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VOUS AVEZ DIT HALAL ? NORMATIVITÉS ISLAMIQUES, MONDIALISATION, SECULARISATION
7-8 November 2013 Collège de France – Paris

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Re-imagining Malaysia: a postliberal halal strategy?

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Multiple halal's

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Origins of nationalism & ethnocracy

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- Historical legacy of ethnic diversity in modern Malaysia
- Merchants from China, India, the Middle East and Europe mixed with colonial powers
- Slaves were traded in towns such as Malacca and Singapore
- In early 1800s, first colonial administration set up state apparatus to rationalise economy and society



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The rise of ethnocracy

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- Processes came to the fore after independence from Britain in 1957 through *ethnocratic* state regime (Yiftachel 2006)
- Malay state elite maintained hegemony by redefining the state in their own terms (Wade 2009)
- NEP introduced to produce an educated, entrepreneurial & consuming Malay middle class alongside Western economic model
- Halal central to this process (Fischer 2011) through social and economic spatializations

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Consolidating ethnocracy

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- Hegemony maintained through the use of ethnic quotas in education
- Migration strategy to increase the population ratio of ethnic Malays *vis-à-vis* Chinese and Indian minorities (Wade 2009)
- 1957 – 47% of the population was ethnic Chinese; by 2009 this figure had dropped to 26%
- Islam idealised as rational, of-this-world and compatible with capitalist society
- 'Deviant Islam' regulated (Fischer 2011)



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Consolidating ethnocracy

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- In this discursive context, state used *halal* to mobilize nationalism and notions of *other*
- Debates about Islam played out in affluent suburbs of Kuala Lumpur
- In spaces between mosques and shopping malls the role of Islam, state and market debated (Fischer 2011)
- Eating used to indicate the difference between halal consuming Malays and the 'bad Malay other' (Fischer, 2011)

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Ethnocracy to postliberalism

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- During late 1990s, state compelled by Asian crisis/ global pressures to develop less exclusive form of nationalism
- Vision on 2020 launched to make Malaysia a fully developed and modernized country by 2020
- Halal central to this agenda through social and economic spatializations in international markets
- A discursive media and marketing strategy perused through HDC, IHI Alliance, Matrade, Bernama, Halal Media...

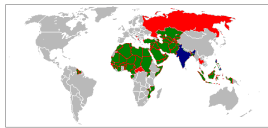


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A policy of 'selected openness'

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- 2004 Malaysia launched state halal food standard and certification regime
- MS1500 quickly gained recognition as markets expanded & multiple halal's emerged
- 2008-2010 Malaysia entered partnership with OIC to develop a global halal standard
- Partnership failed because of Malaysia's economic ambitions (Lever and Miele 2012)
- Malaysia perused policy of 'selected openness' (Yiftachel 2006; Lever 2013)




Organisation of the Islamic Cooperation (OIC)



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Under postliberal conditions...

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- Malaysia targets Muslim consumers excluded under transnational conditions
- Neither the centralised apparatus of government nor the relational networks of neoliberal governance are effective
- Transnational emerged as a response to a crisis at the heart of the nation state during 1960s
- Postliberalism is NOW emerging as a response to the crisis of multiculturalism at the heart of transnationalism (Papadopoulos et al. 2008)
- Malaysia NOW targets halal consumers as and when the opportunity arises one country at a time (Halal Media 2011)

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New supply chains, halal parks/ hubs New economic & social spatializations

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Halal Park	No. of Companies	Status	Investment Value
Selangor Halal Hub	19	2 (in operation) 1 (under construction) 16 (land purchased)	RM1.3 bil
PKFZ Halal Flagship Zone	3	1 (in operation) 1 (under construction) 1 (land purchased)	RM200 mil
Petioa Halal Park	3	1 (in operation) 2 (land purchased)	RM15.5 mil
Tanjung Manis Halal Hub	12	2 (in operation) 10 (land purchased)	RM1.8 bil
Malaka Halal Park	29	28 (in operation) 1 (under construction)	RM100 mil
Kelantan Halal Park	15	15 (in operation)	RM20 mil
Terengganu Halal Park	8	8 (under construction)	RM15 mil
TechparkKuantan	16	3 (in operation) 4 (under construction) 9 (land purchased)	RM1.8 bil
Total	105	42 (in operation) 15 (under construction) 28 (land purchased)	RM5.25 bil

Source: HDC

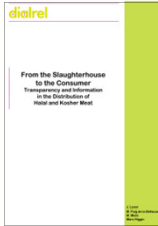
- Links promoted between the halal designated Malaysian Port Klang and the Port of Rotterdam in the Netherlands, (Marketeer 2011)
- Malaysia building relationships in EU with private sector organisations, certification bodies and multiple groups of halal consumers
- Matrade worked with Tesco and the halal certification body National Halal Food Group
- National Halal Food Group won award from the Malaysian Chamber of Commerce for introducing halal products into UK

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Evident in the Dialrel project...

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- Stunning animals before slaughter the norm in EU for many years – Malaysia now allows stunning of animals under certain conditions
- Malaysia NOW inserting new hegemonic claims into transnational space (Lever 2013)
- Manager of specialist UK meat production company stated that Malaysian state standard will continue to evolve as halal markets expand
- Muslim scholar argued that the acceptance of stunning is an attempt to influence all Muslim consumers over religious and scholarly opinion



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Under postliberal conditions...

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"The state splits itself... in broader social aggregates. It participates by articulating interests, wills and political views and by linking with many different, selected segments of social classes, social groups, associations of civil society... local business companies, transnational companies, non-governmental organisations, international governments, transnational organisations..."

Escape Routes: Control and Subversion in the Twenty-First Century, Papadopoulos et al. (2008: 32) Pluto Press

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The continuing role of the state 

- Postliberalism not simply an example of state acting in its own interests in response to wider global pressures
- Developing 'foundational transformations in the relation between public and private domains' (Sassen 2008)
- Postliberal halal strategy cuts across transnational space on the vertical plane, targeting multiple groups of Muslim consumers excluded under transnational conditions
- Part of a wider strategy to re-imagine Malaysia's role in the world...



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Vous remercie de votre attention

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