importantly, we have observed that there has been a recent de-politicization of halal. The decline in influence of the extreme right in the political field is one explanation, as is the prudence of the economic actors involved whom have always kept a low profile on the issue.

### The case of pig soup

The general press reported a case of discrimination, known as "pig soup":

*A pork soup served to homeless people creates controversy in Nice, 31/12/2005.*

*"On Wednesday 28<sup>th</sup> December, at the port of Nice, a few bowls of pork soup were distributed to a handful of homeless people, the association Souldarietàà, a group closely allied to the far-right organisation 'Bloc Identitaire'.*

*"Dominique Lescure, aged 47, who served up this 'identity soup', gave his explanation as the low profile and lack of concern for homeless persons: "Competing charities came in advance so that we would have less pig soup to serve."(...) Dominique Lescure denies any racist intent: "Eating pork is not innocent, but then again it is not a sin. Supermarkets have aisles of halal or kosher meat, why ban pork soup for our French and European brothers. If a Muslim is hungry, we'll serve him..*

*"on the other side of the road, separated by several police vans, some fifty homeless persons are eating. The distribution of food is handled by volunteers from 'Secours Populaire'. Bruno Dubouloz, the convener of Intersecours, which brings together some forty associations, believes Souldarietàà has no right to "hijack people who are hungry to an ideology."*

*"Teresa Maffei, president of the Association for Democracy in Nice (DNA), said that the authorities should respond to "this incitement to racial hatred through legal means and prohibit Souldarietàà serving pork soup." But for Robert Mauri, deputy director of the Department for Health and Social Affairs (DDASS), to "prohibit the distribution, would*

*lead to the very result that Souldarietàà wish to bring about: that we publicise the situation and indirectly, their cause".*

### **The increasing number of halal butchers**

Source: "18% of butchers are halal" 29<sup>th</sup> July 2006, Le Figaro

"The development of the halal market is still based almost exclusively on local halal butcher shops. As a consequence of this, we have seen a net increase in the number of such establishments. In the Paris region in 2005, there were 625 halal butchers to the total 1 500 of the region (41.6%). For the Rhone region, the numbers were 110 out of 500 (22%) and 115 on 1 200 (9.5%) in Bouches-du-Rhone region. In total, around 4 000 neighbourhood butcher shops are halal, or 18.2%. According to experts, traditional halal butchers are becoming "essential for the whole industry" ".

### **The recurring problems surrounding ritual slaughter during Aïd el kebir**

Source: Shortage of abattoirs for upcoming festival of Aïd. 9<sup>th</sup> January 2006, Libération

*"How can we avoid the controversies that surround Eid el-Kabir every year? This festival, the largest of the Muslim calendar, will be celebrated this year from 10 to 12 January. 150 000 to 180 000 sheep will be sacrificed in these three days. It simply exceeds the capacity of slaughterhouses, whose modus operandi does not, moreover, fit with that of the Muslim communities.*

### **The major retailers enter the market for Aïd sheep**

Source: Shortage of abattoirs for upcoming festival of Aïd. 9<sup>th</sup> January 2006, Libération

*"One solution could be that Muslims buy their carcass at retailers. But they will do so only if they are sure that the meat is actually halal (in accordance with the rules of Islam). The large retailers this year entered this niche market. Carrefour is offering sheep carcasses in line with health regulations and rules of Islam, for 150 euros for a carcass of 20 kg (Liberation, 31 December). "*

Source: Muslims take a close look at the halal meat in the hypermarkets, 31<sup>st</sup> December, Libération

*The last few weeks have seen Muslims in certain disarray over an initiative led by Carrefour. Advertisements on Radio East and Beur FM and posters, have proclaimed that during Eid el-Kebir, which will be celebrated on 10, 11 and 12 January, whole sheep will be delivered at store car parks and sold at a competitive price (150 euros for an animal of 20 kg).*

*Alarmed, Muslims have turned to their representatives: is the Carrefour meat halal? In order to be religiously correct, the slaughter of an animal must obey strict rules: the sheep must be slaughtered facing Mecca, and a prayer recited. Echoing these concerns, the three chairmen of regional councils of the Muslim congregation (CRCM) issued a communiqué in which they expressed being "pleased with the interest taken in this market by large retailers," but "a number of questions remain unanswered with respect to a number of rules." Food safety rules and compliance with Muslim ritual, "most notably, the time of slaughter, which should occur after the prayer of Eid (after 9 o'clock in the morning).*

(...)

*If Carrefour has entered the market in Eid sheep, it is because they are taking an interest in the purchasing power of Muslims. But this initiative could also go in the favour of Muslim interests. By helping to solve a real problem.*

(...)

*Younger generations reluctant to wield the knife, and shopping, like everyone else, in hypermarkets, large retailers realized that this was a good game to get involved in.*

### **Opening of the first halal fast food restaurant**

Source : Burger King Muslim, the first halal fast food restaurant in France, 30<sup>th</sup> November 2005, Le Figaro

*Up until now, halal catering food was the business of a few sandwiches neighbourhood. But there are 5 million Muslims in France and consumption of halal products is growing 15% every year. "We haven't invented anything. We chose to adapt the business model of fast-food to our concept. Our core targets are families. On Wednesdays, workshops for children are offered" observes Hakim Badaoui, a professor of marketing at Tremblay and spokesman of the founders. They have already served more than 800 meals daily, with such names as "Koull Cheese" or "Koull Filet (koull means "eat" in Arabic). They have ambitions to create a chain of restaurants and cross swords with McDonalds, Quick and KFC. A drive-in BKM will soon open their doors in Paris. A group of 3 people are already working exclusively on the future of the brand. Over the last few weeks, the founders have received over 40 applications to set up franchises. They have a lawyer working on franchise contracts and fees."*

### **The problems of supply of halal meat in the army**

Source : the army must face the challenge of integrating the 'beurs' (second generation French of north African descent), 23<sup>rd</sup> September 2005, Le Figaro

*For now, Islam in the barracks remains crippled. The menus announce halal meals, with pork substitutes and a change of scheduling during Ramadan, but the reality remains uncertain. Muslim soldiers, whom many may spend several days with little to eat because of a lack of meat halal, eventually compromise. Others forgo Ramadan to keep the pace. "Most Muslims adopt an idiosyncratic practice,*

*cobbled together" summarises the researcher. Without anyone to speak to within the army, they take advice from imams outside. The very real risk of major schism occurring calls for the prompt appointment of a trained chaplain and a fight against discrimination. Because the army knows: it puts its cohesion on the line in the event of conflict.*

## **Halal meat and market issues in the specialised Press**

Community websites for French of north African descent and French speaking Muslims have, on the other hand, been engaged in extensive debate on the halal market in 2006. These have been published in the daily French-speaking Algerian paper "Le Soir d'Algérie"

Their journalist reported, in great detail, systematic fraud in all countries visited.

Four commercial websites regularly put out information on the halal market in France but also elsewhere in the world, mainly in French but sometimes in English:

1-The blog HALAL TRENDS targets itself directly towards those marketing halal. It presents itself as a site which "aims to provide new sources of quality, linking the expertise of doing business, information on business affairs, new products, and consumption habits ... ". The team is funded by a communication agency and by hosted advertising.

2-AL KANZ, a blog launched in January 2005 which presents itself as a "news magazine for Muslim consumers." It is an opinion-led website funded by advertising products targeted to the French Muslim community and fed by a professional blogger. Since 2007, this site has seen a continual increase in its audience figures, in part due an increased emphasis on news on the halal sector (finance, ritual slaughter), but also due to the contributions to the blog by many users.

3-SAPHIRNEWS<sup>8</sup> presents itself as a magazine to bring together "news and information directed at Muslims and their concerns." It functions through the "volunteer journalists who go and meet individuals, organisations and mosques, in

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<sup>8</sup> [www.saphirnews.com](http://www.saphirnews.com)

order to understand the realities and challenges facing the Muslim community.” This web magazine regularly publishes reports, analyses and interviews with individuals involved directly or indirectly in trade halal

4- We can also cite another website which plays a more activist role providing information to the Muslim community, in particular on issues of ritual slaughter. This is the blog of the association ASIDCOM (association for raising awareness, information and the defence Muslims consumers. This association, with close ties to the UOIF, receives no subsidy from the advertising sector. It presents itself as a organisation designed to "promote and develop individual and collective actions of Muslim consumers in order to ensure their recognition and the respect of their rights in all spheres of social life including food, education, health, economy, labour, culture and recreation ... ” It is led by a veterinarian converted to Islam. It considers the questioning of the derogation for religious slaughter as a manifestation of Islamphobia, the blog has made the continuation of the derogation on pre-slaughter stunning in the case of religious slaughter its main agenda.



## **B-JEWISH COMMUNITY**

Judaism in France counts approximately 600 000 adherents. However, no official statistics exist that can establish the number of Jews in this country, as statements of religious affiliation are not allowed in the general population census. According to Le Figaro (ibid.): “Nearly half of French Jews (48%) claimed to only visit a community stead once a year. But 45% eat kosher. France has about 200 rabbis and hundreds of synagogues and oratories. Ultra-orthodox Judaism is present in France, in particular the Loubavitch movement, which brings together some 25 000 faithful (including 15 000 in Paris). Jewish schools have experienced strong growth: there were 4 in France before 1945, 88 in 1976 (enrolment 16 000 children). In 2002, about 28 000 children attended a Jewish school. ”

In France, for worship is framed by the law of December 9<sup>th</sup> 1905, which stipulates that the Republic "guarantees freedom of conscience" and "free exercise of religion" but "does not employ nor subsidizes any religion"

Unlike the Muslim federations of France who play a minor role in organising the slaughter and halal market, kashrut is organized by the Consistory of Paris, which has the monopoly on shechita slaughter. However, it has no monopoly on certification which is an open market where certified kosher products are sold in kosher grocery.

In France, there exist several sites of rabbinical supervision<sup>9</sup>, including:

- Beth Din,
- Chabad - Loubavitch (Glatt)
- Rav-Rottenberg,
- Cha 'aré Tsedek Ve Shalom,
- Lamehadrin (Rav Katz).

A more complete list, but not exhaustive, is proposed by K Acher (<http://www1.alliancefr.com/~kacher/Klogos-2.htm>)

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<sup>9</sup> The kashrut system of certification necessitates the presence of cho'hatim (slaughtermen) et inspectors (machgui'him) during slaughter, and inspectors (chomerim) in the restaurants.

Only the Jewish Consistory of Paris is authorized to licence slaughtermen, which gives the Beth Din of Paris at the same time both a dominant and more and more contested position.

Until now the Beth Din of Paris has always refused to share the kashrut (Beth-Din, Glatt-Beth Din, etc. ...), some analysts believe that in doing so the Beth Din would in fact increase competition leading to a loss of funding for Jewish institutions.

## **Kosher meat and market issues in the general Press**

### 1- Internal debates with the Jewish community :

#### a. Debate over the draft national Rabbinic tribunal

**“Debate over the draft national rabbinic tribunal” (Source: Le Monde, 27<sup>th</sup> November 2005)**

*The Chief Rabbi of France, Joseph Sitruk, has announced the creation of a national rabbinical court, a Beth Din of France, causing the hostile reaction from Beth Din managed by local communities, as well as Loubavitchs and ultra-Orthodox communities who have their own Beth Din.*

*In particular, the Consistory of Paris, which has a monopoly in France on shechita slaughter, has rejected this draft Kashrut competitor who would endanger its finances, which were in an "already a difficult position". "The rabbinical court has not yet sat, but its Chairman has already overseen the religious slaughter of 4 tons of meat in Ireland. For now, these foods are stored in freezers. "If a single gram is brought onto the French market its war!" warns Moses Cohen, president of the Consistory of Paris.*

**The Consistory of Paris sees itself as the victim of destabilising tactics (Source: Le Monde, 4<sup>th</sup> October 2005)**

*"This last threat has come from the Central Consistory, which brings together all Consistories in France. Its Vice President, Zvi Ammar, has thrown the gauntlet by creating a national kosher label under the authority of the Chief Rabbi of France, Joseph Sitruk. The meat is slaughtered in Ireland by Israeli priests, and then imported. The first deliveries have already arrived in Montreuil (Seine-Saint-Denis).*

*These products, which present themselves as "super-kosher," compete directly with the label of the 'Beth Din of Paris'. They could be sold at the kosher section of large supermarkets, unlike the meat of the Consistory of Paris, which is distributed in specialized butcher shops. "You could sink us," states Moses Cohen. The institution he heads has already "big financial problems" and deregulation of the market for kosher food risk exacerbating the situation. "*

*Ces produits, qui se présentent comme " super-casher », viennent concurrencer directement le label " Beth Din de Paris ». Ils pourraient être vendus au rayon casher des grandes surfaces, contrairement à la viande du Consistoire de Paris, distribuée dans des boucheries spécialisées. " On risque de nous couler », assure Moïse Cohen. L'institution qu'il dirige a déjà " de gros problèmes financiers » et la dérégulation du marché de la casherout risque d'aggraver la situation. »*

b. Jewish Consistory of Paris in financial crisis

**Consistory of Paris : the majority put to question Source : Le Figaro 29<sup>th</sup> November 2005**

Le Figaro has reported that the profits of the kosher meat market (which finances half the 1 000 officials, including rabbis) are at risk because of competition from cheaper meat from abroad, or from those of Loubavitch and Ultraorthodoxe (glatt) Kashruts, or those of the Consistory of Strasbourg. With this crisis in the kosher market, the political expert Jean-Yves Camus says, "the old model of the central Consistory is in the process of imploding"

2- Debates external to the Jewish community

a. Calls for support from the State

**The Consistory of Paris calls for support form the State. 25<sup>th</sup> October 2007. Le Monde**

Faced with a situation which prevents them being able to maintain an estate of more than a hundred buildings, officials from the Consistory have called for State support. "If the Government is concerned that the Jewish community continue its development and to live its Judaism as well as possible, the State must give a strong signal of its support," says Mergui. In fact he goes further by saying that the State has a special responsibility to the extent that "two hundred years ago, the State created the Consistory". "Just because once a week is a building dedicated to worship should not preclude it from receiving Government grants", he argues in reference to the prohibition for the State to finance congregations.

(...)

On the side of the Government, it seems that only guarantees of loans from the

‘Caisse des depots’ could be granted, provided that the Consistory "slims down its workforce and undertake a "clean hands" policy.

## **Kosher meat and market issues in the specialised press**

### **1-Alliance magazine, community magazine for French speaking Jews**

A site fed regularly by K Acher (edited by a non-Rabbi), on the dietary laws, Kashrut news, the history of Kashrut, recommendations, contacts etc. .. This is a site with relatively complete, accurate information: *"That is to say: our site has no interest in promoting the kosher market." K Acher says he does not take sides: "Our list aims to merely to list the main certification schemes found on the French market, by giving as little as possible comment on their value. Only some schemes have been excluded from the outset - for non-commercial reasons - or after publication of a disavowal by a rabbinical authority we follow".*

<http://www1.alliancefr.com/~kacher/>

### **2-Website of Jewish Consistory of Paris**

<http://www.consistoire.org/>

Static presentation of Kashrut, its history, and lists of schemes and products certified by the Paris Beth Din. There is no ongoing debate on the site.

### **3-Kosher restaurant guide website**

<http://www.123cacher.com/fr/manger-cacher/>

### **3-MEAT INDUSTRY**

The meat industry keeps a low profile with regard to the religious slaughter, as it does with slaughter of animals in general (taboo). During the past two years, it has intervened once in the public debate to reject categorically any compulsory levy on Halal meat intended to finance Islam in France, through the new Foundation for Islamic works in France proposed by the Minister of Interior D. de Villepin in 2005. The FNICGV received assurances that the plan to finance the Foundation through a tax on halal meat would be scrapped.

#### **“To not participate in the financial support of Islam”**

The FNICGV is a professional organization whose members include meat industry and wholesale (beef, veal, pork, lamb, horse and offal) businesses. It has nearly 400 members who together employ around 30 000 employees throughout France and represent over 75% of turnover in the sector.

Business activities are diverse: slaughtering, cutting, processing, trading meat, import, export.

#### **Story :**

March 2005. Signing of the Statute of the Foundation for Islamic works of France by the four main Islamic federations and the Interior Minister Dominique de Villepin. The Minister suggested that the halal market could be a source of funding for the Foundation. This suggestion was immediately condemned by the FNICGV, who do not want to finance the Muslim congregation.

#### **Excerpt from FNICGV communiqué**

The FNICGV (National Federation of Meat Industry and Wholesale Businesses) reminded the Government of its opposition to the creation of any "tax or monopoly on halal meat sold on the national territory".

The president of the FNICGV, who is the former international rugby Laurent Spanghero, recalled:

*"The funding of any religion whatsoever should be funded by the faithful and donors, but in no case through compulsory levies collected directly or indirectly from abattoirs and cutting plants."*

*The federation justifies its concern with "contradictory statements of the Ministry of Interior on this issue in recent days which indicate –wanting to redirect a portion of the profit in the halal market to supporting the Foundation – as well as*

*legal investigations by the Directorate-General of the Competition and Fraud on the means to secure a monopoly over the use of the term - halal - by some mosques."*

*The FNICGV "wants greater transparency on this issue and expects the Interior Ministry to clarify as soon as possible the government's position on this point so that mosques, the Council of the Muslim Congregation of France and the future Foundation now abandon any proposed source of funding for their institutions from abattoirs and cutting plants. "*

## 4-ANIMAL WELFARE ORGANISATIONS

(part of this section is taken from WP4-1)

The animal protection/welfare NGOs primarily target the general public, but in France their concerns and demands are rarely relayed by the press. There are two main NGOs with a strong position on religious slaughter.

The OABA wants to improve the conditions of religious slaughter and demands that existing rules be complied with. These rules currently allow a derogation from stunning for religious slaughter. The Bardot Foundation demands that this derogation from stunning be removed.

“We must improve the conditions under which religious slaughter takes place in French abattoirs”

The OABA seeks to "assist, protect and defend, by all appropriate means as permitted by law, animals whose flesh is eaten," through the various stages of their lives, including on farm, shelter, transport and the slaughter. "

Comment: essentially this organisation conducts "investigations" (200 annually) on farms, auctions, transportation and abattoirs, which do result in reports submitted to the authorities and professionals, which sometimes lead to legal actions in cases of clear violation of existing regulation.

The OABA rarely attempts to raise public awareness of its concerns and demands.

An "open letter" by the OABA dated January 2007 warns "consumers" against the practices of religious slaughter becoming more widespread. While in the UK animal welfare NGOs have addressed consumers directly for some time (Bergeaud-Blackler, 2007), in France, the OABA is the first association to adopt this strategy.

*"For several years, OABA has observed and condemned the spread of religious slaughter practices within French abattoirs. This religious slaughter, carried out without prior stunning of animals, is often carried out in conditions that seriously violate national and European animal welfare regulations. And in turn are detrimental to 'freedom of conscience and religion' of French citizens, since they consume meat from animals slaughtered in this way without their knowledge. The OABA found it imperative to inform all consumers of this reality, disseminating this information widely to all parliamentarians, media, consumer associations and animal welfare organisations, doing this through the*

*means of its last 'open letter' (Religious slaughter in France: consumer deception and animal suffering. Letter of OABA January 2007, [http://www.oaba.fr/pdf/LETTRE\\_2007.pdf](http://www.oaba.fr/pdf/LETTRE_2007.pdf)).*

“Make pre-slaughter stunning compulsory during religious slaughter”

The Brigitte Bardot Foundation (FBB), named after its founder actress Brigitte Bardot, lays claims to the impetus behind the adoption of the original Humane Slaughter Act of 1964. The Bardot Foundation, however, was only created in 1986, nearly ten years after the successful campaign by Brigitte Bardot for a ban on the sale of fur from baby seals. The FBB was recognized as a public utility by the State Council in 1992. The FBB alleges to have 57 000 donors supporting its efforts to protect and safeguard both domestic and wild animals. Its public relations strategy is revolves heavily around the popularity of its founder, thanks to her good media and political connections. The radical position of Brigitte Bardot, in particular her support for the extreme right, and her clear hatred for Muslim slaughter practices which she describes as barbaric, has, if not diminished her popularity, at least considerably weakened her credibility in the public domain. Her public position has also increased public scepticism around the FBB and, by extension, all animal welfare organizations with a certain proximity to the racist and anti-Semitic extreme right.

But the FBB is also an effective lobbying organization of politicians (from right) and the Mosque of Paris. After every year denouncing the "open air butchery" of Eid el Kebir, the FBB has managed to get the rector of the Grand Mosque of Paris, Dalil Boubakeur, to issue a statement stressing that Islam is not against to stunning. In so doing, the Bardot Foundation has tried to regain the popularity it

lost due to its support of the National Front Party (extreme right) during the presidential elections.



*Generally regarded being an Islamophobe the photo of "BB" accompanied by Dalil Boubakeur smiling widely surprised the Muslim community. (Photo kindly sent by Bardot Foundation)*



The FBB has tried to influence the Ministries of the Interior and Agriculture, to abolish the derogation to not stun before slaughter. So far, these interventions have not come to anything. The FBB cited the report by the Academy of Veterinarians of France, submitted to Minister of Agriculture in December 2006, which concluded.... It reiterates its request to Nicolas Sarkozy, then Minister of the Interior and in the midst of his presidential election campaign. Sarkozy assured them in a letter made public, dated 22<sup>nd</sup> December 2006: "As you do, I hope that the animals suffer as little as possible during slaughter. Like you, I hope that, as far as possible, stunning prior to slaughter is common practice (...) I want that slaughterhouses which undertake halal slaughter, begin to the practice of prior stunning." In a note of caution, however, he added that as Minister he is not able to impose a ban on slaughter without stunning by decree.

Replying a few months later to a letter sent by Brigitte Bardot, this time not as a Minister but as a Presidential candidate, he wrote using the future direct tense: "Indeed, we will have to, in a spirit of dialogue with representatives of Muslim organisation and respect for traditions, succeed in imposing the type of practice I have already announced in a letter dated December 23 last year."





# Religious slaughter and the consumption of kosher and halal foods in the UK: the media debate

The School of City and Regional Planning, Cardiff University, UK

Adrian Evans

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Task 4.2

## 1. Introduction

This report provides an overview of the UK media coverage of issues surrounding religious slaughter and the consumption of halal and kosher foods. The report forms part of the output for workpackage 4 of the Dialrel project. The Dialrel project is a European framework 6 project, which attempts to improve knowledge and expertise about religious slaughter via dialogue and debate. The project focuses primarily on: (a) understanding the development of current legislation, religious rules and scientific welfare concerns about religious slaughter; (b) evaluating current religious slaughter practices; (c) understanding consumer and consumption issues in relation to halal and kosher foods; (d) exploring socio-economic issues related to religious slaughtering practices; and (e) promoting dialogue and debate about religious slaughter issues. This report complements work already carried out within workpackage 4, which reviewed the coverage of social, economic and cultural issues concerning religious slaughter within academic literatures in the UK (see Cole 2007).

Cole (2007) provides an excellent summary of some of the key legal, demographic and socio-economic aspects of religious slaughter in the UK. In relation to legislation, he notes that religiously slaughtered animals are exempt from the legal requirement for pre-slaughter stunning in the UK, however he also notes that only licensed Muslim slaughtermen using ‘the Islamic method’ in a licenced slaughterhouse are permitted to conduct Muslim religious slaughter and shechita may only be performed by a licenced slaughterer. Furthermore, he notes that, based on research by the Farm Animal Welfare Council, the government has stated its *preference* for all animals to be stunned prior to slaughter in the UK (for example see, Defra 2006, 55). In relation to UK demographics and the size of the market for halal and kosher foods, Cole states that: “According to the 2001 census, the Muslim population of Great Britain numbered 1,588,890, accounting for 2.78% of the general population. The Jewish population numbered 267,373, accounting for 0.47% of the general population.” Furthermore, following Ansari (2004) he contends that until the 1970s most Muslim immigrants originated from South Asia, the Middle East, Africa and Cyprus, however more recently, due in part to political refugees joining economic migrants, Muslim immigrants have also included; Iraqis, Algerians, Somalis, Turkish Kurds, Libyans, Egyptians, Palestinians and Iranians. Whilst he believes that it is very difficult to obtain reliable figures regarding the size of the market for halal and kosher foods in the UK, Cole extrapolates from figures produced by the Meat Hygiene Service (regarding the numbers of religiously slaughtered animals in a one week period in 2001) to estimate that approximately 900,000 sheep and lambs and 20,000 cattle are slaughter annually in the UK without any form of stunning. Furthermore, he observes that the market research company Mintel estimated the scale of the UK halal food market at £460 million in 2001. Finally, Cole identifies a number of key social-scientific themes and debates, which emerge from the UK academic literature on religious slaughter. These include:

(a) *Animal rights/welfare concerns*: UK consumers are becoming increasingly interested in farm animal welfare and ‘humane slaughter’ is seen as an important concept. The Farm Animal Welfare Council (as well as many animal welfare NGOs) has recommend removing the religious exemption for pre-stunning on account of animal welfare concerns.

*(b) Theological debates:* There is some debate within Islamic and (to a lesser extent) Jewish religious understanding about both the role and significance of religious slaughter. For example, certain religious Islamic scholars have argued that modern pre-cut stunning techniques can be allowed, as long as they do not kill the animal outright, as they can be seen as fitting within the overall spirit of Islamic religious ideals concerning the importance of animal welfare. However, other religious leaders have argued that cutting in-itself is the most humane way to kill animals, due to the rapid loss of consciousness. Furthermore, whilst some religious leaders have focused their attention on the animal welfare credentials of religious versus conventional methods of animal slaughter, others have focused on the more ritualised aspects of religious slaughter. For example, as Cole (2007) states: “His Holiness MR Bawa Muhaiyaddeen (c.1900 – 1986) argues that the Muslim slaughterer has to ‘look into the animal’s eyes, he has to watch the tears of the animal, and he has to watch the animal’s eyes until it [*sic*] dies – hopefully his heart will change’ (in Walters & Portmess, 2001: 177). The purpose of this is to reduce the number of animals slaughtered – the process of ritual killing is both more time consuming and more physically and emotionally difficult for the killer”.

*(c) Discrimination:* The literature about religious slaughter also highlights the deep interconnects between religiously-informed food consumption practices, notions of cultural and religious identity and wider social integration/segregation. For example, the poor availability of halal food was identified in a 2001 Home Office report as a frequent aspect of anti-Muslim discrimination in the UK (2004: 202).

*(d) Economic issues:* The main debate within the literature focuses on the issue of labelling and whether all meat originating from animals that have been killed without prior stunning should be clearly labelled as such. At present in the UK there is no obligation to label foods in this way and as such meat from animals that have been religiously slaughtered can enter the standard food chain. Many consumers and pressure groups find this to be highly disturbing, as it means that even those consumers who are strictly in opposition to non-stunned slaughter might have consumed these products without their knowledge, furthermore they believe that it makes a mockery of the notion that the exemption to stunning has been granted on religious grounds if the products are being consumed by people who do not believe in this particular religious practice. On the other hand certain religious groups have argued that enforced labelling would be tantamount to discrimination, as it would inflate the price of halal and particularly kosher animal products (this is because at present the economics of kosher meat production relies on receiving a good price from the ordinary food market for those parts of the carcass that are not suitable for kosher food). Furthermore, Jewish religious leaders have argued that if it is compulsory to label meat that has not been stunned, then perhaps it should be compulsory to label meat that has been incorrectly stunned (something which they claim to be a common occurrence during conventional slaughter).

This current report seeks to expand upon the research outlined above by examining whether these issues also emerge within media debates about religious slaughter. In particular, the report provides the reader with a systematic analysis of the coverage of issues relating to religious slaughter and to the consumption of halal and kosher foods in three UK Newspapers (two national and one regional) over the last two years

(31/5/2006 to 1/6/2008), furthermore it examines the extent to which these issues are covered in UK-based Internet sites. In particular, the report aims to:

- (a) Explore the extent of public attention given to different aspects of religious slaughter
- (b) Identify which issues dominate and the manner in which they are discussed
- (c) Explore any differences between religious groups regarding practices of religious slaughter
- (d) Examine whether arguments about religious slaughter are used to promote anti-Semitism or Islamophobia

## 2. Methodology

In order to analyse the UK media coverage of issues connected to religious slaughter and to the consumption of halal and kosher foods we decided to focus our attention on both traditional printed media sources (in the form of national and regional newspapers) and on new electronic media sources (in the form of internet sites). In relation to traditional printed sources, we used the 'Lexus Nexus' database and search tool to search for newspaper articles related to religious slaughter over the past two years (31/5/2006 to 1/6/2008). This time period was chosen to enable us to focus detailed attention on what is currently occurring within UK media debates, it also permitted comparison with similar research that members of the Dialrel project were conducting in other European countries. More specifically, we used the search terms: 'religious slaughter', 'ritual slaughter' 'shechita', 'kosher', 'kosher food', 'halal' and 'halal food' to locate articles which covered these issues. However, as the search term 'ritual slaughter' returned articles that were entirely unrelated to what we wanted to research (often focusing on ritualistic acts of human murder), we decided to omit it from the results. Furthermore, given the scope of this report we decided to focus our attention on the articles generated by the search terms 'kosher food' and 'halal food', rather than simply 'kosher' or 'halal'. Whilst this will mean that we might fail to trace some of the multiple interpretations and coverage of these terms outside of food related issues, we feel that this is justified given the focus of the report on issues connected to the religious slaughter of animals.

We limited our attention to three different UK newspapers: The Guardian, The Mail (Daily & Sunday) and The Birmingham Post. We chose The Guardian and The Mail as they represent different ends of the political spectrum (The Guardian is widely considered to be left wing and The Mail to be right wing), furthermore we chose The Birmingham Post, as it is a regional newspaper in an area with a high Muslim population, and we felt that this might give us a different perspective on the issue of religious slaughter from that espoused in the national press (see figure 1 for brief descriptions of the three papers).

Using these data collection techniques our searches revealed a total of 36 separate newspaper articles (17 from the Guardian, 13 from the Daily and Sunday Mails, and 6 from the Birmingham Post) over the two-year period studied (these articles are reproduced in full in appendix 1). As we shall see shortly, the vast majority of articles were returned under the search terms 'kosher food' and 'halal food' rather than under the term 'religious slaughter', however a more detailed look at the content of the articles revealed that issues surrounding religious slaughter were also covered in articles about kosher and halal foods (it was just that the precise term 'religious slaughter' was not mentioned very frequently).

In relation to new electronic media sources, rather than seeking out specific websites produced by relevant organisations (such as animal welfare groups, religious organisations, and policy makers), we decided to use the internet search engine 'Google' to generate a list of the 30 most popular (at least in Google's estimation) UK websites under the search terms 'religious slaughter' (the search was carried out in November 2008). The websites/articles generated were then downloaded in full for detailed content and discourse analysis (see appendix 2). This technique had the advantage that we did not have to make a priori assumptions about which websites

**Figure 1: Brief descriptions of the three newspapers chosen for analysis**

<p><b>The Guardian</b></p> <p>The Guardian has an average daily circulation of 348,878 copies (September 2008)</p> <p>Articles in The Guardian are generally to the left of the political spectrum</p> <p>A MORI pole conducted in 2000, showed that 80% of Guardian readers were Labour Party voters, however a similar pole conducted in 2004, indicated that only 44% of readers voted for labour (however this might reflect the reader's rejection of New Labour's move to the right)</p> <p>Whilst Guardian journalists tend to be from the centre-left there are also some right of centre journalists (e.g. Simon Jenkins)</p>
<p><b>Mail (Daily &amp; Sunday)</b></p> <p>The Daily Mail has an average circulation of 2,139,178 copies (December 2008, official DMGT figures), which makes it the UK's second highest -selling newspaper after The Sun.</p> <p>The Mail on Sunday has an average circulation of 2,211,029 copies (December 2008, official DMGT figures)</p> <p>The Daily Mail is published in a tabloid format.</p> <p>The Daily Mail seeks to promote what it views as being old-fashioned conservative family values in the face of what it sees as a left-wing establishment. Broadly speaking the paper supports stricter controls on immigration, is largely anti-EU, advocates tougher punishment for criminals and harsher discipline in schools. It is also largely pro-monarchy, pro traditional families and pro reductions in taxation.</p>
<p><b>The Birmingham Post</b></p> <p>The Birmingham Post has an average circulation of 12,550 copies (June 2006), making it the largest selling broadsheet in the West Midlands region.</p> <p>The newspaper is owned by the Trinity Mirror group - a large UK newspaper and magazine publisher, which publishes 240 regional papers, as well as The Daily Mirror, Sunday Mirror, People, Sunday Mail and Daily Record.</p> <p>In the 2001 census 16.8% of the Birmingham population identified themselves as Muslim (the average for England and Wales is only 3.0%).</p> <p>There are currently over 100 mosques in Birmingham</p>

were likely to carry information about religious slaughter. Furthermore, a very large percentage of users searching the internet do so via this search engine, as such the data that we analysed is likely to reflect the types of information that internet users would also be accessing. Finally, it is reassuring to note that the top 30 websites generated by this search consisted of a mixture of animal welfare/rights sites (6), religious organisation sites (7), government/policy sites (6), news/media sites (8), academic sites (2) and 'other' sites (1). Thus it would seem that examining the top 30 internet sites relating to the issue will also enable us to gain a fairly good impression of the types of materials being produced and the types of stances being adopted by a range of very different organisations in relation to the issue of religious slaughter.



### 3. Results and Analysis

This chapter is divided into two sections. First, we examine the coverage of issues relating to religious slaughter and to halal/kosher foods in UK newspapers. Second, we examine the coverage of issues relating to religious slaughter in UK websites.

#### 3.1 The coverage of issues relating to religious slaughter and halal/kosher foods in UK newspapers

**Table 1: Number of articles found relating to religious slaughter and kosher/halal foods in three UK newspapers from 31/5/2006 to 1/6/2008**

Newspaper/Search term	Guardian	Mail (Daily & Sunday)	Birmingham Post	Total
Religious Slaughter	1	1	1	3
Shechita	1	0	0	1
Kosher Food	6	6	1	13
Halal Food	9	6	4	19
Total	17	13	6	36

As one can see from table 1, issues relating to religious slaughter and to the consumption of kosher and halal foods received a reasonable amount of media coverage across the 3 newspapers surveyed in the last two years (31/5/2006 to 1/6/2008). Indeed, there were in total 36 articles relating to these issues: 17 in the Guardian newspaper, 13 in the Mail (Daily & Sunday) and 6 in the Birmingham post. Looking at the results it is clear that more articles were found using the search terms 'kosher food' and 'halal food' than were found using the search term 'religious slaughter'. This is perhaps indicative of the fact that stories relating to food issues are likely to be more common than stories relating directly to issues of animal slaughter in the UK press. The results also indicate that halal food issues were slightly more likely to be covered in the national press than kosher food issues (which is perhaps indicative of the larger Muslim population of the UK and the increasing occurrence and visibility of halal food), furthermore, and unsurprisingly, halal issues were mentioned more frequently in the Birmingham post than kosher issues. It is also interesting to note that these issues received marginally more coverage in the left wing intellectual Guardian newspaper than in the right wing popular press (The Mail and The Mail on Sunday).

All 36 articles are reproduced in appendix 1, furthermore table 2 below provides detailed summaries of the nature of the articles, their date of publication, their overall stance towards religious slaughter without stunning and the main points raised in each article. Throughout the remainder of this section we will explore the nature and content of these articles in more detail.

**Table 2: Summary of the content of articles found relating to religious slaughter and kosher/halal foods in three UK newspapers. Articles were searched for over a 2-year period (31/5/2006 to 1/6/2008) using the ‘Lexus Nexus’ database and search tool.**

Name of the newspaper	Guardian	Guardian	Guardian	Guardian
Key search word(s)	Religious Slaughter	Shechita	Kosher food	Kosher food
Publications date	6/3/2007	3/7/2007	26/9/2007	28/8/2007
Kind of article:	Feature article by guardian journalist	Obituary for Rabbi Josef Dunnar defender of ultra-orthodox Judaism	Guardian society section article by journalist	Feature article by guardian journalist
Is the article mainly supporting or criticising ritual slaughtering without stunning?	Brief comment on religious slaughter as “trickier to negotiate” than conventional if displayed on tv. (implicit othering?)	Neutral/positive	Balanced. Complex, nuanced article that explores different dimensions of segregation and integration. Liberal democracy and moderate religious groups	Neutral
What are the main points of the article? (in short)	Depictions of animals in the media cartoons versus documentaries/entertainment programmes on food and farming. Slaughter – the moment of death and how it can be defined.	Tolerance of other religions, jews learning or not learning from other faiths.  Dunnar as a fearless champion of shechita, which is described neutrally/positively as “the jewish method of humane animal slaughter”	Religious schools – do they help create an integrated society? Or do they encourage segregation. Mentions a state-funded orthodox Jewish school where children eat kosher food and recite Jewish prayers (but half the pupils are Muslim). School is strong on Abrahamic traditions. CRE – racial harmony	Ramadan calendar with halal chocolates and questions on the Koran/sharia law under each flap – 80,000 for sale in Asda stores.  Supplier is a Jew with expertise in Kosher market now getting into the growing halal market

Name of the newspaper	Guardian	Guardian	Guardian	Guardian
Key search word(s)	Kosher food	Kosher food	Kosher food	Kosher food
Publications date	16/5/2007	2/10/2006	25/7/2006	6/6/2006
Kind of article:	Feature article guardian journalist	Journalist article in media pages	Journalist article guardian home pages	Journalist article educational pages
Is the article mainly supporting or criticising ritual slaughtering without stunning?	Neutral	Neutral	Neutral	Neutral
What are the main points of the article? (in short)	Globalisation of food growing market for ethnic foods. Ethnic minority food market estimated to be worth £1.86bn. Shift from expensive pre-prepared ethnic foods for non-ethnic minorities to raw ingredients for ethnic minorities. Tesco and Asda's ethnic aisles – kosher food. Size of the market for kosher and halal. Market growth. Price concerns. Supermarkets potentially wiping out local ethnic shops.	What would you do if Osama called - dilemmas for tv editors.  Discussion of appropriate treatment of religion and ethnic rights within television programs – e.g. is it acceptable to propose that kosher food should be abolished	Ground fighting on Israel Lebanon border between jews and Hizbullah. Chabad Lubavitch ultra-religious US-based movement giving out prayer cards, promoting and handing out kosher food.	The love of foreign food in the UK. Willingness to try foreign foods and multi-culturalism. Connection between eating and identity. Kosher food marginalized over time due to greater assimilation. Authenticity/hybridity of foreign food available in the UK – chicken tikka masala as a post-war British construct. Availability of halal food linked to location of minority populations.

Name of the newspaper	Guardian	Guardian	Guardian	Guardian
Key search word(s)	Halal food	Halal food	Halal food	Halal food
Publications date	26/3/2008	12/11/2007	20/10/2007	23/5/2007
Kind of article:	Journalist – features pages	Journalist –home pages	Journalist – home pages	Guest article by 2 politicians - comment and debate pages
Is the article mainly supporting or criticising ritual slaughtering without stunning?	Positive presentation of halal	Neutral	Neutral but slight implicit othering – halal as not the norm.	Neutral/positive – halal food as a legitimate right for Muslim consumers
What are the main points of the article? (in short)	Market for fried chicken convenience food. Growth of cheap chicken market in UK despite media campaigns for better welfare. Fast food and association with working class and ethnic minority consumers. Halal fried chicken a big seller. Halal as safer and healthier as blood is drained from the chicken.	Tourism. Growth of “diaspora tourism” immigrants returning to home countries to retrace roots. Untapped potential for ‘halal tourism’ in the middle east – e.g. an airline could be set up offering halal food, calls for prayer, qur’ans and separate sections for male and female passengers.	Article about charity pop concert for Dafur (Muslim Live8) in Wembley. Special arrangements – accommodate prayer times. For one night only Wembley will be dry and halal. Connects food directly with culture. Some noting of halal (esp non-alcohol) as ‘other’/unusual but not necessarily bad.	The move in UK government to empower people – give people personal control over public services. Muslim parents with children at school that does not serve halal could legitimately try to re-direct the school leadership rather than switch schools.

Name of the newspaper	Guardian	Guardian	Guardian	Guardian
Key search word(s)	Halal food	Halal food	Halal food	Halal food
Publications date	21/4/2007	7/2/2007	30/1/2007	5/12/2006
Kind of article:	Journalist – weekend pages	Guest author director of research at IslamExpo – comment and debate pages	Journalist- education pages	Journalist Guardian International
Is the article mainly supporting or criticising ritual slaughtering without stunning?	Very balanced	Pro halal as part of identity	Balanced	Neutral
What are the main points of the article? (in short)	<p>What's life like for British Muslims in the army? Problems of being a Muslim soldier. Only 340 Muslims in 133,000 UK army. Integration and racism in the army. Army made efforts to make forces less alien environment for those who want to follow Islamic teachings (halal food allowed, prayer times etc.) So halal is portrayed as central to Muslim identity. Moderate attitudes – flexibility with faith. Flexibility, compromise, learning about other faiths. Need for Muslims integrate into British society</p>	<p>David Cameron (leader of the conservative party) betrays familiar Tory hostility to pluralism. DC has rigid notion of national identity and contempt for cultural pluralism, hostility to immigration. Criticism of rightwing Policy Exchange publication on Muslim youth – especially the way the report linked muslim culture (halal etc) with support for violent anti-Western organisations.</p>	<p>Universities having to learn about halal (cooking, handling, serving) for Muslim students. Influx of Muslim students is changing university diets in the UK. Mention of <i>animal welfare</i> issues and slaughter. Part of universities equality policy. Article covers a lot of ground – AW, supply of Halal, religious and minority integration.</p>	<p>Harsh treatment of Muslim terror suspect in military detention in US. Shackled, blindfolded etc. on trip to dentist – but US government denies allegations says he basic needs were met including halal food.</p>

Name of the newspaper	Guardian	Daily & Sunday Mail	Daily & Sunday Mail	Daily & Sunday Mail
Key search word(s)	Halal food	Religious slaughter	Kosher food	Kosher food
Publications date	2/9/2006	17/12/2006	1/3/2008	15/9/2007
Kind of article:	Journalist – financial pages	Journalist	Journalist	Jouornalist/academic (longer essay)
Is the article mainly supporting or criticising ritual slaughtering without stunning?	Neutral	Negative	Neutral	Neutral
What are the main points of the article? (in short)	Tesco expanding its halal foods range – 2 new chocolate bars – all ingredients can be traced back as Halal or vegetarian.	Halal food served to pupils without their knowledge even though it is cruel. Halal slaughter <i>condemned</i> by the RSPCA. Quite inflammatory article about lack of communication with non-muslim consumers and aw problems of halal	Main article about husband trying to kill wife’s unborn child with poison – but mentions they owned a restaurant selling kosher food.	Pope Pius 12 – henchman of Hitler or saviour of the Jews? Article defends the pope’s actions – sees him as a saviour of many Italian Jews. He sheltered Jews in the Vatican and even provided kosher food for them (so again deep link between food and cultural identity/rights).

Name of the newspaper	Daily & Sunday Mail	Daily & Sunday Mail	Daily & Sunday Mail	Daily & Sunday Mail
Key search word(s)	Kosher food	Kosher food	Kosher food	Kosher food
Publications date	11/9/2007	21/3/2007	22/10/2006	16/7/2006
Kind of article:	Journalist- media pages	Journalist – sport	Journalist.	Journalist – guest author previously a newspaper editor
Is the article mainly supporting or criticising ritual slaughtering without stunning?	Neutral	Neutral	Neutral/negative about multiculturalism	Neutral
What are the main points of the article? (in short)	Brief mention of Jewish Chronicle questioning Nigella Lawson's Jewishness as she cooks with pork (termed in original article 'pig-flesh'). Again illustrates deep connection food –identity.	Main article is about England trip to Israel to play football. The hotel will be guarded, no alcohol will be sold to players and all food will be kosher – John Terry will be disappointed as his favourite food is steak with parmesan sprinkled on top (kosher does not allow mixing of meat and dairy products)	(The Guardian covered the same story). BBC is biased in favour of minorities. BBC dominated by trendy left-wing liberals biased against Christianity and in favour of multiculturalism. BBC is more sensitive to the feelings of Muslims than Christians. BBC has become too politically correct. Would it be acceptable to send kosher meat, the bible or the Koran to 'room 101' – bible and kosher meat ok but not the Koran. This illustrates a Muslim bias.	Comment on labour's old chief fundraiser Lord Levy (arrested by Scotland Yard's specialist crime directorate – cash for peerages scandal). Description of diner at Levy's and his wife's careful preparation of kosher food. Again strong link food – identity.

Name of the newspaper	Daily & Sunday Mail	Daily & Sunday Mail	Daily & Sunday Mail	Daily & Sunday Mail
Key search word(s)	Halal food	Halal food	Halal food	Halal food
Publications date	30/11/2007	16/9/2007	27/3/2007	21/2/2007
Kind of article:	Journalist-article	Journalist-article	Journalist article	Journalist article
Is the article mainly supporting or criticising ritual slaughtering without stunning?	Neutral – just halal as a symbol of Muslim identity	Neutral	Neutral	Slightly negative
What are the main points of the article? (in short)	Murder story about young sikh woman who murdered her lover's wife and unborn baby. The young sikh woman was obsessed with the man and she talked of converting to Islam – she started to abstain from alcohol, wore and head scarf and ate halal food (again halal is seen as a key indicator of Muslim identity. Inter-religious love triangle.	Huge rise in demand for Islamic accounts. Wealth must be made by legitimate trade – investment in companies involved in gambling, alcohol, or tobacco is not allowed. Head of national halal food group won a lifetime achievement business award. Supply – emerging halal markets.	Cricket murder police hunt three Pakistan team helpers. These helpers brought the players Halal food and chauffeured them around during their stay in Jamaica.	Muslims want schools to be friendlier to their faith. Reaction to a report from the Muslim council of Britain. School caterers should provide halal meals – store and prepare halal food separately and clearly label it. Case against this was strongly put – could lead to segregation and backlash. Islamophobia.



Name of the newspaper	Daily & Sunday Mail	Daily & Sunday Mail	Birmingham Post	Birmingham Post
Key search word(s)	Halal food	Halal food	Religious Slaughter	Kosher food
Publications date	19/11/2006	12/7/2006	8/4/2008	15/3/2008
Kind of article:	Journalist – article	Journalist – article	Letter to the editor	Features – ‘on this day’. List of things that occurred on this day throughout history.
Is the article mainly supporting or criticising ritual slaughtering without stunning?	Neutral	Negative towards Muslim rules.	Very negative – but part of a more balanced series of exchanges pro and con.	
What are the main points of the article? (in short)	Halal haribos. Sold at asda. The sweets do not contain gelatin – unacceptable to Muslims because it is made of animal products forbidden under Islamic law. Alcohol-based flavourings and colourings also removed. At present sold only in NW (large muslim pops) – sells more than 10,000 packets a week. Business man is an orthodox Jew but sees no conflict this is just an example of multiculturalism.	Alton towers - wedding party double booked with Muslim fun day. Their ‘dreams fell apart’ when they discovered they had been double booked with a fun day for up to 28,000 Muslims. Banning couples from going on rides together, women cover bodies, alcohol prohibited No music only halal food available.	There is no place for such cruelty. Animal welfare. Letter by reader in response to Muslim authors’ claims that religious slaughter is not cruel. Emotive language: <i>animal’s throats being slashed</i> . Beast fighting and kicking for life for many minutes. This is not a religious issue there should be no place in any religion for such cruelty.	1933 Nazi leader Adolf Hitler proclaimed the Third Reich in Germany. He also banned left-wing newspapers and kosher food.

Name of the newspaper	Birmingham Post	Birmingham Post	Birmingham Post	Birmingham Post
Key search word(s)	Halal Food	Halal Food	Halal Food	Halal Food
Publications date	12/4/2008	16/7/2007	4/4/2007	3/8/2006
Kind of article:	Journalist – sport section	Journalist- Business	Journalist- Business	Journalist article – news section
Is the article mainly supporting or criticising ritual slaughtering without stunning?	Neutral	Neutral/positive	Neutral	
What are the main points of the article? (in short)	Aston Villa FC chairman trying to ingratiate club with neighbours – invited local residents to a match – 700 tickets that area kept alcohol free and halal food outlets were installed to serve Asian supports who might not normally attend a match.	Central Jewel awards at NEC for Asian community. Lifetime achievement award to Hafiz Muhammad Yaqoob – pioneer of the halal food industry in the UK and Europe.	Lloyds tsb has launced the first UK high street business bank account to be compliant with Shariah law. Forbid all forms of paying interest. No interest paid of received money ring-fenced. Owner of a halal food business welcomed the launch.	Muslim fun day at Alton towers cancelled due to poor ticket sales. Special provisions had been agreed – ban on alcohol, gaming machines, music in public areas. Segregated rides, halal food stalls, prayer areas. Islamic leisure (company behind day). Also mentions problem of wedding couple (non-muslim) who were told by Islamic leisure that they would also have to follow rules – but Alton towers rejected these claims.

Looking at table 3, it is possible to make some observations about the types of newspaper articles in which issues relating to religious slaughter and to the consumption of halal and kosher foods were mentioned.

**Table 3: The type of articles in which discussion of religious slaughter and kosher/halal foods occurred in UK newspapers**

Newspaper/type of article	Guardian	Mail (Daily & Sunday)	Birmingham Post	Total
General News	2	6	1	9
General Feature	6	1	1	8
Media Articles	1	2	0	3
Education Articles	2	0	0	2
Financial/business Articles	1	2	2	5
Sport Articles	0	1	1	2
Guest Articles	2	1	0	3
Other Articles	3	0	1	4

First, one can see that stories relating to, or mentioning, these issues occurred within many different types of article including; news articles, feature articles, media articles, education articles, financial articles, sport articles and guest articles. This indicates that issues relating to religious slaughter and to the consumption of halal and kosher foods have a broad relevance across many different topic areas in the UK context. Second, it is interesting to note that articles about halal and kosher food appear within the financial/business sections of these newspapers, this is indicative of the growing economic importance of these food products within the UK context. Third, one of the main differences between the media coverage of these issues in the Guardian compared to the coverage in the Daily and Sunday Mails, relates to the fact that stories about these topics tended to appear within feature articles in the Guardian but within news articles in the Mail newspapers. This might be indicative of the broader stances towards these issues by each paper (i.e. these stories are presented as ‘news’ in the Mail in an immediate sensationalist fashion, whereas they are present in a more measured way as feature articles within the Guardian), however it might also be indicative of mere semantic differences between the ways in which articles are labelled at these different papers.

Turning to consider table 4, one can see that the coverage of issues relating to religious slaughter and to the consumption of halal and kosher foods was fairly even over time during the 2-year period under consideration. In most months there were at least one or two stories relating to these issues. On those months in which 3 or even 4 articles appeared there seemed to be little connection between the stories, for example in September 2007 four unconnected stories occurred relating to; the role of religious schools in fostering social integration or social segregation; an essay relating to whether Pope Pius 12 was ‘a henchman of Hitler or a saviour of the Jews’; a comment relating to an article in the Jewish Chronicle, which questioned Nigela Lawson’s Jewishness based on her use of pork in her cookery programs; and finally a business article about the head of the national halal food group receiving a lifetime achievement business award. To summarise, the distribution of newspaper articles over time indicates that whilst there were no really big news events relating to these issues over this time period (which could have sparked controversy and generated

increased debate) there was instead a steady trickle of news and feature articles, which points to the enduring relevance of these issues.

**Table 4: Variations in the coverage of religious slaughter and kosher/halal foods in three UK newspapers (31/5/2006 to 1/6/2008)**

	1 article	2 articles	3 articles	4 articles
6/2006				
7/2006				
8/2006				
9/2006				
10/2006				
11/2006				
12/2006				
1/2007				
2/2007				
3/2007				
4/2007				
5/2007				
6/2007				
7/2007				
8/2007				
9/2007				
10/2007				
11/2007				
12/2007				
1/2008				
2/2008				
3/2008				
4/2008				
5/2008				

**Table 5: The overall tone (negative/positive/neutral) of articles covering religious slaughter and kosher/halal foods in three UK newspapers (31/5/2006 to 1/6/2008)**

Overall Tone	Total	Kosher Specific	Halal Specific	Guardian	Mail (Daily & Sunday)	Birmingham Post
Positive	3	1	2	3		
Negative	4		3		3	1
Neutral	29	10	15	14	10	5

Table 5 depicts the overall tone (i.e. whether the articles were mainly positive, negative or neutral) of articles covering issues related to religious slaughter and to the consumption of halal and kosher foods. As one can see the vast majority of articles were neutral and either expressed no clear opinion or a balanced opinion about these issues, however four articles expressed marginally negative opinions about these issues, whilst 3 articles presented marginally positive opinions about these issues. The majority of non-neutral articles were specifically related to halal food (2 positive and 3 negative). Furthermore, the majority of positive articles appeared in the Guardian newspaper (left wing), whereas the majority of negative articles appeared in the Mail newspapers (right wing).

Those articles from the Daily and Sunday Mail, which depicted halal consumption in a slightly negative light tended to focus on how the consumption of halal foods (in conjunction with numerous other features of Muslim cultural identity) were helping to foster social segregation and to erode traditional British cultural practices. For example, one story heavily criticised a report from the Muslim council of Britain, which proposed that school caterers should provide halal meals for Muslim pupils. The article argued that this (along with a raft of other suggestions) would only help to foster separation and segregation and could lead to an Islamophobic backlash. Another article tells the story of a British couple who had planned their wedding at Alton Towers (a UK theme park) only to discover that they had been double-booked alongside a Muslim fun day. This meant that they were required (unreasonably in the view of the paper) to adhere to specific rules for that day, which included a prohibition on alcohol, no music and a halal dominated food supply. As the paper rather insensitively remarks: “Their dreams fell apart, however, when they discovered they had been double-booked with a fun day for up to 28,000 Muslims.”

In contrast 2 of the 3 Guardian articles, which portrayed halal food consumption in a positive light, did so in the context of their support for multiculturalism. One article even suggested that (within the context of a much wider article about empowerment) Muslim parents with children at a school that does not serve halal food could legitimately try to re-direct the school leadership rather than switch schools. Another article was highly critical about both a speech delivered by the Conservative leader David Cameron and a report by the rightwing organisation ‘Policy Exchange’ both of which were portrayed as showing hostility towards pluralism. The article states:

“Cameron delivered his speech on the day the rightwing Policy Exchange published its report on British Muslim youth. The survey mixed wildly unrelated questions - faith schools, the hijab, sharia - with support for violent anti-western organisations, as

though a girl's wish to cover her hair was no less sinister than support for al-Qaida. Just over a third of the youngsters polled expressed a desire to live under sharia, reported by the Daily Express as "more than one-third want Islamic law imposed in the UK". The implication is that if you want to eat halal food, marry according to Islamic law, or get an interest-free mortgage - which is what most Muslims understand by sharia - you are a threat to the social order, legal system and cultural identity of the land."

Finally, one entry (a letter to the editor) in the Birmingham post presented a very strong animal welfare argument against religious slaughter without stunning. The letter itself was very negative about the animal welfare implications of religious slaughter without stunning, however it is important to note that this particular letter was part of a broader series of more balanced exchanges about this issue.

To summarise, one can see that within the UK, newspaper articles that adopt a particular stance in relation to issues of religious slaughter and to the consumption of halal and kosher foods tend to do so in relation to issues of identity, and social integration/segregation rather than in relation to animal welfare issues. Furthermore, whilst left-wing newspapers such as The Guardian broadly support the consumption of halal and kosher foods as a sign of pluralism and multiculturalism, right-wing newspapers, such as The Daily Mail tend to express a concern that the consumption of halal (along with an adherence to other facets of Muslim religious culture) could lead to problems of social segregation and to an erosion of mainstream British culture.

Looking at table 6, one can see that a range of different themes emerged in newspaper articles related to religious slaughter and to the consumption of halal and kosher foods. The most frequently occurring theme (14 times) related to issues around food and identity and in particular to whether the consumption of halal or kosher foods should be praised as a form of multiculturalism or feared as a sign of social segregation. A typical example of this theme can be found in an article from the Daily Mail (21/2/2007). The article states:

"The Muslim Council of Britain said some schools were failing to respect the wishes of Muslim children when organising sex education, changing rooms and religious assemblies.... Suggestions to make schools more Muslim friendly include the building of prayer rooms, individual changing cubicles and allowing pupils to grow beards ... School caterers should provide halal meals, storing and preparing halal food separately, and labelling it clearly in canteens, the council said ... But the calls are at odds with Labour's leading Muslim peer who said catering for Islamic values is not helping integration. Lord Ahmed declared that 'the veil is now a mark of separation, segregation and defiance against mainstream British culture'".

Here we can see that the consumption of halal food is bundled together with a number of other facets of Muslim religious/cultural identity (such as prayer, the growing of beards and particular views about sex education). Furthermore, we can see that the consumption of halal is framed within much broader debates about social integration and segregation.

**Table 6: The types of themes addressed within articles relating to religious slaughter and kosher/halal foods in three UK newspapers (31/5/2006 to 1/6/2008)**

Themes Addressed	Total	Kosher Specific	Halal Specific	Guardian	Mail (Daily & Sunday)	Birmingham Post
Food –identity (Rights of religious expression; integration/ segregation)	14	6	7	9	4	1
Portrayal of ethnicity & religion in the media	2	2		1	1	
Business/Expanding market	10		9	6	2	2
Market transparency	1		1		1	
Big Muslim/Jewish Events (special preparations)	5	1	4	1	2	2
Animal welfare	3		2	1	1	1
Mentioned in passing	3	2	1		3	
Other	1			1		

The second most frequently occurring theme (10 times) related to the financial side of halal and kosher food production and in particular to the growing economic importance of halal food within the UK market. As one article from the Guardian (30/1/2007) states:

“An influx of Muslim students is changing university diets across the UK. The Federation of Student Islamic Societies says there are now about 90,000 Muslim students at university in the UK - almost double the number five years ago. It estimates that at least half of all universities now provide halal meat options in their canteens, as opposed to simply a vegetarian alternative.”

Articles relating to this issue tended to be more neutral/passive in tone and tended to report these changes in terms of economic opportunities to invest in new markets rather than in terms of any animal welfare or social-segregation issues.

The third most frequently occurring theme (5 times) focused on large Muslim/Jewish events and on the special preparations that they required. This theme incorporated both discourses about the growing economic importance of halal food and Muslim

consumers (which was presented in a pretty matter of fact fashion) and discourses about ‘difference’ and in particular the problems encountered when things have to be done a little differently from normal to cope with different religious requirements (e.g. removing alcohol, providing prayer rooms, serving halal or kosher food).

The fourth most frequently occurring theme (3 times) related to animal welfare concerns about religious slaughter. As one article from the Daily Mail (17/12/2006) states:

“Halal meat is being served to pupils in state schools without their knowledge, even if they believe that religious slaughter is cruel ... To conform with Jewish and Muslim religious tradition, halal slaughter requires animals to have their throats slit while conscious a method that many people believe is inhumane and which has been condemned by the RSPCA”.

What is perhaps surprising is that the types of argument mobilised above do not appear more frequently within the UK press. Even the quote above frames animal welfare concerns within broader concerns about consumer choice and product labelling/traceability.

Finally, other themes mentioned included the portrayal of ethnicity in the media (2 times) and market transparency (1 time).



### 3.2 The coverage of issues relating to religious slaughter in UK websites

**Table 7: The top 30 UK websites featuring information about religious slaughter**

Type of organisation	Number of web articles in top 30 (under the search terms 'religious slaughter').	Websites in top 30
Animal welfare/rights NGOs	6	Viva! (*2) The Vegan Society The Humane Slaughter Association Compassion in World Farming The RSPCA
Religious Organisations	7	The Muslim council of Britain The Association of Muslim Lawyers The Islamic Cultural Centre & The London Central Mosque (*2) Salaam (Muslim) The Council Of European Jamaats (Muslim) Something Jewish
Government/policy	6	Defra (*2) Hansard The Scottish Parliament Information Centre The Office of Public Sector Information
News/Media	8	BBC news The Scotsman The Independent The Guardian Just food The New Statesman The Evening Standard The New Scientist
Academic	2	Haluk Anil David Smith
Other	1	The national secular society

Looking at table 7, one can see that a variety of different organisations were represented in the top 30 UK websites relating to religious slaughter, including 6 animal welfare/rights NGOs, 7 religious organisations, 6 government/policy organisations and 8 news/media organisations.

## 4. Conclusions

- Issues relating to religious slaughter and to the consumption of kosher and halal foods received a reasonable amount of media coverage (36 articles) in the 3 UK newspapers surveyed in the past two years (31/5/2006 to 1/6/2008).
- Stories relating to, or mentioning, religious slaughter or the consumption of kosher/halal foods occurred within many different types of article including; news articles, feature articles, media articles, education articles, financial articles, sport articles and guest articles.
- The distribution of newspaper articles over time indicates that whilst there were no really big news events relating to these issues over this time period (which could have sparked controversy and generated increased debate) there was instead a steady trickle of news and feature articles, which points to the enduring relevance of these issues.
- Within the UK, newspaper articles that adopt a particular stance in relation to issues of religious slaughter and to the consumption of halal and kosher foods tend to do so in relation to issues of identity, and social integration/segregation rather than in relation to animal welfare issues.
- Whilst left-wing newspapers such as The Guardian broadly support the consumption of halal and kosher foods as a sign of pluralism and multiculturalism, right-wing newspapers, such as The Daily Mail tend to express a concern that the consumption of halal (along with an adherence to other facets of Muslim religious culture) could lead to problems of social segregation and to an erosion of mainstream British culture.
- Many themes emerged within articles related to religious slaughter and to the consumption of halal and kosher foods. The most important themes included; food-identity (and in particular integration/segregation), which occurred 14 times; the expanding market for halal food (10 times); big Muslim/Jewish events and the special preparations that are required (5 times); and animal welfare (3 times). These themes often form the larger contexts in which and through which issues of religious slaughter and the consumption of halal and kosher foods are framed. For example, economic articles about the growing importance of the market for halal foods tended to be fairly neutral in tone, whereas articles that mentioned halal foods in the context of broader debates about social segregation tended to be far more opinionated.

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Religious slaughter:

Public debates, media analyses

WP4.2- Germany

Taina Bucher, Lill M. Vramo (SIFO, National Institute for Consumer Research)  
& Ellen Eser (BSI Schwarzenbek, Germany)  
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## Introduction

This report provides an overview over the public debates on religious slaughter in Germany as it played out in major national newspapers, on animal welfare websites and on Muslim and Jewish authorities' websites.

Debates about religious slaughter in Germany provide a particularly interesting case in point. The combination of Germany's highly dramatic Jewish history and the significant Muslim population in Germany challenge the potentially difficult relations between freedom of religion and animal welfare significantly, as these historical conditions constrain the ways in which public debate can be performed.

An important event for framing the media discussions on issues of religious slaughter in Germany was the legislative decision of the Federal Constitutional Court on 15 January 2002 to permit a wider practice of slaughter without stunning. Before 2002 slaughter without stunning had only been permitted with an exceptional permission. Although this continues to also be the case after the court decision in 2002, some media tended to misinterpret the decision reporting that religious slaughter without stunning was now fully permitted on the grounds of personal religious belief<sup>1</sup>. In the aftermath of this event the media debates centred heavily around the issue of slaughter without stunning. Due to the anti-Semitic prohibition for Jews to practice ritual slaughtering as put down by the Nazi regime and the invalidation of the prohibition after Second World War puts Jewish religious slaughter in a distinctive position. The fact that Jews today mostly get the exceptional permission to slaughter without stunning has rarely been debated as such due to this troublesome history. Only after 2002 when the constitutional right to slaughter without stunning also applied to Muslims, the debate began to surface significantly. Critique of the Jewish *Schechita* (religious slaughter practice without stunning) is still largely felt to echo anti-Semitism and is therefore strongly silenced by the German media.

Public debate about religious slaughter in recent years was initiated by the Turkish butcher Rüstem Altinküpe who went all the way to the Federal Constitutional Court to acclaim his right to slaughter animals without stunning. History was written, when in early 2002, animal rights had to back away in favour of freedom to freely practice one's religion. The case of Rüstem Altinküpe is illustrative of the various issues at stake in this debate, including religious views, traditions, beliefs, animal welfare and rights, constitutional rights, freedom of religion, freedom of profession, integration, identity, national history as well as the heterogeneity of religious groups amongst others. As will be shown later on, the public debate that followed the constitutional change in favour of exceptional slaughtering without stunning in January 2002 was carried out on a wide scale in several national German newspapers.

## Sources

In this overview on the main issues of the public and media debate on religious slaughter in Germany, three daily national newspapers were chosen to cover the popular press: the Berlin-based *die Welt*, *Frankfurter Allgemeine Zeitung* (FAZ) based in Frankfurt am Main, and the

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<sup>1</sup> Deutscher Bundestag: Gesetzenwurf des Bundesrates (*Law draft of the Federal Council*)  
<http://dip21.bundestag.de/dip21/btd/16/062/1606233.pdf>

München-based Süddeutsche Zeitung (SZ). In addition the weekly nationwide newspaper Die Zeit was also consulted.

The newspaper market in Germany counts 359 daily regional and national newspapers. However only eight of these are nationwide in circulation and readership. Evidently the local and regional written press hold a strong and important position in the German media landscape.

Situated at the conservative political spectrum, Die Welt is the flagship of the Axel Springer publishing group. Die Welt is a founding member of the European Daily Alliance, cooperating on editorial level with the Daily Telegraph (UK), Le Figaro (France) and ABC (Spain). The average daily circulation counts approximately 209,000 and the paper can be obtained in more than 130 countries.

Frankfurter Allgemeine promotes a variety of political views, with its main political orientation being that of a classical liberal stance with occasional conservative views. Whereas the political section is conservative and the finance section highly liberal, the feature section follows a leftist political line. The FAZ has a daily circulation of about 360,000 and has the highest international reach of the broadsheet German newspapers.

The biggest national subscription paper is the Süddeutsche Zeitung situated at the liberal political spectrum. In a survey<sup>2</sup> among German journalists, the SZ was named as the most important point of reference.

Die Zeit is Germany's most widely read weekly newspaper with a circulation of about 488,000. Die Zeit is a much respected newspaper, particularly known for its reputation for quality journalism. The political leanings tend towards a centrist/liberal stance.

In addition, the leading database for press releases Presseportal.de (<http://www.presseportal.de>) was consulted in order to get a general overview on the key contributors to the public debate on religious slaughter.

To cover the views expressed by animal welfare organisations, the websites of the German animal protection organisation "Deutscher Tierschutzbund" (<http://www.tierschutzbund.de>) and "Vier Pfoten" (<http://www.vier-pfoten.de>) were examined.

The religious perspectives were collected from the websites of Muslim and Jewish organisations respectively. Muslim websites include: Vikz.de (<http://www.vikz.de>), Islamrat.de (<http://www.islamrat.de>), Zentralrat.de (<http://www.zentralrat.de>). Jewish websites include: Hagalil.com (<http://www.hagalil.com>), Zentralratdjuden.de (<http://www.zentralratdjuden.de>).

## Method

The respective newspaper archives and search engines were searched for relevant keywords, including: 'halal', 'koscher', 'schächten' (*religious slaughter*), 'Schechita' (*the jewish*

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<sup>2</sup> Survey carried out by the University of Hamburg in 2005: [http://www.wiso.uni-hamburg.de/fileadmin/wiso\\_dsw\\_ijk/PDFs/jouridmp.pdf](http://www.wiso.uni-hamburg.de/fileadmin/wiso_dsw_ijk/PDFs/jouridmp.pdf)



*religious slaughter*), 'tierschutz' (*animal protection*), 'religion', 'betäubung' (*stunning*), as well as a combination of these. A simple, but systematic content analysis was then carried out, looking for patterns of consistency as well as silences, issues clearly left out. In line with the project proposal, the extent of media attention on ritual slaughtering and the level of controversy these websites and newspaper article displayed were considered. The issues covered by the media and the ways in which these were framed constituted an important aspect of the data analysis. The material was particularly coded for religious viewpoints, stunning and animal welfare concerns, signs of anti-Semitism and islamophobia, as well as production and distributions issues. Finally, questions concerning key players and their positions were asked.

## **The level of media attention**

The extent of media attention on religious slaughter, and the level of controversy surrounding this topic was particularly high during January 2002. As mentioned above this was the time when Muslims were given the right to slaughter without stunning. The right to slaughter, however, has been a controversial issue for a long time and the legal battles have been ongoing since 2002. Media coverage has tended to be particularly heavy at times of legalising slaughter without stunning by different courts.

## **Players and positions**

The key players in the public debate on religious slaughter are animal welfare defendants on the one side and defenders of freedom of religion on the other. However, media coverage tends to favour contra-religious slaughter views and only a few really pro-religious slaughter positions are made visible in the general press. Common positions taken by animal welfare defendants centre around the pain felt by the animals and the time it takes for the animal to die. Whereas the conditions surrounding the death of the animals seems to be at stake, others prompt the need for asking questions about the living conditions of these animals, pointing towards animal husbandry and the transport of animals. For instance, is hunting any less painful than religious slaughter? A liberal democratic position taken in the media often revolves around equal rights between religious groups, that is, if the Jews are allowed to slaughter without stunning, Muslims should be allowed too.

Also very evident in the media discourse are questions concerning integration. How far should a country's laws be stretched in order to grant for the freedom of religion? Here the rights of a society as a whole are put against the rights of specific groups in society. Some players take on the role of "defending" the society against the "intruding" other, arguing that foreigners who wish to live in Germany should amend to German law. The few religious players noticeable in the discourses of the general press, to a large degree take on an informative position, trying to explain or give a neutral account of what religious slaughter means to them. An interesting position in this regard is the question about death and pain; is there such a thing as painless death? How about industrial slaughter? Many contributions to this debate in the media also raise broader questions regarding morality, about a society's notions of right and wrong. Discussions about tradition versus modern science are apparent as well.

# Issues

## *Religious viewpoints*

### Muslims

Religious viewpoints in the public debate on ritual slaughtering tend to be pro-slaughter without stunning, or neutral and informative.

On their website, the ‘Zentralrat der Muslime’ state that “our way of slaughter is the most humane”<sup>3</sup>. The statement explains that animals are highly regarded in the Koran and that Islam is explicit about the fact that animals should be respected and slaughtered without suffering. Slaughter without stunning is compulsory according to Islam, and the following rules and conditions are given:

The animal is not allowed to watch how other animals are being slaughtered  
At least one leg must remain untied  
The animal must be fed, given something to drink and be calmed down beforehand  
Prior to the slaughter a prayer must be spoken  
The knife must be very sharp  
The carotid and trachea must immediately be cut so as to allow immediate death and thereby minimize any suffering for the animal

The Vikz support this view and exemplify that slaughter according to specific rules, including without stunning, is part of religion and therefore needs to be permitted. In a Spiegel special edition about Islam and the Germans, the Muslim perspective on slaughter without stunning is exemplified: “Devout Muslims claim that nobody can safeguard that the animals have not died already due to the stunning and a stunned animal might not exsanguinate completely<sup>4</sup>.” A common counterargument from the religious perspective is that animal transport methods cause much more suffering than slaughter without stunning. Or as the article “From the everyday life of Muslims: How to gain access to halal meat?”<sup>5</sup> states: “A conveyer belt like industrial slaughter, where animals are treated more like “meat products”, as in the big slaughter pedestals, is clearly at odds with the ethics of Islam”.

An important point that is mentioned by the media, is the fact that Muslims are no homogenous group. An article printed in the FAZ on January 16<sup>th</sup> 2002 points to the difficulty of generalizing about religious groups, stressing that there are many more groups with different attitudes towards nutritional rules. In this regard, an expert from the University of Al-Azhar in Cairo is often cited in the general press<sup>6</sup>. According to this expertise Muslims are allowed to eat meat from stunned animals. For the most, reference to the expert from Cairo is promoted by contra slaughter without stunning positions.

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<sup>3</sup> Zum Thema Islamisches Schächten. An open letter as a response to the many letters from animal protection organisations they received. <http://zentralrat.de/include.php?site=zmd/publikationen/docs&di=im36>

<sup>4</sup> Bad Blood. Spiegel Special February 2008.

<sup>5</sup> <http://www.bioundhalalmagazin.com/>

<sup>6</sup> See for instance “Stunning for the Purpose of Islam”, Der Spiegel September 2002; “Back to the middle ages”, Der Spiegel April 2002; “A fast cut”, FAZ January 15<sup>th</sup> 2002.

## **Jews**

The profession of butchers in Judaism is considered a religious office. The trainee has to visit the Yeshiva, a religious educational establishment, followed by practical training, in order to be employed by a Jewish community afterwards<sup>7</sup>. A professional and appropriately educated butcher is a necessity for the Jewish shechita. If these qualifications are not met the slaughtered food is determined as not kosher (illegitimate, uneatable).

According to Hagalil, the biggest Jewish online magazine in German language, the terms under which the shechita has to be carried out are strict and are non-negotiable. Zentralrat der Juden (Central Council of Jews) declare that animals must be slaughtered without stunning, as stunning may prevent the complete bleeding out of the animal. As in Islam, consuming blood in any way is strictly forbidden.

However, religious viewpoints need not stand in opposition to animal welfare perspectives, although they mostly are presented as such. Dr. Hanna Rhein, the founder of the Jewish animal welfare initiative “Initiative Jüdischer Tierschutz”, advocates that meat from suffering animals never should be considered as kosher, as Judaism explicitly promotes animal rights.

## ***Signs of Anti-Semitism and Islamophobia***

### **A leap back to the middle ages**

Some signs of anti-Semitism and islamophobia are definitely present in the media debate, although this is not explicitly displayed as such. In the sections below, views are presented that can be said to be of islamophobic character, equating Islam to the middle age and barbarism. If one was to consider the many comments that these discussions fuel on the newspapers online editions, islamophobic views as in offending views directed explicitly at Muslims and Islam are highly present. However, to decide on what counts as signs of anti-Semitism or islamophobia can be very difficult. On the other hand it can be safe to say that an “us” versus “them” discourse is highly evident, where “other” is often represented as archaic in contrast to Germany as a “modern civilization”. It is nevertheless important to be cautious about labelling arguments as signs of anti-Semitism or islamophobia, as being pro animal welfare doesn’t imply being contra religious groups.

Interestingly, as already pointed out, no one dares to speak about the Jewish practices. Whereas the Muslim slaughter methods receive a lot of critical attention, the Jewish Schechita doesn’t receive much attention at all. Undoubtedly history plays a pivotal part here.

Source: A leap back to the middle age (by Petra Kappert, professor in Turkish studies at the University of Hamburg). January 24<sup>th</sup> 2002, Die Welt

*Islam has finally, at least in its most conservative form, arrived in continental Europe, and the media praised last week the repeal of the prohibition against ritual slaughtering for Muslims through the Federal Constitutional Court. Is this so, or hasn’t a piece of the middle ages again taken hold in this country?*

(...)

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<sup>7</sup> What kind of qualification? Frankfurter Allgemeine on January 18th 2002.

*Why did we make the stunning of animals in Germany absolutely mandatory? Because in a humane society dealing with animals is a question of ethics*

(...)

*Animals are more than just things (women by the way too- something that should be particularly stressed in this context)*

Source: Barbarian privileges (letters to the editors). December 5<sup>th</sup> 2006, Frankfurter Allgemeine

*No religion justifies the strengthening of barbarism in Germany. Freedom of religion is inferior to humanism. The next time an ancient Aztec might claim the right to sacrifice human hearts or a devout Muslim might claim the right to circumcise his daughters*

In a similar vein with regards to barbarism and traditions of the “other”:

Source: Incision with a rusty blade (political section). January 17<sup>th</sup> 2002, Express (Cologne)

*There are also traditions in other religions like stoning, chopping of hands or whipping, which have no place within our society*

## ***Integration***

### **Or, disintegration?**

Integration is put forward as an issue of concern in the debate about religious slaughter, framed in similar ways as the excerpts above. The distinctions between signs of anti-Semitism and islamophobia and the issue of integration are not easily drawn. Integration, however, is much more framed in terms of the law and German legislation and has much in common with integration debates in the media in general. The similarities to the above issue are the “we” and “them” division, with reference to civilized societies versus uncivilized societies and progressive thoughts versus old-fashioned thoughts.

Source: Disintegration (political section). January 16<sup>th</sup> 2002, Frankfurter Allgemeine

*It is not necessary for immigrants to adapt to local law and conventions anymore, but the law is extended in such a way that the progresses of our civilisation made in the last decades are repressed again*

(...)

*With this decision the Court has not supported the integration of foreigners living in Germany, but makes multiculturalism the standard.*

Source: Unbearable tolerance (letter to the editors). June 2002, Die Zeit

*In reality the court has legitimized a leap back for human civilization*

Source: Cruelty to Animals (letter to the editors). December 5<sup>th</sup> 2006, FAZ

*Those who want to live in Germany have to adapt to the laws*

Source: Does religion really stand above the law? (letter to the editors). November 27<sup>th</sup> 2006, Die Welt

*How much do we need to abide to other cultures, or put differently; why aren't we in the position to defend our own culture?*

(...)

*But the principle, that religion should be more powerful than laws, and that German federal judges actually allow this madness makes me frightened*

### ***Stunning and animal welfare concerns***

As already mentioned the media discourse on religious slaughter centres heavily around the question of stunning or lack of stunning. As such animal welfare concerns are most commonly raised. The discourse takes up questions of suffering, pain and the prolonging of time of death. Animal welfare organisations basically consider slaughter without stunning cruel. From time to time, counterarguments are raised asking why hunting or emergency slaughter is any different. In this regard, an article published in FAZ<sup>8</sup> brought up the issue of animal testing in the medical and scientific field. Although animal testing is a much contested and highly controversial issue of its own, it is hardly brought into the debates on religious slaughter. The article 'No Opium for animals' also published in the FAZ<sup>9</sup> problematizes this by questioning the premises of the law permitting the slaughter without stunning. As of January 15<sup>th</sup> 2002, anyone whose personal belief or community of belief demands it should be granted the exceptional authority to slaughter without stunning. The difficulty of interpretation has been widely discussed in the general press. 'No opium for animals' stresses the difficulty of interpreting concepts such as 'community of belief' and 'demand'. A 'community of belief' which is often exempted from stunning decree is that of science, as "science in our society is the religion"<sup>10</sup>.

Deutscher Tierschutzbund (*German Animal Protection Organisation*) argue that slaughter without stunning is significantly more stressful for the animal than slaughter with stunning, referring to scientific results. They also state that most Muslims in Germany have already accepted slaughter with short time electrical stunning and call out for everyone to use this method in avoidance of any pain and suffering for the animal. In a statement letter<sup>11</sup> about religious slaughter from an animal welfare perspective the *Deutscher Tierschutzbund* describe the consequences of slaughter without stunning when the conditions are not perfect. Not only the circumstances surrounding death is seen as extremely painful, but the preparations in beforehand are considered stressful for the animal as well. With references to scientific studies animal welfare organisations stress that religious slaughter without stunning does not

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<sup>8</sup> Faith and suffering. Frankfurter Allgemeine January 21<sup>st</sup> 2002.

<sup>9</sup> No Opium for animals. Frankfurter Allgemeine January 16<sup>th</sup> 2002.

<sup>10</sup> Ibid.

<sup>11</sup> [https://www.tierschutzbund.de/download/register/PDF/Stellungnahmen/Landwirtschaft/Schlachten\\_\\_\\_Schaeecten/Stell\\_Sch\\_chten\\_Stand\\_Juni\\_2007.pdf](https://www.tierschutzbund.de/download/register/PDF/Stellungnahmen/Landwirtschaft/Schlachten___Schaeecten/Stell_Sch_chten_Stand_Juni_2007.pdf)

guarantee the complete bleeding out of the animal, like the Muslim viewpoint claims. Hence there is no reason for using this method according to the animal welfare position.

The Bundestierärztekammer (*Federal Veterinarian Chamber*) is also highly in opposition to slaughter without stunning. With references to 70 scientific studies, it argues that slaughter without stunning causes extreme pain and suffering, in addition to the danger of being carried out incorrectly.

Source: Federal Constitutional Court decides to permit slaughter without stunning. November 20<sup>th</sup> 2006, Presseportal.de (press release for PROVIEH<sup>12</sup>)

*The large majority (72%) of the voting population in Germany speaks in favour of prohibiting slaughter without stunning*

Source: One the edge of the knife (political section). April 2002, Die Zeit

*But when humans and animals collide it's always the human who wins*

Source: Sacrifice without suffering. November 23<sup>rd</sup> 2006, Zeit Online (an interview with Dr. Martin von Wenzlawowicz)

*In former times, before there were any methods for stunning, shechita or halal-slaughter may have been the most acceptable method to kill the animal. But today we are able to prevent the pain. If we demonstrate electrical stunning to Muslims most of them appreciate it. It does not prevent exsanguination and the animal does not die before the cut*

Source: One-eyed animal protection (political section). January 17<sup>th</sup> 2002, FAZ

*We only value animal protection highly when it does not compete with economic goals. As such, massive animal husbandry and animal transport are accepted by most – because it makes the meat cheap*

Source: Cruel torture of animals (letter to the editors by Dr.jur. Dieter Schramm). December 5<sup>th</sup> 2006, FAZ

*Religious slaughter is one of the most cruel cases of animal torture*

(...)

*Totally disregarded is the fact that the original hygienic reasons in hot countries and the fact that only one knife was available are no longer any problem*

(...)

*Strangely, the fact that there are other religious communities, like the Jewish, which slaughter without stunning is largely left unmentioned in any big outrage*

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<sup>12</sup> Verein gegen tierquälerische Massentierhaltung (Commission against animal torture in industrial animal husbandry)

## ***Production and distribution***

The economics of religion is an important aspect. Religious faith has a great influence on consumer behaviour, with only those products classified as 'halal' or 'kosher' being purchasable and eatable. In Germany there are several halal certification companies, among them "m-haditec GmbH & Co. KG" and "Halal Control". An article<sup>13</sup> in the weekly newspaper "Das Parlament", a paper published by the German Bundestag (Parliament), states that 'Halal Control' certifies halal döner-meat (meat used in kebab) for 2.8 billions alone. In total the halal market in Germany is estimated to add up to 5 billion euro<sup>14</sup>. According to the magazine "Bio & Halal"<sup>15</sup> no segment of the consumer food market worldwide is growing as fast as halal-food.

Die Welt reports of a boom in products that are kosher or halal. At the biggest food convention in the world, Anuga, which was organised in Köln late 2007, over 600 of the 6600 stands were directed at this "newly discovered target group"<sup>16</sup>.

However, there is also the question of whether the meat that is marketed as halal really is halal, as there is no central certification system to date. A guaranteeing "halal-stamp" is profoundly lacking within this segment of the food market. How the minority deals with this situation is varying, with some choosing not to eat meat at all. But for others it is sufficient that it says 'halal' on the product<sup>17</sup>. With the increased demand for halal products in Europe, this problematic aspect of the market was one of the main issues that were discussed at the World Halal Forum in Malaysia earlier this year. An "International Alliance for Halal quality" was founded there on a voluntary basis.

As shown, the debate has mostly been centred on the 2002 amendment and the fact that Muslims from then on were allowed to slaughter without stunning when stating in the application for an authorisation that their religious belief or community of belief demanded this. Interestingly, accounts about how many actually get such an authorisation have largely been left out of the media debate.

In addition, questions concerning the production of halal and kosher food have been framed in terms of freedom of occupational choice and professional standards. An article in the FAZ on January 18<sup>th</sup> 2002, describes the professional differences between Muslim and Jewish butchers'. As already mentioned, the Jewish butcher has to undergo a strict and well-defined education whereas very few Muslims to date have passed a German butchers' apprenticeship. This may very well be due to the handling of pigs during the education.

Source: Disintegration (political section). January 16<sup>th</sup> 2002, Frankfurter Allgemeine

*The appellant claimed that the prohibition to slaughter without stunning in effect was an occupational restraint and a ban against occupational choice*

(...)

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<sup>13</sup> <http://www.bundestag.de/dasparlament/2007/50/thema/18695601.html>

<sup>14</sup> Mohammed als grosser Kaufmann. Zeit Online, December 2007. <http://images.zeit.de/text/2007/12/Markt-fuer-Muslime>

<sup>15</sup> Ein neuer Wachstumsmarkt:analyse der Halal-Branche. <http://www.bioundhalalmagazin.com/>

<sup>16</sup> Lebensmittel nach religiösen regeln. October 7th 2007, Die Welt.

<sup>17</sup> Aus dem Alltag der Muslime:Wie kommt man an Halal-Fleisch? <http://www.bioundhalalmagazin.com/>

*The Court even conceded that clients of the butcher have the right to direct supply. In case of imported meat (also from Islamic countries) there is a lack of direct contact to the butcher, and there is no basis of trust. That means that the client can not be sure about whether the meat is really 'halal'*

Source: Mohammed as a major businessman (business section). December 2007, Zeit Online

*Every meat chop is a statement and every Schnitzel is a confession for the consumer. For Wim Snijders it is "big business". Snijders is manager of the meat production company Mekkafood in Nettetal-Kaldenkirchen (...) Snijder's products reach many stores like Rewe and Edeka<sup>18</sup>*

Source: Food products after religious rules. 7<sup>th</sup> October 2007, Welt Online

*Koscher dining and halal food is conquering German supermarkets*

Sausage maker Hans-Eswald Reinert has embraced the growing market for halal-products, offering 15 new products that are produced after the rules of Islam.

Source: A trace of the Orient from Ostwestfalen. August 3<sup>rd</sup> 2008, Welt Online

*Muslims can't just buy their meat and sausages (wurst) in supermarkets. But precisely the younger generation of Muslims are increasingly asking for wrapped up sausage*

Source: Food with Allahs permission. December 10<sup>th</sup> 2005, Welt Online

*Halal food is one of the future markets in the food industry according to experts. Mekkafood was according to themselves one of the first players on the market. "Meanwhile there are six or eight serious competitors in Europe" says Wim Snijders*

## **Concluding remarks**

The public and media debate in Germany demonstrates that religious slaughter is an ongoing issue for discussion. Although most of the debate and media coverage tends to cluster around specific events, like juridical matters, the issue remains controversial, sensitive and unresolved. Caught between religious viewpoints, animal welfare concerns and human right issues, media coverage tends to balance between a neutral and informative stance and a contra religious slaughter without stunning position. A pro slaughter without stunning position is mostly absent within the general press but can be found in specialized press like religious websites. The pro or contra stunning conflict is moreover reflected by the knowledge in the public opinion as expressed in letters to the editors and blogs. Issues that are frequently made part of this discussion include integration, legislation, obsolete versus progressive worldviews, the role of tradition and science. Moreover, animal welfare considerations are highly evident, advocating a discourse against animal cruelty and suffering. There is also a strong emphasis on Muslim slaughter practices, whereas Jewish slaughter practices are mostly left out of the debate. This makes Germany a particularly interesting case, as the debate is layered with historical controversies, evidently demarcating religious slaughter as an emotional topic of discussion.

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<sup>18</sup> Rewe and Edeka are major food chain stores in Germany



Taina Bucher, Laura Terragni, Lill M. Vramo  
SIFO - National Institute for Consumer Research

## Religious slaughter in Norway: Main issues in the media debate

DIALREL  
Encouraging Dialogue on issues of Religious Slaughter

**EC funded project involving partners in 11 countries.**  
**N°: FP6-2005-FOOD-4-C from 1st November 2006 to May 2010**

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# 1 Introduction

Religious slaughter and in particular the aspect related to stunning or not stunning before slaughter is currently a debated issue in many European countries (Bergaud-Blacker: 2007). These issues are relevant for consumers of halal (Muslims) or kosher (Jews) in Europe today, but also for non-consumers of the same products. Concerns about religious freedom, human rights and/ or consumer rights, on the one hand, and concerns about animal welfare and animal rights, on the other, are the main dimensions of the current public debate all over Europe. Still the debate varies in different contexts and in time and intensity. Here we will give an overview of the media debate related to religious slaughter in Norway. Besides analysing the media debate on religious slaughter through various verbal statements, we make a short analysis of how the debate is presented and illustrated through the media's use of images. First we will give a brief overview of the Norwegian context.

## 1.1 The Norwegian context

There are 381 000 immigrants and 79 000 Norwegian-born persons with immigrant parents living in Norway. Together these two groups represent 9.7 per cent of Norway's population. Data from Statistics Norway indicate that there are 72.000 Muslims living in Norway, of which most are living in the capital city Oslo. Pakistanis were prominent in the first wave of immigration in the 1970s and still represent the largest Muslim community in Norway. In recent years there has been a growth of immigrants of Somali origin. According to Vogt, about 500 ethnic Norwegians have converted to Islam. The first Mosque was opened in Oslo in 1974 by the Islamic Cultural Centre. The Muslim community has a manifold of organisations, partially reflecting the ethnic background and their specific faith (Vogt: 2000). The Islamic Council (Muslimsk Råd) serves as an umbrella organisation and is one of the most prominent voices of the Muslim community in Norway. Today there are about 2000 Jews in Norway. Most of the Norwegian Jews are living in Oslo. The Jewish Community (Det Mosaiske Trossamfund) was established in Norway in 1892 and is the largest and most crucial Jewish community in Norway.

According to Norwegian law all animals have to be stunned before slaughter (Animal act § 9, 1974 - and previous, and in the new Animal act 2009 § 12). The Jewish community is not allowed any exception from the rule of pre-stunning. This implies that orthodox Jews in Norway depend on imports of kosher food.<sup>1</sup> At the moment the Norwegian Muslim community have reached an agreement regarding pre-stunning of animals, which means that they have access to halal slaughtered meat produced in Norway.<sup>2</sup>

With few exceptions, the media debate on religious slaughter has not been loud in Norway. The debate is characterised by some "peaks" followed by periods in which religious slaughter has not been a major issue.

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<sup>1</sup> The Council for Animal Ethics, appointed by the Ministry of Agriculture, specified in 1995 that although exceptions to the pre-stunning norm are not permitted, "people or groups believing that this slaughter method does not satisfy their religious obligation, are allowed to import meat from animals that are slaughtered in other countries".

<sup>2</sup> For more details on issues related to imports of kosher and the way halal slaughtering is practised in Norway see the sub deliverable 4.2 'The Norwegian Market for Halal and Schechita meat products').

## 2 Method

The analysis of the media debate is based on a plurality of sources: newspapers, organisations' web-sites, articles and a previous study.<sup>3</sup> First, an extensive search in Norwegian newspapers during the period 2003-2008 has been done (both in their paper edition and web edition). For this purpose the following key words have been utilised: *religiøs slakting* (religious slaughter); *halal slakting* (halal slaughter); *kosher slakting* (kosher slaughter). In addition the Norwegian media database 'Atekst'<sup>4</sup> was consulted for keywords like *halal*, and *kosher*. Secondly, we have focused on selected media; *Dagbladet*<sup>5</sup> a popular tabloid, and *Aftenposten*,<sup>6</sup> a more sober and conservative newspaper.

Given easy access to most Norwegian newspapers through Atekst, we have furthermore considered a variety of local and less well known newspapers when relevant. (Local newspapers have provided interesting insight into halal-slaughter and local Norwegian farmers). By analysing the articles we have identified the actors and the organisations that have been visible in the debate.

A further search has been done utilising the websites of relevant organisations: The Norwegian Islamic Council (Muslimsk råd, Norge), The Jewish Community (Mosaiske Trossamfund) (religious organisations); Noah, Dyrevernalliansen (animal rights organisations); Animalia (producer organisation); Nortura (market actor) The Food Safety Authority (Mattilsynet), mainly through the web-site Matportalen, Agriculture and Food department.

Figure 1 below shows the number of articles or news-clips per year from 2003-2008 in Norwegian newspaper media that mention kosher and halal. These numbers represent the amount of hits per keyword ('halal' and 'kosher') searched in the media database Atekst. The numbers, however, do not give an accurate representation of the amount of original articles, as many news-items and articles are reprints of an original piece in another, often local, newspaper. Moreover the series indicating articles on kosher should be read as being somewhat lower than the figure shows, since many articles that show up in Atekst when searching for 'kosher' concentrate on halal whilst mentioning kosher only in passing. However, what the figure does show is the difference between the coverage of halal and kosher, showing that halal is much more debated and commented in the Norwegian press. Most likely this can be explained by the relatively small Jewish population in Norway, as compared to Muslims.

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<sup>3</sup> A study done by Runar Døving has been utilised for presenting the case of the opening of a slaughterhouse in Fredrikstad.

<sup>4</sup> The Atekst includes digitised article archive from Norwegian printed newspapers.

<sup>5</sup> The third largest national daily newspaper, published in tabloid format. Average circulation of 135 611 copies.

<sup>6</sup> Biggest subscription and Norway's second largest newspaper. Average circulation of 250 200 copies.

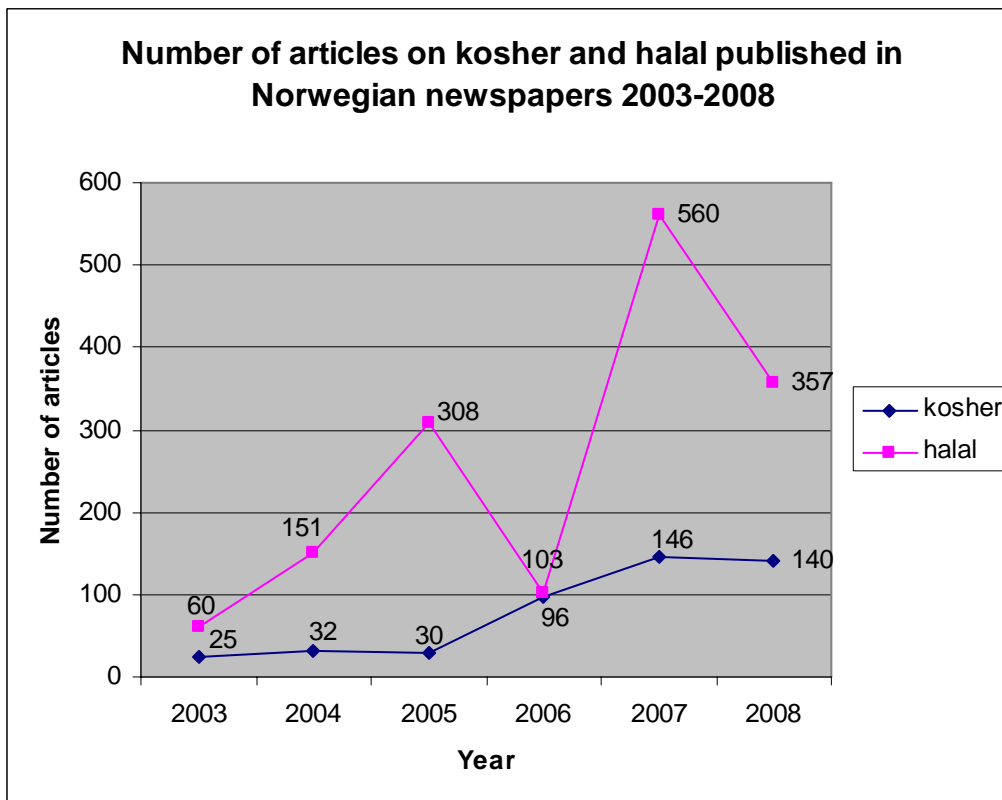


Figure 1: Number of articles or news-items on halal and kosher in Norwegian newspapers 2003-2008. Source: Atekst.

## 2.1 The historical background

Although our media analysis will focus on the debate in the most recent years, a deeper understanding of some points of this debate requires taking some steps back in history. A ban of performing religious slaughter according to the Jewish tradition was introduced and took effect in Norway at the end of 1920's (Mendelsohn: 1987). During a Parliamentary debate, Jens Hundseid, a member of the Farmers' party (and prime minister for a short period in 1932), stated that: *"Although the slaughter of meat is a sacrament for the Jews, they have to stick to other animals than ours! We do not have any obligations to give our animals to the Jewish cruelty. We have not invited the Jews to our country and we have not any obligations to provide animals for their religious orgies"*<sup>7</sup> (Source: Parliament debate on a new law on Animal Protection, June 12th 1929).

This statement, as well as other contemporary contributions against slaughter without stunning, is often quoted in debates on religious slaughter today. Rabbi Johav Melchior referred to Hundseid's statement in a radio programme in the autumn of 2007. Melchior asked for a change in the legislation from 1929. He argued that anti-Semitism was the main reason for the ban on slaughter without stunning, *hence* changes are required in order to amend this discrimination.

<sup>7</sup> "Og selv om det schechita kjøtt er et sakrament for enkelte jøder, så får de holde sig til andre dyr enn til våre. Vi har ingen forpliktelse til å utlevere våre husdyr til jødernes grusomheter, vi har ikke invitert jødene hit til landet, og vi har ingen forpliktelse til å skaffe jødene dyr til deres religiøse orgier". (Kilde: Forhandlinger i Odelstinget 12. juni 1929)

The main points in the debates will be presented and discussed in the next sections. The focus will be on the years from 2006 to 2008. We include a few retrospective glances on relevant earlier debates, such as comments to the inauguration of one of the first slaughterhouses performing religious slaughter in the late 1990s. In the autumn of 2007, however, religious slaughter became breaking news in the major newspapers and TV channels. The main reasons for this renewed debate were that a new EU directive might challenge the Norwegian ban on exceptions to pre-stunning and the ongoing discussion of a new Norwegian Law on animal welfare. These debates lasted for several months. During the autumn of 2008 halal re-emerged in the media on several different accounts. Three storylines have been particularly evident. First, what has been defined as an “historical agreement on halal slaughter” between the Islamic Council and Norway’s leading producer and supplier of meat and eggs Nortura, aimed at certifying halal meat. Second, there was a debate on halal meat, or the lack of it, in Norwegian prisons. And, third, there were rumours surrounding the disappearance of sheep from farms in the northern part of Norway believed to have been illegally processed into halal-meat.

### 3 Media debates between 1998 - 2006

A more visible debate on religious slaughter in the Norwegian media from 1998 onwards can be related to a higher visibility of halal meat products in the conventional market. Before 2002 labelled halal products were mainly sold in small shops run by immigrants. After 2002 more halal products were branded (‘Alfathi’)<sup>8</sup>, labelled, and got distributed in supermarkets.

An example of a media debate/ discourse on religious slaughter occurred when an Algerian refugee wanted to open a Muslim slaughterhouse in a small Norwegian town (Rakkestad)<sup>9</sup> in 1998. This event triggered a vigorous debate, as documented by the letters sent to the local newspaper (Fredrikstad Blad). Comments like these are examples of the main dimensions of the discourse:

*“When the animals are slaughtered in Norway, the Norwegian law has to be obeyed.”<sup>10</sup>*

*Which God has given the right to torture animals to death?”*

The reactions we find in *Fredrikstad Blad* are similar to written reactions to articles on religious slaughter. The comments seem to indicate that Muslims don’t abide to the Norwegian law and/ or that they are cruel towards animals. The fact that the Algerian shop owner repeatedly stated that halal slaughter was performed following Norwegian law did not calm the public. This case, where the public is left to misinterpret how halal slaughter is performed, is a recurrent aspect emerging in the media debates. Such media discourses are still in 2009 standing uncontested, fuelling assumptions that religious slaughter is brutal and something different to the ways “we do it in Norway”.

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<sup>8</sup> For more details see sub task 4.3: The Norwegian market for halal and schechita meat products, by Lill M. Vramo.

<sup>9</sup> Når dyr slaktes I Norge, må norsk lov følges”

<sup>9</sup> ”Til bords med Muslimer” <http://www.aftenposten.no/meninger/kronikker/article1077733.ece>,



In July 2005, the issue of religious slaughter was brought to public attention referring to consumer rights and Norwegian 'needs' and 'values'. In a feature article in the national newspaper *Aftenposten* Tore Stubberud, a local opinion leader and farmer, argues that the current sale of halal meat is questionable and "sneak (lurk) Islamification" (snikislamisering) Under the heading "To the table with Muslims"<sup>9</sup> Stubberud writes:

*"Behind our backs the slaughterhouses have established a system in which anyone who buys a chicken or a lamb runs the risk of eating halal meat without knowing. This is unfair, as the Norwegian non-Muslim market does not consist only of passive consumers who only eat to postpone their death. We have also different needs and values."*<sup>11</sup>

The reference to Norwegians' needs of knowing what they eat was a new dimension and turn in the debate. Part of the halal meat in Norway is not labelled halal but sold in the conventional meat market. This implies that non-consumers of halal may buy and eat halal meat without knowing. Stubberud's article led to a debate in various newspapers. *Dagbladet* conducted a simple survey among its readers, asking if the readers were concerned about eating halal meat without knowing. The survey showed that the readers were rather split. Almost 46 % of the respondents thought that information about the meat being halal slaughtered should be provided, while 47 % of the respondents answered that "meat tastes the same anyway".<sup>12</sup>

Another new dimension in the debate launched by Stubberud was the pronounced fear of invasion. Stubberud indirectly prompts Norwegian consumers to take action to defend themselves and Norway from a passive Islamification through their dinners.

### **3.1 An intensification of the debate on religious slaughter 2007-2008**

The debate on religious slaughter became more visible in 2007 through a general discussion on integration and a fear that changes in EU legislation would provide an opening for slaughter without stunning in Norway. The debate on religious slaughter moves in this period towards a debate of "us" and "the others", where "the others" is extended from being only religious groups *within Norway* (migrants) to "the others" also including pressure for change from abroad (European Union). This is particularly clear when reading the articles discussing the risk of changes in EU legislation threatening the prohibition against slaughter without stunning<sup>13</sup>, as exemplified below:

#### **We may slaughter without stunning**

*"New EU regulations may cause a withdrawal of the 90 years old prohibition of slaughter without stunning."*

<sup>11</sup> Bak vår rygg har slakteriene derfor laget en ordning hvor enhver som kjøper en kylling eller et lam i Norge, uten å vite det risikerer å spise halal mat. Dette er ikke rett, for det norske, ikke-muslimske matmarkedet består ikke bare av glatte forbrukere som kun spiser for å utsette døden. Vi er også forskjellige.

<sup>12</sup> <http://www.dagbladet.no/magasinet/2005/07/11/437156.html>

<sup>13</sup> <http://www.aftenposten.no/nyheter/iriks/article2108862.ece>

### 3.1.1 Science as an argument

Elisiv Tolo, a veterinarian currently working at the research and knowledge centre of the Norwegian meat industry (Animalia), has been a leading figure in this debate. Religious slaughter is a main issue in the Animalia annual report (2007). Tolo has also published a number of articles on this issue in different newspapers. Her main point is that in the conflict of interest between religious rights and animal rights, the latter has to be prioritized, as the quote below illustrates:

*“Religious slaughter is often in conflict with the norms of the Western world regarding animal welfare and animal rights. The main question in this debate is: What is more important: the right to perform one’s faith or animal rights? (...) Animals feel fear and pain just like human beings- she continues- and have to be protected against any kind of unnecessary suffering..”<sup>15</sup>*

Referring to studies assessing the loss of animal consciousness due to different stunning and slaughter methods, Tolo says that it is scientific evidence that religious slaughter prolongs the pain of animals for many seconds (about 30) or, in the worst cases for many minutes. She adds:

*“Culture and religion can explain why some people perform acts that are in contrast with ethical principles, but this does not justify the endurance of such practice: if we mean that woman genital mutilation is wrong in Norway, it is wrong in Africa as well.”*

### 3.1.2 Integration as an argument

“A test on Norwegian tolerance” was the headline of a feature article written by the leader of the Norwegian Islamic Council published in *Aftenposten*.<sup>16</sup> In this article several aspects of Norwegian integration policy were discussed, including the issue of religious slaughter.

*“There is no use in talking about religious freedom if it is only in theory. Circumcision of Muslim boys and Muslim slaughter procedures are tests to see whether the Norwegian society really wants religious minorities to enact their faith in freedom - also in practice.”<sup>17</sup>*

## 3.2 Conclusion

The opinion of Elisiv Tolo can be regarded as representative for a large majority of main actors of the Norwegian food system. In a seminar organised in March 2008 –as part of the DIALREL project- the Norwegian Food Safety Authority (Mattilsynet), as well as the Veterinarian Institute, shared the position that slaughter without stunning is unacceptable.

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<sup>15</sup> <http://www.animalia.no/Publikasjoner/Kjottets-tilstand/Kjottets-tilstand-2006/> our translation

<sup>16</sup> <http://www.aftenposten.no/meninger/kronikker/article1873217.ece>

<sup>17</sup> Frihet i praksis. Det hjelper lite med religionsfrihet dersom den kun gjelder i teorien. Omskjæring av guttebarn og muslimske slaktemetoder er tester på det norske samfunns vilje til å la minoriteter utøve sin religion fritt - også i praksis.

Trust in the objectivity of scientific research has had an important role in this debate: An example in this regard is the report commissioned by the Norwegian Food Safety Authority to the Norwegian Scientific Committee for Food Safety (Vitenskapskomiteen for mattrygghet). The Report, published in January 2008, states that slaughter without stunning causes animal stress, fear and pain; while in the case of slaughter with previous stunning the pain is limited to the phases preceding the actual slaughter<sup>18</sup>.

Animal rights organisations such as Noah and Dyrevernalliansen have not been particularly visible in the media debate. These organisations are in opposition to any change to the Norwegian regulations regarding stunning. This may be due to the fact that the major actors in the food system (from producers to food authorities) have not questioned current regulation.

## 4 Illegal halal slaughter?

Media coverage on halal slaughter gained another momentum during December 2007, when illegal halal slaughter was exposed on a farm in the Norwegian county Østfold. Several articles were published in print and online media on this incident, in which a Norwegian farmer had allegedly slaughtered sheep without pre-stunning and had been caught in the act by an inspector from the Food Safety Authority. The articles mostly polarized the views of the farmer and the representative of the Food Safety Authority. Somewhat intriguingly the farmer claimed to have shot the animals beforehand, while the inspector claimed to have evidence that the animals were alive when they were slaughtered. Several journalists, when interviewing the farmer, pointed out his claimed shooting of the animals, which is against the whole idea of halal-slaughter. Shouldn't the animal be alive during halal slaughter? To this, the farmer replied:

*“It is forbidden to cut the throat of a live animal in this country; therefore I shot a bullet into the sheep’s forehead. To the Muslims I say that the shot is a stunning. I don’t think they understand that the animal is dead after I have used the rifle.”*<sup>19</sup>

An argument about ritual inhumanity was evident in this case, in which a letter to the editor of the local newspaper, *Smaalenenes Avis*, framed the Østfold case in terms of animal rights and cruelty, stating that no religion should stand above animal welfare. Moreover, the letter claimed that if some obscure devil worshipers or worshipers of the ancient Gods ‘Tor’ and ‘Odin’ had slaughtered without stunning all resources would be mobilised in order to stop them. This should not be different in the case of a worldwide religion, the letter proposes<sup>20</sup>.

The issue of illegal halal-slaughter has been evident from time to time and is often mentioned as a fact when it comes to debates on halal, also as part of articles that don't primarily deal with the aspect of illegal halal-slaughter per se. It is not uncommon for media coverage to mention that illegal halal-slaughter is a widespread practice. As to date such statements are more grounded on rumours and myths than real facts, as there are no figures or statistics available for such a claim to be substantiated. When incidents such as animal cruelty have

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<sup>18</sup>Uttalelse fra Faggruppe for Dyrehelse og dyrevelferd (dyrevern) i Vitenskapskomiteen for mattrygghet 16.01.08

<sup>19</sup> Smaalenene, 20.12.2007. <http://www.smaalenene.no/nyheter/article3204331.ece>

<sup>20</sup> Smaalenenes Avis, 27.12.2007.

been exposed on farms, or cattle and sheep have gone missing, local newspapers in particular have a tendency to frame the incidents as suspicions of illegal halal-slaughter.

## 5 Religious minorities: claims and pragmatism

Religious minorities are seldom taking an active role in the public debate regarding religious slaughter. We will here refer to some of the few occasions when Jews or Muslims have raised their voices on these matters.

Rather than dispensation from pre-stunning, the main claims from Norwegian Muslim and Jewish communities have been assurance that animals do not die during the pre-stunning, authorisation for importing kosher meat, together with better and clearer information on food additives.

In a radio program in the autumn of 2007 the rabbi Joav Melchior, refers to the already mentioned ban on ritual slaughter and states that it is “a shame that the Jewish minority does not have the opportunity to follow its religion on this matter”. According to Melchior the law should be revoked:

*Norway was one of the first countries in Europe to pass a law on stunning before slaughter and is still one of the few countries not giving any exception to this rule. Melchior feels that the Jewish tradition based on thousands of years of experience is being characterised as “barbarian”<sup>21</sup>.*

Besides linking the prohibition to perform ritual slaughter to anti-Semitism, Melchior challenges the idea that religious slaughter is crueller towards animals. This point is made even clearer in a statement to the proposed law on animal welfare (discussed in 2007 and 2008), which states that “today many are genuinely interested in animal welfare. Our point is that there is not any objective evidence stating that Jewish slaughter methods are more or less humane than other slaughter”<sup>22</sup>.

Another point put forward by Muslims and Jews in the consultative process regarding the new law on animal welfare<sup>23</sup> is the unfairness that “different rules” exist for the Sami community regarding religious slaughter. The Sami community is allowed to slaughter reindeer without stunning.

Spokespersons from the Muslim community have not made demands in the media regarding slaughter without stunning. Still we find demands for the removal of the prohibition to perform religious slaughter in the Norwegian Islamic Councils’ consultative statement to the new law on animal welfare. Here it is stated that while the majority of Muslims living in Norway accept pre-stunning, not all Muslims do agree on this practice<sup>24</sup>. Uncertainty about the current method of stunning seems to be the main concern in the Muslim community as expressed in this statement:

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<sup>21</sup> <http://www.nrk.no/nyheter/kultur/1.3504848>

<sup>22</sup> From the Mosaiske trosamfunnet hearing statement to the new law on animal welfare (see appendix)

<sup>23</sup> (Høringsuttalelse om ny lov om dyrevelferd, februar 2008) (Aktuelt/Høringer)

<sup>24</sup> From the Norwegian Islamic Council consultative statement to the new law on animal welfare (see appendix)

*“Those accepting stunning have actually only one request: that the animal is alive when slaughtered.”<sup>25</sup> This is assured in many countries practising stunning.”*

This claim refers in particular to procedures used for poultry. *To eat poultry is to sin*, an imam stated<sup>26</sup>. The Halal group of the Norwegian Islamic Council expressed concerns about the fact that according to inspections undertaken by the Norwegian Food authority, many chickens die from stunning<sup>27</sup>. This concern was extensively covered by the press during 2007. More on this coverage follows below in section 9.

Even though some Jewish voices ask for an exception for religious slaughter, the community concentrates its efforts on goals that seem more reachable, such as facilitating the imports of kosher meat. The Jewish and Muslim communities also request easier and more transparent information on additives used in food production. A large number of additives derive from pigs or other non halal and kosher food items.

## **6 Images of religious slaughter**

In this section we will look at the use of images to illustrate articles on religious slaughter. Photos illustrating articles on religious slaughter show the killing of the animal in a rather “direct and gory” way, like the pictures below illustrate. These pictures are accompanying some of the articles on religious slaughter that we have used in our analysis. (pics. 1, 2, 3) The pictures show ordinary procedures in the slaughtering of large animals – which is blood-spattered. The point is that most Norwegians are unfamiliar with such images and have never watched the killing of an animal. Killing animals can be upsetting. So while this is nothing out of the ordinary and not illegal, the images are powerful in building up an understanding that halal slaughter (with pre-stunning) is “insensitive, barbarian and unclean”. The tacit reference is non-halal slaughter the way it is done in Norway, which is expected to be more “clean, hygienic and humane”.

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<sup>25</sup> By alive is meant that the heart is still active.

<sup>26</sup> <http://www.aftenposten.no/nyheter/oslo/article2113913.ece>

<sup>27</sup> <http://www.aftenposten.no/nyheter/iriks/article1827432.ece>



1.



2.



3.

## 7 The market

There is some press coverage focusing on the market for halal products as such. Kosher is almost completely left out of the debate, as the market for such products is marginal<sup>28</sup>. The articles seem to convey an understanding about an increasing popularity and growth of the market for halal products, like the heading of an article published in *Aftenposten Aften*<sup>29</sup> exemplifies:

*“Selling halal-meat like never before – merchants go after modern Muslims.”*

According to the article, the sale of halal foods is on the rise. The grocery store featured in the article is one of Norway’s best selling in terms of halal products and according to grocer, sales for Norway’s only halal processed meat range, Alfathi, is increasing year by year.

<sup>28</sup> for more details see sub task 4.3: The Norwegian market for halal and shechita meat products, by Lill M. Vramo. 2009

<sup>29</sup> 15.02.2007

Sellers of halal products have to a certain extent had an informative voice in the Norwegian media and have also, as the quotation below exemplifies, tried to normalise the halal products by producing and promoting products parallel to “Norwegian products”.

*“These products are adapted to modern Norwegian families. Muslim children who are in the kindergarten or at school can now barbeque halal hotdogs or halal burgers. It is so rewarding to see the eyes of those kids that now know that they can eat the same as the others.”* (interview with Nina Sundquist, information director for ‘Alfathi’ the first and only halal brand in Norway).<sup>30</sup>

There are reports that Muslims are willing to pay more for meat that is halal<sup>31</sup>, both from grocery stores and directly from a farmer. Articles where the latter is mentioned are often framed in a negative way. Particularly local newspapers report on farmers who are offered twice as much for their sheep when the purpose for the purchase is halal-slaughter. According to the local paper *Sør-Trøndelag: Selling “halal-sheep” is good for business.*<sup>32</sup> *Dagbladet* also reports on similar tendencies, claiming that ever more Muslims close deals with Norwegian farmers about being allowed to slaughter sheep in the traditional halal way<sup>33</sup> - that is without stunning. Moreover, the article explicitly states that rumours are circulating about these kinds of deals. A number of similar reports have been produced. Many are characterised by being based on speculation and rumour more than facts, often linked to stories about illegal slaughter in which the destiny of the animal for the most part is left for the reader to imagine. This adds to the mystification of halal-slaughter and the representation of the practice as something barbaric and strange.

## 8 Recent tendencies

After the ‘EU threat’ disappeared and the new law on animal welfare was approved in early autumn of 2008, stating clearly that no exceptions are made for religious slaughter, debates on halal gained renewed media attention. During the last six months halal has been a debated topic within the media and the public sphere. There are several reasons for this. In particular three events mark the renewed interest in halal and religious slaughter. The main event is undoubtedly what has been defined as an “historical agreement on halal slaughter<sup>34</sup>” between the Islamic Council and the meat producer Nortura, aimed at certifying halal meat<sup>35</sup>. It is difficult to say if this agreement can be regarded as a result of the previous debates or if the process of introducing certified halal products on the market would have occurred anyway. One can probably say that the opening of the debate on religious slaughter has emphasised the

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<sup>30</sup> . [Selger%20halalkj%C3%B8tt%20som%20aldri%20f%C3%B8r-%20Nyheter%20-%20Oslo%20-%20Aftenposten\\_no.htm](http://www.aftenposten.no/lokalt/article526028.ece)

<sup>31</sup> Stavanger Aftenblad, 10.10.2007. <http://web3.aftenbladet.no/lokalt/article526028.ece>

<sup>32</sup> 3.10.2005. <http://www.avis-st.no/arkiv/article574209.ece>

<sup>33</sup> 30.11.2005.

<sup>34</sup> <http://www.irn.no/>

<sup>35</sup> More on this can be read in the Sub task 4.2: The Norwegian market for halal and schechita meat products by Lill M. Vramo. 2009.

need of a definition of what halal meat – in the Norwegian context - is: on behalf of the Muslim believers but also on behalf of other parts of the Norwegian society. This agreement, furthermore, seems to support the tendency to search for collaboration and consensus which in general characterises the Norwegian way of solving problems.

Secondly, there was a debate about the right of Muslim prisoners in Norway to have access to halal meat, which was most prominently advocated by the lawyer and politician Abid Raja during December 2008. Last, there were media reports on rumours surrounding disappeared sheep from farms in northern Norway believed to have been illegally processed into halal-meat.

## **8.1 Alfathi gets certified as halal by the Islamic Council and the case of the chicken boycott**

Nortura's halal product range, Alfathi, has been on the market since 2002 but it was more fully recognized as proper halal in September 2008 when the Islamic Council officially declared it halal. As already mentioned, the media portrayed it as a historical agreement. The agreement was seen as a statement of a favourable integration politics, as well as signalling that Norwegian minorities are taken seriously<sup>36</sup>. Alfathi had a more undefined and contested position within the Islamic Council before the agreement was signed, but did have a steady growth in sales.

This recognition came after a controversy over halal chicken. The case of Alfathi and halal was a major theme in the media and public debate during 2007, as the Islamic Council had called for all Muslims to boycott Norwegian chicken. In 2007 the Norwegian Food Safety Authority controlled 400 chickens slaughtered at Nortura Elverum's slaughterhouse. The inspection showed that 93-99 percent of the chicken would still with certainty show heart activity after stunning; while the condition for the rest could not be determined with certainty. This indeterminacy led to the boycott call for chicken be leading Muslims in Norway.

In July 2007 the Islamic Council declared chicken slaughtered in Norway and Sweden not to meet the standards for halal and thus pronounced a prohibition to eat such chicken. The debate on chicken and halal gained a lot of media attention in the Norwegian press. Some articles were published on the controversy about slaughter methods used for chicken from March 2007 on, while the peak of the media coverage came during the summer, most evidently during June and July 2007. The case of the chicken boycott continued to be a controversy during autumn 2007 – although on a smaller scale than before - and was not fully solved until the historical agreement between Nortura and the Islamic Council.

It needs to be emphasised that the chicken boycott did not receive unambiguous support within the Muslim community. As such, the debate was not only between the Muslim community, on the one side, denouncing Norwegian and Swedish chicken, and the chicken producers, on the other side. The chicken boycott debate was also a controversy between the many different actors within the Muslim community, most evidently with the imams on one side and some Muslim shop owners on the other. According to *Aftenposten*, “ordinary” Muslims “collided” with Imams over the issue of chicken. Many Muslims were confused

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<sup>36</sup> Matindustrien.no. [http://www.matindustrien.no/default.asp?cont=7&ar\\_id=509](http://www.matindustrien.no/default.asp?cont=7&ar_id=509)



about differing messages: “I know that imams say we aren’t allowed to eat chicken, but the shop owners say that the chicken is halal-slaughtered. One gets very confused by this.”<sup>37</sup>

## 8.2 Halal in prisons

During late autumn of 2008 a Muslim inmate pressed charges against Trondheim Prison, after the inmates had been served food that included pork without the inmates’ knowing. Several media covered the case after the prominent Norwegian politician and lawyer Abid Raja went out publicly defending the Muslims’ right to be served halal-meat, even when in prison. He told that eating pork is one of the most serious assaults a Muslim could experience. According to the media, approximately one-third of all inmates in Norwegian prisons are Muslims. One line of argument concerned the right to be able to practice ones religion freely. On the other hand, comments posted in relation to several online newspaper articles showed very little sympathy with the Muslim prisoners’ claim for halal. Comments with cliché arguments and a racist tone of voice, like: “Send them back to where they came from”, “they should be happy and grateful that they are in a Norwegian prison and not complain”, “if Muslims only would abide the law they wouldn’t be in that position in the first place” and “not eating pigs is about the only rule that Muslims seem to abide to”<sup>38</sup> are just some of many similar comments that were posted as a reaction to the news story about halal-meat in Norwegian prisons.

However, this is not the first time the question of halal in prisons has been brought up as an issue in the media. Some newspapers in Norway covered the case of introducing halal-meat in American prisons after a similar protest had been going on during spring of 2008. A similar case was also present in the media during autumn 2007 when prisoners at Ringerike Prison were denied halal-meat during Ramadan. Newspapers reported that several inmates converted to Islam out of sympathy with Muslim prisoners. The case was solved when the prison director at Ringerike promised halal during next year’s Ramadan. The case of halal meat in prisons was also a debate during July 2002 when the leader of the Immigration Council in Drammen, Yousef Gilani, asked for halal-meat to be introduced into the Norwegian prison system<sup>39</sup>. At that time it was disclaimed as a non-option.

Similar to the prison debate, halal-meat in hospitals has also been an issue in the media. A newspaper article in *Drammens Tidene* states that the local hospital “Gives a damn about the halal prohibition”<sup>40</sup>. Anyone who requests halal-meat will get this at Buskerud Hospital, in contrast to the policies practised at one of Norway’s biggest hospitals, Ullevål University Hospital. Ullevål follows the guidelines put down by the Norwegian Directorate of Health, stating that halal is prohibited in the Norwegian health system. NRK, the Norwegian Public Broadcasting, and other media<sup>41</sup>, on the other hand, focused on the fact that these guidelines date back 13 years and therefore cannot be seen as relevant today as the view on halal and safety has changed over the years. Today halal meat is recognized as safe as regular slaughtered meat, according to a spokesperson at the Norwegian Food Safety Authority. The guidelines on halal meat in the Norwegian health care system has clearly been practiced in

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<sup>37</sup> Aftenposten, 21.11.2007. <http://www.aftenposten.no/nyheter/oslo/article2113913.ece>

<sup>38</sup> NRK.no, 6.12.2008. <http://www.nrk.no/nyheter/1.6341390>

<sup>39</sup> Drammens Tidene, 30.7.2002.

<http://dt.no/apps/pbcs.dll/artikkel?Avis=DT&Dato=20020730&Kategori=NYHET&Lopenr=107300110&Ref=AR&Profile=1152&Secti+onCat=tema1>

<sup>40</sup> 29.12.2007. <http://dt.no/article/20071229/NYHET/526858209>

<sup>41</sup> NRK, 19.12.2007. <http://www.nrk.no/nyheter/distrikt/ostlandssendingen/1.4340284>.

different ways, with some actors following the directives while others have chosen not to take the guidelines too seriously, instead judging the right to equal treatment for all patients and employees to be of greater importance.

### 8.3 Sheep disappearing from farms

In December 2008 and early January 2009 several newspapers reported on the “Mysterious disappearance” of sheep in the counties of ‘Møre and Romsdal’, ‘Trøndelag’, ‘Sogn og Fjordane’ and ‘Telemark’. Several hundred sheep disappeared from the fields during autumn 2008. *Aftenposten* reports that the police has received reports from 10-15 farmers who have “lost sheep in mysterious ways” in the county of ‘Møre and Romsdal’ in the weeks following the first reported incident that autumn<sup>42</sup>. “Unexplainable disappearance of sheep”, “suspicious”, “disappearing without a trace” and “sheep theft” are some of the ways in which the press has framed the incidents. A local coverage<sup>43</sup> on the issue starts with stating that: *Suspicion has been there all along*, referring to the suspicion that the disappearances in reality are thefts made by Muslims for the purpose of halal-slaughter. Such suspicions are indicated in most articles covering the problem of sheep disappearance although the police has not been able to back up these claims with any evidence up to date. Interestingly these accusations are not responded to by the Muslim community, whose voices are clearly missing from this media debate. A comment posted to the online version of the local news article mentioned above is an exception. An information officer at Oslo’s oldest mosques reminds the reader that: “*so far there are only speculations and that we should all be careful about making judgements too quickly.*”

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<sup>42</sup> Aftenposten, 13.12.2008. <http://www.aftenposten.no/nyheter/iriks/article2822033.ece>

<sup>43</sup> Romsdals Budstikke, 18.12.2009. <http://www.rbnett.no/article/20081218/NYHETER05/759510076>

## 9 Conclusion

The aim of this paper was to describe the main themes and issues of the Norwegian media debate on religious slaughter with the emphasis on the time span from 2006-2008. From our analysis we can state the following:

- The Norwegian debate has been characterised by some “peaks” followed by periods in which religious slaughter has not been a main issue. Media coverage triggered by the fear of possible change in legislation represents one important peak in recent years’ media debate on halal and kosher.
- Information on religious slaughter among the general public is characterized by confusion and is often stereotyped. Chronicles and articles on this issue tend also to reflect a high degree of stereotyping.
- Expert actors on halal slaughter tend to keep silent when misunderstandings regarding halal are evident in the media debate, leading to lack of information to the general public.
- Religious slaughter is framed as something that is related to “others” and words such as “western civilisation” and “barbaric” tend to be used as distinctions, dichotomising “us” and “them”.
- Photos that are used to illustrate articles on religious slaughter tend to use strong visual means where the actual killing is portrayed more “directly and bloody” than when conventional slaughter is illustrated by photos.
- There is high consensus among the main actors within the food and agricultural authorities concerning religious slaughter. Any possibility of allowing slaughter without stunning is rejected with reference to the scientific evidence that slaughter without previous stunning increases the suffering of the animal.
- The “historical” agreement between the Islamic council and the main meat producer Nortura can be regarded as an example of successful problem solving within the Norwegian context.
- Discussions on religious slaughter in relation to freedom of religion or consumer rights are marginal in Norwegian media.
- Animal rights organisations have not played a central role in the recent debate on religious slaughter within the Norwegian context. This is due to the fact that representatives from food and agricultural authorities have been unambiguously united in their argument against changing the Norwegian ban on slaughter without stunning. This corresponds with the attitude of the animal rights organisations.

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The DIALREL project is funded by the European Commission and involves partners from 11 countries. It addresses issues relating to religious slaughter in order to encourage dialogue between stakeholders and interested parties. Religious slaughter has always been a controversial and emotive subject, caught between animal welfare considerations and cultural and human rights issues. There is considerable variation in current practices and the rules regarding religious requirements are confusing. Consumer demands and concerns also need to be addressed and the project is collecting and collating information relating to slaughter techniques, product ranges, consumer expectations, market share and socio-economic issues. The project is multidisciplinary and based on close cooperation between veterinarians, food scientists, sociologists, and jurists and other interested parties.

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Project Coordinator  
Dr Mara Miele  
School of City and Regional  
Planning  
Cardiff University  
Glamorgan Building  
King Edward VII Avenue  
Cardiff, CF10 3WA  
United Kingdom  
Telephone: +44 (0)29  
20879121  
Fax: +44 (0)29 20874845  
e-mail: [MieleM@Cardiff.ac.uk](mailto:MieleM@Cardiff.ac.uk)  
[www.dialrel.eu](http://www.dialrel.eu)