GEOGRAPHIES OF HALAL: SLAUGHTER, ETHICS AND EDIBILITY IN THE BRITISH HALAL MEAT INDUSTRY

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A thesis submitted for the degree of
Doctor of Philosophy (DPhil) in Geography and the Environment

MICHAELMAS 2023

Abstract

This thesis focuses on how halal meat production and consumption in the UK is shaped by relations of distance and proximity to animal killing, in order to understand how the intersection of sacred and secular values shapes producers' and consumers' ethical dispositions towards the animals they rear, kill and consume. Throughout the thesis, I draw upon interviews with halal meat producers, retailers, and certifiers, as well as slaughterhouse and farm visits and responses to an in-depth online consumer survey. My work develops literature in animal geographies, critical animal studies and animal ethics on distancing animal death, as well as debates in food geographies and cultural anthropology on material semiotics of consumption and reconnecting with food production. The results chapters progress through the halal meat supply chain, with each chapter focusing on a specific practice of production or consumption, and the spaces and distance/proximity relations implicated in each. The first results chapter addresses *slaughtering*, situated in the modern British halal slaughterhouse, the predominant site of animal killing for halal meat in the UK. The chapter demonstrates how the halal ritual creates unique configurations of proximity and distance regarding animal death, both leaving open the ability to be affected and providing protection from the emotional impacts of killing animals for food. However, there is a tension between practices of ritual slaughter and the realities imposed by commercial demands. The next three results chapters move to the realm of consumption, with the second results chapter examining halal consumers' *witnessing* of animal killing and rearing, told through the narrative of significant space-times of slaughter and their (un)ethical effects. I argue that British Muslim consumers make an interesting case for studying relations with animal death because, by virtue of the unique configurations of their identity, they straddle 'domestic' and 'postdomestic' animal relations. The following chapter explores how knowledge intermediaries shape distance/proximity relations in common sites of halal meat *purchasing*, most notably the butcher shop, and how these are changing with time. The final results chapter explores how the embodied *eating* experience affects halal consumers' proximity and/or distance to food animals' lives and deaths and how they perceive the implications of this for their bodies and souls, blurring sacred and secular concerns. Throughout the thesis, I draw attention to the spatial, multi-scalar, temporal, embodied, contingent and culturally- and religiously-laden nature of halal meat consumption, developing geographical work on the ethics and politics of meat production and consumption.

Supervisors This thesis was supervised by Professor Beth Greenhough from the University of Oxford.

Total words This thesis contains approximately 73,000 words.

Statement of authorship All chapters are single-authored, and fully my own work.

Acknowledgement of funding I acknowledge financial support from St. Catherine's College through the Berlinski-Jacobson Graduate Scholarship, the RGS-IBG through the Dudley Stamp Memorial Award, the Aziz Foundation-NZF scholarship, and the Long Ditton Trust.

Ethical approval Ethical approval has been sought and obtained from the University of Oxford CUREC committee.

Declaration The work in this thesis is based on research I have carried out at the University of Oxford between 2019 and 2022. No part of this thesis has been submitted for a degree at this, or any other, university.

Hibba Mazhary (January 2024)

Acknowledgements

Thank you to my family for their support, encouragement and patience, especially my husband and mother, as well as my feline writing companion for her quality-control and lap-warming services. A special thanks to my supervisor for her unwavering support, wisdom, and invaluable mentorship over the past seven years.

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1. Introduction

I use relations of distance and proximity to animal lives and deaths in halal meat production as a framework that runs throughout the thesis. The way we consume food today is increasingly characterised by growing physical and figurative distance from where and how commodities were produced. This distancing is seen to be problematic because of how it veils animal abuse, poor working conditions, environmental degradation, and health effects (Eden, 2011). A "solution of reconnection" (Eden et al., 2008a: 1045) is often sought for such issues; there have been efforts to bring closer conditions of food production, seeking shorter supply chains and collapsing distances between consumers and producers, reflected in academic scholarship (Cook, 2004), policy discourse on food (Policy Commission on the Future of Farming and Food, 2002) and popular consumer movements around 'farm-to-fork' traceability. Within the modern trend of 'fetishised' food commodities (Harvey, 1990), meat is especially veiled due to the involvement of animal death. Distancing from animal killing (for both consumers and producers) comes in many forms, which will be explored throughout this thesis, including physical concealment of spaces of killing, figurative concealment of animal origins, emotional detachment from individual animals, denying animal subjectivities and stigmatisation of meat production workers. The result is that many western meat consumers avoid or are prevented from performing, witnessing and thinking about animal death, and even from thinking about the live animal involved in meat. For this reason, I class distance from live animals and spaces of rearing in meat production as a subset of distancing from animal death due to their life ending in slaughter for food. I make use of the term 'killing' and 'slaughtering' animals throughout the thesis, as terms which seek "neither to convey judgment nor to hide the reality of ending the lives of other beings" (Blecha and Davis, 2014: 67). I also use the more general term 'animal death' since it is also widely used in the animal studies literature (Johnston and Probyn-Rapsey, 2013), although I recognise that animal death refers to a much wider set of practices (summarised in the literature review) than the subset of killing animals for food.

With rising global meat consumption (OECD, 2024), which has often been linked to the trend of increasing disconnection from animals and meat production (Bulliet, 2015), it is important to understand the relations of distance and proximity to food animals' lives and deaths of those

who produce and consume meat. A significant and fast-growing proportion of global meat consumption and production is associated with halal meat, making it an important site of focus. The global halal food and drink market was worth $775 billion in 2021 (Grand View Research, 2022), and with rising Muslim populations in the UK and across Europe (Grim and Karim, 2011), we are likely to see continued growth. The UK provides an important example of this; the UK halal food and beverage industry accounted for 8% of the UK's total food and drink spend in 2016 (Stannard and Clarke, 2020). Muslims eat more meat per capita than the national average (Stannard and Clarke, 2020). On the production side, 71% of sheep, 22% of chickens and 3% of cattle killed in the UK are slaughtered using a halal method (including stun and non-stun) (Food Standards Agency, 2019).

'Halal' is a concept meaning 'permissible' under Islamic law, but throughout this thesis I will use it to refer to a specific subset of this concept which sets out a ritual slaughter process that renders meat permissible. Halal slaughter (*dhabihah*) involves a single incision using a sharp knife across the animal's throat, severing the carotid arteries, oesophagus and trachea without separating the head from the body (Masri, 1989). This must be carried out while uttering a specific prayer and blood must be drained from the animal, and some include further requirements such as a Muslim slaughterer (EQL, 2023). This animal could be from various permitted species, but halal slaughter in the UK mostly involves chickens, sheep, cows and goats (FSA, 2022). Whilst there are essential requirements of the halal slaughter process, as previously outlined, there are also some additional recommended elements such as not sharpening the knife in front of the animal and not allowing it to see the slaughter of its fellows (Taqi Usmani, 2006). Beyond slaughter, there are more general Islamic guiding principles around animal care and environmental ethics (Masri, 1989; Mayer, 2023), often linked with the Quranic term 'tayyib' [loosely translating to pure/wholesome/good] (Yasin, 2017). Modern manifestations of meat production such as intensive farming have resulted in arguments that 'halal' should also encompass animal welfare (and related sustainability, health and quality concerns) during rearing as well as slaughter (Furber, 2017).

1.1 Halal distance/proximity relations

Halal meat in the UK is a compelling site for studying distance/proximity relations to animal killing and rearing. Halal slaughter is a particularly appropriate topic from which to explore animal death because, as Lever (2018: 889) argues, it represents one of the rare instances where "slaughter comes into view". There are several elements that make it particularly visible, including (i) the ritual and sacred discursive framing of animal killing in a secularised context, (ii) the controversy of non-stun slaughter, and (iii) the specific identities and characteristics of the British Muslim community.

Firstly, animal killing in Islam is given a sacred discursive framing, guided by ritual justifications and the specific slaughter process described earlier. Such ritual justifications help to "redeem the killing" (Llewellyn, 2003: 232) and transform "improper violence" to "proper violence" (Tayob, 2019a: 1207). This draws attention to the everyday encounter of religion and secular modernity more generally, with ritual slaughter existing uneasily within the secularised domain of food (Mukherjee, 2014), particularly with the loss of slaughter rituals in Christian and secular Western traditions (Jeske, 2023). Islamic traditions have also maintained an emphasis on 'sacrifice', a particular subset of the halal ritual (the specificities of which will be discussed in detail in chapters 4 and 5 on slaughtering and witnessing). Reinert (2007: 3) argues that the "notion of sacrifice in a literal, Abrahamic sense has become profoundly alien to our conceptions of the modern". The yearly 'Festival of Sacrifice' (*Eid al-Adha*), where every able adult Muslim is required to sacrifice (or outsource the sacrifice) of an animal to mark the original Abrahamic sacrifice and to feed the poor (Tayob, 2020), therefore regularly heightens scrutiny of halal slaughter (in the UK and beyond).

Secondly, the fact that halal slaughter can include un-stunned methods also focuses attention on it. Stunning is a process that renders the animal unconscious at the point of slaughter and can be done through electric or captive bolt methods. Although the majority of halal meat is stunned before slaughter - 84% of poultry, 75% of cattle and 63% of sheep (Food Standards Agency, 2015) – it is the smaller non-stun proportion that provokes much debate. Non-stun slaughter (both halal and kosher) accounts for 5.5% of all animals killed in the UK (Food Standards Agency, 2019). Non-stun slaughter is currently banned in several European countries including Denmark, Sweden, and Iceland (Grumett, 2015). More recently, several regions of Belgium have

introduced laws for mandatory pre-stunning (BBC, 2020). There is a derogation in British law for religious (halal and kosher) slaughter, as in The Welfare of Animals (Slaughter or Killing) Regulations 1995 (Barclay, 2011), dating back to 1933 (Downing, 2015). Several organisations have periodically called for a ban on non-stun slaughter on animal welfare grounds, including the Farm Animal Welfare Council (FAWC, 1985; 2003), the RSPCA and Compassion in World Farming (CIWF, 2014). Faith communities have however responded to this by arguing that non-stun slaughter, if carried out correctly, is more humane (Lever, 2018). Burt (2006: 126) highlights the often uneven treatment of religious (non-stun) slaughter, where characterisations of it as "inhumane" take place "within a system that is deeply inhumane by virtue of its scale." Mukherjee (2014: 33) argues that the halal industry involves a much more pronounced focus on animal death and what goes on inside a slaughterhouse because of "Anti-Halal science, intent on disproving the humanity of zabiha, and Halal-Science, intent on justifying it." This helps to foster an environment of the regular emergence of 'halal meat controversies', such as Fagge (2011) and 'halal hysteria' in 2014 (Sommers, 2014), where chains such as Pizza Express were accused of secretly selling halal meat, which obliged major supermarkets and fast-food chains to declare the halal or non-halal status of their meat (Sommers, 2014).

Disagreements within the Muslim community itself as well as outside it regarding stunning keep attention focused on death. The first halal certification body in the UK, the Halal Food Authority (HFA) emerged in 1994. They accepted pre-slaughter stunning and carried out inspections of slaughterhouses and granted licenses (Lever, 2018). In 2003, the more orthodox Halal Monitoring Committee (HMC) emerged, partially in response to the HFA, advocating for non-stun slaughter and stressing the religiously dubious nature of stunned meat (Lever, 2018). Some halal consumers demand non-stunned meat due to the perception that it is more in line with the exemplary ritual process of slaughter and concerns that the animal would die from the stun, or that the stun would stop all the blood draining out (EBLEX, 2013).

Thirdly, specific characteristics of the British Muslim[1] community make halal slaughter more visible. They are a significant (6.5% of the British population in 2021 (ONS, 2022)), growing

[1] I use 'British Muslims' and 'halal (meat) consumers' mostly interchangeably throughout the thesis as the large majority of British Muslims do adhere to halal dietary guidelines: 90% according to EBLEX (2013) and 86% according to Stannard and Clarke (2020). However, I recognise there might be some slippage between these terms,

(MCB, 2022), visible (due to religious/cultural dress codes and lack of whiteness) minority, constructed as less integrated, more dangerous (due to concerns around extremism and terrorism (Isakjee, 2016)) and more demanding (Allen and Isakjee, 2015) than other minority communities. The fact that they simultaneously present ethnic and religious minorities (with 95% from BAME backgrounds (ONS, 2022)), have higher levels of financial deprivation than other religious communities (Heath and Li, 2014) and the national average (MCB, 2015; 2022), and poorer health outcomes for over-50s (MCB, 2015) adds to this picture of marginalisation. Relations with animal death therefore get refracted through these elements of identity, creating more attention on the topic. Debates around halal slaughter are inextricable from "concerns about integration and the threats posed to British values and national identity by the food practices of *outsiders*." (Lever, 2018: 889). Similarly, Grumett (2015:25) frames the debate around religious slaughter as a 'moral panic' arguing that, in the February 2014 controversy around halal, "animal welfare was primarily the presenting issue for irrational, unarticulated anxieties about the place of Muslims in British society". This moral framing is problematic, he argues, because it prevents any meaningful engagement with either religion or animal welfare, but results in a polarisation.

As well as British Muslims' identity amplifying debates around animal killing, there is evidence to suggest that they may have distinctive distance/proximity relations with animal death, which require investigation. Stannard and Clarke (2020: 7) argue that there is no significant difference between halal and non-halal consumers regarding distancing from animal death as halal consumers also "tend to shy away from the specifics about slaughter", but I interrogate and challenge this assertion throughout the thesis. Halal consumers are arguably more concerned about death than the average non-halal consumer; halal consumers have a more pronounced focus on slaughter methods due to the ritual discursive framings discussed earlier. If the animal is slaughtered in a ritually incorrect manner, this renders the meat religiously impermissible to consume (Friedlander, 2020). This study therefore focuses on a population who are already effectively motivated (through a concern for religious compliance) to ask questions about the sites of meat production and animal death, and examines how this shapes their consumption practices. One other phenomenon that affects British Muslims' relationship with animal death,

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especially with the small but growing proportion of British Muslim vegetarians and vegans, which I refer to at several points in the thesis.

echoing above, is the observance of the annual 'Festival of Sacrifice'. Such cultural and religious resonances of animal death are vital to take into account when discussing de-fetishising meat. On the other hand, 99% of Muslims in the UK lived in urban areas in 2011, compared to 82% of the overall population (MCB, 2022), suggesting a heightened disconnection from spaces of food production and animal rearing, and the fact that they are more financially deprived may limit their ability to access products with shorter supply chains, which tend to be more expensive and also embedded in more racially exclusive spaces (Guthman, 2011). The mobilisation of animal welfare discourses in halal and kosher controversies may cause them to be tainted by association with xenophobic intentions (Lever, 2018), which may also create suspicion of these alternative 'connected' food movements which emphasise higher welfare. This all creates a complex picture of distance/proximity that will be unpacked in this thesis.

Exploring practices and perceptions of animal death in the specific context of the halal meat industry is therefore a rich topic of enquiry due to both internal preoccupations with slaughter methods (due to implications for religious permissibility) and external scrutiny of halal slaughter (through othering and politicisation). In the context of the appropriation of animal and environmental ethical discourses to stigmatise British Muslims, it is especially important to explore how grassroots animal welfare and environmental sustainability movements are emerging from within the community itself, which I consider in detail. Lever (2020: 93) argues that "Muslim and non-Muslim consumers have (very) similar rather than (extremely) disparate concerns about food production and consumption". Whilst this may be true, I endeavour to illustrate how halal consumption in the UK is laden with meaning, refracted through their cultural, religious, class and minority identities.

1.2 Research questions

There are two key overall questions that this thesis aims to address:

1) How do the geographies of halal meat production and consumption shape British Muslim relations to animal life and death?
2) How does the study of halal meat in the UK inform work in geography on the ethics and politics of meat consumption?

Under these, there are some more specific empirical questions framing each chapter that focus on how specific halal meat consumption and production practices shape relations of distance/proximity to animal lives and deaths (included in the chapter summaries below).

1.3 Thesis structure

Following a review of relevant literature on animal geographies, critical animal studies, animal ethics, food geographies, cultural anthropology, religious studies and geographies of religion (chapter 2), and an account of the research design and methods (chapter 3), there are four results chapters. These results chapters progress down the halal meat supply chain and focus on a specific practice of production or consumption in turn, and the spaces and distance/proximity relations implicated in each. Chapter 4 addresses the practice of slaughtering in the space of the modern British halal slaughterhouse, followed by chapter 5 on how halal consumers witness or do not witness animal killing and rearing. Chapter 6 examines how halal consumers rely on different knowledge intermediaries when purchasing halal meat in spaces such as the butcher shop. Chapter 7 focuses on the halal consumer's body (and soul) in the process of eating, and the distance/proximity relations involved. It is important to understand animal death geographically because questions of distance and proximity to animal death (both physical and figurative), fundamentally shape the meanings we attach to it, and animal death is highly spatial, with where it takes place often determining acceptability (Sneegas, 2021). This thesis attends to the spatial nature of animal killing by focusing on different significant sites of halal meat production and consumption such as the slaughterhouse, space-times of witnessing slaughter, sites of consumption such as the halal butcher shop and the halal eater's body (and soul).

Chapter 4: Slaughtering

-What relations of distance and proximity (from animal death) does the halal ritual create in the modern halal slaughterhouse?

-How do bodies and materials interact in the halal slaughterhouse to create distance or proximity?

-How could care look different in halal slaughter?

The first results chapter addresses *slaughtering*, situated in the modern British halal slaughterhouse, the predominant site of animal killing for halal meat in the UK. The modern slaughterhouse is characterised by an ever-growing scale of production, and associated with this

is increased detachment from animal death (Bjørkdahl and Syse, 2021). The relations that shape animal death are a constant tension between distance and proximity. As the majority of killing animals for food in the UK takes place in a slaughterhouse, it is important to understand the relations of care and killing, and distance and proximity in such spaces, which are usually concealed, remote and difficult to access (Serpell, 1986; Philo, 1995; Burt 2006).

I begin the chapter by outlining the halal ritual killing process ('dhabihah') and its core relations of distance/proximity. I argue that the ritual of halal slaughter comprises of contrasting relations of distance and proximity in the modern slaughterhouse, both leaving open the ability to be affected by the act of killing animals for food and providing a measure of distance and protection from the emotional impacts of killing. The next section situates the halal ritual in the modern slaughterhouse and reflects on the relations of distance/proximity that emerge in this translation, and whether there is a slippage between 'ideal' and practical performances of the ritual. To do this, I go through a journey of the sheep slaughterhouse I visited, zooming in on several key chronological moments in the halal slaughter ritual in the slaughterhouse, and what relations of distance/proximity they give rise to; the animal entering the assembly line, the administering (or not) of the stun, the utterance of the ritual prayer, the sharp neck incision, draining the blood of the animal. This chapter focuses mostly on one part of the slaughterhouse (the killing room), as this section is what differentiates the halal process (the gutting and skinning further down the assembly line are quite similar to the non-halal process). I examine the configurations of distance and proximity for each practice, who and what is being brought closer or set at a distance, and what new dimensions the halal ritual adds. One of the contributions of this chapter is that, not only do I reflect on relations of distance/proximity afforded by the halal ritual compared to non-halal slaughter, I also offer a sense of the differing distance/proximity relations afforded by different types of halal slaughter, in particular stun and non-stun and sacrificial and non-sacrificial halal slaughter. Implicit in the discussion of all of these practices is the scale of killing facilitated in the modern slaughterhouse, and I explore the complex relationship between the halal ritual and scale, most starkly characterised in the annual 'Festival of Sacrifice', which concentrates vast demand into one week, creating amplified commercial pressures, shaping the volume and speed of death. This detailed description of the realities of the modern slaughterhouse helps to show what is possible in this space, and the challenges of translating this ritual into this space. After showing what relations and forms or care are possible/practical in

the halal slaughterhouse, the final section takes a 'speculative ethics' (Puig de la Bellacasa, 2017) approach, asking how else things could be, how to care better and kill better. If killing animals is done, could it be done better? Both thinking through current manifestations of care and speculating about improving care in halal slaughterhouse is important in the context of the common portrayal of halal slaughter as care*less* and cruel. Ultimately, however, some tensions of care are incommensurable in the context of halal slaughter or killing animals for food.

Chapter 5: Witnessing

-How do halal consumers witness animal killing and rearing for meat production?
-What are the effects of these encounters?

This chapter explores how halal consumers witness practices of animal killing and rearing for meat production, and the effects of these encounters on consumers' identities, consumption behaviours and ethics. I show how British Muslim consumers emerge as (post)domestic consumers with exposure to (post)domestic contexts, with neither a default position of distance nor of proximity to animal killing and rearing, but a complex combination of the two, which is brought to light during specific encounters. This chapter starts by zooming in on several space-times of how halal consumers' commonly witnessed slaughter and the distances and the proximities afforded by these encounters. Halal consumers' witnessing of animal death was distinctive due to its clustering around certain places ('back home' and not in British ruralities) and temporalities (childhood memories and seasonal religious festivals). Whilst the focus of the chapter is more heavily on encounters with animal killing, throughout I also comment on distinctive ways in which halal consumers connect with (or are disconnected from) animal rearing. In the final section of the chapter, I reflect on effects: how these encounters with slaughter and rearing in these distinctive space-times shape halal consumers' *identities* and their *behaviours/practices.* In the case of identities, these experiences are often shaped by and go on to shape foreign/native, child/adult, urban/rural, sacred/secular and self/other identities, such as how relations with death were implicated in British Muslims' minority status. Regarding behaviours/practices, encounters with killing and rearing shape what is normal and acceptable when it comes to animal lives and deaths, influencing meat consumption practices and shaping the potential for ethical and political transformation. This chapter therefore unpacks both directions of a complex process, where in the space-times section I show how certain identities

(cultural, religious, urban, minority) give rise to certain experiences of distance or proximity to animal killing and to witnessing certain types of death, and in the effects section, I examine how such encounters in turn affect their identity (feelings of ethnic and national belonging, othering).

Chapter 6: Purchasing

-How do sites of consumption shape halal consumers' relationship with animal lives and deaths?
-How do knowledge intermediaries in sites of halal meat purchasing shape halal consumers' relations with animal lives and deaths?

This chapter explores halal consumers' relations with the lives and deaths of the animals they consume in the practice of halal meat *purchasing*. In order to do this, I focus on common knowledge intermediaries of halal meat purchasing. Distance/proximity relations with animals' lives and deaths are mediated by "knowledge intermediaries" in the purchasing experience, wherein the absence of first-hand information, consumers must rely on different proxies in order to obtain information about food production and provide assurance (Eden et al., 2008a). This chapter focuses on different knowledge intermediaries in halal purchasing practices. For each section, I think about who or what the knowledge intermediary is and the effects of this knowledge intermediary for distance/proximity relations. I begin with the most common and historical knowledge intermediary of the Muslim butcher shop. The independent halal butcher shop acts as a vital 'knowledge intermediary' in halal meat consumption, where "everything therein can be quickly picked up without further analysis" (Eden et al., 2008a: 1051). I show how the space of the butcher shop acts to black-box some elements and open some conversations up. I then move to the emergence of certification bodies as knowledge intermediaries. The chapter then turns to knowledge intermediaries of farms/farmers' markets in the 'alternative halal' space and how these rely on a different set of distance/proximity relations. The chapter then turns to discussions around the 'knowledge fix' and what the effects of providing more knowledge, especially in the form of labelling, are on consumers' connection with food animals' lives and deaths.

Chapter 7: Eating

- How does the embodied process of halal meat consumption create relations of distance and proximity with animal lives and deaths?

-How do the concepts of 'halal' and 'tayyib' inform embodied ethical consumption?

This chapter explores how the embodied eating experience affects halal consumers' proximity and/or distance to animal death and how they perceive the implications of this for their bodies and souls, with implications for their consumption decisions, blurring sacred and secular concerns. I focus on the key consumption site of the halal eater's body (and soul) to explore how halal meat becomes known through the process of eating. I consider the two directions of the relationship between the embodied eating experience on the one hand and connection with food animals' lives and deaths on the other. The first half of the chapter ('Eating') attends to how the embodied eating experience (in the form of material qualities of meat) shapes knowledge about how animals live and die in the production of halal meat. Various (socio-) material qualities of the animal body (such as the taste, texture, nutrition, presentation, and preparation of the meat) create different relations with animal death. I ask what sets of ethical relations are co-generated by these halal meat materialities, such as a higher concern for animal welfare or environmental sustainability or the working conditions of food producers. The second half of the chapter ('Edibility') examines how connection with certain aspects of animals' lives and deaths "intervene with" (Evans and Miele, 2012: 6) the embodied eating experience (leading to the food becoming physically inedible, rejected by both body and soul). Roe (2006a;2006b) describes the ways in which food is deemed edible, or 'things become food', in which consumers sense material and immaterial qualities of a foodstuff to decide whether they will consume it. I push this idea of edibility further by considering how religious dietary prescriptions create different forms of contested edibility to emphasise the spiritual motivations that make halal consumption distinctive and to illustrate the complex ways in which halal consumers navigate consumption choices. I show how edibility is mediated by concerns for the soul as well as for the body, encapsulated in understandings of the Islamic scriptural term '*tayyib*'. This brings the dimension of spirituality and faith into understandings of human-animal relations, meat consumption, and materiality of human and animal bodies, showing how halal meat comes to matter for the body and the soul.

Conclusion

Halal meat production in the UK is a crucial site for the examination of distance/proximity relations to animal death, highlighted by the public attention on religious slaughter and the specific identity configurations of the minority British Muslim community. This topic speaks to literature in animal geographies, critical animal studies and animal ethics on distancing animal death, as well as debates in food geographies and cultural anthropology on material semiotics of consumption and reconnecting with food production, and work in religious studies and religious geographies on the sacred and the secular.

2. Literature review

In this chapter, I review geographical and anthropological literature crucial to informing the study of the distance/proximity relations involved in halal meat production. I start by reviewing work on bringing food production closer in food geographies and consumption geographies. I then focus on a subset of food production - meat production - drawing upon scholarship in animal geographies, critical animal studies and animal ethics to illuminate the processes of distancing and connecting with animal death involved in this practice. Finally, I summarise work in religious studies and geographies of religion on the relationship between the sacred and the secular, and the relationship between food and religious identity, which add complexity to halal meat consumption. This lines up with Lever's (2018) argument that what makes halal meat particularly controversial and interesting is its position at the intersection of (i) food, (ii) animal death and (iii) religion.

2.1 Food production

Academic work, particularly in food geographies and consumption geographies, has addressed the phenomenon of distancing from food production. Geographers have engaged with the Marxist notion of commodity fetishism, which describes how the labour and social relations involved in making a commodity are hidden (Harvey, 1990). Eden et al. (2008a) describe both cartographic and cognitive distancing from food production, where as well as being physically distanced from *spaces* of food production, consumers have poor knowledge of food production *practices*. De-fetishising commodities, therefore, involves revealing the social and material relations of production; scholars in food geography have traced the producer-consumer pathways of certain foods; Cook (2004) follow the routes of "things" such as papayas. Further examples of studies 'following food' include Lind and Barham's (2004) work on the social life of the tortilla, Miele's (2011) work on free-range chickens and Cook and Harrison (2007) on hot pepper sauce. This work is exemplary of an explosion of interest in food and consumption geographies in ethical consumption as part of increasing attention paid to consumer power (Lockie, 2002), as well as a wider 'ethical turn' within geography (Smith, 2000), with an increased engagement with ethical purchasing practices of food and other commodities (Hartwick, 2000; Sayer, 2003). Questions of ethics are increasingly being implicated in food consumption: "morality is a key and growing currency in the provisioning of food in much of the postindustrial North and

beyond." (Goodman et al., 2010: 1783) Such work discusses what it means to 'care at a distance' (Goodman, 2011) about food produced abroad (Lyon, 2007; Neilson and Pritchard, 2010), where physical distance does not necessarily decrease "a felt responsibility or practical capacity to care for others" (Barnett et al., 2005: 25).

It is valuable to focus on British halal consumers with respect to the above questions of distanced food commodities and ethical consumption because they provide a vital and understudied intersectional perspective of how multiple barriers shape access to alternative consumption choices. Authors in food and consumption geographies have explored alternative consumption practices, or 'Alternative Food Networks' (AFNs) such as locavorism, vegetarianism, organic farming, farmers' markets and cooperatives (Bell and Valentine, 1997; Guthman, 2003), with a large focus on reconnecting consumers with producers and their food (Holloway and Kneafsey, 2000; Renting *et al.*, 2003; Kneafsey *et al.*, 2008). AFNs "reconvene trust between food producers and consumers" and "redistribute value…against the logic of bulk commodity production" (Whatmore *et al.,* 2003: 389) and consist of more localised and traceable food systems (Goodman *et al.* 2010). One major characteristic of AFNs is increased traceability, a "technique of visibility" (Miele, 2011: 2079) where consumers have access to information about the spaces in which their food is grown or made. There is also a significant emphasis on the 'local' scale, to "re-embed food systems in "local" places and communities" (Harris, 2010:355–356). Reconnecting to local places may mean different things depending on certain communities' levels of alienation. Significantly, the early work on ethical consumption and AFNs has not focused on a diverse range of consumers (Guthman 2011), but mostly on white, middle-class professionals (Goodman and Goodman 2008; White, 2007). In particular, there has been a call for this literature to focus on marginalised racial minorities (Abrahams, 2008), such as Ramirez (2014: 749), who aims to "de-center the white actor as the presumed practitioner of community food work" by bringing marginalised communities to the forefront in decision-making in community food projects. There have been a few studies looking at religious and racial minorities such as McCutcheon (2011; 2013) but there is need for more work on this. Furthermore, as highlighted by Joassart-Marcelli and Marcelli's (2018) and Williams-Forson and Wilkerson's (2011) studies, there is a need to understand how race, class and gender interact in an intersectional manner to work towards a more inclusive politics of sustainable food provision.

Reconnecting with the local scale has interesting dimensions with respect to halal consumers. As a population which is disproportionately urban (MCB, 2022), which feels alienated from British rural sites of food production (Dafydd Jones, 2010) and which experiences higher levels of poverty and has larger household sizes (Stannard and Clarke, 2020), studying British Muslims' shows how ethical consumption is conceptualised, experienced and practised given these dynamics. It could, for example, shed light onto how racial and financial barriers constrain consumption choices, complicating the assumption that consumers who have more information about food production will make more ethical and sustainable purchasing decisions (Guthman, 2008). Moreover, given this is a community whose specific consumption practices – halal slaughter – have been flagged in popular and media discourse as unethical and 'barbaric' (Mukherjee, 2014), understanding Muslim consumers' engagement with ethical consumption (and also care and animal welfare in the slaughterhouse) is important because it shows a reclaiming of discourses that have previously been weaponised against them; Lever (2018) highlights the link between animal rights and xenophobic discourse when examining the history of halal and kosher controversies.

Moreover, whilst work in consumption geographies has acknowledged that ethical consumption can be influenced by a "diverse range of motivations, incentives, and desires", including faith-based commitments (Barnett et al., 2005: 27; Clarke et al., 2005; Barnett et al., 2017), there is scope to further explore the ways in which these commitments shape consumers' material interactions with food. This is particularly important in the context of debates around religion and environmental degradation or protection. White (1967) argues that religion, in particular the Judeo-Christian tradition, presents a damaging notion of man being supreme over nature, and is therefore responsible for widespread environmental degradation. There has however been work challenging this on religious groups with pro-environmental values and practices, such as Kidwell *et al.* (2018) on Christian environmental groups in Scotland. Other examples include a recent report on Christian perspectives on farm animal welfare (Clough et al. 2020) and Pope Francis' encyclical 'Laudato Si', On Care for our Common Home' in 2016 (Mayer, 2023). It can be argued that Islam has a strong environmental ethic in principle (Ozdemir, 2003) and religion has often cited as stimulus for care for animals; Masri (2006) outlines how animals are seen in Islamic scriptures simultaneously as teachers, worshippers, communities and fellow members of God's creation, while Tlili (2023) provides a 'non-anthropocentric' interpretation of the Qur'an.

There has been recent work by contemporary Islamic religious scholars seeking to apply Islamic scripture to modern issues such as intensive farming (Furber, 2017). Moreover, MacGregor et al. (2019) and Pettinato (2016) explore faith-inspired environmental activism and sustainability practices amongst British Muslims. Although such environmental and animal welfare arguments are still amongst a minority of British Muslims, they are achieving increasing traction (MacGregor et al., 2019) in the mainstream, at least in discourse if not in practice. Further research is therefore needed on how religious motivations and animal welfare concerns intersect, as suggested by White and Samuel (2016).

Much of the existing geographical work on halal focuses on the mainstream meat industries, yet far less attention has been paid to 'alternative' or 'eco-halal' movements, where faith is cited as the stimulus for ethical food consumption, such as in Istasse's (2015) study on the Belgian 'Green Halal' movement and Robinson's (2014) on the Taqwa Muslim food cooperative. There have been postgraduate theses looking in depth at 'eco-halal' establishments, although these have been mainly in the US context (Najeeb, 2013; Yasin, 2017). Much of the geographical work on halal has explored halal slaughter (Higgin et al. 2011; Miele and Rucinska, 2015; Miele, 2016), which focuses our attention on the slaughterhouse, paying less attention to the rearing of the animal and the term Qur'anic term 'tayyib'. This term is mentioned briefly in Isakjee and Carroll (2019), but there is a need to bring geographers' attention to the spatio-temporal dimensions of tayyib, which take into account spaces of rearing. I argue that whilst there are similar spatialities involved in secular ethical consumption and ethical halal consumption under tayyib, in the latter there are different temporalities, socio-material bodies and relations at stake, which is explored further in chapter 7 on eating.

Reconnection to food production is often filtered through 'knowledge intermediaries' that "provide information that consumers cannot get or test for themselves" (Eden et al. 2008a: 1052). One form of this is certification and labelling (Eden, 2011), which do not necessarily bring consumers closer to production; in the context of assurance schemes such as Red Tractor and the RSPCA 'Freedom Food' that audit food supply chains and have certain welfare, safety and environmental requirements, Eden et al. (2008a) demonstrates how such schemes can result in re-'black-boxing' production by allowing quick purchasing decisions and foreclosing further enquiries. In chapter 6, I focus on different knowledge intermediaries in the halal meat

purchasing process such as the space of the halal butcher shop, halal certificates, and alternative farmers. I examine the specific cultural and religious resonances of certification and knowledge intermediaries in the case of halal assurance, where religious food networks mobilise intra-Muslim trust dynamics (van Waarden and van Dalen, 2013; Tayob, 2022). In his thesis on halal certification and consumption in Malaysia and US and international halal bodies, Dolan (2010: 3) observes that "the concept of halal formed through the interaction of consumers, manufacturers and industry advocates is a social rather than strictly theological concept." In chapter 6, I complicate the characterisation of butcher shops in the animal studies and consumption geographies literatures as necessarily a more connected space to animal death and spaces of animal rearing and killing. Gillespie (2011: 155) argues that animal origins of meat products are more evident in traditional butcher shops since consumers to "see the silhouette of an animal when they bought their meat". Syse and Bjørkdahl (2021: 128), in reference to changing meat provisioning practices in Norway, position the butcher shop as "highlight[ing] the origin of meat as well as the expertise that went into transforming animals into meat", in contrast to the supermarket which "made meat a grocery like any other". Eden et al.'s (2008a:1050) focus group participants perceived the butcher shop as a space of heightened visibility and traceability, and "strong immediacy of the meat supply chain". However, I argue that the British halal butcher shop involves complex relations of both proximity and distance to food animals' lives and deaths, shaped by additional cultural (Asian butchery cuts and other culturally-specific foodstuffs) and religious (the aforementioned intra-Muslim trust dynamics) factors.

However, there are changing trends away from butcher shops, as "halal-certification organizations are important intermediaries that sought to replace the loss of personal trust with trust in the certification logo" (Tayob, 2016:74). In chapter 6, I illustrate how halal certification can 'black-box' certain elements of production (rearing) and open up others such as killing (and particularly stunning). It is important to note that receiving information through knowledge intermediaries may not result in changed consumption behaviour; Eden et al. (2008a: 1052) complicate this idea of reconnection as a solution to problems in the industrial food complex, as "we may block things out to make life easier". Miele and Evans (2010) also challenge the idea that increasing consumers' knowledge of animals' lives and suffering through food labels always causes consumers to act more ethically. As shown with their focus group in Italy, some consumers

felt 'resentment' at being given such information because they did not believe that animal welfare was the consumer's responsibility.

As well as certification and labelling, the animal body acts as a knowledge intermediary by conveying certain material qualities to the eater which may be interpreted to provide knowledge about the animal's life and death. Since food is so "profoundly and deeply felt in the gut" (Goodman, 2011: 244) it is unsurprising that concerns at the bodily scale are a key starting point for reconnecting with food production. Evans and Miele (2012: 300-301) stress the importance of recognising an embodied approach to consumption in order to reduce future farm animal suffering, highlighting that "our relationship with food is deeply visceral: we all taste and ingest foods, we incorporate them into our bodies", in the case of meat creating "enduring metabolic intimacies between human and nonhuman bodies" (Stassart and Whatmore, 2003: 450). Food is distinct from other commodities such as clothing, its alterity lying in the fact that it is "a biological imperative that is non-substitutable for human existence as we know it" (Goodman, 2011: 244). Roe (2006a;2006b) describes the ways in which food is deemed edible, or 'things become food', in which consumers sense material and immaterial qualities of a foodstuff to decide whether they will consume it. I understand the body as an instrument of politics in alternative food systems, after Hayes-Conroy and Hayes-Conroy (2010). Chapter 7 focuses on the halal eater's body and how they sense various material qualities of meat and how that shapes their relations to animals' lives and deaths. Isakjee and Carroll (2019) highlight the importance of the scale of the body in understanding halal consumption in particular, emphasising how beliefs become inscribed on the body as embodied impulses of disgust and desire. Gökarıksel (2009) moreover identifies the body as an important scale for exploring the sacred and secular, involving spiritual as well as physical embodiment (Holloway, 2003). My work extends the literature in food and more-than-human geographies on embodiment by highlighting the importance of the spiritual body in visceral approaches and in shaping edibility.

2.2 Animal death

The most pronounced distancing from food commodities is found in meat production, due to a combination of societal taboos around death in general (Stevenson et al. 2016), and killing to eat more specifically; in fact, Fessler and Navarrate's (2003) cross-cultural analysis found that

meat is a universally highly prized foodstuff but also faces the most cultural taboos. There is increasing attention paid to animal death across multidisciplinary studies of animals, attentive to the fact that killing is the most common type of human-animal interaction (Animal Studies Group, 2006). There have been several edited volumes dedicated solely to animal death, bringing together scholarship across various disciplines across human-animal studies, such as Animal Studies Group (2006) on 'killing animals' and Johnston and Probyn-Rapsey (2013) on 'animal death', and an edited volume from sociology and anthropology on 'mourning animals' (DeMello, 2016). There are rich discussions of animal death across anthropology (Serpell, 1986; Reinert, 2007; Dave, 2014; Mukherjee, 2014; Parreñas, 2018), environmental humanities (Ginn et al., 2014; van Dooren, 2010; 2014), vegan geographies and critical animal studies (Cole, 2011; Gillespie, 2011a; Stanescu, 2013; 2015; White, 2015). Several review articles in geography have pointed to the importance of animal death, including Gibbs (2020) on animal death in contexts of conservation, Gibbs (2021) on the intersection of killing and caring and Mazhary (2021) on the spatial nature of animal death. Shcheglovitova and Pitas' (2022) special issue on 'deadly intersections' with non-humans shows the increasing attention from social and cultural geographers on animal death, arguing that (non-human) death is productive and transformative of spaces, affects and values. Animal death is very revealing; "killing an animal is rarely simply a matter of animal death. It is surrounded by a host of attitudes, ideas, perceptions, and assumptions" (Animal Studies Group, 2006: 4). In particular, animal death also helps to shed light on social and religious laws that govern its (un)acceptability (Higgin et al. 2011). I develop work in animal geographies, critical animal studies and animal ethics on animal death by attending to the specific cultural, political and religious resonances around how the geographies of halal meat consumption shape relations with animal death and rearing.

2.2.1 Consumers

Firstly, consumers in highly industrialised societies are physically distanced from animal death. For example, animal ethicist Serpell (1986) identifies concealment as one of the key "distancing devices" that allow meat consumers to disconnect from animal death; he notes how abattoirs are often hidden from consumers' eyes in isolated rural locations. Similarly, within animal geography Philo (1995) describes how in Victorian London, urban slaughterhouses and live meat markets, previously the norm, began to disappear as they were seen to violate public propriety

and cleanliness (Fitzgerald, 2010). From the 18th century onwards, there were legal reforms in London that restricted the spaces where it was legitimate to carry out animal slaughter, from backyards to purpose-built slaughterhouses (Fitzgerald, 2010; Otter, 2008). This marks the beginning of a formalisation of slaughter in the UK. Nineteenth century Britain saw a whole host of legislation restricting the ability of the public to witness of all types of animal death, including vivisection and bear baiting as well as slaughter (Burt, 2001). This physical concealment of animal death is not unique; it is part of a wider 'civilizing process' (Elias, 1978) of modernity where violence and other unfavourable sights such as nudity and excrement are hidden from view (but not eliminated).

This work affirms the intensely spatial nature of death identified by the death geographies literature (Maddrell and Sidaway, 2010), with death and mourning being concentrated in certain spaces such as the slaughterhouse and the research laboratory, and with death 'in the wrong place' (Convery et al., 2005) perceived as transgressive. Sneegas (2021:63) similarly argues that "death must occur in prescribed sites and at approved times to function as a site of value accumulation in capitalist agriculture." In fact, Elder et al. (1998) argue that one factor that shapes what type of harm towards animals is defined as "civilised" and what is deemed as "savage" is the site of harm, and whether the harm occurs in concealed places such as abattoirs or in visible everyday places such as homes or churches. Convery et al. (2005) discuss an example of death 'in the wrong place' during the 2001 foot and mouth epidemic, where large numbers of cows and sheep had to be killed on farms. Farmers in Cumbria who were interviewed expressed grief because, despite acknowledging that the animals would have gone to slaughter eventually, they felt that the killing "transgressed this emotional geography of the farm as the appropriate place of livestock management and the abattoir as the appropriate place of livestock death" (Convery et al., 2005: 105). The location of killing can equally play a part in making animal death unremarkable, where animal corpses in certain places such as 'roadkill' on motorways is a routine sight (Monahan, 2016), although there have been efforts to make this less mundane and acceptable through art activism (Watson, 2015). This thesis attends to the spatial nature of animal death by focusing on key sites of encountering death, including the slaughterhouse (chapter 4), space-times of slaughter (chapter 5) and sites of consumption such as the butcher shop and the body.

Beyond physical distancing of spaces of killing, consumers are figuratively distanced from animal death through a set of "broader tacit embodied practices" (Evans and Miele, 2012: 6) that disassociate the products of animal death from the process of their production, such as the arrangement of animal-derived foods in shops and the everyday vocabulary relating to food. Johnston and Probyn-Rapsey (2013: xvi) argue that, in order to sustain the level of animal death that we see today, there is a "cultivation of indifference and silence by various cultural mechanisms". Consider, for example, the effort to make the animal absent from the act of meat consumption through verbal concealment by the use of words such as "beef" instead of "cow-meat" (Serpell, 1986) and "veal" instead of "baby cow stomach" (Adams, 1995), and the distinct euphemistic language employed to describe killing of animals versus the killing of humans (Jepson, 2008). Wolch and Emel (1998: xi) call this concealment "language tricks", which "artfully disguise true origins of flesh-food". In this way, the animal is almost completely erased from the creation of meat products, and becomes an 'absent referent' (Adams, 1991). Neo and Emel (2017: 10) argue that the result of absenting animal origins results in them "being reproduced as wanton exchange values (for ever-increasing profits) rather than reasonable use values (for sustenance)." Distancing is also achieved through the butchering and presentation of the animal carcass; Herzog (2010: 190) observes that in the US in the 1960s, most chicken was sold with an intact carcass and internal organs, and contrasts this with the rising popularity of highly processed meat and "translucent boneless pieces of flesh". Another phenomenon that aids this de-animalisation is the decline in the number of butcher shops over the past fifty years to be increasingly replaced by supermarkets, lessening the opportunity for customers to "see the silhouette of an animal when they bought their meat" (Gillespie, 2011: 155). Interestingly, this is less the case in the British halal meat industry as most consumers still rely on independent butchers (Stannard and Clarke, 2020). I explore the relations of distance and proximity in the halal butcher shop in chapter 6.

The distancing of the animal from the meat product has also been explored in psychology, with authors theorising the existence of a 'meat paradox', where humans both care about animals, yet still enjoy eating meat (Bastian *et al.,* 2012; Bastian and Loughnan, 2016), and this is largely due to psychological processes such as what Plous (1993: 11) calls "structural variables that disassociate consumptive practices from the infliction of harm". Rothgerber (2013) identifies direct and indirect strategies for justifying meat consumption, with indirect strategies including

avoiding thoughts of animal suffering and obscuring or 'dissassociating' (Kunst et al., 2016; Kunst and Palacios Haugestad, 2018) the live animal from meat consumption. Kunst et al. (2016) found that willingness to eat meat was reduced by interventions that foregrounded the animal, such as presenting a pork roast with an intact head or replacing 'beef' with 'cow' in a restaurant menu.

Narratives and practices of consumer distancing from animal death are complicated by: (i) emerging sub-cultures in the West; and (ii) international and regional variations in levels of distancing amongst different societies. In western sub-cultures, Parry (2009) observes an emerging trend in contemporary Western gastronomic culture, the 'New Carnivore' movement (Parry and Potts, 2010: 382), perhaps as a reaction to the distancing of death in the meat industry, of not only the acknowledgement, but also the romanticisation of slaughter and a desire for greater proximity to spaces of animal death, "not as a deterrent to flesh consumption, but as an incentive". This is reflected in practices of killing animals live on cooking channels, and the promotion of 'do-it-yourself' slaughter. Parry (2009) argues that this "traditional cruelty" has wide appeal because it is associated with more natural and authentic animal husbandry practices. Similar sub-cultures in Finland are explored by Kupsala (2018: 202), where older individuals, rural residents and 'gastronomes' were more likely to value "overtly animal-like ingredients" such as tongue and offal. Smith (2002: 54) points to similar sentiments where "carnivores often take a kind of macho delight in ordering an undisguisable "rack of ribs" and there is a culinary cachet in ordering calves' liver." As part of this trend in contemporary gastronomy, or what Parry (2009) calls 'the new nostalgia for meat', there has been popular non-fiction aimed at a lay audience about killing to eat, such as journalist Louise Gray (2016) who wrote about a year of only eating animals she killed herself. She opens the book with a jarring and affecting vignette of shooting her first rabbit and her sense of overwhelming horror and guilt, but by the epilogue she taxidermies the rabbit and makes rabbit ragù. She (2016: 302) argues that "ethical carnivores" have made a decision to eat meat, and they want to make sure it is from a good source". This links to the argument made by Morris and Kirwan (2008) that killing animals for food while considering animal welfare arguably represents a more complex and multi-faceted ethical standpoint, whilst vegetarianism, according to Morris and Kirwan (2008: 139) is "comfortably accommodated" by society as an Alternative Food Network. They suggest that it is this moral

complexity that may lead meat-eaters, and not vegetarians, to be the ethical consumers who most thoroughly investigate and reflect upon the origins of their food.

As well as variability in similar societies, there are global variations, and high levels of distancing are more often a characteristic of highly industrialised nations. Across different societies, Kunst and Palacios Haugestad (2018:356) found that American consumers, who were randomly shown a pork roast with the head intact or absent, were "more sensitive to cues linking meat to animal origins" than Ecuadorian consumers and theorised that this was because they were less exposed to unprocessed meat. Bulliet's (2005) thesis describes the contemporary condition of "postdomesticity" where humans are cut off from the domestic animals that they eat, yet simultaneously form increasingly intimate relationships with domestic pet animals. Tayob (2023: 13-14), who has written extensively about halal slaughter in India and South Africa, argues for a mode of researching slaughter that "provincialises secular-liberal/ European norms and moral assumptions". Part of this involves not assuming universality of contexts where slaughter is hidden and exploring "domestic" as well as "postdomestic" (Bulliet, 2005) types of animal relations. For example, Miele (2016) describes slaughter in an Egyptian seaside town where animals were routinely killed onsite in butcher shops and dismembered in front of customers. Furthermore, in contexts where animal death is not hidden, there may be contrasting issues of desensitisation and normalisation; in fact, Dave (2014:453-454) argues that, in the case of violence against animals in India, "it is more the apathy of ubiquity that is the problem than the tendency to conceal".

In chapter 5 (witnessing), I grapple with where the halal consumer fits into these relationships of distance from and proximity to animal death, arguing they occupy a distinct space between domesticity and postdomesticity due to their layered cultural, religious and national identity, which shapes their witnessing encounters. This is an underexplored area as much of the geographical work on distancing animal death with regards to meat consumers often focuses on white and/or European consumers (Evans and Miele, 2012; Blecha and Davis (2014). Halal consumers' relations with animal death are politically and racially charged. Being a minority community (both religious minority and composed of many ethnic minorities) means that their relations with animals and practices with animal death are highly scrutinised and subject to stigmatisation. Animal geographers have examined how minority groups' treatment of animals

can be used to construct racial difference, where "one type of harm/death to an animal is seen as more…humane than others" (Elder et al., 1998:74). For instance, Mukherjee (2014: 25) argues that the "debeak[ing] and mutilati[on]" of a traditional French coq is perceived as significantly less cruel than the ritual slaughtering of a coq. Similarly, Robbins (1998) explores the power dynamics of beef consumption in India amongst minority groups and how identity politics play out with often fatal consequences in the case of cow slaughter, with Hindu cow protectionists threatening Muslim beef producers (Govindrajan, 2018), and the 'Muslim-as-butcher' trope feeding into an "anti-Muslim politics of abjection" (Tayob, 2022: 3). The relations of British Muslim consumers to animal death are therefore of interest as they may be characterised by distinctive encounters with killing animals for food, with implications for consumer behaviours and identities.

Given widespread concealment of animal death in the British context, questions are raised about the ethically transformative nature of witnessing animal death. Encountering animal death more closely may shape meat consumer behaviour; respondents to Blecha and Davis's (2014:72) survey of attitudes towards backyard slaughter in California "explicitly noted that this psychological distance is necessary in order for them to continue eating meat." Evans and Miele (2012) similarly posit that it is this disconnection with death that facilitates and normalises eating animals. Blecha and Davis (2014) call for further research into the relationship between intimacy with animal death and meat consumption. On the one hand, witnessing animal death can be transformative of human-animal relations, an idea encapsulated in what Pachirat (2013:15) calls a "politics of sight", involving "concerted attempts to make visible what is hidden…in order to bring about social and political transformation." Kean (1998: 27) argued that reforms regarding animal treatment in 19th century Britain were triggered by "the way in which animals were literally and metaphorically seen", and points to the "importance of the role of sight in developing the relationship between seeing ill-treatment and creating change" (page 30). An assumption in the power of vision in effecting change is inherent in the existence of "ag-gag laws" in the United States that criminalise the capture of photographs or videos in industrial animal agriculture facilities (Rasmussen, 2015). In fact, Dave (2014: 434) calls the emphasis on witnessing acts of violence against animals a "standard trope" in animal activist origin stories, where the moment of witnessing "inaugurates a bond demanding from the person a life of responsibility." Exposure to animal death can however generate complex ethical responses that refuse linear narratives of

visibility always provoking transformative action, which I demonstrate in the witnessing chapter. I show how halal consumers have a specific 'politics of site' (in terms of where and how they encounter animal killing) that affect their responses to animal death. I also show how exposure to specific types of death over others can create different levels of proximity, in line with Pachirat's (2013: 255) call to examine which "types of making visible are likely to be more politically transformative".

2.2.2 Slaughterhouse workers

Meat producers, in particular slaughterhouse workers, experience different combinations of both proximity and distance from animal death. Chapter 4 on slaughtering provides a detailed account of these relations and how they are shaped by religious rituals in the modern halal slaughterhouse.

Firstly, a significant body of scholarship has explored how the space of the slaughterhouse helps facilitate mass killing through its infrastructure and apparatus and (emotionally) detaches workers from the process (Bjørkdahl and Syse, 2021). The mechanisation of slaughterhouses made slaughter "a rapid, piecemeal, impersonal process" made up of "discrete and fairly simple tasks." (Purcell, 2011: 62). In a similar vein to Vialles' (1994) claim regarding the assembly line set-up of the slaughterhouse, Serpell (1986: 204) argues that the division of labour in the industrial animal agriculture system where every person has a specific role in the larger process creates a situation where "everyone involved is guilty, but no one is obliged to shoulder the full burden of responsibility." This helps bring out the distancing device that he labels 'detachment', which is the emotional and mental detachment required to carry out killing. People who work closely with animal death such as slaughterhouse workers may deliberately or unconsciously develop strategies to distance themselves and often become desensitised (Serpell, 1986). The killable nature of animals is constantly reinforced in such spaces, where "with each repetition, these practices of killing animals and discerning their deaths make animals more killable" (Wentworth, 2015: 147). The fast-paced environment of the killing floor/assembly line is evocatively captured by Pachirat (2011) with his book title 'Every Twelve Seconds'. Moreover, techno-mediation in the abattoir reduces interaction with the animals, and, alongside the sheer scale of the operation and the high outputs that necessitate quick, repetitive actions, helps to

banalise acts of killing, a process which Gillespie and Lopez (2015:3) argue "is *central* to the process of 'making killable'." Techno-mediation in meat production was explored as early as Harrison's (1964) 'Animal Machines', and includes a decline in "intimate husbandry practices" in large-scale factory farms (Purcell, 2011: 64). Porcher (2006: 64) talks about the increase of number of animals per worker and the increase of techno-mediation has created an "instituted distance between livestock and farmers", arguing that this has resulted in increased human as well as animal suffering. This is all in the context of a global trend of increasingly larger and more technologically-advanced production systems owned by a few large conglomerates (Neo and Emel, 2017).

As well as the layout of the slaughterhouse, the vulnerability of slaughterhouse workers on multiple dimensions may also interrupt their ability to emotionally attach to the act of killing. Mc Loughlin (2019: 325) characterises them as "a deskilled and disempowered workforce that is mostly male, non-unionized and of immigrant status", similar to Blanchette's (2020) description of pig factory farm workers who lack agency to change the status quo and must work within the confines of the conditions created by corporate power and large-scale demands. Slaughterhouse workers are associated with higher levels of socio-economic deprivation; Broadway (1994) found that slaughterhouses locating to an area often resulted in increases in crime, social services use, homelessness, and healthcare strains (Fitzgerald et al 2009). Purcell (2011) also draws attention to the intense (physical and otherwise) vulnerability of workers in the slaughterhouse, with high risk of injury (Fitzgerald, 2010). Leduff (2003) points to the high staff turnover of large slaughterhouses due to the difficult nature of the work. They can also be emotionally as well as physically harmed by the job. Pribac (2016: 193) draws attention to the emotional and psychological toll on "those who bear witness to nonhuman animals' torture and deaths en masse". Dillard (2008) explores the psychological harm associated with slaughterhouse work and argues that opportunities for legal redress and compensation should be better integrated. This vulnerability of workers is however usually dismissed, as highlighted by Wentworth (2015: 154), who argues that "contemporary concerns about meat and animal slaughter focus on everything but worker wellbeing." Consumers are distanced from animals in the slaughterhouse, but also from human workers, ironically because of slaughterhouse workers' physical proximity to animal killing. The cultural role of butchers and slaughtermen has often been an uncomfortable one, with Serpell (1986: 204) pointing out that "throughout history, those directly responsible for

killing animals have been regarded with a curious mixture of awe and disgust, not unlike that normally reserved for public executioners." All of these factors contribute to undermining slaughterers' abilities to be affected by animal death.

However, there has also been work acknowledging the emotional investment of those who work in animal killing. Smith (2002: 57) asserts that the slaughterhouse "annihilates the space where care and compassion might otherwise survive." However, practices of care can also emerge in violent spaces such as the slaughterhouse; those who regularly inflict violence and death upon their animal subjects also exert affective labour and exhibit practices of care towards these same animals. Work in feminist care ethics demonstrates how care and harm can coexist (Puig de la Bellacasa, 2017), and even how killing can be a form of care in some contexts (Greenhough and Roe, 2021). Gibbs (2021) draws attention to the intersection of killing and caring, which is particularly evident in conservation contexts (Gibbs, 2020), and Donati (2019) explores relational ethics of care over relational ethics of efficiency in slaughterhouses. Much of the work on care and animal death has been in the context of animal experimentation. Holmberg (2008; 2011) and Greenhough and Roe (2017) explore the role of animal caretakers in implementing animal welfare code and practices in research laboratories, illustrating how they exceed the requirements of animal welfare guidelines to ensure the animals' comfort, and form attachments to them, performing "ethical as well as emotional labor" in their practices of care. Care here is "the small, practical measures that make an animal's life and death a bit richer" and work to ensure a painless death (Holmberg, 2011: 158). When discussing care of animals in violent situations such as animal experimentation, Haraway (2008) stresses the ethical practice of "shar[ing] suffering" with the subjects, yet Holmberg (2011: 159) takes issue with this concept as she argues that it may divert attention away from considering the "obligation to end suffering". These complex relationships for those who inflict violence against animals is also seen in livestock relations (Convery et al., 2005; Riley, 2011; Wilkie, 2005) where farmers and stockpersons interact with the animals every day and build attachments. Farmers interact with the animals both as companions and friends and then as commodities to be killed, as illustrated by a farmer respondent in Holloway's (2001:303) study who would tell the slaughtermen, "they're my babies, look after them won't you".

Such combinations of care and killing have their limits. It is important here therefore to make a distinction between those who are able to form relationships with individual animals facilitated by long-term exposure, such as Govindrajan's (2018) sacrificial goats and Sharp's (2018) laboratory animals, and those who are unable to do so, for example in the highly mechanised and fast-paced environment of a slaughterhouse. However, Wilkie (2010: 3) argues that deeply caring relations with animals do not necessarily only concern small-scale farmers, but can also apply to large-scale systems; while admitting that instrumental attitudes are more common in these systems, she argued that "such attitudes can be disrupted and temporarily suspended when some animals come to be seen as individuated beings." Similarly, in Mc Loughlin's (2019: 323) ethnography of an Irish cattle slaughterhouse, she observes that "the transformation of cows into commodities is not a discrete process, but is constantly negotiated and reconciled, as the emotions of cattle continually defy characterizations." Blanchette (2020) also describes how certain pig factory farm workers cultivate a constant openness to being affected.

It is in this context of worker vulnerability, emotional detachment and 'cruel intimacies' that halal slaughter raises some interesting possibilities, due to the specific distance/proximity relations engendered by the ritual, particularly around protecting slaughterers from vulnerability and stigma on the one hand, and on the other maintaining their ability to be emotionally moved by the act, which will be discussed further in chapter 4. I also reflect upon whether the protective acts of the halal ritual and the emphasis on mindfulness are diluted by the 'cruel intimacies' (Purcell, 2011) of the modern slaughterhouse. Much of the work on the ritual nature of slaughter and 'sacrifice' has been in anthropology, such as Govindrajan (2018), but there is scope to take a geographical approach to ritual by drawing out the spatialities, temporalities and the relations of distance and proximity created by the halal ritual in the modern slaughterhouse. This is valuable in the wider context of discussions in studies of religion about the potential for ritual and/or sacrificial discursive framings of slaughter helping to address alienation from animal death, and to cultivate more caring relations with animals (Grumett and Muers, 2010). This is in the context of the disappearance of slaughter rituals in western Christian and secular traditions (Bjørkdahl and Syse, 2023; Jeske, 2023), where postdomestic societies are "urgently looking for meaning and moral acceptability" through 'meat-narratives' (Leroy and Praet, 2017: 83) that will help to 're-enchant' meat (Jeske, 2023). Dahlan-Taylor (2016: 364) argues that ritual, in particular Islamic ritual slaughter, can offer solutions to the "distancing, disconnection and

concealment" of postdomesticity, and "can reconnect us with the animals we depend on." I address this provocation by describing the effects of ritual, particularly sacrificial Qurbani slaughter in the slaughterhouse (chapter 4) and in various encounters spread out over time and space (chapter 5).

The halal ritual slaughter process is both a material and immaterial process. Geographers, more-than-human and science studies scholars have drawn upon various approaches to understand the relationality of matter and meaning in the slaughterhouse. Roe (2010) draws upon Barad (2007) to examine how 'material discursive' practices allow sentience to become knowable in the animal body after slaughter. Wentworth (2016;2017), drawing upon Haraway's (1992:298) 'material-semiotic' and Barad's (2003;2007) 'material-discursive', focuses on "the practices of making cuts and judging meat as material practices that make meaning and difference", framing practices like cuts that butchers make on animal carcasses to aid disassembly as "material-semiotic devices", allowing the meat product to emerge (Wentworth, 2016: 45). 'Material-semiotic' is a very useful concept for halal slaughter because there are material differences made on the animal's body that are vital to the halal process (such as the neck incision) but also seemingly immaterial processes such as uttering the prayer, which is seen to have the very material effect of making the meat halal. In a similar way to how material clues from the animal's body are used to determine sentience (Roe, 2010, on post-slaughter materiality), material clues/'material-discursive practices' are used by consumers to determine certain information about the animal's life and death, explored in chapter 7 on the eating experience.

2.3 The sacred and the secular

The discussion about the role of ritual in animal killing is situated in the wider decline of rituals in western modernity (Stephenson, 2015), which links to debates about the sacred/secular interface. In the last decade, religion has increasingly become a subject of social and cultural geography research (Kong, 2001). Scholars of religious geographies have been concerned with the interface between the sacred and the secular. Some scholars have engaged with the thesis of post-secularisation, acknowledging that secularisation is a prevalent trend, yet also asserting that religion has an enduring influence and should not be disregarded as an actor in moulding global issues (Beaumont, 2008; Cloke and Beaumont, 2013). Belk et al. (1989: 8) identify that there is

a twin process of the secularisation of religion and the sacralisation of the secular; this sacralisation of the secular has been precipitated by the secularisation of institutional religion because "as religion provides less of an extraordinary experience, people look elsewhere for experiences that transcend everyday life." As part of this, the secular is becoming "less obviously secular" (Heelas, 1998: 3), and there is increasingly an overlap between the religious and non-religious (Ivakhiv, 2003; 2006; Maddrell, 2009). For instance, Bartkowski and Swearingen (1997) draw attention to how environmentalist movements, without being affiliated with a specific religion, can become imbued with religious ideas of purity and justice. The merging of the religious and the secular has been explored in several other contexts, including in veiling practices of Turkish Muslim women (Gokariksel, 2009) and in the UK's Scout Movement (Mills, 2012). Ritual slaughter and meat consumption exemplify how the sacred is branching out into "unofficially sacred" spaces (Kong, 2001) such as abattoirs, butchers and supermarkets. Similarly, Mukherjee (2014: 26) points to how mainstream fast-food corporations such as McDonald's and KFC are beginning to offer halal-certified products, arguing that "gastronomy becomes the new site from which anxieties about both Global Islam and the perceived waning opacity of Western secularism are negotiated." This is particularly manifested in debates around stunning and statements from anti-non-stun slaughter campaigners that religious dietary codes should not come in the way of secular animal welfare codes. This interface between the sacred and the secular is also highlighted by Fischer (2011: 69), who observes that "modern forms of halal consumption in London challenge and reconfigure what are often considered separate secular realms of state, government, and politics, on the one hand, and the intimacy of religious life and expression, on the other". Kosher food auditing has been applied to "unofficially sacred spaces" such as scientific laboratories (Siddall, 2012); biotechnology company Novozymes obtained kosher certification for its enzymes (Fischer, 2015).

Belk *et al.* (1989: 9) in consumer studies identify how consumption is a ripe area for examining the sacred, as "consumption has become a secular ritual through which transcendent experience is sought". This can be linked to how certain foodways (vegan) are sacralised by using religious language, although it would be interesting to explore this through commodities that are traditionally sacred (religious dietary laws), as I do in my project. This blurring of the religious and the secular within the domain of food consumption has been discussed in anthropological food studies. Publications in food studies have demonstrated how food practices such as

preparation, cooking and eating are deeply intertwined with beliefs about religion (Finch, 2014), where a spiritual as well as nutritional dimension is attached to food products (van Waarden and van Dalen, 2013). It is however becoming more difficult to distinguish between faith-based and non-faith-based foodways, since food self-denial and consumption are increasingly "secular-spiritual" pursuits, where adherents "seek to recover order, meaning and purpose without making any personal commitment to…institutional religion" (Grumett, 2014: 4). Zeller (2014: 295) demonstrates how certain diets such as vegetarianism and locavorism function in similar ways to religious practices, where dietary practices are not only imbued with meaning but represent to their practitioners "ways of life, systems of values, and symbols of meaning". Zeller (2014) provides an example of a 'quasi-religious' foodway by analysing the oral histories of vegetarians and locavores, and finds that the language used is overwhelmingly religious, with people describing their becoming vegetarian as a 'conversion' and linking avoiding certain foods with cultivating a 'healthy soul'. According to Zeller (2014), associating diets with a wider spiritual significance is a way for adherents to alleviate their anxiety and disillusionment with the contemporary global food system. Such combinations of religious and non-religious motivations for food "confound neat understandings of religion" (Finch, 2014: xii).

As well as revealing the relationship between the sacred and the secular, halal meat also creates insights about the nature of identity. The link between food and cultural identity has been extensively explored (Counihan and Van Esterik, 1997; Gabaccia, 1998). Food is central to "the production and reproduction of cultures, societies, and people's identities." (Goodman, 2011:244), a site where "national boundaries and identities are often contested and, at times, rewritten" (Wright and Annes, 2013: 389). The intersection between food and migrant identity has been discussed in health geographies by Dyck and Dossa (2007: 696) in the context of migrant women in Canada, where the dishes they prepared at home were a crucial part of maintaining their culture, and food was therefore "not simply a nutritional issue but one of negotiation of cultural belonging." In terms of religious identity, anthropologist Mary Douglas (1996) links food and religion by arguing that food practices are perceived as a way to achieve spiritual purity and avoid spiritual pollution. Work in anthropology has also recognised how taboos relate to identity, where food taboos create a sense of group cohesion and belonging (Kristeva, 1982; Meyer-Rochow, 2009). Such literature argues that spiritual and cultural purity are socially constructed and attached to different foods, which helps inform the creation of a

group identity. In a similar way to theorisations about the rationale behind the kosher dietary code, arguments have been made that adhering to halal is a way to keep the community together and differentiate them from other groups, acting as "a bio-political strategy which unifies populations of believers through the cultivation of a global habitus of religious know-how" (Mukherjee, 2004: 28). Lever (2020: 90) makes a similar argument that meat choices can represent levels of assimilation or belonging, linking the decline in the acceptability of meat from Christians in the past few decades with both the rise of stunning as a practice but also to the "controversy about war in the Middle East and debates about what it means to live a religious life in Western societies". This is also argued by Ali (2015: 270) that decline of acceptability of meat slaughtered by Jews or Christians is due to a "Muslim concern with demarcating a distinctive identity when traveling or dwelling among non-Muslims". I add to this by illustrating the multi-directional relationship between halal meat consumption and cultural, religious and national identities in chapter 5.

Studies on Islam and Muslim identity have emerged in geography, with scholarship being attentive to topics of faith and gender in transnational contexts (Dwyer, 2000; Hopkins, 2007). This work on 'Muslim geographies' has addressed questions of transnationalism, identity, and the diasporic experience (Dwyer et al., 2008; Mohammad, 2015). Diaspora geographies and geographies of religion have acknowledged Muslims as an interesting group; Hopkins and Gale's (2009) edited volume points to the complexity and heterogeneity of British Muslim identity, with the combination being both an ethnic diaspora and a religious diaspora: a distinct 'Muslim diaspora' (Turner, 2010). Articulations of these hybrid diasporic identities are (see Dwyer (2000) on young British South Asian Muslim women) are spatially contingent and complex. Kong (2010) calls for attention to how second-generation migrants negotiate transnational religious connections, and how they connect to homeland through religious practice. I delve into this in chapter 5 by examining negotiations of diasporic ethnic and religious identities through exposure to practices of animal killing, particularly sacrificial rituals, in consumers' countries of origin.

2.4 Conclusion

I have summarised literature across food and consumption geographies, animal studies, more-than-human geography, religious studies and geographies of religion in order to situate my research questions and findings into debates in these literatures.

3. Methodology

3.1 Introduction: Halal industry ethnographies

As Miele (2017) emphasises, the dynamic nature of acts of consumption requires the methods used to examine them to be complex and multiple, which is why this research adopted a mixed methods approach. The value of mixed methods in understanding halal markets and consumption landscapes is shown in Lever (2018) on kosher/halal consumption in Europe, as well as in van Waarden and van Dalen's (2013) exploration of Dutch halal markets, which involved interviews with different stakeholders, a visit to halal consumer expos and website analysis. Mixed methods also allowed me to negotiate some of the challenges of slaughterhouse access and COVID-lockdowns (such as switching to questionnaires for slaughterers and conducting an online survey), which will be discussed further below. I was interested in focusing in on several significant sets of stakeholders across the British halal meat supply chain, including regulators/certifiers, slaughterhouse workers, alternative halal businesses or campaigners, and finally consumers. I used a different combination of methods to engage with each type of stakeholder, which will be described below. Specifically, I conducted 12 in-depth semi-structured interviews with various stakeholders across the British halal meat supply chain, including slaughterhouse managers and slaughterers, halal animal welfare campaigners, halal regulators, alternative halal businesses and farmers, one short interview with a slaughterman and one written interview with a halal industry analyst and five written short-answer questionnaires with halal slaughtermen. Additional insights were drawn from responses from an in-depth online survey of 711 British halal consumers, participant observation at halal industry events and meetings, and textual analysis of key online sources including halal blogs, mobile applications, forums, campaign organisations, websites of halal meat certifiers and other industry bodies. Below I set out in detail and reflect on the different elements of my research design.

In order to gain an insight into the British halal meat supply chain, I cultivated a sustained ethnographic engagement with the industry over the duration of three years from 2018 to 2021. This involved participant observation at the annual HFA (one of the main British halal certifiers) British Halal Industry conference in 2018 and 2019, two halal consumer expos (the London Muslim Expo in 2018 and London Halal Food Festival in 2022), a panel on 'Eco-halal' at the

London School of Economics in 2018, and a National Sheep Association meeting on 'Understanding the Halal Market' in 2019. I also participated in a 'Halal Industry Stakeholders' meeting in September 2021, which was a regular meeting of the largest suppliers in the industry with certifiers and senior government regulators. In July 2019, I spent the day in the office of a mainstream halal certifier and had a series of informal conversations about certification and industry practice. I also conducted one informal interview with a senior data analyst at a meat industry board on best practice for researching halal consumers. All encounters and visits (formal and informal) were recorded with detailed fieldnotes. This is similar to Lever et al.'s (2023) approach to studying kosher food certification and consumption in Manchester, and Lever's earlier (2020) work on British halal consumption. The effect of my long-term ethnographic presence was that it allowed informal conversations to arise that gave insights into the industry. Repeated interactions over a few years also helped to build trust in a cautious and closed-off industry, which later gave rise to opportunities for formal interviews (for instance, the interview with Alef, a halal meat regulator and industry leader, was arranged after several years of attending the same events, and he then became a useful gatekeeper for other opportunities such as being invited to attend the 'Halal Industry Stakeholders' Meeting).

I combined participant observation with a series of in-depth interviews with key stakeholders[2]. As seen in table 1, some interview participants fit in multiple stakeholder categories, such as Riaz, who was both involved in halal industry leadership and regulation, sitting on several industry boards, but also had extensive slaughterhouse experience. Scholars in food geographies have sought to problematise the binary separation between the spheres of consumption and production, with a move towards "integrative approaches" (Goodman, 2002). Reproducing this binary is arguably unavoidable and Neo and Emel (2017: 11) acknowledge "the heuristic convenience and utility in drawing on such a dichotomy". Nonetheless, I attempted to deconstruct this separation by asking industry stakeholders who would be conventionally defined

[2] A valuable missing type of stakeholder in my study is Islamic religious scholars, especially those sitting on halal meat certification boards, as they could have provided much-needed insights into ritual (im)permissibility of certain practices and how scriptural interpretations were changing over time; Lever et al. (2023) include interviews with rabbis as part of their efforts to understand different manifestations of kosher compliance. However, I was unable to reach religious scholars through the industry contacts I made and mitigated this by reading previous surveys of views of Islamic scholars on pre-slaughter stunning (Fuseini et al., 2017), as well as jurisprudential rulings on Islamic slaughter (Taqi Usmani, 2006) and more recent rulings in the context of intensive farming (Furber, 2017).

as 'producers', to draw on experiences of their own meat consumption, which simultaneously placed them as 'consumers'.

Table 1: Interviewee details

Name	Details	Method of recruitment	Interview date	Interview format
Asif	Employee at organic halal business for which Susan slaughters chickens. As of 2019, the company lost its organic certification due to new rulings forbidding non-stun slaughter in organic standards.	Approached him at a stall in a halal customer expo in April 2018 to first make contact and maintained email correspondence to arrange interview.	January 2020	In-person
Grace	Halal animal welfare campaigner. Runs education campaigns for halal consumers in particular.	Approached via email.	February 2020	In-person
Riaz	Owner of a large-scale halal lamb slaughterhouse that kills thousands of sheep a day. Influential figure in the industry as sits on multiple boards and steering committees.	Snowballed from personal contact and arranged to meet him at his stall in a halal customer expo in April 2018 and maintained email correspondence to arrange later slaughterhouse visit and interview.	March 2020	In-person
Mazin and Steven	Business partners and owners of a halal fine dining restaurant together. They source free-range and higher-welfare meat products for their restaurant.	Approached Mazin at a panel event on the 'Eco-halal' movement in October 2018 to first make contact and maintained email correspondence to arrange interview.	March 2020	In-person
Jalal	Alternative halal entrepreneur – set up an online business that sells gourmet meat products.	Approached via email.	June 2020	Phone call
Iman	Alternative halal entrepreneur – set up an online halal nutrition business that sources free-range and higher-welfare meat products. Legal background in food fraud. Had sat on an industry board.	Snowballed from Grace interview	June 2020	Video call
Osman	Manager at a medium-scale halal slaughterhouse that kills hundreds of sheep a day.	Approached me via email after seeing my consumer survey advertised to offer to share his experiences.	September 2020	Video call
Susan	Halal slaughterwoman at a small-scale slaughterhouse that kills hundreds of chickens a day. Also helped to set up one of the earlier British organic halal farms and still slaughters chickens for them. 10 years of	Prior contact from undergraduate research but also snowballed from Asif interview.	September 2020	Phone call

	experience in slaughtering and production and one of only British Muslim slaughterwomen.			
Alef	Halal meat regulator. Extensive experience in halal meat industry space, particularly certification. Sits on many halal industry boards and committees.	Met him at several halal industry events over a few years and then requested a formal interview.	September 2021	Video call
Frank	Senior slaughterhouse vet and regulator who has worked in this space for the last few decades.	Email to regulatory organisations.	September 2021	Video call
Raheem	Regenerative halal farmer who provides free-range halal meat and comes from a farming family background.	Approached via email.	September 2021	Video call
Ahmad	Free-range halal meat business owner. Used to provide exotic halal meats and then switched to 'ethically-reared' common species, marketed as 'gourmet', although still does venison. Slaughters chickens on his own farm in a small abattoir, leases land from farmers to raise livestock (lambs) he owns and takes them to local HMC-certified abattoirs for slaughter. As of 2019, his company lost its organic certification due to new rulings forbidding non-stun slaughter in organic standards.	Approached via email.	September 2021	Phone call

All interviews were transcribed and analysed and coded using a mixture of inductive and deductive themes, and interview codes were cross-referenced with coding of consumer survey qualitative comments. Participants for interviews were recruited by making initial contact at industry events, snowballing from interviewees, or emailing organisations without prior contact (although this latter method yielded fewer results) – see table 1 for more detail on recruitment methods. All interviewee names are pseudonyms and names of employing organisations/businesses have been redacted to protect the anonymity of participants.

3.2 Regulators/certifiers/industry leaders

I was particularly interested in those working in halal meat regulation or certification as they had significant influence in the industry and were 'industry leaders' and shaped trends in the

industry. I explored this group with a few in-depth interviews (Alef, Riaz, Frank) but mostly participant observation at events over the course of a few years, described in the above section. The importance of these types of stakeholders in shaping halal and kosher industries is shown in Lever and Miele (2012), who interviewed halal meat certifiers and retailers across different European countries.

3.3 Slaughterhouses and slaughterworkers

Ethnographic slaughterhouse visits are an established method to gain an insight into these often closed-off spaces. There is evidence of long-term ethnographic engagements and in-depth participant observation with spaces of slaughterhouses, particularly in anthropology, such as Pachirat (2013) who spent five and a half months working in an Omaha slaughterhouse, Blanchette (2020) who worked for two years in the intensive American pork industry, Wentworth's (2015;2016:2017) engagement with small slaughterhouses in the UK over the course of two years, or Mc Loughlin's (2023a) two weeks in a small-scale British slaughterhouse. Shorter visits to slaughterhouses are also an established method, particularly in human geography, and can still yield rich and detailed engagement with the space of the slaughterhouse, such as Miele and Rucinska (2015) in a Welsh halal slaughterhouse, and which were more accessible to me given complex access issues I faced with visiting slaughterhouses and the fact that I was taking a mixed methods approach. Roe (2010), Higgin et al. (2011) and Miele (2016) each visit two separate slaughterhouses and write detailed comparisons of the killing practices there. Roe's (2010) study is based on a large-scale Welsh lamb abattoir and a small research abattoir for pigs belonging to a university, whilst Higgin et al. (2011) compare a non-halal multi-species small-scale abattoir with a large-scale halal chicken abattoir and Miele (2016) compares a visit to an industrial halal slaughterhouse in the UK with a small butcher shop/slaughterhouse set-up in Egypt. In a similar way, I visited a large-scale halal lamb slaughterhouse in the UK (killing thousands of sheep a day). This visit involved spending time in the killing area and assembly line, a tour of the lairage area where live animals were kept, and an in-depth interview with the owner (Riaz). This is contrasted with a visit to a small-scale chicken abattoir on a halal free-range farm, where I also toured around the farm and attended a customer butchery course. I made detailed fieldnotes on the experience of slaughter in these locations, taking inspiration from Roe (2010) and Higgin et al.'s (2011) thick description of slaughterhouse assembly line

practices. I also paid attention to the multi-sensory nature of the slaughterhouse (Pachirat, 2013), including sounds (Mc Loughlin, 2023a).

To gain an insight into slaughterhouse workers, I interviewed a few different actors in the slaughterhouse. Pachirat (2013: 236), from his extensive participant observation of a large-scale slaughterhouse, found that the slaughterhouse was not a homogenous space, but full of "physical, linguistic and phenomenological walls", which is similar to Leduff's (2003) description of the racial division of labour in slaughterhouses. A variety of different workers were interviewed, including an owner (Riaz), a manager (Osman), a slaughterman (Saleh) and slaughterwoman (Susan). These came from a variety of slaughterhouse sizes to get an idea of diverse scales; Riaz's slaughterhouse killed thousands of sheep per day, compared to hundreds of sheep at Osman's and hundreds of chickens at Susan's. However, more of an insight was needed into the most common animal killing for food, which is by far chickens, and at a large-scale (the most commonly consumed meat in the UK is chicken (both halal and non-halal) (FSA, 2022)) and I only visited a small-scale chicken abattoir that killed dozens of chickens rather than tens of thousands. There were many mentions of large-scale chicken slaughter in the interviews and qualitative survey data, which did help to characterise such spaces despite the lack of visits.

Further variety and number of slaughterhouse visits was foreclosed by the fact that I was repeatedly met with refusal after numerous attempts to visit more slaughterhouses. After the small-scale chicken abattoir visit in October 2019 and the large-scale lamb slaughterhouse visit in March 2020, COVID-19 lockdown restrictions prevented visits for a year and a half, compounded by the fact that slaughterhouses and meat-packing plants became COVID-19 hotspots and dealt with heightened biosecurity and staff shortage issues (Stull, 2020). In the summer of 2021, I attempted to organise further slaughterhouse visits; I contacted ten different gatekeepers and organisations regarding the possibility of visiting a slaughterhouse (halal and/or non-halal) or interviewing slaughterhouse vets/inspectors, and received rejections from seven (for various reasons including short-staffing and supply chain disruptions due to COVID and Brexit, as well as concerns around undercover activism) and no replies from three. However, these access issues were existent before COVID-19, as shown in similar (albeit fewer) rejections I had received to visit requests in 2019 (whilst a halal certifying organisation had agreed for me to accompany their employee to a slaughterhouse they inspected, the supermarket retailer who

owned the slaughterhouse refused visitors and blocked access). This illustrates the closed-off nature of the industry and reinforces the spatial and figurative concealment of such spaces observed in the literature (Serpell, 1986). In line with Amrith et al.'s (2008:79) account of "harvesting failure in the field", where "frustration of an ethnography stopped short…can be constructive", refusal became a generative theme in itself and was discussed in interviews, with those such as Alef and Ahmad speculating on the reasons for my rejection, mentioning the regulatory, biosecurity and activism concerns of the slaughterhouse. I also asked interview participants who regularly visited slaughterhouses (such as Ahmad and Frank) to describe in detail the set-up of the average slaughterhouse during interviews in order to gain an insight into the space.

Slaughterhouse *workers* as well as spaces were difficult to access. From the initial producer interviews (January to June 2020) as well as from consumer survey data (May to July 2020) it became clear that there was a lot of interest around slaughterers' views, with interviewees speculating about how they perceived their work, so I felt there was a need to investigate their opinions more directly:

> "…their thought processes about the process [slaughtering] is simply just, 'this is work'." (Asif, organic halal provider interview)

> "Being a slaughterman's a tough job. I think it becomes normal to them to slaughter, after a while I don't think there's any connection there between the animal, it's just a commodity, it's a thing. There have been more and more articles actually now that slaughtermen are starting to suffer from PTSD." (Grace, animal welfare campaigner interview)

I had been interested in slaughterers from the beginning of the project, but they had proved hard to access. Neo and Emel (2017: 10) argue that meat industry workers are often "rendered invisible" and Mc Loughlin (2019) and Purcell (2011) highlight their physical and emotional vulnerability and social marginalisation. On top of this, halal slaughterers face extra stigma due to being associated with the killing practices of a minority community. My initial plan had been to conduct interviews with slaughterers during my abattoir visits, but this proved difficult as I

realised that the slaughterhouse was perhaps an unsuitable place to access them because they were very busy, tired (especially since the one I visited processed thousands of animals a day), working with dangerous and heavy machinery and also they might not have felt comfortable expressing certain opinions in their workplace. Similarly, in her ethnography of an Irish slaughterhouse, McLoughlin (2019) mentions interviews being interrupted by loud noises. With this in mind and ongoing COVID restrictions, I therefore devised a short questionnaire that could be easily distributed (facilitated by Riaz, the slaughterhouse owner) and received responses from five slaughtermen from Riaz' slaughterhouse.

3.4 'Alternative halal'

In addition to studying more conventional halal production, I also explored stakeholders from the 'alternative halal' movement, which I broadly characterise as individuals who provided or sourced higher-welfare, free-range or organic options and/or expressed an interest in lobbying for change in the industry on the grounds of animal welfare, health and environmental sustainability. They were a mixture of farmers, animal welfare campaigners, employees of halal organic businesses, entrepreneurs and restauranteurs. I was particularly keen to access this group as they represent a gap in the literature on halal geographies, with much of the work focusing the 'mainstream industry' (such as Isakjee and Carroll, 2019, Miele, 2016, Lever, 2018;2020). I accessed this group with a few interviews (Grace, Ahmed, Jalal, Iman, Asif, Susan, Mazin & Steve) but also a visit to a free-range halal farm and its onsite chicken abattoir and participant observation of a butchery course at this farm. To differentiate between 'alternative halal' players, throughout the thesis I refer to those who previously had organic certification as 'organic', and others as 'free-range', even though, because of issues discussed in more detail in section 6.6 around the complex relationship between organic certification and halal slaughter, they all ended up marketing themselves using some variation of 'free-range'

3.5 Consumers

Eden et al. (2008a) emphasise the importance of bringing the consumer back into agri-food and ethical consumption research. Focus groups are a common method to understand consumer practices and understandings in geography, particularly on ethical consumption (Eden et al. 2008a; Evans and Miele 2012; Miele 2013). Interviews are also frequently used to gain insight

into people's personal consumption decisions and beliefs about deep convictions around halal, purity and embodied consumption (see for example Isakjee and Carroll (2019) and Oleschuk et al. (2019)). I had originally planned to pursue these methods but the onset of the COVID-19 pandemic and the subsequent first lockdown in March 2020 complicated setting up focus groups. I therefore turned to new approaches to gain insights as to consumer perspectives and experiences. I designed and conducted an online survey aimed at British Muslim consumers incorporating both quantitative and qualitative analysis, taking inspiration from Blecha and Davis' (2014) study on attitudes to backyard slaughter in California, although with a larger sample size than their sample of 345 California residents. Miele et al. (2023) also used a survey to assess halal consumers' attitudes towards certification in the UK and UAE, with a stratified sample of 330 consumers. My survey was live over a period of three months between May-July 2020 and received 711 responses in total. Prior to launching, a pilot survey was trialled with friends and family who gave feedback on its wording, content and structure. The survey was distributed to Muslim student society mailing lists, British Muslim community groups and organisations via social media (mainly Twitter, WhatsApp and Facebook). I compared the demographics of the overall British Muslim population with the demographics of the survey responses as data arrived and adjusted my recruitment strategy as the period progressed. To get a representative sample, I specifically targeted organisations in northern England and Scotland as they were under-represented in my initial respondents. There was an over-representation of younger people in the survey responses (probably due to the distribution methods through student societies and social media). In the empirical analysis, the sample is weighted to more accurately match the age and regional distribution of the UK Muslim population, and regression analysis explicitly controls for variables such as age, gender, household income and region. Table 2 provides a detailed demographic breakdown of the survey sample.

Table 2: Demographic breakdown of consumer survey respondents

Table 2a: Gender

Gender	Male	Female	Prefer not to say
My sample	57%	41%	2%
British Muslim population (MCB, 2015)	52%	48%	

Table 2b: Age

Age	18-24	25-34	35-44	45-54	55-64	65-74	75+	Prefer not to say
My sample	21.8%	44.6%	17.3%	9.7%	4.2%	1.1%	0.6%	0.7%

	My sample	British Muslim population (MCB, 2015)
0-15	0%[3]	33%
16-34	66% (18-34)	37%
35-64	31%	27%
65+	2%	4%

Table 2c: Household income

Household income	Less than £15,000	£15,000 - £25,000	£25,001 - £35,000	£35,001 - £50,000	£50,001 - £75,000	£75,001 - £100,000	More than £100,000	Prefer not to say
My sample	8.4%	14.1%	14.5%	16.0%	16.2%	6.9%	11.4%	12.5%

Table 2d: Region

Region	London and the SE	West Midlands	Yorkshire and the Humber	NW	SW	East Midlands	NE	East of England	NI	Scotland
My sample	51%	15%	9%	8%	5%	4%	4%	2%	1%	1%
British Muslim population (MCB, 2015)	45%	14%	12%	13%	2%	5%	2%	6%	No data	No data

There have been many surveys (in marketing and consumer studies) on Muslim consumer preferences, but these have mostly focused on religiosity and ethnicity (Jamal and Sharifuddin, 2014) and less on animal welfare and environmental sustainability. Surveys in the field of meat science have explored halal consumers' views on the acceptability of stunning (Fuseini et al. 2017) and large-scale industry-funded surveys have focused on halal consumers' meat purchasing preferences with a view to improve industry marketing and sales (EBLEX, 2013). With the exception of passing references, none of these surveys, including the AHDB (2020) consumer insights survey, have probed consumers' feelings around environmental sustainability and animal welfare when it comes to halal meat, which is what I sought to remedy with this survey.

The survey contained several demographic questions on age, gender, household income and region, and more open-ended questions on consumers' level of meat consumption, levels of distancing and animal welfare. To further examine the kinds of intimacy and distancing to which

[3] Under 18s were not included in my sample due to lack of ethical clearance to conduct research on minors, and the desire to survey individuals who were more likely to be in charge of their own meat purchasing.

consumers are exposed, the online survey included, as in Blecha and Davis' (2014) study, questions about slaughter experiences, asking respondents what kinds of animals they eat and whether or how often they have witnessed or performed animal slaughter. A frequent issue encountered in survey research, particularly around animal welfare, is a mismatch between declared habits and priorities and actual consumption patterns (Buller and Roe, 2018), and therefore answers to questions around consumers' willingness to pay more for an organic halal chicken may be more aspirational than indicative.

As with Miele et al. (2023), my survey had open-ended questions as well as multiple choice and Likert scale questions to create space for deeper engagement (see appendix A for the full list of survey questions). Even for the closed questions such as on whether they would pay more or less for an organic/free-range chicken, I added open comment boxes in order to allow respondents to provide as many details as they desired, which turned out to be very generative as many respondents made use of those boxes to provide longer comments and expand on their thoughts, or question the categories and wording of the questions. I was encouraged to discover that alongside the large sample size (711), participants provided very comprehensive qualitative responses. For instance, 307 people engaged with Q20 ('Please share any further comments that you may have regarding the above questions or the state of the British halal meat industry in general'), some of which were very extensive and detailed, and 550 people responded to Q19 ('What do you understand term 'tayyib' to mean?'). In fact, respondents' written answers to open-ended questions totalled over 23,300 words, including 5,000 words in response to Q19, and 11,200 words in response to Q20, which yielded a wealth of rich and interesting themes. There was also notable engagement with Q15 (which asked participants to what extent they agreed with certain statements on government regulation and on stunning before slaughter) with a total of 1650 words in additional comments, and Q16 ('Would you be willing to pay more for a free-range/organic halal chicken compared to a standard (intensively-reared) halal chicken?'), prompting 1500 words in additional comments. Respondents used the free text data in various ways. For Q11 ('Have you witnessed halal slaughter (in-person or via video)?'), there were 700 words in additional comments, providing rich detail around participants' halal slaughter exposure, through which themes around performing versus witnessing, diasporic experiences, childhood and religious festivals of sacrifice emerged, explored in chapter 5. Additional comments in response to Q15 included in-depth justifications of participants' opinions around

government involvement and stunning, whilst in response to Q16 respondents qualified their answers regarding organic chicken by adding caveats that would affect their willingness to pay a premium. Comments in response to Q18 (which asked participants how important certain factors were in meat purchasing decisions) challenged the bundling of halal 'certification' and 'compliance' in the multiple-choice answer options. This data provided some of the in-depth material that I had initially been hoping to glean from focus groups and further interviews. When discussing these free text responses throughout the thesis I will refer to survey respondents by their unique number such as 'SR1'.

This survey was also conducted in response to the earlier interviews and visits, where producers referred to the lack of market research available on halal meat consumers (Riaz, slaughterhouse owner interview), with Steven desiring "market profiles" of halal consumers (Fine dining halal restauranteur interview). One aim of the survey was therefore to get a better quantitative overview of halal consumers' attitudes, experiences, and preferences. I was also able to use the quantitative data to 'test' assertions from the interviewees, such as checking for the existence of knowledge gaps that producers claimed were present (for instance, producers posited that there was a widespread misconception that the HFA and HMC were government bodies, which I was able to check in the survey with a true/false statement exercise and found that 80% of respondents did not hold this misconception). It was also interesting to reflect on the impact of the methods used, especially since "research is always also an intervention" into the world that is being studied (Greenhough, 2014). For instance, there were several responses to the online consumer survey where participants had felt inspired to do their own research on the topic after having filled out the survey [respondents 79, 403, 420, 602]:

> "This questionnaire made me realise that I don't know enough about the halal meat industry and its regulations. As a consumer I should be more conscious of the impact of my eating habits. I will be doing some research, thanks for this." [SR420]

Using an inductive process in NVivo, there were two levels of coding of the interviews, fieldnotes and free text survey responses. The first level was identifying popular themes (descriptive coding) and the second level was more analytical codes. These were then organised into four analytical chapters. I also coded interviews for the same themes, with major themes including lack of

transparency of halal supply chains, the desire for increased traceability, doubt of halal compliance, stunning methods, financial exclusivity of free-range or organic halal meat, and desire for more availability of these higher-welfare options.

Summary survey statistics are outlined below:

- **711** respondents
- **£43,000** average household income[4]
- **4** average days per week where meat is consumed
- **£27.50** average weekly spend on meat (not including eating out)
- **22%** average proportion of meat consumption comes from eating out (restaurants, take-aways)
- **29.5%** had decreased their meat consumption between 2018 and 2019
- **91%** would pay more for organic/free-range vs intensively reared chicken (average premium **33%**)
- **27%** had never witnessed halal slaughter (in-person or via video), **21%** had witnessed it once, **38%** a few times and **14%** many times.
- **83%** had never visited a halal slaughterhouse, **9%** once, **6%** a few times and **2%** many times.
- Women ate meat on fewer days of the week, were more likely to have decreased meat consumption between 2018 and 2019, and less likely to have witnessed slaughter.
- Younger people ate more beef and chicken, and less sheep, than older people.

[4] This is likely to be higher than the average household income of British Muslims, given figures about their deprivation (MCB, 2015; 2022), but specific figures are not available.

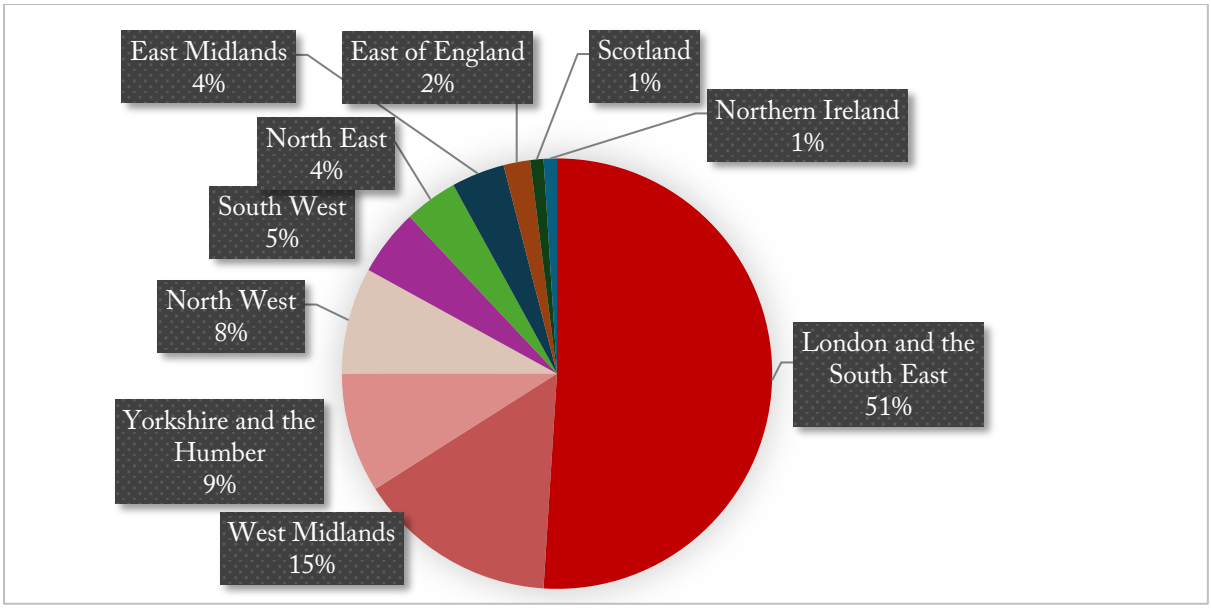

Figure 1: Regional breakdown of survey respondents

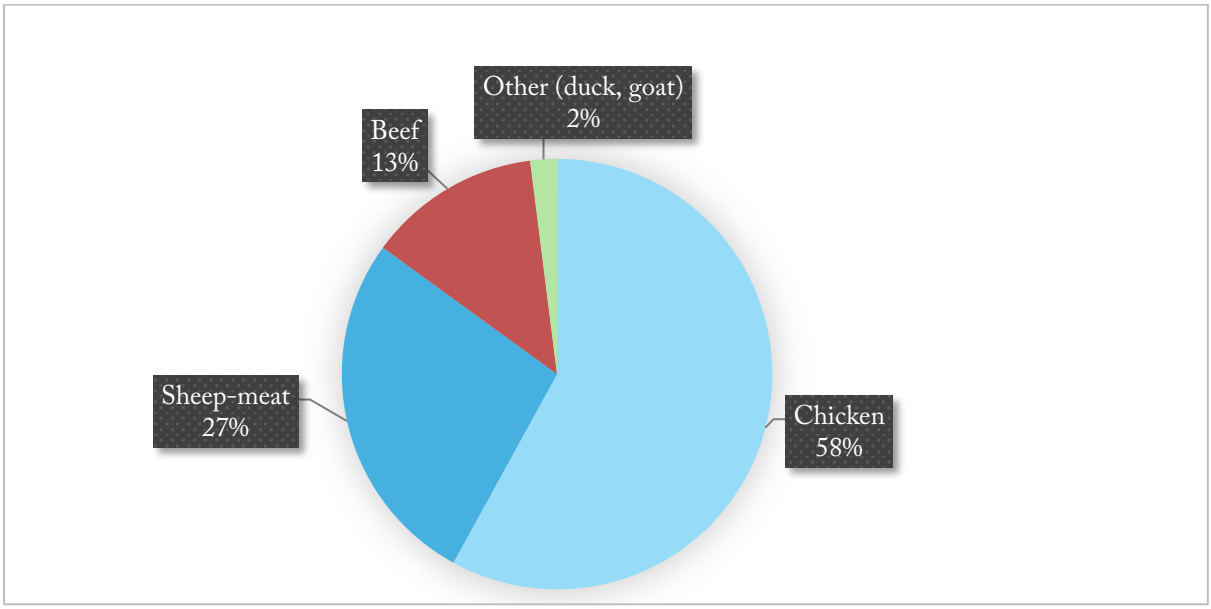

Figure 2: Breakdown of protein consumption

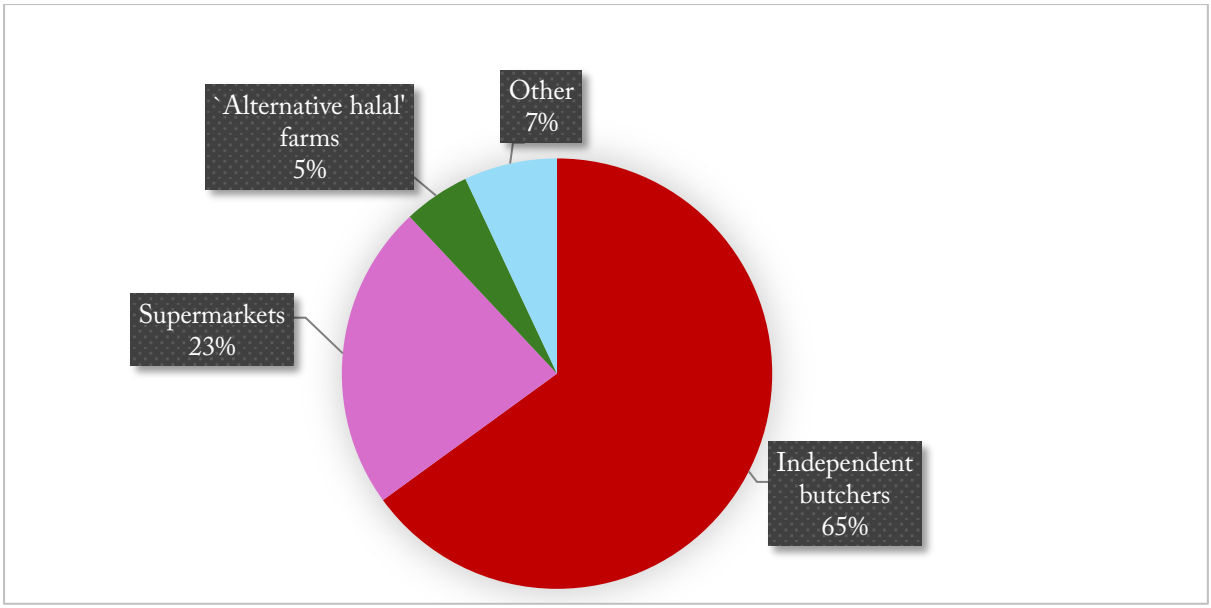

Figure 3: Sources of household meat purchases

3.6 Textual analysis

Ethnographic data was supplemented by textual analysis of key sources to place the themes emerging from engagements with stakeholders and consumers in relation to broader discourses and imaginations of halal, as in Lever (2020) who carried out a textual analysis of certification body requirements and online food guides to gain insight into halal food production and consumption. I conducted an analysis of the five most popular British halal blogs, the five most popular British halal Instagram accounts, three halal restaurant apps, the two main British halal certifiers' websites, the industry levy board (AHDB) website, two halal campaign websites, and four alternative halal business websites (see appendix B for a full list of sources). Online space is an important platform to explore alternative food spaces, and researchers in social and cultural geography are increasingly turning to online spaces to conduct research and analyse relationships (Madge and O'Connor, 2006), particularly in food geography (Bos and Owen, 2016). Ethical food movements manifest themselves in online spaces through chat rooms, food blogs and company websites (Goodman *et al.*, 2010). Gillespie (2011a;2011b) conducted a textual analysis of the marketing materials of small scale 'alternative' meat. Using a similar approach, I was attentive to what was excluded and silenced in these sources, as well as who produced the text and who benefited from the text. Silences in the texts are defined not as everything that is not present, but everything that might have a "claim to inclusion" (Derrida, in Shurmer-Smith, 2002: 134). This analysis helped to give a high-level view of trends in both halal production and

consumption. For instance, halal blogs and Instagram accounts gave a strong indication of the changing consumption preferences towards beef, cuts like steak, eating out, and luxury, discussed in the purchasing and eating chapters. Websites of alternative halal businesses showed how material qualities of meat were emphasised to consumers for higher-welfare, more expensive meat products, as outlined in chapter 7. An identification of halal producers with specific manifestations of British animal rearing and ruralities (sheep farming) was clear in websites and videos of industry organisations. Such observations helped to supplement the interview and qualitative survey data.

3.7 Positionality and ethics

It is crucial to acknowledge my positionality as a British Muslim researcher, particularly since this study explores the British halal meat industry and British Muslim consumers, and complex cultural and religious practices around animal death and meat consumption. Denning et al. (2020) argue for the importance of autoethnography in researching faith-related issues, and state that geographies of religion should not disregard researchers of faith. As Chouinard (2006: 254) points out, it is impossible to separate "who we are" and "whom we've encountered" from "how we do geography". Mohammad (2001: 101) comments that in her experience researching Pakistani women in England, her belonging to the community seemed to "endow [her] with a superior, almost organic knowledge" of the community. Prior knowledge of the community was particularly important in analysing the qualitative survey comments, where familiarity with British Muslim vernacular, which mixes words from several different cultural and language traditions, allowed me to interpret the responses, with use of terms such as 'sunnah' [sayings and practices of the Prophet Muhammad], 'Bakra Eid' [Festival of Sacrifice] or 'khaleefas' [environmental stewards of the Earth]. My positionality was also important in light of the sensitivity of the topic of religious slaughter in the UK, and the concealed nature of spaces and practices of animal death. Being part of the minority British Muslim community allowed for more reassurance and trust when attempting to gain access to halal slaughterhouse, especially given concerns surrounding security, investigative journalism and anti-halal activism.

It is important to recognise, however, that positionality is not a fixed entity, and is constantly being re-negotiated (Nagar and Geiger, 2007). Discussions of positionality have moved beyond

simply matching up the researcher and participants in terms of ethnic or religious groups and assuming insider status based on markers of similarity (Merriam *et al.*, 2001). Insider status should not be assumed given one common aspect of identity. The fluid nature of positionality and insider/outsider status has been explored by many feminist geographers, who illustrate that a researcher can shift between the two as well as occupy a position of 'inbetweenness' (Chacko, 2004; Chattopadhyay, 2013; Mullings, 1999). For instance, despite being part of the same religious community, my positionality as a woman during slaughterhouse visits and industry event, where the male-dominated nature of the slaughterhouse and wider meat industry possibly hindered my ability to access slaughtermen, both during the visits and in later attempts. In the 'Halal Industry Stakeholders' meeting I observed consisting of 19 attendees, I was one of only two women. This echoes Mc Loughlin's (2019: 324) reflection of feeling "other" whilst researching the emotionography of Irish slaughterhouses. Therefore, although one should not be quick to assume insider status, it is nevertheless important to recognise commonality with one's research subjects, but also other intersectional aspects of identity which may at times facilitate or, alternatively, hinder access.

3.8 Conclusion

This combination of qualitative and quantitative, in-person and online, producer- and consumer-focused, open-ended and multiple choice, fine-grained and high-level, and long-term and short-term methods allowed me to gain a holistic insight into distance/proximity relations with animal death in the British halal meat industry.

4. Slaughtering

-What relations of distance and proximity (from animal death) does the halal ritual create in the modern halal slaughterhouse?

-How do bodies and materials interact in the halal slaughterhouse to create distance or proximity?

-How could care/relations of distance/proximity look different in the halal slaughterhouse?

4.1 Introduction

This first results chapter focuses in on the halal slaughterhouse, a major site of British halal meat production, and on workers who witness and/or perform slaughter regularly. The modern slaughterhouse is characterised by an ever-growing scale of production and an associated heightened detachment from animal death (Bjørkdahl and Syse, 2023). As the majority of killing animals for food in the UK takes place in a slaughterhouse, it is important to understand the relations of care and killing, and distance and proximity in such spaces, which are usually concealed, remote and difficult to access (Serpell, 1986; Philo, 1995; Burt 2006). These access issues are compounded in halal slaughterhouses due to added security concerns and stigmatisation.

I begin the chapter by outlining the halal ritual killing process and argue that this ritual enshrines contrasting relations of distance and proximity, both preserving a sense of closeness to the act of killing animals for food and providing a measure of distance and protection from the emotional impacts of killing. The next section situates the halal ritual in the modern slaughterhouse and reflects on the relations that emerge through this translation, and whether there is a slippage between 'ideal' and practical performances of the ritual. To do this, I trace a journey through the halal slaughterhouse based on my ethnographic lamb slaughterhouse visit, zooming in on several key chronological moments in the process: the animal entering the assembly line, the administering (or not) of the stun, the utterance of the ritual prayer, the sharp neck incision, draining the blood of the animal. This chapter focuses mostly on one part of the slaughterhouse (the killing room), as this section is what differentiates the halal process (the gutting and skinning further down the assembly line are quite similar to the non-halal process). For each practice, I describe the configurations of distance and proximity involved, who and what is being brought

closer or set at a distance, and what new dimensions the halal ritual adds. Implicit in all of these moments is the scale of killing facilitated in the modern slaughterhouse, and I explore the tensions between the halal ritual and scale, most starkly characterised in the annual 'Festival of Sacrifice', which concentrates vast demand into one week, creating amplified commercial pressures, shaping the volume and speed of death. This detailed description of the realities of the modern slaughterhouse helps to show what is possible in this space, and the challenges of translating rituals into this space. Having shown what forms of care and proximity practically occur in the halal slaughterhouse, the final section takes a 'speculative ethics' (Puig de la Bellacasa, 2017) approach, asking how else things could be, particularly around how to care and kill in better ways. Both thinking through current manifestations of care and speculating about improving care in halal slaughterhouses is important in the context of the common portrayal of halal slaughter as care*less* and cruel (Dahlan-Taylor, 2016).

I frame the chapter largely through ethnographic data from a visit to a large halal lamb slaughterhouse (killing thousands of sheep a day) and an interview with its owner, Riaz, but throughout the chapter I draw upon interviews with workers from a variety of different sized slaughterhouses, including Osman (whose slaughterhouse killed hundreds of sheep a day), Susan (whose slaughterhouse killed hundreds of chickens a day compared to tens of thousands in the largest set-ups), and a visit to a small-scale 'alternative halal' on-farm chicken abattoir that killed dozens to hundreds a day. Ahmad, a 'gourmet' halal provider, had a mixture of experiences at a large-scale lamb slaughterhouse, his own small on-farm chicken abattoir, and an abattoir that processed 15 deer a day for venison.

4.2 The halal ritual

> *"All slaughtering is to be carried out by hand, by a Muslim*[5]*...The animals are to be slaughtered with a swift incision to the throat with a sharp blade by a Muslim mentioning the Tasmiyah (In*

[5] Here, there is an assumed Muslim male, although there is no direct prohibition on Muslim women slaughtering. Female slaughterers are very rare in the UK; Susan observed that "in both Muslim culture in the UK and non-Muslim, women are rarely professional slaughterpeople", and that "women, if they are present are usually on the line tidying up birds from the plucking apparatus" (Slaughterwoman interview). Reflecting on her experience as a rare halal slaughterwoman, she points to social stigmas around women killing animals, navigating this by not broadcasting her role and functioning as a "notional male and an invisible woman" for customers of the company for whom she provides meat. Parry and Potts (2010: 381) observe how animal domination and slaughter (and butchery) can be "an integral component in the performance of gender", where killing animals and consuming red

the name of God, God is great)…Any flowing blood from the carcass is completely drained" [Extract from the 'British Halal Charter', signed by major British halal certification bodies and halal meat suppliers (EQL) 2023)]

This section outlines the halal ritual and what kinds of distance/proximity it brings into being. Halal slaughter (*dhabihah*) involves specific processes that I frame as "material-semiotic devices" (Wentworth, 2016: 45) that inscribe upon the animal's body and turn it from animal to carcass, from alive to dead, from impermissible to permissible, allowing halal meat to emerge. Whilst each of these practices is essential to the ritual, it cannot be reduced down to any one of these, as it is the combination of them and in a specific order that makes it a ritual, or as Susan expressed, the fact that she is "doing it in a specific way". Ritual can be defined as "the performance of more or less invariant sequences of formal acts and utterances not entirely encoded by the performers" (Rappaport, 1999:24), and Friedlander (2020) builds on this definition, emphasising the role of Islamic scripture in informing ritual, and also the *performative* nature of the ritual, having material or immaterial ritual effects (such as turning meat from impermissible to permissible). The material-semiotic actions described above in the British Halal Charter are what Riaz, the owner of the large halal lamb slaughterhouse I visited, described as "the core criteria of halal", but there are some added recommendations that I will refer to throughout the chapter. These include not showing the animal the knife, facing in the direction of prayer, and giving the animal water before slaughter, although it is many of these added recommendations that are lost in the modern industrial slaughterhouse.

I argue that the halal ritual cultivates unique combinations of distance and proximity, with implications for capacities to care about as well as for the animal being killed. Firstly, elements of the halal ritual can be argued to preserve a sense of closeness to the act of killing animals for food. For example, the obligatory utterance of the prayer ["In the name of God, God is great"] over each animal by the slaughterer gave rise to more reflection on the act of death. Riaz argued that because an animal's life was taken in the name of God "animal death should never be routine" and humans had "no right to take that life if we're not doing it in the best way possible".

meat are masculinised activities and can also be a way to contravene gender norms. In addition, Gray's (2016) '*The Ethical Carnivore*' provides an autobiographical commentary of only eating animals she personally killed, and she reflects on how her gender comes to matter in this journey and feeling out of place meeting 'countrymen' hunting experts.

Similarly, SR357 felt that meat should not be taken lightly because the slaughter was done "in the name of Allah." As well as the prayer, there was a sense that observing a continual state of mindfulness of the act was more devotional, as shown by Riaz' characterisation of an 'exemplary' slaughterman:

> "...one of the guys he's a very religious guy, he just loves the fact that he's doing that job, so for him it's like an honour to do that, and that's the kind of people that we want to be doing that job...he comes in *wudu* [state of ablution]."

The fact that Riaz associated the act of mindful slaughter with what it meant to be a "very religious guy", which is similar to Susan's assertion that her role was "in many ways very expressive of being a devout proper Muslim" suggests that there is a sacred imperative to remain affected. This is further emphasised by the detail of the slaughterman performing slaughter in *wudu*, a state of ritual purity achieved through ablution, and a necessary state for performing *salah* [the five daily obligatory prayers]. *Wudu* is not compulsory in the slaughter process but suggests that the slaughterman views slaughter as an act of worship. Riaz stressed the importance of the workers "refreshing their *niyyah* [intention]" when slaughtering, which echoes Blanchette's (2020: 155) example of one factory farm worker's commitment to remain affected, cultivating "an ongoing ethical orientation to life...marshaling constant attention...and resisting alienation". The difference here is Blanchette frames this approach as a personal conviction of specific workers, or as part of the 'culture of care' of institutions (Roe and Greenhough, 2021) rather than an explicitly devotional act that allows one to draw closer to God. Grandin (2006: 239) believes that ritual has the potential to preserve the capacity to be affected by death, arguing that rituals, like a moment of silence, should be re-injected into conventional slaughterhouse to prevent slaughterers from becoming "numbed, callous, or cruel". Bjørkdahl and Syse (2023:770) argue that the increased regulation and formalisation of animal slaughter in the past century, and the transition from ritual to legal justifications for slaughter, has had the side-effect of more detachment from the act of killing animals for food, since "when this killing is regulated merely by law, there is nothing – or at least nothing much – that forces us to confront the fact that we kill an animal to eat it."

The closeness and reflection that the ritual encourages is tempered by the spiritual protection conferred by the codified nature of the act, providing some distance.

> "The reason you say "*Bismillah, Allahu Akbar*" [In the name of God, God is great], it's an act of protection of me as a slaughterer, I am doing it in a specific way, so I am not taking a life in vain." (Susan, slaughterwoman interview)

The sense that the ritual itself protects the slaughterer is echoed in Friedlander's (2020: 6) point that the ritual is supposed to "put the animal at ease" but equally "put the person carrying out the slaughter at ease". The ritual functions by "bringing the violence inherent in the practices into the realm of the morally acceptable by orientating the action towards the divine." (Friedlander, 2020: 6). Tayob (2019a: 1206) makes a similar point with regards to *Qurbani* sacrifice, where "the invocation of the greatness of God defers ultimate responsibility and permission for the slaughter onto God", turning "unnecessary, haphazardly managed" violence into "necessary ordained violence". This is echoed by Susan's statement that it was because she killed "in a specific way", in other words, with a ritual, that she was protected. In this sense, therefore, the ritual acts as a 'distancing device' of what Serpell (1986: 207) calls "shifting the blame", such as ancient societies where priests took part in rituals "in order to cleanse themselves of guilt". Similarly, Herzog (2010) argues that rituals are created to fulfil the need to "atone" for the continual guilt present act of eating animals, as described by Bjørkdahl and Syse's (2023: 760) who assert that ritualisation has been traditionally prevalent across many cultures in order to "cope with the transition from caretaking to lifetaking".

This spiritual protection is echoed by discussions of the need for self-protection in other contexts. Law (2015) describes how care for the self as a slaughterer involves two competing elements: on the one hand preserving the ability to be affected by animal suffering and the act of killing, whilst on the other also establishing a sense of distance and learning not to be affected. Law (2015: 63) frames this balance of "responding, but not responding too much" as a strategy of "self-protection". This need to detach from animal death as a method of self-care has also been discussed in relation to emotional management of animal sanctuary workers (Coulter, 2016) and veterinary technicians in times of pet pain and death (Sanders, 2010). In the context of orangutan rehabilitation, Palmer (2020: 133) questions whether lack of detachment is something

that is fair to expect from those who deal with animal death and bear the brunt of the emotional labour. In the case of slaughterhouse workers, whilst they are not rescuing animals as in Palmer's (2020: 133) example, similar concerns of vulnerability and "burnout" apply that are disproportionately placed on these workers. In a vulnerable position of regularly witnessing and enacting animal slaughter, therefore, care of the self is something vital, something arguably embedded in the halal ritual.

Therefore, the halal ritual involves a careful balance of both closeness and distance. The "ideal forms of workplace subjectivity", as in Blanchette's (2020) example of pig factory farm workers, are where workers are expected to not be too emotionally invested (so they are not debilitated by the death and suffering of animals) but invested enough to do extra labour. The ideal halal slaughter worker according to the above accounts should be affected by the sanctity of the act, but also seek refuge from the harmful nature of the act using the prayer and the overall ritual as a distancing device. The 'ideal' effects of the halal ritual are therefore to, first and foremost, make the meat halal, then to cultivate mindfulness and simultaneously protective distance. This ritual does not take place in a vacuum and I next explore what practically happens when it is translated into the space of the slaughterhouse, and whether there is a slippage between 'ideal' and practical performances of the ritual.

4.3 Situating the halal ritual

The section is an exercise in situating the halal ritual in the modern slaughterhouse and reflecting on the relations of distance/proximity that emerge in this translation. To do this, I go through a journey of the sheep slaughterhouse I visited, zooming in on key moments. I question whether the space of the modern slaughterhouse and the conditions of large-scale slaughter dilute the effects of the halal ritual, both the imperative to stay affected and the protective distancing qualities. I also consider the alternative possibility that the halal ritual becomes even more salient in the modern slaughterhouse because it helps workers to deal with these demanding conditions.

Despite the slaughterhouse being a place of immense physical and multisensory closeness between human and animal bodies, several processes are at play to resist the ability of bodies to be affected, creating conditions of emotional detachment from the act of killing. Purcell (2011:

68) uses the term "cruel intimacies" to challenge the notion that physical proximity between slaughterhouse workers and animals necessarily creates ethical conditions, stressing that intimacy can "itself be cruel", pointing out that acts of cruelty are in fact highly intimate, such as using an electrical prod on a fallen cow. Giraud (2019) makes a related point that proximity does not necessarily correspond with ethics, highlighting the existence of activists who care deeply from a physical distance. Asif speculated that a slaughterman did not "have a connection between what he's just killed and then going home to beef or curry" and argued that they saw it simply as another type of "manual labour" (Organic halal employee interview). Osman, who occasionally performed jobs on the assembly line said that he had not changed his meat consumption habits since starting the job but was "just more conscious of what goes behind it" in terms of traceability and certification (Slaughterhouse manager interview). Moreover, three out of the five slaughtermen who returned questionnaires reported that their level of meat consumption had not been impacted since beginning their job whilst two reported an increase in consumption. Whilst level of meat consumption is not a sufficient proxy for ethical reflection, it can go some way in determining evidence of ethically transformative moments. Much about the slaughterhouse suppresses it being a space of affect; based on an 'emotionography' of an Irish slaughterhouse, Mc Loughlin (2019: 322) argues that "hegemonic masculine ideals" result in the emotions of workers as well as the emotional experience of cattle being "denied, diminished or repressed". The difficult working conditions of the slaughterhouse can also mask reflection on killing. Ahmad characterises work on slaughterhouse assembly lines as "hard work", being "very noisy" and "physical" (organic gourmet halal provider interview). In the slaughterman questionnaire, none of the five respondents, when asked what part of their job they found the most difficult, mentioned anything to do with killing, with two mentioning "long hours" and one "time management". There are several structural conditions inherent in the conventional modern slaughterhouse that help create this detachment and desensitisation, including the assembly line set-up, and techno-mediation, and the scale of killing facilitated by such technologies.

Halal and non-halal slaughterhouses are very similar in terms of line set-up and employee demographics in the case of stunned slaughter, characterised by "Eastern Europeans on the line" (Ahmad, organic gourmet halal provider) in both types and the addition of a Muslim slaughterman at the end of the line for halal, which Frank (senior regulatory vet) reported occurs

in many slaughterhouses in order to "maximise" the potential to sell the meat to multiple markets. Non-stun slaughter for sheep (which I witnessed) involves a slightly different set up, with the presence of legislation stipulating that animals have to be restrained for at least 20 seconds after the neck incision before they can be shackled. This means that if higher outputs were needed, such premises would use multiple lines and slaughtermen.

4.3.1 The assembly line

"…The sheep are loaded from the pens in the lairage area a few at a time onto a narrow moving chute which leads into the killing room. The live lambs coming in don't react to the slaughter of their fellows in front of them, and I assume that the chute is so narrow and has such high sides that they can't actually see what is going on and can't move much. There is a loud beeping noise every 20 seconds, signalling when the workers can eject the sheep from the restrainer chute after the neck incision and shackle it [for non-stun slaughter], then…" [Extract from field diary notes of large-scale halal lamb slaughterhouse visit, March 2020]

We begin with the sheep entering the assembly line. The assembly line is a major characteristic of the modern slaughterhouse and in fact has been traced back to the earliest manifestations of the modern slaughterhouse in Chicago meatpacking plants (Pachirat, 2013). The first implication of the assembly line set-up for the halal ritual is that it helps to separate out the ritual amongst several individuals, with a separate person doing the neck incision and prayer to the ones doing the blood draining by shackling and hoisting the animal. This segmentation could create conditions of detachment; quick, repetitive actions help to banalise acts of killing, which facilitate "the process of 'making killable'" (Gillespie and Lopez, 2015:3, see also Serpell 1986). However, the ritual 'pushes back' in that there is a limit to the level of segmentation and techno-mediation allowed; in halal slaughter the person making the neck incision must be the one reciting the prayer (there are some more contested minority opinions of the acceptability of tape recorders reciting it as in the slaughterhouse Higgin et al. (2015) visited, but this is not a widely accepted practice). As I revisit in the neck incision section, the conditions of diluted responsibility of the assembly line set-up are limited for the halal ritual as it is crucial to be able to prove that the animal died from the neck incision, as anything otherwise renders the meat religiously impermissible, interrupting this process of desensitisation.

As well as increased segmentation and repetitiveness of tasks, a second characteristic of the assembly line that shapes relations of care and distance/proximity is its speed. Only a few seconds are spent in killing each animal, limiting the depth of connection with the individual animal. It also creates a pressured and stressful environment for workers, decreasing their ability to be affected. Riaz argued that the speed of the assembly line required "high-energy people" in order to "keep going on a rhythm". This implies that only certain type of personalities are suitable for or can cope with being a slaughterer in such contexts. However, for tending to live animals in the lairage, Riaz argues that more "empathetic" people are useful ("some people are natural at being more empathetic on how to handle animals than others"). This implies that the fast pace of the assembly line interrupts the ability for empathetic relations. In these conditions, possibilities for care are limited and often care for one (the animal) can be a trade-off for the other (the slaughterer). This negotiation is articulated by Susan:

> "It is extremely stressful and impacts on your mental health and sense of self-worth. It's also intensely boring. When you're on the line you can't move. The welfare of the chickens is paramount and takes precedence over anything you're feeling." (Slaughterwoman interview)

This negotiation between different agents' needs in the slaughterhouse is further illustrated by Riaz's statement about the importance of "look[ing] at every animal as an individual" and slaughtering them right", even for the "last animal of the day" when the slaughterman himself is tired. The assembly line set-up creating "stressful", "boring", "unmoving" and "tiring" (Susan) conditions can therefore limit the depths of care workers can show towards the animal. There is evidence of the use of technology to give rise to more synergistic relations so that care for one (conserving energy of the slaughterer) means better care for the animal. Practices of care in the slaughterhouse are usually in the form of 'tinkering', making small, iterative changes to make a difference to animals' lives (or in this case, deaths), and efforts to "explore, test, touch, adapt, adjust, pay attention to details and change them, until a suitable arrangement (material, emotional, relational) is achieved." (Mol *et al.,* 2015: 16, see also Holmberg, 2011: 158). This idea of tinkering takes into account the role of materials and technologies in the construction of care (Law, 2015). Riaz captures this by describing the small adjustments they made such as

moving a blood pump out of the slaughter room because it was noisy, creating a calmer environment for the animals and the workers:

> "…nothing can be 100%, but it's about trying to pinpoint all the different elements, how can we continually improve this and this and this, and everyone pulling in the same direction."

He also describes optimising the killing room by relocating certain buttons and other objects to make the process more ergonomic, all with the intention of "conserving energy" so that the slaughterer has the same care and "the same effort going into the last animal as the first animal" of the day and so they can "focus on having the time to sharpen their knives in between the animals", making for a smoother experience for the animals. Whilst conversations of improving care here are limited to framings of technological optimisation rather than more radical and systemic changes to do with scale and animal exploitation, they do nevertheless demonstrate the coexistence of caring and killing.

4.3.2 The stun

"… the sheep travel down the chute towards the slaughtermen. The stun gun dangles above everyone's heads, used on some days to perform low-voltage non-lethal electrical head-only stunning, but hung up out of the way today, a 'no-stun' day…"

This section explores what happens to distance/proximity relations when the halal ritual meets the highly contested technology of stunning.[6] Porcher (2006: 64) observes that these kinds of techno-mediation tend to increase emotional distance between animals and humans, resulting

[6] In the non-halal industry, sheep are killed either using a penetrative captive bolt stun, or electrical stunning (both head-only and head-to-body) (FSA, 2022). Halal stunning methods for sheep include nonpenetrative captive bolts or electrical head-only stunning (Riaz et al., 2021). In this specific slaughterhouse, they used an electric stun gun to carry out head-only stunning. Non-halal cattle in the UK are mostly killed using a penetrative captive bolt stun, whereas halal cattle are killed either without stunning, with nonpenetrative captive bolt stunning or head-only electrical stunning (FSA, 2022). Chickens in the UK for the non-halal market are killed using gas stunning or electrical water bath stunning. Halal chickens are killed using a mixture of non-stun and lower-voltage electrical water bath stunning methods (FSA, 2022).

in increased human as well as animal suffering. In halal slaughter, the first significant implication for the use of stunning is that it masks the viscerality of death by delaying convulsions and reducing immediate blood loss, perhaps making the moment of death less affecting. The slaughterhouse that I visited carried out both non-stun and stun (electrical head-only) slaughter, so was able to offer insight into both two methods. When asked whether some slaughter methods "looked better" than others, Riaz answered "Definitely", adding that "Slaughter without stunning looks worse" because of convulsions happening earlier, but he argued that these convulsions also occured in the stunning method, only later because the electric stun initially masked them. He observed that more convulsions created more blood on the killing floor, and therefore the electric stun preventing early convulsions means that "it just doesn't look as gory". Therefore, the animal body in non-stun slaughter has the potential to create more affective responses of unease and even disgust by being "gory". The animal also seems to be in the process of dying longer and more violently. As I observed in my field diary, "it was unclear to me when the point of death was exactly (the sheep was still convulsing), even after watching many being slaughtered." In contrast, electrical stunning is often framed as "cleaner" and therefore more acceptable and civilised, allowing for efficiency, low cost, and hygiene as well as meeting humane considerations (Burt, 2001: 217). However, Riaz was intent on emphasising that the animal was dead or unconscious and unable to feel pain after non-stun slaughter, and that the convulsing was involuntary:

> "The animal thrashes around earlier [than in stun slaughter] – the body of the animal, not the animal itself – and you can tell by looking at the eyes, if the eyes are unblinking it's just normal convulsions, not to do with the animal being conscious or not."

Riaz differentiated the moment of life and death, and was quick to correct himself that it was the "body of the animal, not the animal itself" that continued moving. Therefore, encountering non-stun slaughter may be more disturbing, but Riaz argued that this difference in appearance was not ethically informative as the animal was not suffering longer. He used what Wentworth (2017) calls "sensing sentience" skills gained by long-term exposure to death and "skilled watching" to come to this conclusion, and looked for specific signs (such as unblinking eyes to show lack of life). Ultimately, when asked whether stun or non-stun slaughter was preferable for welfare, Riaz was ambivalent and replied that it was "much of a muchness", since both methods

had "pros and cons", and argued that optimising the wider environment allowed greater welfare improvements. Therefore, the lack of use of the stun gun arguably made the process of killing more immediate, especially since non-stun slaughter led to more (or at least, earlier) convulsions, and more immediate blood loss.

The second implication of the use of stunning for the halal ritual is the scale of killing it facilitates. Stunning has been theorised as a "socio-technical fix" of killing; Higgin *et al.* (2011: 179) argue that whilst stunning has helped improve welfare at slaughter, it has also contributed towards "making animals killable (especially in large numbers)" as it renders animals more passive, allowing for quicker processing and thus higher outputs, an argument also echoed in Miele (2016) and Bjørkdahl and Syse (2023). Grace in fact argued that one of the primary reasons that stunning was introduced was to facilitate higher production numbers (animal welfare campaigner interview). She felt that stunning is perhaps necessary in the current industry, where "maybe we're having to knock these animals out for their own sanity and our own sanity", since they are "on these lorries for hours, they reach these abattoirs that stink of death…they're shoved through to make our supply and demand". However, she believed that if you treated each individual animal with "time, care, respect, you wouldn't need to stun". Ahmad made a similar argument that the "systems were not in place" for non-stun chicken slaughter to be done ethically due to the existence of the assembly line and the fact that thousands of chickens were killed an hour by each slaughterer: "if you take a bird and shackle it and stun it, it's very calm. When you put a bird on the line when it's conscious and live, it might break its wings while on that shackle because it's flapping around" (organic gourmet halal provider interview). The integration of stunning into some types of halal slaughter can therefore be seen to increase desensitisation of workers to animals, but also be perceived as necessary to care for the animals in the context of industrial slaughterhouses.

4.3.3 The prayer and neck incision

"…the two slaughtermen ready their knives. Each slaughterman utters the prayer "Bismillah, Allahu Akbar" [In the name of God, God is great] and forcefully draws their knife across their sheep's throat…It must take practice and skill to do it in one swift movement… They run their knives through knife sharpeners in between every animal…"

The ritual prayer and the neck incision processes of the halal ritual give rise to specific relations of distance and proximity in the modern slaughterhouse. The ritual protection and affective resonances of the *tasmiyyah* [prayer uttered at slaughter] may be undermined by being inaudible or muted. In my field diary for the lamb slaughterhouse visit, I noted that "you can barely hear the *tasmiyyah* because all the machinery is so loud", with the slaughtermen sometimes wearing headphones or earplugs. Similarly, Grace believed that, with the thousands of chickens killed per hour, "there's no way you can say the full *tasmiyyah* to every single bird" (animal welfare campaigner interview). The prayer being inaudible and incomplete could prevent the fulfilment of the ritual, and therefore the permissibility of the meat, and also could undermine the effect of the halal ritual to put both the slaughterer and the slaughtered at ease (Friedlander, 2020). This is pertinent given high levels of slaughterer vulnerability in the modern slaughterhouse, characterised by high risk of injury and social stigmatisation (Purcell, 2011).

The simultaneous neck incision during the utterance of the ritual prayer is a material-semiotic device that intervenes in the distribution of responsibility for killing (Vialles, 1994) and messiness of life and death (Wentworth, 2015) in the slaughterhouse. Pachirat (2011: 238) notes that on the large-scale assembly line, "it was impossible to state categorically that there was a moment when they were dead". In the halal process however, it is crucial to be able to prove that the animal died from the neck incision, not the stun, as anything otherwise renders the meat religiously impermissible, interrupting the effect of distributed responsibility. The neck incision through a sharp knife also helps to make the moment of death clearer and focus responsibility on one individual due to the emphasis on individual hand-slaughtering (see the British Halal Charter, where "all slaughtering is to be carried out by hand" (EQL, 2023) rather than machine-slaughter[7]. This can give rise to more opportunities for worker bodies to be affected by animal bodies due to less techno-mediation. As discussed in earlier sections, the ritual effect of focusing responsibility on one person is slightly diluted in halal stun slaughter, since rendering the animal unconscious from the stun before slitting its throat makes the moment of death more still and less bloody.

[7] Although data on the actual prevalence of halal machine-slaughter is difficult to obtain, most mainstream British halal certification bodies do not allow it; the HMC opposed it from their conception and the HFA notably switched their position to no longer certify machine slaughter as halal (Grumett, 2015).

The knife-made neck incision therefore comes to matter in creating a more immediate encounter with the moment of death. Equally, however, the knife, and particularly its sharpness, can distance some elements of the act of killing. Knife sharpness acted as a proxy for participants to persuade other groups about the ethical and painless nature of halal slaughter:

> "I educated [non-Muslim farmers] about the respect for the animal in the halal slaughter process: A very sharp knife, one incision, there shouldn't be blood on the floor, there shouldn't be blood on the knife, the animals shouldn't see each other being slaughtered." (Ahmad, organic gourmet halal provider interview)

Similarly, a British sheep farmer recounted being convinced of the painlessness and effectiveness of non-stun slaughter due to knife size and sharpness and the skill of the knife-wielder in shechita slaughter:

> "When the Jews do it, they use a razor-sharp knife. You need five years' training to know how to use the knife. If there is a slight indentation in knife, they have to start over again and sharpen it. It's a huge knife. And once they cut the animal with it, you can stick a finger in the cow's eyeball two to three seconds after and it's not moving, it is *dead*." (Fieldnotes from National Sheep Association 'Understanding the Halal Market' meeting)

This sharpness of the knife creating a 'good kill' (Higgin et al. 2011) is precarious, however, as Riaz argues that mis-cuts can occur without the "right angle" and movement (Slaughterhouse owner interview). The knife and its sharpness allow pain to be set at a distance through the insistence from participants that there is rapid onset of senselessness, therefore a death that is 'not a welfare issue' (Webster, 1994). Interestingly, the absence of the knife also acted as a proxy for the ethical nature of halal slaughter; both Riaz and Ahmad mentioned the importance of not showing the animal the knife and not sharpening the knife in front of the animal before slaughter, as recommended in the traditional Islamic method. SR369 also reported that "I have seen myself how goats/chickens react after just seeing a blade. They become so distressed that the slaughter effectively becomes cruel." Therefore the knife both represents the slaughterer's physical closeness to the act of killing as well as representing their efforts to distance the animal

from its own death. This resonates with efforts to minimise fear and discomfort for cattle in industrial slaughterhouses in the US by masking smells and reflections (Grandin and Johnson, 2005).

Overall, during the neck incision, the literal act of cutting apart the animal's throat and arteries disassembles life from death and the permissible from the impermissible. The moment of killing is brought closer through the imperative to know which action caused the death. The ritual requirements of individual hand-slaughtering allow more opportunities to be affected due to physically handling each animal. The sharpness of the knife acts to bring the moment of death into relief, yet simultaneously allows for the denial of the presence of pain in death, helping to justify the act of slaughter.

4.3.4 Draining the blood

…the sheep's body convulses and spurts blood. After twenty seconds, there is a loud beep and two other men shackle the animal and hoist it onto a hook, allowing it to drain optimally. Then the carcass swings around the corner to the cutting area which is hidden from the view of the killing room…

A crucial requirement of the halal ritual is draining the blood of the animal due to the categorisation the blood as impure (Saleh, slaughterman interview). Ensuring that all the blood is drained out is an example of a halal 'meat knowledge' practice of "post-slaughter materiality" (Roe, 2010: 272), but instead of determining sentience, it helps determine 'halalness'.

> *"The walls near the shackling area are caked in blood, the floor is swimming in it, there's blood everywhere… and the person who is doing the shackling, his face is getting splattered with blood."* (Field diary excerpt)

Riaz argued that consumers should cultivate a level of emotional detachment from the affective nature of the blood in the killing process in order to gain knowledge about animal death; he explained that for a consumer education video his company helped to produce on halal lamb slaughter methods, they took the decision to "switch to animation at the point of slaughter":

> "...we wanted to keep people's focus on what was actually happening scientifically as opposed to the gory nature of the blood coming out. And it has helped a lot of people understand the concepts better." (Lamb slaughterhouse interview)

According to Riaz, the blood here causes consumers to be affected too much, arguing that bloodiness is not a proxy for humaneness of the slaughter and can actually hinder understanding of best welfare practice for slaughter.

In contrast to the consumer, the halal slaughterer is obliged to be physically close to the blood of the animal due to the emphasis on blood draining. A different type of closeness with animal death emerges at this point, where, as seen in the description of shackling and hoisting above, the slaughterer and then the shackler are literally splashed with the animal's blood. Blood is associated with taboos and prohibitions in many cultures; Frazer's (1890) work of comparative religion finds blood taboos and prohibitions around consumption in numerous ancient faith traditions, many stemming from the belief of the soul or life of the animal being in the blood. Categorising the blood as impure allows for a further distancing as it creates a level of disgust for the slaughterer towards the animal. This also contributes to the social stigmatisation of slaughterers, as the process of their work obliges them to become intimate with blood (by draining the carcass) so that the consumer is spared exposure to it as a fairly bloodless carcass reaches them. Here, workers' closeness to animal death (and blood) can put them at a distance from the rest of society. Susan declared that herself and her fellow slaughterhouse workers know that "no one else respects us":

> "In the Jewish community if you kill things, you have some status. In the Muslim community no one gives a hoot about you." (Slaughterwoman interview)

Similarly, when asked what needed to be improved about halal slaughter, one slaughterman questionnaire mentioned the need for more "appreciation" of such work. This suspicion of slaughterhouse workers was even evident from other stakeholders from within the meat industry itself. Asif argued that slaughterhouses were a suspicious "meat lobby" and "the real people in power" (Organic halal provider interview, 2020), whilst Steven identified "a lot of mistrust with slaughterhouses, both within and without the halal industry" (Fine dining restauranteur

interview). These social vulnerabilities and stigmas act to interrupt slaughterhouse workers' abilities to be affected by animal death.

However, there is potential for more pride in working in halal slaughter due its religious significance, which acted as a source of empowerment; when asked what they enjoyed most about their job, slaughterers mentioned providing a socially and religiously important community service. Two slaughtermen questionnaires mentioned pride in "being able to provide halal meat to the Muslim community", whilst another called the job a "big responsibility". Susan declared that, in her capacity of providing halal organic chicken:

> "I do it for the Muslim community so people in places like London can access quality chicken they wouldn't usually be able to access." (Slaughterwoman interview)

Moreover, Riaz' comment that halal slaughtering is "not just a job, there's a higher thought process that goes into it", where this labour is sanctified, suggests an avenue for minimising the devaluation and alienation of labour described by Marxist theorists (Sayers, 2011) in contexts such as the slaughterhouse. This source of respect for slaughterhouse workers could also reinforce what Blanchette (2020: 163) argues about the importance of taking seriously the inter-species expertise of factory farm workers facilitated by their inter-corporeal closeness, instead of just focusing on "their bodily or mental suffering, or lamenting their alleged deskilling". This could equally apply to slaughterhouse workers due to the intimate nature of their labour, and their ability to 'sense sentience' of animals facilitated by "skilled watching" (Wentworth, 2015: 145).

4.3.5 Scale

A context implicit in all the above processes that complicates translation of the halal ritual to the modern slaughterhouse is the large scale of the killing. In this section, I interrogate the relationship between the halal ritual and scale. Several modern Islamic scholars argue that industrial animal production in incompatible with the spirit of the halal ritual. Ramadan (2008) finds a contradiction in industrial halal meat production, stating that "the capitalist system has managed to efficiently take over an ideational frame of reference that was supposed to resist it".

Furber (2017) argues that animal exploitation in intensive agriculture contravenes the 'Sacred Law'. This is also identified by Higgin et al. (2011: 187) in their visit to a halal chicken slaughterhouse, where there was "tension between Muslim scriptures, which advocate respect, dignity and (individual) recognition for animals at death and the…sheer scale…which functioned to de-animalise the birds and to de-sensitise the act of killing." Harvey (2010: 14) argues that in the rationalisation process and the pursuit of efficiency, "the true spirit and practice of halal has been left behind". Similar comments can be found amongst interviewees from the 'alternative halal' movement; Susan asserted that halal was not "meant to be in large-scale abattoirs, industrial style" (Slaughterwoman interview). With these arguments in mind, I unpack how the scale of killing that the modern slaughterhouse facilitates (through the assembly line set-up and use of various technologies such as stunning) affects the halal ritual's distance/proximity dynamics described in section 4.2.

Firstly, does the devotional imperative to stay affected and the encouragement to recognise the individual animal hold up in slaughter at scale? The assembly line and technologies of the slaughterhouse allows many animals to be processed at once. The lamb slaughterhouse I visited killed thousands of animals a day. To keep up with this, two sheep were killed at once, with two slaughtermen working in the killing room. The beeping noise every 20 seconds was a reminder of the fast pace and created a sense of urgency. The routine nature of death in these spaces can therefore erode the ability to be affected in the slaughterhouse. Osman, who worked in a slaughterhouse that killed hundreds of sheep a day, described becoming quickly accustomed to animal death after being initially unsettled:

> "…it had me shaken a little bit and then very quickly I just got used to the idea that the animals are here for meat." (Slaughterhouse manager interview)

The scale of slaughter has implications for the type of human-animal affective relations possible in the slaughterhouse. Keeping up with high quotas also could result in the failure to adhere to higher ethical principles. Grace argued that "in Islam, if the cow is really freaked, it says to let it go, but you're not going to do that if you've got to meet Tesco's demands of 4,000 cattle this year" (Animal welfare campaigner interview). Osman also mentions having to meet certain quotas, saying that they have to process a minimum of 350-400 sheep to make the day financially

productive, and quite often he is asked to leave his usual manager duties to help out on the line by moving carcasses. This sense of urgency is created by the conditions of the slaughterhouse, where there are "set hours" and "we have a certain goal to reach before the end of the day", and often being "short-staffed". Such rhythms of the slaughterhouse may therefore erode moments of care.

Large-scale production and welfare were set up as an inevitable trade-off by some survey respondents, foreclosing possibilities for adhering to higher ethical principles:

> "In order to supply current demand for meat at competitive prices, the welfare of the animals involved is inevitably going to be compromised" (SR135)

> "you can't industrially slaughter 50,000 unstunned chickens in one day in a humane way." (SR71)

The scale of slaughter in the modern slaughterhouse, where more than one animal is killed at a time and there is limited time spent with each animal, means the individual animal is set at a distance. The species of animal can also affect the level of this distancing. For instance, while sheep in the slaughterhouse I visited were individually manually stunned or individually cut, chickens are stunned in batches in electric water baths (88% of all halal chicken in the UK (FSA, 2022)). Also, the slaughterer spends less time per animal for chickens than for larger animals, with 3 million halal chickens killed in the UK a week compared to approximately 160,000 sheep (18 million chickens killed overall in the UK in a week versus about 240,000 sheep) (FSA, 2022). Ahmad estimated that ten slaughtermen in an average slaughterhouse would be "doing 12,000 [chickens] an hour" (Organic halal gourmet provider interview), while Grace referred to an industry average of "15,000 chickens an hour being slaughtered (Animal welfare campaigner interview). This affects slaughterhouse workers' capacity to be affected by individual animals and by the act of killing. The slaughter of certain species is quicker than others, with Grace arguing that "you can take your time a bit more" with sheep and cattle, partly because of the risk of injury, since "if a cow comes for you, you're in trouble".

So far, I have drawn upon contexts of non-sacrificial, or "normal" (Riaz) halal slaughter when talking about scale diluting the ability to be affected by and form a relationship with individual animals. This is even more apparent in sacrificial slaughter. The complexity of negotiating ritual in the scale of the modern slaughterhouse is starkly demonstrated by the example of Qurbani. Qurbani is the animal sacrifice obligatory on every adult Muslim at the time of the annual *Eid al-Adha* festival[8]. In Islamic law, there are different types of halal slaughter, including sacrificial and non-sacrificial slaughter. Whilst they both have the same ritual process at the point of killing described in section 4.2 (although sacrifice has some additional requirements on the age and type of animal that can be used), they differ in their purpose; sacrificial slaughter has a primary purpose of "bringing the practitioner closer to the divine" (Friedlander, 2020: 8) and is carried out on specific occasions, including at the *Qurbani*/Festival of Sacrifice. Meat from sacrificial slaughter is eaten, but with an added condition that a portion of the meat must be distributed to those in need. During Qurbani, both the scale of slaughter (with the highest surge in demand for halal meat in the year) and the ritual aspect (with more requirements and a higher emphasis on closeness to death) are amplified, bringing into relief the complexities of combining these two aspects. In this chapter, we see how these requirements are negotiated by practitioners in the space of the modern British slaughterhouse, in terms of how they try to facilitate the conditions of closeness for the consumers. In the next chapter, we see how the requirements for physical and emotional proximity to death in the Qurbani process created interesting configurations of distance and proximity for consumers in spaces other than the slaughterhouse.

Having an attachment to the individual sacrificial animal is seen as "an exemplar of how proper *Qurbani* should be practiced" (Tayob, 2019a: 1204), more emphasised here than in non-sacrificial slaughter, but ironically, the specific conditions that govern UK *Qurbani* slaughter make this difficult to achieve. Firstly, the high numbers of animals can hinder moments of reconnection with animal death; Riaz recalled how at *Qurbani* time (during which they produce 25,000 lamb carcasses a week, compared to the usual 15,000), customers desire to connect with the animals and slaughter process, but "you don't always get that because of the sheer volume of people and everything going through" (Slaughterhouse owner interview). Riaz paints a picture of a direct trade-off between scale and connection with the animal:

[8] Many British Muslim consumers outsource their sacrifice to charitable organisations who organise slaughter on their behalf in countries with higher levels of poverty (Riaz, slaughterhouse owner interview).

> "if you let a guy spend some time with the animal in the lairage, it'll slow down the whole line so instead of going 8 a minute, we're going 3 a minute, and that means instead of doing 4,000 in a day, we're doing 2,000 a day, so that's 2,000 people's *Qurbani's* that we couldn't even do."

Therefore, the scale and speed of slaughter makes it difficult to form attachments to individual animals. Similarly, traceability of individual animals is difficult to achieve in the production process during this time, as described by Ahmad:

> "… nobody has an idea of which lamb they bought, which got slaughtered for them, because I guarantee you that the number you bought and the number you get on Eid day is not the same. It's so difficult to control the lamb that was picked for you and traceability because of the volumes they process on Eid day." (Organic gourmet halal provider interview)

He contrasted this with "non-Qurbani times", where it was possible to achieve that level of traceability, ironically when it "doesn't really matter" to customers.

These conditions of extremely busy and fast-paced slaughterhouses at this time of year are shaped by the specific regulatory landscape of the UK, which, alongside other highly industrialised regions, has seen intensified formalisation and regulation of animal slaughter in the last century (Syse and Bjørkdahl, 2021). Only certain sites are authorised to host slaughter, and only certified professionals can perform the slaughter. This drives all the demand to these sites and creates these conditions. As described in the next chapter, more informal networks of slaughter (either in different spaces or in the past) allowed non-professionals to carry out *Qurbani* slaughter and in a wider variety of sites. These conditions therefore make it difficult to fulfil some of the recommendations of the *Qurbani* process that encourage proximity to animal death, such as performing the slaughter oneself, and even being present at the slaughter is difficult to achieve with the high numbers (Riaz, slaughterhouse owner interview). The space of the industrial slaughterhouse therefore interrupts the ability to achieve the depth of the ideal

sacrificer/sacrificed relationship, characterised by "everyday gestures of love, care and remorse" (Govindrajan, 2018: 31)

Difficulties created by such regulatory conditions are likely to be continue; in more recent years, slaughterhouse workers have identified a trend of increased regulation, not restricted to the halal meat industry. Susan argued that the industry had become "very highly regulated" in recent years:

> "Ten years ago, you could turn up in an abattoir and no one would look at you…it is now highly regulated, I am filmed and supervised more closely by the vet. PPE has to be more closely adhered to even before COVID." (Slaughterwoman interview)

Osman similarly identified the meat industry as "such a highly regulated industry", with "making sure the paperwork was up to date, that the requirements were met, even the cleaning products that you have, you have to have the entire COSHH data sheet" (Slaughterhouse manager interview, 2020). He pointed to instances of regulators such as the Food Standards Agency "interfer[ing] a bit too much". This results in a context where regulatory and health and safety restrictions increasingly limit the ability for consumers to access slaughterhouses, in particular interrupting the process of cultural transmission of distance/proximity relationships of the Qurbani ritual to children explored in detail in the following chapter:

> "…people want to come and…are bringing kids and we're like 'No no no, you can't bring a seven-year-old kid into a slaughterhouse', because we don't want them to slip and fall." (Riaz, slaughterhouse owner interview).

The regulatory and infrastructural environment of the British slaughterhouse therefore makes it difficult to remain faithful to the proximity requirement of the Qurbani ritual and results in an imperfect ritual:

> "…this is the animal that you've, ideally, that you've reared in your own back garden or whatever, you've built a connection and bond with it, you don't want to slaughter it, like Ibrahim (peace be upon him) didn't want to slaughter his son, that's why it's a sacrifice. If it's a sacrifice of something you don't really connect with or care about, yes your

> *Qurbani* will be done from a *fiqhi* [jurisprudential/technical] perspective, but spiritually it's not really a sacrifice because you're not really feeling you're losing anything." (Riaz, slaughterhouse owner).

In the following chapter, we see how the closeness required by the Qurbani ritual is more closely fulfilled in other spaces (less industrialised countries) and times (referring to the past in the UK).

Large-scale slaughtering operations have implications for the requirement for closeness in both non-sacrificial and sacrificial halal ritual killings. I now turn to the implications of scale for the protective distance of the halal ritual. We saw in section 4.3.3 how the conditions of the modern slaughterhouse may not allow for audibility or full utterance of the '*tasmiyyah*' prayer, which again results in an incomplete or imperfect execution of the ritual. It could however be argued that even in a diluted form, ritual is especially compatible in the modern slaughterhouse to confer a level of protection and comfort to slaughterhouse workers and animals in response to the scale and difficult conditions of the slaughterhouse. More radical alternatives than continuing to integrate the halal ritual in imperfect forms would include fundamentally transforming the scale and conditions of the slaughterhouse, which are explored in the following 'speculative ethics' section.

4.4 Speculative ethics of halal slaughter

In her book on 'speculative ethics', Puig de la Bellacasa (2017: 7) states that care can be speculative, "provoking political and ethical imagination in the present" and involving imagining how to care differently and transform current relations of (un)care. This is also in line with Haraway's (2010) reflections on how to live and die well with others, where "killing well—or at least better—is more explicitly attended to." (Donati, 2019: 127). Many of these discussions around how care for human and animal workers could be better are relevant to the concept of 'tayyib', which will be discussed in detail in chapter 7. There are several dialectics shaping debates around caring differently in halal slaughter, including (i) small/large, (ii) slow/fast, (iii)long/short, (iv) individual/collective and (v) sacrificial/non-sacrificial.

Firstly, producers from the alternative halal meat movement - characterised by free-range and organic options - implied that the very practice of large-scale slaughter created an atmosphere that increased desensitisation and was antithetical to the emergence of care, believing that slaughter had to be downscaled and decentralised. Susan, who worked in a small-scale abattoir (processing hundreds of chickens a day rather than thousands typical of a conventional slaughterhouse), stated that "To improve all slaughter it should be done in small local abattoirs on a small scale", believing that reducing scale itself would create a more caring environment, and that a small-scale chicken abattoir allowed "much more of an understanding of chickens than in a large-scale abattoir" (Slaughterwoman interview). Furthermore, Asif claimed that "mobile slaughterhouses on farms doing five hundred to a thousand a week is much better than a hundred thousand carcasses a week in some massive slaughterhouse", and argued for the need to revert to older de-centralised models of slaughter where "every farmer had their own little abattoir" (Organic halal employee interview). Vialles (1994: 31) argues that "one-to-one slaughter…is easier to accept than industrial slaughter", the latter of which is characterised by "anonymity" and "lack of differentiation". One alternative halal farm had a policy of not producing over a certain quota, despite constant over-subscription, stating that "we make as much as feel is appropriate and when it's finished, it's finished" (Visit to small-scale free-range chicken abattoir, 2019). Interestingly, however, Frank, a senior regulatory vet, argued that he did not believe that "large slaughterhouses have worse standards" in terms of welfare, and that "it's interesting to reflect on the fact that the majority of undercover footage of animal abuses are from small-scale slaughterhouses." He therefore argued for a nuanced discussion of scale where there are "pluses and minuses" of each type of slaughterhouse.

Secondly, slowing down fast rhythms in the slaughterhouse (which is very linked to scale as slowing down is only really made possible by downscaling production) could rework relations of care. Extra *time* in particular opens up possibilities for better welfare before and during slaughter. For instance, this creates possibilities for recommended acts in halal slaughter, such as feeding the animal hay and water and calming the animal before slaughter, to be implemented for every animal. Steven argued that the ideal in halal slaughter where the animal "can't witness another animal being slaughtered" was "incredibly difficult to engineer" in a "traditional slaughterhouse" (Fine dining halal restauranteur interview). Also, if the speed of the assembly line required by pressured conditions of high demand and quotas to be met limits care in the slaughterhouse,

slower rhythms in spaces of killing could allow space for better care for the individual. If meeting lower quotas, this could open up possibilities to be more response-able in the slaughterhouse to more stressed animals, to live up to the ideal of "in Islam, if the cow is really freaked, it says to let it go" (Grace, animal welfare campaigner interview), or at least to delay slaughter in order to calm the animal. Slower methods of slaughter could also be more attentive to certain species' needs; Susan believed that the best way to calm chickens before slaughter was to hold their heads and cut their throats in a cone as opposed to cutting their throats on an assembly line, but that this was a method used only in small, 'slower' abattoirs. For example, this method was used in the small-scale chicken abattoir I visited, and it was indeed quite slow; it took the workers a few hours to process a few dozen chickens from start to finish, which might have been achieved in minutes in a faster assembly-line set-up). Also, if the speed of the assembly line requires more "high-energy" people and therefore forecloses opportunities for other types of individuals to do the killing in the large-scale halal slaughterhouse, slower rhythms could allow for those that Riaz describes as naturally more "empathetic" towards animals to also be perceived as suitable slaughterers.

Thirdly, relations of care in the slaughterhouse could also be deepened by focusing on longer relations with animals (the previous paragraph discussed cultivating slower relations, but that translated to a micro-temporal scale of moving from seconds to minutes/hours, whereas here I refer to longer temporal scales of months/years spent looking after the animals that will be killed). There is a potential for deeper care relations by further integrating those who have spent longer with the animals. There was a particular focus on the ethically generative nature of including farmers in the killing process, with farmers being constructed as inherently "good" in comparison to slaughterhouse workers (Asif, organic halal employee interview). This integration of farmers does not only take the shape of the farmers themselves carrying out slaughter (as occurs in the small-scale chicken abattoir I visited), but being present at slaughter, as this could have positive effects on the welfare and stress of the animal. For instance, Donati (2019: 127) describes how "the visceral confrontation of watching his chickens die" motivated a chicken farmer to "seek out alternatives, with the aim to de-industrialise the killing process to whatever extent he can". Donati (2019: 127) frames these as efforts to "stay with the trouble" after Haraway (2010), and Raheem displayed similar commitments with his desire to "go see [his] animals being killed" (Regenerative farmer interview).

Integrating farmers and those workers who have had long-term exposure to the animals being killed also has effects for worker welfare. There has been a steep decline in the number of abattoirs in the UK (Farm Animal Welfare Council, 2003), with one in three small slaughterhouses having closed in the last ten years (Kennard and Young, 2018), "abattoirs are closing at an alarming rate" (Regenerative farmer interview), as part of a trend towards larger but fewer slaughterhouses owned by a small group of companies (Perry, 2008), also a trend identified by Frank, a senior regulatory vet. As a result of this closure, many farmers have been forced to "delegate the act of slaughter to huge industrial units", creating feelings of "guilt" and "impotence", making it difficult for them to "mourn their animals" (Porcher, 2006: 67). Presence at slaughter was seen to reduce anxiety for farmers:

> "Most farmers are actually deeply attached to the welfare of their animals and sending them offsite, it's out of sight and out of mind but there's always that anxiety nagging at the back of their head. The mobile slaughterhouse gives them the opportunity if they feel the need to vet the process." (Steven, fine dining halal restauranteur interview)

Smaller abattoirs were also seen to be able to provide more care (to both humans and animals) (Perry, 2008); Kennard and Young (2018: 11) describe large abattoirs as "busy and impersonal places" that are stressful for both animals and farmers. Presence of farmers in the killing process was seen to increase a sense of control and agency (Donati, 2019). Raheem states that even though there are three closer abattoirs to him, he prefers the one in Oldham "simply because it's much smaller. I can go see my animals being killed, I can speak to people. That in-depth experience is not available to me in others." (Regenerative farmer interview). Here again we see how most of the ways of imagining different care relations are linked to downscaling and how difficult it is to extricate questions of care from scale.

Fourthly, more attention to animal individuals could deepen relations of care. This could firstly come through understanding the varying needs of different species. The difference in species mentioned by my participants came to matter only in how they were killed (I discussed in this chapter what difference species makes to amount of time per animal, and killing methods) rather than their lives/personalities, but there is scope to delve into this further. Just as Donati's (2019)

description of conviviality needing to attend to chickenly social relations, there were some promising acts of care and attention to specifically ovine worlds and social relations in Riaz' slaughterhouse, with recognition of them being flock animals and knowledge of how to minimise their stress, "you're trying to get them to follow their mates around basically, because sheep are flock animals that like to follow each other" (Riaz interview). Riaz specifically talks about understanding the animals' "own sense of environment" in order to move and calm them, describing the most skilled workers in the lairage area, where "it looks like they're not even working but the way that they position themselves to be in the right vision of the animal, that the animal moves where he wants them to move, it's effortless". This resonates with discussions around attuning to animal worlds and learning to be affected by certain species. However, there are practical limits to the levels of care that can be achieved in this slaughterhouse, especially for caring for individual animals within the flock. The extent to which one can indeed "look at every animal as an individual" (Riaz) in the modern slaughterhouse set-up is limited because slaughter is done in the same way and in the same amount of time for each animal. This provides little space for the individual subjectivity and personality animals to come through, and little space to accommodate animal resistance and refusal.

Finally, I consider whether more caring relations can be created by cultivating Qurbani-level closeness all year round but during times of lower demand when it is more possible to adhere to the spirit of the ritual. When talking about customers wanting to bring children into the slaughterhouse, Riaz outlined the uniqueness of this period, stating that "Qurbani is something is very different, because of the story of Abraham, people want to connect with the process." This implies that halal consumers are not as interested or compelled to connect with the process at other times. However, there is also evidence of consumers cultivating this closeness more widely due to their expanded use of the term 'sacrifice'. SR357 felt that we must not take meat lightly because it is a "sacrifice that has been made in the name of Allah." This is echoed by SR127 who said that it was important to understand that "you are sacrificing an animal which was given life by the Almighty". These respondents used the term 'sacrifice' even when referring to general halal slaughter, not just sacrificial slaughter, implying a continuation of sacrificial logics. Therefore, although most halal meat in the UK is produced through non-sacrificial slaughter, there is perhaps value in leveraging the term 'sacrifice' more loosely to encourage more reflection and care in animal killing. This is expressed by Riaz, who felt that "…animal death should never

be routine… even in normal halal slaughter, you're taking the life of the animal". Sacrificial framings of animal death have however been critiqued by voices in critical animal studies such as Weil (2006: 95), who believes that the logical conclusion of this "communion with animal suffering" should be "the sacrifice of sacrifice" rather than its romanticisation.

All the above speculations do not escape the act of killing, however, which represents one of the incommensurable tensions of imagining killing better. Gillespie (2011: 158) problematises the practice of 'humane' slaughter in smaller-scale establishments by arguing that although it does result in a better experience for the animal until the point of slaughter, it still "fails to confront the violence of slaughter itself." Cole (2011: 83) is critical of the 'happy meat' discourse due to similar concerns that it "works to appease and deflect ethical concerns". This links to discussions of whether animal death is intrinsically ethically problematic; influential arguments in animal welfare science posit that death is not a welfare issue if carried out painlessly (Webster, 1994), whilst others argue that it is problematic if it forecloses the opportunity for positive experiences (Yeates, 2010). For this reason, Kupsala (2018: 209) argues that transformation of human-animal relations of care can only occur by going beyond contexts of animal killing and interacting with animals "outside the realm of food production" such as animal sanctuaries, which would encourage people to "recognize animals as individuals that are more than the consumable qualities they are seen to hold". Alternatively, Donati (2019: 127) suggests that a way of navigating this coexistence between living and dying (what she calls limits of multispecies conviviality) is not to avoid killing, but is through radical anthropomorphism, in other words, to ask "how might we humans prefer to be killed if we were on the menu for others? In what way might we want to live our lives in the meantime?"

My focus on care and distance/proximity relations in the modern halal slaughterhouse has been mostly framed through my visit to a large-scale lamb slaughterhouse, and although there were many issues associated with the erosion of care through scale, it may not be representative of the conditions in many slaughterhouses. Interestingly, Asif, who worked for a small-scale organic halal business, characterised the slaughterhouse I visited as an exemplar, saying that "they're our model slaughterhouse when it comes to how things should be done", saying "it's very good, very particular, they take care of the animal." Riaz' (the owner of this slaughterhouse) commitment

to improving care and being mindful about the halal process is illustrated in this interview extract:

> "One of the things that I want to work towards that we haven't done yet, we've done it in a loose way, I want our slaughtermen to intimately know all the *Quranic ayat [verses]* and the *hadiths [sayings of the Prophet]* to do with halal. They do know some of them, but if you had a slaughterman who knows all the *ayat* that gives you a lot more confidence not just in his ability but also in his understanding of what he's doing"

Although he admits that it is difficult to practically live up to some of these commitments, this level of reflection and aspiration may not be representative of all or even many in halal slaughterhouse management. This is especially the case given that the majority of UK halal slaughterhouses are not Muslim-owned (observed by Riaz, Frank and Asif). Although Susan questions the association between Muslim ownership and better practice in the industry ("just because they are Muslim doesn't mean that they are much better"), Muslim slaughterhouse management may be, at least aspirationally if not in practice, more motivated to improve their fulfilment of halal rituals.

4.5 Conclusions

This chapter has demonstrated how the emergence of halal in the slaughterhouse involves a mixture of distance and closeness with animal death in different ways. For each "material-semiotic" practice of the halal ritual, I have considered who and what is being brought closer or set at a distance. The obligations of the halal ritual make slaughter more immediate and maintain a space to be affected in the slaughterhouse; the requirement to hand-slaughter, the importance of isolating the moment of death, and the utterance of the prayer for each individual animal. On the other hand, the ritual prayer also acts as a distancing device to shift responsibility; the halal ritual was seen to provide much-needed protection, with halal slaughterhouse workers embracing the rituals of the halal slaughter process to seek divine protection from the act of killing. Learning not to be affected was a state to be carefully cultivated and maintained as a self-protective strategy in the face of the physical, emotional and social vulnerability of slaughterhouse work. The ritual of halal slaughter was perceived to transform 'improper violence' into 'proper violence', but in

the average British halal slaughterhouse, the pursuit of 'proper violence' was undermined by the same conditions of 'cruel intimacies' created by large-scale slaughter and worker vulnerabilities.

This chapter has shown the tensions and challenges of bringing the halal ritual into the modern slaughterhouse, and the tensions between commercial halal and 'ideal' halal slaughter. The halal ritual, particularly Qurbani, a subset of the halal ritual, encouraged mindfulness of the act of killing, and gave rise to acts of care. However, I also show the difficulties of situating the ritual in the space of the modern slaughterhouse, which makes it difficult to cultivate the radical closeness to death and the sacred imperative to be affected by the Qurbani ritual and beyond. One of the contributions of this chapter is not only showing relations of distance/proximity afforded by the halal ritual compared to non-halal slaughter, but also by different manifestations of halal slaughter, in particular stun versus non-stun and sacrificial versus non-sacrificial halal slaughter.

Ideal relations of care were characterised by participants to be: *small(-scale), slow, long(-term), individual* and *sacrificial.* In the following chapter, I think about the dialectic of visible/invisible and whether 'visible' slaughter has transformative ethical effect. Ultimately, some tensions of care are incommensurable in the context killing animals for food, even if we diversify out of the space of modern British slaughterhouse, given that killing is still present. Nevertheless, speculation can open up possibilities for imagining other ways of caring.

5. Witnessing

~ How do halal consumers witness animal killing and rearing for meat production?

~ What are the effects of these encounters?

5.1 Introduction

This chapter explores how halal consumers witness practices of animal killing and rearing for meat production, and the effects of these encounters on consumers' identities, consumption behaviours and ethics. I characterise these encounters as 'witnessing' since this largely captures how halal consumers engaged with practices of killing and rearing (with fewer instances of participating), whilst not dismissing the visceral and multi-sensory nature of this witnessing (such as SR315's description of halal slaughter as a "bloody affair") and the crucial sonic (Mc Loughlin, 2023a), olfactory and haptic dimensions of slaughter. In the previous chapter I argued that the halal slaughter process is defined by a complex constellation of proximity and distance, but here there is a focus on distance/proximity relations of consumers with animal killing and rearing rather than slaughterhouse workers, and a focus on a wider variety of spaces-times than the modern British halal slaughterhouse. I draw extensively from responses from the online consumer survey in this chapter, since the focus is on consumers' relations with food animals' rearing and killing, supplemented by interviews from various halal meat retailers and producers.

I argue that the ways in which halal consumers encounter killing and rearing is distinctive in several key ways. Scholars in animal studies and animal geographies have noted the ways in which highly industrialised societies, or 'postdomestic' contexts (Bulliet, 2005), do not, in fact, usually bear witness to food animal killing, with an overall trend towards concealment. Much of this work is concerned with western postdomestic consumers, and therefore assuming a starting point of distance from killing animals for food and of highly industrialised and large-scale meat production systems. Other work has engaged with 'domestic' contexts in countries such as India (Dave, 2014; Tayob, 2019a; Govindrajan, 2018) and Egypt (Miele, 2016). I argue that British Muslims are (post)domestic consumers with exposure to (post)domestic contexts, where I assume neither a default position of distance nor of proximity to animal killing and rearing, but a complex combination of the two, which is brought to light during specific encounters. Dahlan-

Taylor (2016) similarly implies that halal consumers straddle domesticity and postdomesticity by arguing that Islamic practices can resolve some of the tensions of postdomesticity. The postdomestic thesis includes relations with the lives of meat-producing animals as well as their deaths (Leroy and Praet, 2017), which is why this chapter also attends to halal consumers' encounters with (spaces of) animal rearing in halal meat production.

Various elements of halal consumers' identity (as both an ethnic and religious diaspora (Hopkins and Gale, 2009; Turner; 2010) generate specific relations of distance and proximity to killing animals for food. Due to the multicultural make-up of the British Muslim population (with 95% from BAME backgrounds (ONS, 2022), 60.2% from South Asian (Indian/Pakistani/Bangladeshi) ethnic groups and 10.1% from Black ethnic groups (7.7% Black African specifically) and 6.6% from Arab ethnic groups in 2011 (MCB, 2015), they have cultural, familial, emotional and faith-based bonds to spaces and times with diverse cultural and spatial practices of animal killing. They are religiously committed to certain sacrifice rituals (especially during religious festivals) and are both religious and ethnic minorities in the UK, which means that their relations with animals and practices of animal death are highly scrutinised and subject to stigmatisation (Elder et al., 1998). Isakjee and Carroll (2019) do engage with British halal consumers in Birmingham and their opinions on halal slaughter practices, but do not address their direct encounters (or lack thereof) with slaughter, and therefore do not delve into relations of distance and proximity.

This chapter starts by zooming in on several space-times of how halal consumers' commonly witnessed slaughter and the distances and the proximities afforded by these encounters. Halal consumers' witnessing of animal death was distinctive due to its clustering around certain places ('back home' and not in British ruralities) and temporalities (childhood memories and seasonal religious festivals). Whilst the focus of the chapter is more heavily on encounters with animal killing, throughout I also comment on distinctive ways in which halal consumers connect with (or are disconnected from) animal rearing, which is ultimately geared towards death in these animal agriculture contexts.

In the final section of the chapter, I reflect on effects: how these encounters with slaughter and rearing in these distinctive space-times shape halal consumers' *identities* and their

behaviours/practices. In the case of identities, these experiences are often shaped by and go on to shape foreign/native, child/adult, urban/rural, sacred/secular and self/other identities, such as how relations with death were implicated in British Muslims' minority status. Regarding behaviours, encounters with killing and rearing shape what is normal and acceptable when it comes to animal lives and deaths, influencing meat consumption practices and shaping the potential for ethical and political transformation. This chapter therefore unpacks both directions of a complex process, where in the space-times section I show how certain identities (cultural, religious, urban, minority) give rise to certain experiences of distance or proximity to animal killing and to witnessing certain types of death, and in the effects (on identities) section, I examine how such encounters in turn affect their identity (feelings of ethnic and national belonging, othering).

5.2 Space-times of slaughter

> *"I witnessed Qurban in another country in Eid al Adha" (SR150)*
>
> *"As a child in Eid" (SR310)*
>
> *"My brother & I were very young & thought it was a pet!...it was in Karachi." (SR351)*

Many consumer survey respondents' experiences of slaughter bundled together multiple spaces, times, and identities, such as being a child during a religious festival (SR310), or abroad during a religious festival (SR150), or young and abroad during a religious festival (the reference to Eid is implicit in SR351's account as well as their youth and location due to the common practice in places like Pakistan of keeping animals destined for Qurbani slaughter as pets beforehand). I tease out several elements of these experiences (going 'back home', *not* being in Britain, being young, celebrating religious festivals) and unpack the implications of each for relations of distance and proximity to animal killing.

5.2.1 'Back home': diasporic encounters

> *"Witnessed it back home" (SR399)*

One common feature of how halal meat consumers witnessed animal death was the fact that this most often occurred 'back home'; in the answers to the consumer survey question on whether they had witnessed halal slaughter, 29 people chose to qualify their 'yes' answers with additional information that it had occurred abroad; 13 responses spoke about this being 'back home' or outside the UK but gave no specific country, whilst 13 people specifically mentioned South Asia (eight Pakistan, four Bangladesh, one general South Asia). Other respondents mentioned encounters in Sudan, Yemen and Morocco (specific place mentions are presented graphically in figure 4). The distribution of these sites reflects the ethnic make-up of British Muslims, the majority being South Asian, and experiences of going 'back home' are likely to be common given that 53% of Muslims in Britain are foreign-born (MCB, 2015). Many of these experiences abroad were linked to familial connections, such as "when visiting family in Pakistan" (SR406), accompanying their "dad...in Yemen" (SR142), or visiting their grandfather's farm abroad (SR252). Animal death seemed to function as a key moment of the diasporic experience of visiting and connecting with parents' or grandparents' home countries and reclaiming certain ethnic identities by being initiated into those countries' cultures of animal slaughter, especially during childhood, as described in section 5.2.3.

Figure 4: Proportional symbol map depicting survey participants' sites of witnessing animal death.

The first significant element of witnessing animal slaughter 'back home' is that many of the survey comments referred to contexts of meat production where visible animal slaughter is much

more common. International variability in exposure to animal death has been acknowledged in anthropological and human geography literature (Dave, 2014; Miele, 2016; Kunst and Palacios Haugestad, 2018; Tayob, 2022). Both survey respondents 256 and 544 characterised witnessing halal slaughter as a "normal occurrence" in Sudan and in Bangladesh respectively, which draws attention to its mundanity through frequent visibility. Such contexts throw up a different set of ethical considerations from the concealment of slaughterhouses in a British context; in fact, Dave (2014: 453-454) argues that, in the case of violence against animals in India, "it is more the apathy of ubiquity that is the problem than the tendency to conceal". Moreover, these consumer experiences emphasise the inherently spatial nature of (animal) death, as acknowledged in the geographies of death literature (Maddrell and Sidaway, 2010). In the case of witnessing animal slaughter 'back home', the location of death was significant, because whilst many consumers had not witnessed animal death in the UK, witnessing it in a different spatial location, 'back home', was perceived as more mundane and unremarkable.

Another significant feature of the spatial location of animal slaughter in these contexts 'back home' was that they allowed for moments of witnessing to become moments of performing – an easier crossover across the categories of consumer and practitioner – due to a higher prevalence of informal networks of slaughter and less strict rules governing who could legally carry out slaughter:

> "I have helped slaughter a sheep in my home country" (SR261)

> "My husband grew up in a small island in which they would slaughter" (SR273)

> "When I lived for 17 years in Muslim countries I would slaughter goats or sheep myself during Eid." (SR679)

Similarly, Ahmad, a gourmet halal meat provider, was reportedly asked "all the time" by his customers if they could come and perform slaughter themselves "by hand" because "they might have done it in their home country". This results in more intimate relations with animal death, as it goes beyond witnessing to incorporate visceral encounters with killing such as those

described in the previous chapter, going beyond closeness to sounds and smells of slaughter and also involving added dimensions of embodied labour.

What is significant here is not just the fact that halal consumers had witnessed (and in some cases performed) slaughter abroad but that this was often accompanied by lack of exposure to slaughter in the UK. When giving accounts of encountering animal killing abroad, several respondents made an effort to specify that they had not witnessed slaughter in the UK:

> "Eid back home, not in the UK" (SR113)

> "My grandfather has a farm (not in the UK) and I often witness halal slaughter when I visit." (SR252)

> "In Pakistan Never in Uk" (SR433)

In particular, halal consumers (in much the same way as non-halal consumers) were alienated from British slaughterhouses, and by extension animal death in British contexts, since almost all animal killing for food in the UK takes place in slaughterhouses (due to the historical and regulatory context described in the previous chapter). Ahmad emphasised how difficult it was for anyone to enter slaughterhouses (due to biosecurity and animal activism concerns), meaning that "customers don't get access to slaughtering at all". 83% of survey participants said they had never been inside a halal slaughterhouse (see figure 5).

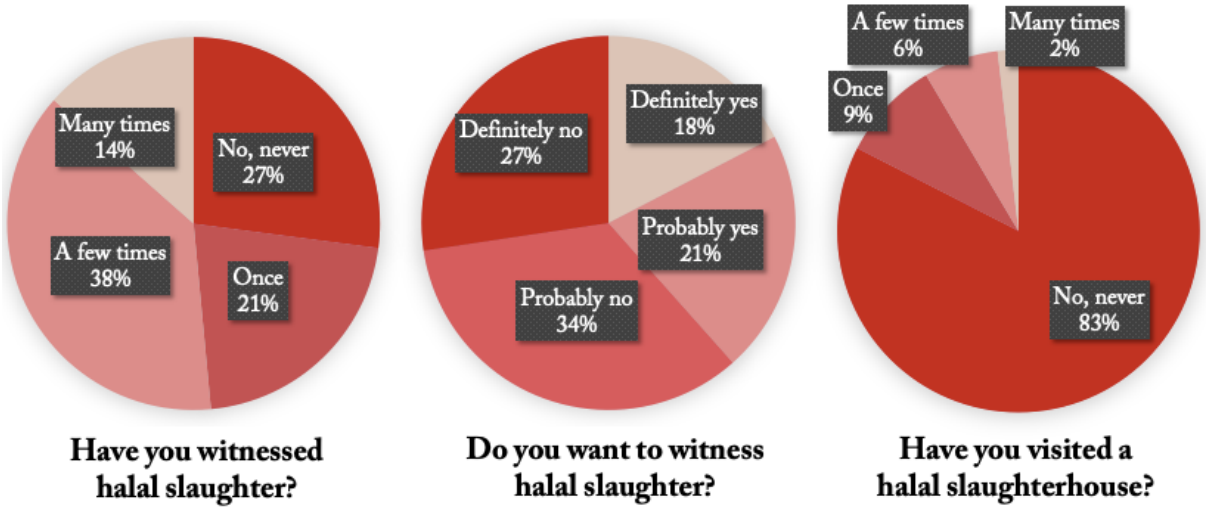

Figure 5: Consumer survey responses regarding slaughter

They were constructed as mysterious places: "Halal slaughterhouses are an enigma in the UK, lots of secrecy around them" (SR113). This is aided by the concealment of such spaces of animal death; the large halal lamb slaughterhouse I visited was in a peripheral semi-rural area: "After a long train journey with three changes, I arrived at an unremarkable-looking building in what looked like a normal residential street backing onto large fields" (Field diary excerpt). This echoes Morin's (2016: 1322) observation that such spaces "are "hidden in plain view" in rural or remote locations, their colour and architectures so innocuous and ordinary that they do not attract attention", displaying a "banal insidiousness" (Pachirat, 2011: 23), in a similar way to animal research laboratories. This is the result of a longer historical process of segregating spaces of animal death.

There are temporal and generational variations of this lack of encountering slaughter (and slaughterhouses) in the UK. SR664 alluded to looser regulations in previous decades in the UK, speaking about her family slaughtering chickens at home "in the 70s", whilst Asif mentioned "a time in the seventies" when "there was no regulation in that way", when Muslims would "go themselves to the farm" and slaughter chickens (Organic halal employee interview). This practice is also recorded in oral histories of early Pakistani Muslim migrants (Hamlett *et al.* 2008). Then, Ahmad refers to only "15 years ago", where there were more opportunities to "take the animal to the slaughterhouse yourself" to witness (but not perform) Qurbani, but this is "not as available today…so younger people may be less likely to go to slaughterhouses" (Organic gourmet halal

provider interview). Older halal consumers may therefore be more familiar with animal killing in a UK context, which links to Kupsala's (2018) observations of generational differences between Finnish consumers in distancing from animal death. These generational differences are compounded by the very rapid development and formalisation of the halal meat industry from the 1970s onwards (Lever, 2018).

There are also seasonal variations in halal consumers' alienation from slaughter in UK contexts. As described in the previous chapter, slaughterhouse managers and workers report a significant spike in interest from British halal consumers in learning about animal death and in visiting the slaughterhouse around the time of the Festival of Sacrifice/Eid al-Adha/Qurbani. At this time, there are more opportunities to enter the halal slaughterhouse and understand the killing process (although limited by the structural and regulatory conditions of the slaughterhouse). Riaz describes such an opportunity for consumers:

> "I do believe in people coming to see the *Qurbani* being performed. We actually schedule the whole day in terms of the ordering, and we tell people 'This is where you are in the order' and we schedule them in to see it…we use that as a time to educate people about 'This is the slaughter method, this is what happens'". (Slaughterhouse owner interview)

I expand further on the seasonal variations in proximity/distance relations with animal death in the section on Qurbani (5.2.4). Despite these generational and seasonal variations, encounters with slaughter in the UK are generally a rare occurrence for halal consumers. This specific combination of encountering slaughter abroad and not encountering slaughter in the UK gives rise to certain relations with animal death. Firstly, these experiences of witnessing 'back home', since they mostly took place in less mechanised and smaller-scale networks of slaughter, may shape halal meat consumers' perceptions of animal death in ways that are not reflective of a modern British context, which is characterised by more industrialisation and techno-mediation. Iman argues that:

> "…when you speak to traditional Asian families, they are very accustomed to seeing animals being hand-slaughtered back home. Here in the UK there's a disconnect as

> hand slaughter is not common, we use machines." (Halal nutrition business owner interview)

In a similar vein, SR369 spoke about their experience of encountering slaughter abroad and specified that it "wasn't an industrial slaughterhouse", while SR407 had only seen "individual lambs" being killed and "not in a slaughterhouse". Mazin, a fine dining halal restauranteur, felt that the fact that many South Asian Muslims got their exposure to animal slaughter 'back home' inaccurately positively skewed perceptions of slaughter as they tended to be in smaller-scale production contexts and he felt animals were "actually kept quite well", and therefore argued that for consumers to be ethically mobilised they needed to "really see what's happening on the mass production side" in the UK. Alef, who works in halal meat regulation and certification, argued that those Muslims who had migrated from "third world countries" would be well-informed about non-stun slaughter due to exposure in their home country, but that they then had to negotiate and "try to understand why slaughter in the UK deviates from the process they knew". He posed different implications of this exposure 'back home' from Mazin because he believed that it negatively skewed perceptions of British practices of killing by creating perceptions that stunning was less humane as it was less familiar.

On the other hand, there was also evidence of encounters 'back home' being negatively perceived, with SR573 describing her experience as "traumatic". Similarly, Riaz pointed to how seeing slaughter at his (British) slaughterhouse actually had "reassured" some halal consumers after previous negative experiences abroad:

> "There have been a couple [consumers] that the way it had been slaughtered, whether it was in India or somewhere else, had put them off meat." (Slaughterhouse owner interview)

Encounters with animal killing abroad acted as a way of making connections with practices and cultures 'back home', drawing attention to spatial variability of concealment of animal death. The types of closeness afforded by encounters 'back home' included more opportunities for embodied labour of actually performing killing, familiarity with less mechanised, less formalised

slaughter networks, accompanied by distancing from British slaughterhouses and from industrial slaughter. This differentially shaped perceptions of killing as more or less humane.

5.2.2 Rearing and ruralities

This pattern of exposure in 'domestic' contexts 'back home' accompanied by lack of exposure to killing in the UK is also reflected in more exposure to (spaces and practices of) rearing abroad than in the UK, which is implicitly also related to killing since this rearing is geared towards meat production.

Greater connection with spaces and practices of animal rearing in consumers' countries of origin is highlighted by Asif, who argued that when trying to discuss organic/free-range practices with older generations the only "common ground" was invoking "the 'back home' thing" by drawing parallels with similar traditional farming practices practised in these countries (Organic halal employee interview). Many early Pakistani Muslim migrants to the UK in the 1950s and 1970s came from rural agricultural backgrounds (Holmes, 1988). Halal consumers' familiarity with animals in ruralities abroad (with "villages" [SR544], "mud huts" [SR369], "small islands" [SR273] and "grandfather's farms" [SR252]) is contrasted with a comparative lack of familiarity with British ruralities. Grace spoke about her husband's family from rural Bangladesh and reflected that "I think it's strange how people have come from a farming village background and now they come over here and now they have no connection to animals whatsoever" (Animal welfare campaigner interview). Interviewees who worked in halal meat production and campaigning believed that halal consumers were more disconnected from spaces and practices of food production than the average British consumer. This was firstly through lack of knowledge of animal workers and secondly through lack of connection to human workers. Asif reminisces that as a child he "had no idea", and believes that "most Asians are similar", about the difference between "a lamb , a sheep, a rooster, a chicken, a hen, a ewe or mutton, a broiler" (Organic halal employee interview), whilst Susan stated that "the current notion of halal is divorced from the environment and from the people who make the animal halal" (Slaughterwoman interview). Disconnection from farmers was specifically highlighted; Asif observed that "you're completely detached from the farmer in the halal industry" and Iman stated that "We don't have and we

need to have a direct relationship with the farmers…The non-halal industry is so well ahead in that respect." (Halal nutrition business owner interview)

It may be precisely this familiarity with non-British animal rearing and ruralities that drives alienation from the same practices and spaces in the UK; Grace argued that within the South Asian community, working with animals is denigrated, linking this to the fact that many British Muslims came from poorer rural backgrounds and associated spaces and practices of animal rearing with previous experiences of poverty and 'backwardness' (Animal welfare campaigner interview). Other factors driving distance from spaces and practices of animal rearing in the UK include the urban-ness of the British Muslim population, with 99% of Muslims in the UK living in urban areas in 2011 compared to 82% of the overall population, which is linked to migratory histories of post-WW2 labour shortages in manufacturing industries (MCB, 2022). Such patterns of diaspora settlement exacerbate issues of access to (overwhelmingly rural) spaces of food production. They can also contribute to perceptions of whiteness and exclusivity of British ruralities; literature on rural geographies has observed the alienation of ethnic and religious minorities from the British rural idyll, often constructed as a white (Agyeman and Spooner, 1997; Cloke and Little, 1997) and exclusively Christian (Dafydd Jones, 2010) landscape.

This alienation is further reinforced by barriers to land ownership for British Muslims. Susan argued that the crux of the issues in the halal meat industry was the fact that Muslims were "very disenfranchised from the land in the UK". Raheem described how land ownership and "getting into farming" was exclusive even for "your white English community", quoting the figure that "about 45% of farmers in the UK are tenants", with additional barriers for Muslims as a "minority" who have to "deal with racism and urban exclusion". He offered a unique perspective on exclusivity and whiteness in farming land ownership as a white English Muslim convert from a farming background:

> "I've heard the reaction to Muslim people showing interest in land in land auctions, and it's "we don't want them coming here". Also farming communities are very isolated and conservative. There will certainly be exceptions to this attitude, but that will be a minority… To gain abattoir contacts *[name of organic halal business redacted]* had to use a non-Muslim woman's name to build up relationships" (Regenerative farmer interview)

In fact, farming is the least ethnically diverse occupation in the UK, and animal care services the third least ethnically diverse (Norrie, 2017). This complicates achieving closeness to animal rearing through land ownership and farming for British Muslims, despite a desire for more Muslim farmers expressed by multiple people, where Muslims "need to learn to farm" in order to "be in charge of our industry" (Grace, animal welfare campaigner interview), should "initiate local sustainable farming" (SR355) and "model…a socialised food industry with co-operative farms" (SR108). Steven argued that the government should provide financial support for "a new generation of Muslim farmers" (fine dining halal restauranteur interview), a sentiment echoed by SR240. There was a particular need identified for more "high welfare halal farms" (SR466) to address current "limited supply and pretty much non-existent competition" (SR168) and ensure that "individual cities had their own nearby farms" (SR273).

It is however crucial not to assume complete Muslim absence from rural areas (Dafydd Jones, 2010), or to that black and ethnic minority individuals are always alienated within rural space, and not to perpetuate a "racialized cultural stereotypes of an urban Other who has little knowledge of or interest in the rural" (Panelli *et al.,* 2009: 356). For example, Tolia-Kelly (2006) draws attention to the complex positive experiences of Asian women in English rural landscapes and how these intersect with memories of rurality 'back home'. As with spaces and practices of animal killing, there are variations in exposure to and participation in animal rearing in the UK, with more closeness to certain models of animal rearing and certain manifestations of British ruralities than others, in particular sheep farming. This is particularly the case for halal meat producers; in a red meat industry levy board's video[9] in collaboration with a halal lamb provider on British halal sheep meat, there is a significant emphasis on Britishness, as the video opens with emphasising the unique suitability of the British climate "as England's rainfed pasture offers one of the most efficient livestock production systems in the world." This was also evident in the marketing of the halal lamb slaughterhouse I visited; the image chosen in their company calendar distributed to clients and consumers included an idyllic British rural landscape with rolling hills and historic castles (figure 6).

[9] AHDB Beef & Lamb. Farm to Fork - the journey of homegrown lamb for Halal consumers: https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=BfrumvlW0Xg

Figure 6: Photograph of halal lamb provider company calendar (Source: Author)

This emphasis on the specific form of animal rearing that is sheep farming is attributed to, as Riaz identifies, the fact that "Muslims have historically culturally eaten more lamb, to the extent that every single significant lamb abattoir in the UK will be doing halal" (Slaughterhouse owner interview). Halal consumers are more likely to eat sheep-meat at least weekly (60% of Muslims as opposed to just 6% national average) and the Muslim market is therefore perceived as a major opportunity for sector growth (Stannard and Clarke, 2020). Alef argues that sheep farmers greatly benefit from the fact that British Muslims consume mutton from cull ewes, and that "without the halal sector, the sheep sector would have suffered significantly" (Halal regulator and certifier interview). Others also identified the potential for further interaction between the sectors, with Grace saying that "sheep farmers could make a lot of money out of Qurbani, definitely." In fact, the National Sheep Association devoted a whole event for members on "Understanding the Halal Market" that I attended in October 2019, and sent a representative to speak on the history of sheep farming in the 'Halal Stakeholders Meeting' I attended in September 2021.

It is true that the above is more evidence of halal producers' identification with British practices of animal rearing, rather than necessarily halal consumers. Yet this coalition between halal and red meat industry leadership means there are more concerted efforts by industry bodies to connect halal consumers with sheep farming; Alef, part of whose position is to make connections

between the British sheep farming industry and the halal sector, spoke of an education campaign where he brings Islamic scholars to visit British sheep farms and abattoirs. Whilst this is primarily aimed at halal certifiers and scholars who sit on certification boards, there is a wider interest in educating lay consumers: "We have said that if any consumer is interested in witnessing the trial [of halal stunned sheep slaughter], [the certifiers] should let us know so that we can facilitate it" (Alef, Halal certifier and regulator interview). In contrast to sheep farming specifically, there is much less of an identification between the halal industry and the rearing spaces and practices of British organic farming (for all species): Asif spoke about British organic farms who would only consider doing halal for export to the Middle East, but never for "farm shop halal, you can't be associated with halal, because white middle England will not forgive you for that".

Given – as explored above – that for most respondents the connection with animal rearing and slaughter occurs 'back home', this may reinforce connection with non-British rurality and further distance halal consumers from contexts of British rurality. These connections (or lack thereof) with animal rearing in rural spaces comes to matter because of the ways in which rural landscapes are implicated in constructing national identity in the UK. I reflect further on the (un)ethical effects of these exposures to certain types of animal rearing and not others on halal consumer *identities* in section 5.3.1 and on *behaviours* in section 5.3.2.

5.2.3 'When I was very young": childhood encounters

> *"When I was very young, I was locked on the roof to watch the slaughtering of what I thought would be a pet. I think it's subconsciously one of the reasons that motivated my decision to become vegan." (SR357)*
> *"...when I was a child, I went with my dad. We were in Yemen." (SR144)*
> *"When I was a child over 20 yrs ago" (SR540)*

The previous two sections have attended to spatial variations in witnessing animal death and animal rearing practices, with more evidence of encounters in foreign rather than in British ruralities. This section illustrates how proximity to animal death and rearing also has interesting temporal patterns over the halal consumer's life.

Many of these moments of witnessing animal death 'back home' occurred when respondents were young. Memorable, and sometimes traumatic, exposures to animal death were strongly linked to childhood in the survey, such as in SR357's experience. This points to the complexity of the relationship between childhood and animal death. On the one hand, there is the sense that children should be especially insulated from animal death; Stewart and Cole (2009) analyse how children's media and toys obfuscate the act of killing animals for food, whilst Law (2015: 67) points to how a farmer "made arrangements to get the children off the farm" in the culling of animals during the 2001 UK foot and mouth epidemic. Paradoxically, it is also clear that childhood is a vital period in which to accustom children to animal death and normalise eating animals for food. Drawing on Woodward's (2004: 75) "pedagogy of the emotions", Roe and Greenhough (2021: 9) apply this idea of emotional pedagogies to interactions with animals, with past interactions informing our future perceptions of animals, observing that "feelings about animals emerge historically in the individual…informed by different events over the course of a life spent living alongside and caring for animals", such as experiences with pets. Childhood is thus a crucial emotional pedagogical moment, which helps to shape how individuals go on to view the status of (food) animals as adults. Stewart and Cole (2009: 473) also argue that childhood is a key moment for transmitting "culturally appropriate relationships with nonhuman animals", where a "food socialization process" occurs as children learn to separate the animals they love from the ones that they eat. This rationale of socialisation would explain the concerted efforts of adults to expose children to slaughter (in particular sacrificial slaughter) as is discussed by SR357 and by Riaz in the previous chapter on bringing "seven-year-old kids" into slaughterhouses (Slaughterhouse owner interview, 2020). Osman theorised that this exposure was to try to normalise animal slaughter from a young age, because "if you're not exposed to it when you're younger it suddenly becomes big":

> "…it was something I actually grew up being comfortable around…I think there's certainly a correlation between being exposed to ideas at a young age that, the understanding of which becomes…a norm of life when you are older." (Slaughterhouse manager interview)

He further described becoming quickly accustomed to seeing animals killed in the slaughterhouse after being initially shaken, attributing this quick desensitisation to having grown up working in his father's butcher shop and to having volunteered as a hospital chaplain to deal

with cases of patient death. Therefore, his 'emotional pedagogies' of having witnessed animal slaughter growing up, as well as working at a butcher's and as a chaplain helped shape his view of the legitimacy and mundanity of animal death. This is juxtaposed with the average British consumer; at an event for British sheep farmers on 'Understanding the Muslim Market', one attendee asserted that "People don't want their kids to see or know about slaughter".

Therefore, witnessing animal death in childhood plays a key role in cultural transmission of ideas of the acceptability and normalisation of killing animals for food. Again, diasporic identity plays a role here because exposure to cultural transmission of ideas about animals are linked to immersive experiences in the 'homeland' for more general cultural transmission to subsequent generations; Dwyer (2000) emphasised the importance that young British South Asian Muslim women placed on reproducing and preserving religious and cultural identity for their (future) children. Moreover, the concerted efforts of adults to expose children to slaughter both in the survey and interview data could be further explained by the seasonal context of the festival of sacrifice, where it is viewed as especially important to connect with loss and animal death.

5.2.4 'During Eid festival': Sacrificial encounters

"Esp during bakra eid" (SR123)
"It is commonplace to see this in my parents' home country during celebrations (circumcisions, weddings, Eid)." (SR196)
"... Zabiha on Eid al Adha" (SR470)
"Eid videos from Pakistan" (SR514)
"During Eid festival" (SR694)

Many of the experiences of witnessing animal death described in the survey were linked to religious festivals, especially with the observance of the annual Festival of Sacrifice (*Eid al-Adha/Qurbani*), where every able adult Muslim is required to sacrifice (or outsource the sacrifice) of an animal in order to mark the original Abrahamic sacrifice and to feed the poor, with portions allocated to those in need and familial/social networks, and some for personal consumption (Tayob, 2020). This tends to bring up yearly discussions around Muslims' relationship with animal death. The previous chapter reflected on the distance/proximity

relations afforded by attempting to translate the Qurbani ritual into the space of the modern British industrial slaughterhouse, whereas this chapter reflects on effects of exposure to the Qurbani ritual in other contexts, mostly abroad.

Witnessing animal killing during this religious festival shaped relations of distance and proximity in several distinct ways. There is a wider link present in other cultures and religions between meat consumption/animal killing and celebrations and festivals (Oleschuck et al. 2019), but there are specific resonances around this *Eid al-Adha* festival to draw out, around the notion of sacrifice in Islam as devotional and bringing one closer to God and cleansing sins. Firstly, there was a sense that *Qurbani* was an especially appropriate time in which to think about animal death, because of the importance that the story of sacrifice plays in Islam and in wider Abrahamic religions; Riaz, the owner of a halal lamb slaughterhouse saw it "as a good time to actually reconnect with people and talk about the whole thing". He believes that the reason that people are so eager to bring children into the slaughterhouse at that time is "because Qurbani is something is very different, because of the story of Abraham, people want to connect with the process."

Secondly, there was an emphasis on bonding with individual animal subjects. Riaz expressed that feeling closeness to the animal and the resulting trauma of witnessing (and/or performing) its slaughter was spiritually rewarding, where "you're supposed to feel that loss" as it would "ideally" be an animal that you had bonded with: "you don't want to slaughter it…that's why it's a sacrifice" (Slaughterhouse owner interview). This tradition of actively emotionally attaching oneself to animals and even celebrating that vulnerability and loss is different from Serpell's (1986) idea that we actively detach ourselves from and avoid befriending animals that we will kill. The tradition of blurring the boundary between sacrificial animal and pet is evident, given several survey responses that mentioned thinking the animal to be sacrificed was a pet (SR351 and SR357). Similarly, Asif reminisced about *Qurbani* in Kashmir, where "they would decorate it and everything, and then they would slaughter. And obviously the younger kids would get upset, but you were hungry and you were going to eat it" (Organic halal employee interview). This goes against the trend of children being socialised into separating pets and food animals mentioned in the previous section, probably because of the emphasis placed in sacrificial slaughter on feeling loss. In Tayob's (2019a: 1204) ethnographic study of *Qurbani* in Mumbai,

India, devotees actively formed relationships with the sacrificial animals because this demonstrated "an exemplar of how proper *Qurbani* should be practiced", and it was not uncommon for wealthier individuals to raise a goat for months and even years before slaughtering it. This is also present in accounts of non-Islamic ritual sacrifice; Govindrajan (2018) describes Hindu temple goat sacrifice in the central Himalayas, where families lived with and cared for goats for two years before sacrificing them, believing that it was necessary to have this attachment and kinship with the animal in order for the sacrifice to be acceptable to their deities. Therefore, a common embracing of vulnerability and loss is evident across these different religious traditions, although perhaps with more widespread effects here due to the common opinion of Islamic legal scholars that the *Qurbani* ritual is obligatory for every able Muslim adult. There are however, "new discursive and material articulations of sacrifice by Muslims in different contexts" (Tayob, 2020: np) emerging, with modern debates about whether animal sacrifice is necessary or desirable, with some suggesting donating to charity instead or distributing non-meat foodstuffs to poor communities (Masri, 1989; 'Ali Muttaqi, 2009; Abou el Fadl, 2016).

It is important to note, however, that the above interview and survey excerpts regarding higher levels of vulnerability and opening oneself up to loss is something more seasonal and linked to specific occasions (specifically *Qurbani*) and not as emphasised for everyday non-sacrificial slaughter. Although there are instances of sacrificial slaughter rituals for other events and purposes, such as for the expiation of sins or *aqiqah* [giving thanks for the birth of a new child], which mobilise similar dynamics of desiring closeness to the killing (customers keen to witness or carry out *aqiqah* slaughter are mentioned by Ahmad, an organic gourmet halal provider) these are less common. In this sense, it seems that animals killed during the Festival of Sacrifice (and other less frequent sacrificial slaughter events) are more 'grievable' (Gillespie and Lopez, 2015; Stanescu, 2015), which shows that grievability is not only aligned along spatial lines (Trigger et al., 2008) and species lines (deMello, 2016; Herzog, 2010), but also temporal and seasonal lines. In addition, the affective resonances of the Qurbani ritual may be diluted for many British Muslim consumers due to a majority outsourcing their sacrifice to charitable organisations who organise slaughter on their behalf in countries with higher levels of poverty (slaughterhouse owner interview), and therefore experiencing the ritual 'back home' is a rarer occurrence.

5.2.5 Evaluating distance/proximity relations

These space-times of witnessing animal slaughter and rearing have shown that British Muslims have distinctive patterns (spatial, temporal, seasonal) in distance/proximity relations to animal death. It is however difficult to state whether halal consumers are overall more or less connected to animal killing than non-halal consumers due to mixed evidence from the survey and interview data, hence my argument that they straddle domestic and postdomestic animal relations. An argument can be made that religious practise of British Muslims makes them pre-disposed to be more invested in and exposed to animal death, firstly due to the implications of slaughter method of religious compliance (if the animal is slaughtered in a ritually incorrect manner, this renders the meat impermissible to consume).[10] This is reflected in the fact that 47% of consumer survey respondents rated the slaughter method as "very important" to them when making a halal meat purchase (and 38% "somewhat important"). 51% of survey respondents agreed with the statement 'I am knowledgeable about the halal slaughter process', but it is difficult to contrast this with knowledge of non-halal consumers of slaughter due to the lack of available data. The other link between Islamic devotional practice and death is the fact that animal killing is linked with drawing closer to God through sacrificial slaughter (Friedlander, 2020: 8; Tayob, 2019a) in religious festivals, expiation of sins and major life events. Yet, this does not necessarily translate to straightforward characterisations of British Muslims' distance or proximity with animal killing. Stannard and Clarke (2020: 7) argue that there is no significant difference between halal and non-halal consumers regarding distancing from animal death as halal consumers also "tend to shy away from the specifics about slaughter". As seen in figure 5, only 14% of survey respondents said that they had witnessed halal slaughter (in-person or via video) 'Many times'. Of the survey participants that said they had never seen halal slaughter, 39% said they would like to witness it whilst 61% expressed the opposite. SR452, who answered that they had never been to a slaughterhouse, said in the additional comments box, "Who'd want to? I'm sure it's gruesome."

However, there is clear evidence of higher levels of meat consumption; an industry report found that British Muslim consumers ate more meat per capita than the national average (Stannard and Clarke, 2020), with Riaz believing that Muslims consumed more kilograms of meat protein

[10] The killing method is a key aspect within Islamic law that differentiates between killing (*al-qatl*) and slaughter (*al-dhakah*). If the correct steps are not carried out, the act is merely designated as 'killing' and the meat is not considered permissible to consume (Friedlander, 2020).

than non-Muslims even if accounting for lack of pork consumption and low beef consumption (Halal stakeholders meeting, September 2021). SR117 identified a "disproportionate obsession" with meat and SR191 found it "disturbing" that "…excessive meat consumption has almost gone hand-in-hand with being Muslim today". However, this does not necessarily neatly translate to increased closeness or not with animal killing. Halal meat producers in particular had conflicting responses when asked about British Muslims' relations of connection or disconnection from animal killing:

> "I think with abattoirs Muslim consumers are way more connected than your average native English consumer, massively - even though as a Muslim consumer we are very divorced in general - to the point that it shocks other people. One of PFLA farmers I was speaking to, she said, "I was dropping off lambs to a slaughterhouse and I saw women[11] in *niqabs* [face veils] with huge bin bags standing at the end of the line packing up meat". She was very shocked that we would do that. She never saw an English consumer going to an abattoir to buy their meat." (Regenerative farmer interview)

Therefore, according to Raheem, the Muslim consumer was "very divorced in general" but still "way more connected" with death than non-Muslim consumers, whereas for Ahmad, (organic gourmet halal producer) "there is no difference" as he "doesn't think people in mainstream halal necessarily want exposure". Alef (who worked in halal regulation and certification) believed that Muslims born in the UK had "almost the same levels of connection and disconnection with the slaughter process as non-Muslims", although qualified this by adding that those born abroad were more likely to be "better informed". Muslims were also portrayed as especially disconnected from animal rearing and rural spaces (see section 5.2.2). Despite the complexity of these narratives, the bundling of these elements of Muslim identity (being mostly ethnic minorities, maintaining diasporic connections 'back home' and having religious convictions about ritual killing and sacrifice) means that we can make a case for, if not closer, than at least distinctive

[11] This anecdote is notable because female halal consumers were less likely to have visited slaughterhouses; statistical analysis of survey results revealed that women were less likely to have witnessed (correlation coefficient of -0.58, statistically significant at the 1% level) or want to witness slaughter, and less likely to have visited a slaughterhouse (correlation coefficient of -0.25, statistically significant at the 1% level). Although not explicitly drawn out in Raheem's comments, the existence of Muslim *women* specifically (and conservatively dressed ones) in the abattoir may have contributed to the "shock" of the PFLA farmer, who interestingly was another example of a woman in a male-dominated space and profession.

relations with animal killing and rearing. The stakes and effects of storying British Muslims' connections to animal killing and rearing are outlined in the following section.

5.3 (Un)ethical effects

In this section, I reflect upon the effects of witnessing (or not witnessing) animal killing and rearing on halal consumers' *identities* (religious, cultural, minority, national) and meat consumption *behaviours*.

5.3.1 Identities

In the 'space-times' section I mentioned the effects of these encounters on ethnic/cultural identity specifically in the context of being part of a diaspora. Animal death seemed to function as a key moment of the diasporic experience of visiting and connecting with parents' or grandparents' home countries and reclaiming certain ethnic identities by being initiated into those countries' cultures of animal slaughter, especially during childhood, as described in section 5.2.3. We saw how encounters (or lack thereof) with rural spaces have reinforced feelings of disconnection with British identity. We also observed how animal killing in *Qurbani* allowed for practice of religious rituals/teachings, strengthening faith-based connections. All these involve how encounters with animal rearing and killing shape halal consumers' own sense of their individual and community identities. I now turn to how encounters with rearing and killing shape how their identities are perceived by external actors.

Halal consumers' relations with animal death and rearing cannot be discussed without referring to their status as a rapidly growing ethnic and religious minority community in the UK, which creates high stakes for characterising British Muslims' distance or proximity. Questions of national identity are inextricably linked with halal; Isakjee and Carroll's (2019) study participants associated availability of halal food with feelings of belonging to the UK, whilst debates around halal slaughter are entangled with "concerns about integration and the threats posed to British values and national identity by the food practices of *outsiders*" (Lever, 2018: 889). This is set amongst anxieties of cultural change and waning secularism (Mukherjee, 2014) brought about by the rising Muslim population in Europe (Lever, 2018). Animal geographers have also examined how minority groups' treatment of animals can be used as grounds for othering and stigmatisation (Elder et al., 1998). As a result, halal consumers' relations with animal killing and

rearing (killing in particular) are subject to more scrutiny, which in turn affects others' perceptions of Muslims' belonging and national identity in the UK. Awareness of this heightened scrutiny is evident from SR600 lamenting that "Halal meat has become a political tool. This has made us Muslims defensive", and Asif declaring that "without you being too political about it, halal meat *is* political in this country, it's political everywhere and there's a lot of mistruths about it" (Organic halal employee interview). Ahmad refers to "a lot of bad publicity in media about halal", with the regular "negative media crises" around halal slaughter (Organic gourmet halal producer interview). This media attention is also mentioned in the survey:

> "… far-right groups….exploit paranoia in the general public e.g. HALAL MEAT IS COMING TO A PUB NEAR YOU, RUN FOR THE DAMN HILLS - Daily Mail" (SR234)

Relations of proximity to animal death also reinforced the vulnerability of British Muslims as a minority community. Riaz argued that animal welfare regulators and NGOs focused more on welfare issues in non-stun slaughter while actively not discussing CO2 gas stunning of pigs which "is known to be quite painful because they don't become unconscious straight away and struggle to breathe", because the former "affects a minority" (Slaughterhouse owner interview). SR543 believed that the government should not regulate halal meat due to fears that "right-wing politics and Islamophobia" would further marginalise the community.

These negative perceptions of halal are also illustrated by Mazin and Steven's account that when they first opened their restaurant they "got a lot of hate messages from people because we were halal…about how they were going to tell everyone not to come here" (Fine dining halal restauranteurs interview). Similarly, Asif is quoted in section 5.2.2 speculating on how stocking halal products in farm shops would provoke a backlash in "white middle England". The fears of stigma from being associated with halal were also shown during my attendance of the regular 'Halal Industry Stakeholders' meeting, where the facilitator mentioned that an unnamed large-scale supermarket retailer had requested for the meeting to be recorded, but had asked the facilitator not to disclose their brand name in order to preserve anonymity. Moreover, Frank, a senior regulatory vet, argued that many supermarkets employed halal slaughtermen in order to

fulfil halal requirements (for stunned slaughter) in order to be able to sell their meat to multiple markets, but that "most of this meat that goes into supermarket is not labelled as halal."

As well reinforcing perceptions of British Muslims as 'other' and a marginalised minority community, halal consumers' closeness to particular forms of animal killing described in the space-times section (slaughter outside 'acceptable' spaces like slaughterhouses, non-stun slaughter, sacrificial slaughter) influenced perceptions of them as cruel and inhumane. Ahmad argued, that for the "normal average Tom on the street", halal was imagined as a process that was "painstaking for the animal", and "not a practice we British should have in our country" (Organic halal gourmet producer interview). The empirical data revealed certain judgements made about Muslims with regards to their treatment of animals; Grace recounted her experiences of speaking to British (non-Muslim) farmers and explaining the importance of animal welfare in Islam, where they replied ''We didn't really realise that Muslims cared for animals" (Animal welfare campaigner interview, 2020). Moreover, all five sheep slaughtermen who responded to the questionnaire mentioned "cruelty" when asked about what they believed was the biggest misconception about halal slaughter. Susan also spoke about the prevalent perception:

> "…that Muslims are naturally cruel and enjoy killing…I have to explain to people that I have to adhere to animal welfare and that killing things isn't an exclusively Muslim thing." (Slaughterwoman interview)

The fact that Grace and Susan, both white English converts - but with Grace as a visibly "Muslim hijabi" [wearing a head covering] - spoke about being subject to discriminatory notions of Muslims abusing animals shows the stigmatisation of Muslim identity specifically, in this context untethered from added racial stigmas, although they are often bundled together. Yet it is perhaps this whiteness that facilitates their ability to change perceptions about halal slaughter and Muslims, where Grace noted that "the sheep farmers actually wanted to talk to me" and find out more about halal. SR338 sought to combat perceptions of Muslims as uniquely cruel by pointing to animal abuses in the non halal meat industry:

> "The question is put on Muslims as if we are a different ghettoised community within the British context. BRITISH people - Muslim or not - massively abuse the meat industry with poor practices." (SR338)

This context of external perceptions of otherness and cruelty with regards to British Muslims' relations with animals may in turn affect identities and behaviours. SR600 argued that Muslims had been made "defensive" by politicisation of halal meat. This is encapsulated by SR355, who, whilst voicing their concerns for environmental sustainability and animal welfare, also voiced that these could be "problematic narratives" that are "often tools of Islamophobia in media discourse, disguised as moral/ethical concerns". SR338, who is quoted above on the "ghettoisation" of Muslims through accusations of animal abuse, argued that "organic, vegan and other trends are recent middle class white impositions on us". However, there is also evidence of British Muslims reclaiming environmental and welfare discourses as their own through rediscovering ancient religious traditions, as outlined in chapter 7 in discussions of 'tayyib'.

I have therefore shown the effects of animal killing relations on British Muslims' identity as a minority (ethnic and religious) community, and how that can exclude them from British national identity and shape perceptions of cruelty.

5.3.2 Behaviours

I now turn to the impact of encounters with animal killing and rearing on meat consumption behaviour in order to gain an insight into whether witnessing animal death and rearing can be politically and ethically transformative. I reflect on the dynamics of a 'politics of sight', which refers to seeking to effect change by making that which is hidden, in this case animal slaughter and spaces of rearing for meat, visible (Pachirat, 2013). I recognise that change in meat consumption behaviour is an imperfect proxy for levels of ethical reflection and transformation, but it does go some way in revealing attitudes around human-animal relations.

There was firstly evidence of witnessing slaughter being a transformative encounter in terms of meat consumption behaviour. The immersive childhood socialisation process to animal death described in section 5.2.3 can equally provoke disruptions of this legitimising discourse of killing

animals for food, where witnessing slaughter contributes to meat becoming inedible (Roe, 2006), as occurred for SR357 who was "subconsciously…motivated…to become vegan" by this memorable childhood experience of being "locked on the roof" to watch slaughter, which she specified was her only experience of witnessing slaughter. Similarly, SR499 described a similar effect of meat becoming inedible [for an unspecified amount of time] in the aftermath of her sole witnessing of slaughter, stating that "It was awful and I refused to eat the dish". This links to discussions about the transformative nature of witnessing; Dave (2014: 434) calls the emphasis on witnessing acts of violence against animals a "standard trope" in animal activist origin stories. These transformative moments may however be incomplete, and only be a brief interruption before a reversion to previous norms. Survey respondents displayed different degrees of transformation in terms of temporal duration of meat inedibility:

> "It was graphic seeing a chicken slaughtered. Still, you get over it. A roast is too tasty to miss." (SR452)

> "We watched a Netflix documentary that made my wife and I give go vegan for about two weeks. Then we caved in. But since then, we are trying to adopt the flexitarian approach (meat twice a week only) as much as is possible." (SR396)

> "I saw a cow being slaughtered for Qurbani in Bangladesh once and it took me 20 years before I could eat beef again…I really want to do the right thing and buy organic and I try as much as I can but it's expensive and hard to access - so I've sort of struck the balance by just eating less meat." (SR543)

We can see different durations of meat inedibility in response to moments of witnessing, from the hours it takes to prepare a "roast" (SR452) to "two weeks" before "cav[ing] in" (SR396) to "20 years" (SR543). In the case of SR396 and SR543 however, evidence of transformation lingered in more mindful meat consumption behaviours, including reduced consumption and preferences for organic products.

Narratives of transformation through witnessing are complicated by the idea that different types of exposure give rise to divergent effects. Mazin argued that halal consumers "need to really see

what's happening on the mass production side" in order to shift behaviour (Fine dining halal restauranteur interview). Likewise, SR600 believed that Muslims seeing "Islamic slaughterhouse with their own eyes, especially its industrialisation", would help them "think". Both these statements imply that witnessing industrial, large-scale slaughter and rearing will give rise to transformative ethical effects more than exposure to other contexts.

Exposure to small-scale, 'slow' slaughter and rearing can also act to 'reassure' people in general about the humane-ness and acceptability of halal slaughter, and thus foreclose transformation, even if the meat production systems they usually patronise are unlikely to perform that kind of slaughter. This is shown by one of the most commonly viewed videos of halal slaughter on YouTube being 'Mercy Halal Islamic Slaughter'[12] (with over 5 million combined views across two versions). This video was also specifically mentioned by several survey respondents as their only exposure to halal slaughter, referring to "a (I think popular) clip of reciting over a goat and making it extremely calm" (SR108). The 14-minute 7-second-long video depicts a man calming a goat and a sheep with Islamic prayers to prepare them for slaughter and explaining the halal slaughter process in a small farm setting in the USA. Viewers seemed to be drawn to the calm nature of the process and the fact that the farmer had built a relationship with the animals and was able to spend many minutes comforting and attending to the needs of each animal. This context, where slaughter is "clearly all done very well" (SR233) and the "process" "explained beforehand" (SR696) creates reassurance rather than discomfort, although it is interesting to note that the video "didn't show the killing itself" (SR108). The comfort and reassurance viewers derived from the video is shown by these top-rated comments, who also lament current practices:

> "Now this yes this is how they should slaughtered not be being bashed with hammers and inhumane things" *(YouTube video comment)*

> "This is how they are supposed to do it, good. See the religion is fine it's just some of the people who are the problem." *(YouTube video comment)*

[12] Mercy Halal Islamic Slaughter V1: https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=gA7-7igGU1I
Mercy Halal Islamic Slaughter V2: https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=quhVxLUwiBw

Witnessing can also play a role in legitimising animal slaughter for food, upholding the status quo of current meat provisioning systems. This links to Pachirat's (2013) ambivalence towards the ethically generative nature of the 'politics of sight', and how seeing slaughter can reinforce its cultural legitimacy. Explaining why he facilitated veterinary college and journalist visits to the slaughterhouse, Riaz said "Being open and transparent about the process reduces the mystique around it, because sometimes not knowing is actually worse than what the reality is because your imagination can go wild with you" (Slaughterhouse owner interview). He further argued that witnessing slaughter was reassuring for most halal meat consumers, not off-putting. Some producers expressed the belief that an exposure to slaughter was actually necessary for legitimising the killing of animals for food, and a lack of this would result in people going vegetarian or vegan; at an event for British sheep farmers on halal markets, one sheep farmer asserted that many of the problems of people criticising livestock farmers stemmed from "ignorance about slaughter", and another commented that "Our society, we're too soft, they don't know where milk's come from."

There were several examples cited by participants where witnessing slaughter had a specific aim of normalisation of animal killing. Frank, a senior regulatory vet, described touring Welsh government employees around slaughterhouses, stating that "every single person has been very impressed" and reassured by the level of animal welfare and hygiene in such spaces. In the context of a halal consumer and certifier education campaign, Alef spoke about his experiences of connecting Islamic scholars to British farms and abattoirs, and specifically around their imaginations of spaces and practices of rearing:

> "I go to farms with Islamic scholars and I find that some consumers and even scholars, their perception about British farming is the opposite of what is actually going on. Many have not visited a British farm or abattoir before and their perception about commercial farming is intensive farming. I know this is true for chicken, but when you look at sheep, goats and cattle, the situation is different. They say things to me like "We thought they were crammed together in small spaces". That is a big thing that I am trying to change" (Halal regulator and certifier interview).

The above encounters are what Mc Loughlin (2023b: 1) calls "choregraphed encounters with animal death" that "reinforce conformity to societal norms" around animal-human relations (page 9). The education campaign that Alef mentioned is particularly focused on educating and reassuring Islamic scholars about stunned slaughter since they sit on certifier boards and make decisions about what is (im)permissible to eat and therefore the types of products that can be certified, marketed, and sold, and therefore it is in Alef's organisation's interests to reassure scholars both about killing and rearing practices. This provides an example of how witnessing animal death can be 'institutionally-defined' and conforming to the "dominant epistemic regimes" of whoever is facilitating the exposure to animal death (Mc Loughlin, 2023b:12; Mc Loughlin, 2023c). Also, since Alef's organisation deals with red meat, they seemed to be more open to facilitating visits to spaces of rearing since sheep farming tends to be less intensive and more outdoors than chicken farming in the UK (Riaz interview), which could mean more of a reassuring effect for consumers, as is described in Alef's account. Alef himself admits that visits to spaces of chicken rearing and killing would probably confirm scholars' negative expectations of animals being "crammed together in small spaces". Different types of producers would therefore have differential interests in exposing consumers (or not) to animal rearing and killing; Riaz remarked that encouraging people to eat less but better-quality meat would be more of a threat to "certain segments of the meat sector, particularly chicken because that's the cheapest …so it's all about volume". This is echoed by Asif, who also called intensive chicken production a "volumes game" (Organic halal provider interview). Despite more reported openness to consumer visits by red meat producers in Alef's example, the fact that it was a meat industry body organising this exposure limited the possibilities of the witnessing encounter, given that such encounters were limited to animal agriculture contexts and guided by logics where animals were viewed as commodities, which Kupsala (2018) argues constrains ethical transformation around human-animal relations. These examples demonstrate that *who* grants access to witnessing killing and rearing as well as the *type* of killing and rearing that is witnessed shapes the potential for political and ethical transformation. This illustrates the complexity of witnessing animal death, and how one cannot assume that visibility is ethically generative. This links to Pachirat's (2013: 254-255) cautious characterisation of the transformative potential of the 'politics of sight', where it is important to go beyond "simple binaries between visible/invisible" but rather ask which "types of making visible are likely to be more politically transformative and which are likely to result in renewed forms of sequestration and concealment." I have shown how the scalar and

institutional dimensions structuring witnessing encounters create different "types of making visible" with uneven effects for the ethical and political transformation of halal consumer behaviours.

5.4 Conclusion

Halal consumers' encounters with rearing and killing, despite being distinctive from non-halal consumers' encounters in several key ways, refuse straightforward narratives of comparatively more distance or more proximity, in a similar way that witnessing death and rearing refuses linear narratives of ethical transformation, since there was evidence of transformative and non-transformative moments of witnessing.

The fact that many encounters occurred 'back home' had implications for the kinds of slaughter that were being imagined and whether this presented a mismatch with typical halal slaughter in a UK context. It also brought up questions around diasporic identity, belonging and possible alienation from British rurality. What such encounters reinforced was the highly spatial nature of animal death, where the location of death determines legitimacy and acceptability, and how these experiences are tied up with wider diasporic cultural transmission. The association of exposure to animal death with childhood also resulted in visceral first moments and contributed to the normalisation of killing animals for food. This childhood socialisation was reinforced by the religious significance of festivals of sacrifice and the early inculcation of religious values and ritual discursive framings of animal death. As in the previous chapter, spiritual meaning simultaneously acted as a protective distancing device but also, in the context of the festival of sacrifice, as an invitation to covet closeness with animals and the associated grief and vulnerability of the killing process. The embracing of loss in these times showed that grievability can also take place over temporal and seasonal lines as well as spatial and species lines. The above helps to demonstrate the (post)domestic nature of halal meat consumers, their 'domestic' or 'postdomestic'-ness varying depending on space, time, generation and season.

I have drawn attention to the complex and intersectional nature of identity (in particular the bundling of religious and ethnic/cultural identity) when it comes to animal-human (killing and rearing) relations, both in terms of how the bundling of identity (such as Muslim and Pakistani) affects the types of encounters with animals, as well as how these encounters went on to shape

identities in turn in a complex two-way process. Identity also shaped the 'politics of sight', where multi-layered identities influenced the ability to be affected and/or transformed by animal death (for instance, associations with death can make British Muslims defensive against certain possibly ethically transformative movements, or such associations with death can allow them to be more mindful and reflective of their consumption practices), showing that a politics of sight is always also a politics of site, and that identity complicates the relationship between visibility/witnessing and ethical transformation.

I argue that the relations of distance and proximity that emerge from halal meat production and consumption in the UK have effects not just for British Muslims; their status as a visible and growing minority means that these relations have effects for the wider British population. Due to how their minority status gets used to amplify certain encounters, methods and framings of death (but not others), it has the effect of shaping 'majority' as well as 'minority' human-animal relations.

6. Purchasing

- How do knowledge intermediaries in sites of halal meat purchasing shape halal consumers' relations with animal lives and deaths?

6.1 Introduction

This chapter explores halal consumers' relations with food animals' lives and deaths in the practice of halal meat purchasing. These distance/proximity relations are moderated by "knowledge intermediaries" in the purchasing experience, where, in the absence of first-hand information (such first-hand encounters of killing and rearing are described in the previous chapter), consumers have to rely on different proxies in order to obtain information about food production and receive assurance (Eden et al., 2008a). Whilst the previous chapter described out-of-the-ordinary contexts (removed by space, time, seasons and generations), this chapter addresses often-encountered and mundane spaces of halal meat purchasing.

I describe several knowledge intermediaries that are used to create halal assurance and the effects of this for distance/proximity relations. I start with the most common and traditional knowledge intermediary of the independent halal butcher shop, where because "the space is the proxy", "everything therein can be quickly picked up without further analysis" (Eden et al., 2008a: 1051). I then move to the emergence of certification bodies as knowledge intermediaries, and how they act to 'black-box' some elements of production and open up other conversations. This is followed by a discussion of the small but growing presence of 'alternative halal' farms and businesses, who rely on a more direct model of knowledge intermediation. The proliferation of newer knowledge intermediaries such as supermarkets and fast-food chains facilitated by changing trends is also discussed, as well as the speculative role of the government as an additional knowledge intermediary. The chapter then turns to discussions around the 'knowledge fix' and the effects of providing more knowledge to consumers about halal meat production, especially in the form of labelling.

Important context in this discussion of knowledge intermediaries is the specific regulation and certification landscape of halal meat in the UK (characterised by lack of regulation and multiple competing certification claims). There is currently no national standard for halal meat in the

UK, and Bergeaud-Blackler (2015: 122) suggests that states are unwilling to set up these standards as they do not want to embody "this ultimate role of controller" concerning a religious issue. This lack of regulation has resulted in a "vacuum of regulation and control" (Lever, 2013: 1). Despite the existence of some prominent self-established certification bodies, since there is no legal governmental requirement for certification, with many places eschewing formal certification and relying instead on networks of trust.

6.2 The butcher shop

The traditional knowledge intermediary in purchasing halal meat for British halal consumers is the halal butcher shop, a model based on relations of trust, rather than formal certification. It is also the oldest model, with the first halal butcher shop established in east London in the 1940s, alongside some of the earliest Muslim migrant (mostly South Asian) communities (Adams, 1987). The butcher shop is the most frequent site of halal meat purchasing; my consumer survey showed that an average of 65% of halal consumers' total household meat purchases were from independent butchers, and only 23% of their meat purchases came from supermarkets. As well as representing the largest proportion of household meat purchases, the halal butcher shop was the most commonly directly named site of halal meat production or consumption throughout the consumer survey, followed by slaughterhouses, showing it holds an important place in consumers' imaginations of current and future halal meat purchasing practices. Halal consumers' patronage of independent butchers for meat purchasing is higher than the national average; with only 27% of halal consumers frequently buying their meat from supermarkets, compared to 81% for non-halal consumers (Stannard and Clarke, 2020).

In this knowledge intermediary model, the "shop space rather than the product itself demarcate[s] trust" (Eden et al., 2008a: 1050). Similarly, Tayob (2020: np) argues that traditional halal practice "references the places and people with whom one interacts" to build trust, "rather than the material substance of the meat consumed." Informal networks of trust in the butcher shop can often mean that formal or external certification is not perceived as necessary by consumers:

> "Compliance and certification are different. I could believe that a butcher complies but has not been certified, the certification is not important." (SR232)

> "I live outside of East London where…most people just have the general vibe of 'As long as the local butcher's say it's halal it's fine'." (Osman, slaughterhouse manager interview)

The large majority of halal butcher shops in a sample of 50 surveyed by EBLEX (2013) were not a member of certification or assurance schemes. In this model, therefore, certification often does not exist, or if it does, it is not materially important, as the butcher shop is the primary knowledge intermediary:

> "…I see the certificates on the walls in the butchers. However, I don't read the certificates and the bodies. My current understanding is limited to just 'knowing that the butcher is certified'." (SR369)

Certification in this traditional model is therefore either absent or a silent referent, seen from afar, less visible, "on the walls", and not closely engaged with. These relations of trust between halal butchers and halal consumers have also been identified by British halal industry reports: "much business in the Halal meat sector is conducted on trust and personal relationships and few see the need for certification schemes. Butchers trust their suppliers and in turn are trusted by their consumers" (EBLEX, 2013: 10). This has similarly been observed in anthropological writing on the industry, where "consumers generally only display trust in the relations with neighbourhood butchers" (Lever et al. 2010: vii). This is contrasted by lack of trust in major supermarkets who sell halal, with SR289 stating plainly that they "cannot be trusted", SR690 declaring herself as "very sceptical" of halal meat in supermarkets such as Morrison's, and SR576 stating that places like Asda and Tesco were not often patronised for meat products in his community "even though they may be certified".

There are several elements of the halal butcher shop that help to cultivate and support these trust relations. Kjærnes *et al.* (2007) point out that trust in food, rather than being individually-based, is relational and is constituted and reworked as a result of social interactions. Eden et al. (2008a:1050), drawing upon (Giddens, 1990), speak about 'face work', where connecting with the workers at the butcher shop is "necessary to re-embed faceless systems, such as food production, and anchor trust". In their case study of Maghrebi migrants in France, Campbell et al. (2011:76) stress the importance in the "face-to-face relationship between shopkeeper and

shopper" in establishing trust in the halal status of meat. SR454 talks about being attracted to halal butcher shops due to the "friendly service". Therefore, the human interaction at the butcher shop helps with trust. This is reinforced by the 'localness' of the halal butcher shop, where it was often positioned at the local scale; Osman (slaughterhouse manager interview), Jalal (online gourmet halal business owner interview) and survey respondents 41, 47, 219, 450, 488, 511, 576, 590 bundled together the butcher shop with the term 'local', which ties it to a sense of local community, and these repeated relations with the same butchers help to build trust without certification and maintain long-standing relationships. Indeed, SR576 linked shops that were more heavily patronised by locals with a lower need for certification, to the extent that shopkeepers with many local customers saw a "lack of business benefit" in embracing certification. There is evidence in the food geographies literature that localness is often perceived as a proxy for goodness, ethics and superior quality (Watts et al. 2005).

As well as social relations with the butcher, there are also added intra-Muslim dynamics that shape these networks of trust. Religious food networks tend to have an added dimension of trust; according to van Waarden and van Dalen (2013), religious markets such as halal and kosher are more likely to operate on trust, personal reputation and recommendations, such as the case of Maghrebi migrants in France believing in the honesty and superiority of their local halal butcher (Campbell *et al.,* 2011). The role that trust plays is perhaps so strong because it was linked to a religious imperative where it is considered "makrooh (reprehensible) to doubt the halal status of the food of another Muslim" (Tayob, 2020: np), with Mazin arguing that Islam encourages "implicit trust"

> "…if a Muslim tells you something, then you take them by their word because they are a Muslim and a Muslim by nature should be honest." (Fine dining halal restauranteur interview)

Therefore, the Muslim-ness of the body of the butcher comes to matter by reinforcing relations of trust. These relations of trust can also translate to other purchasing contexts (although it is strongest in the butcher shop due to all the contextual factors of the space) with Jalal estimating that 80% of his customers were satisfied with receiving a verbal confirmation from him, the Muslim business-owner, that the products were halal (Halal online gourmet halal business owner

interview). Similarly, SR18 (without specifying the purchasing context) said that if [an assumed Muslim] "someone" "tells me it is halal that is good enough for me".

Another factor that shapes loyalty to such spaces is availability of other culturally-specific foodstuffs and services not limited to meat. Seven survey respondents (64, 247, 454, 467, 470, 490 and 697) put additional comments when asked to estimate the proportion of their household meat purchases from different sites, qualifying that the butcher they bought from also sold other products. This "halal supermarket" (SR247) often has a butcher counter and sells other groceries. Out of these, two respondents used the term "Asian" ("Halal Asian grocery shops" (SR490) and "Asian Supermarket - butcher section" (SR697)), which suggests that the other foods available are specialised and specific to South Asian cuisines and preferences. Hamlett et al. (2008) points to the historical difficulty of obtaining foodstuffs such as ginger and curry powder for early South Asian immigrants, only available in specialist shops. Whilst this effect is more diluted today due to the widespread availability of such items in mainstream retailers, consumers still seem to be attracted to purchasing these items in such specialist stores (SR454 specifically mentions rice), which suggests a preference for price, or the convenience of all groceries in one place or the availability of other services. Raheem claims that the average Muslim butcher shop "in places like Blackburn, Bolton, Manchester" sells chicken and lamb "at least 20% cheaper than normal retailers (supermarkets)" (Regenerative farmer interview). These lower prices may also attract patrons to the shop and embed them in these relations of trust, making them less likely to question product sources and quality. This historical context may also explain the loyalty of older generations to such spaces (older survey respondents were likely to purchase a higher proportion of their meat from independent butcher shops, as illustrated in figure 7).

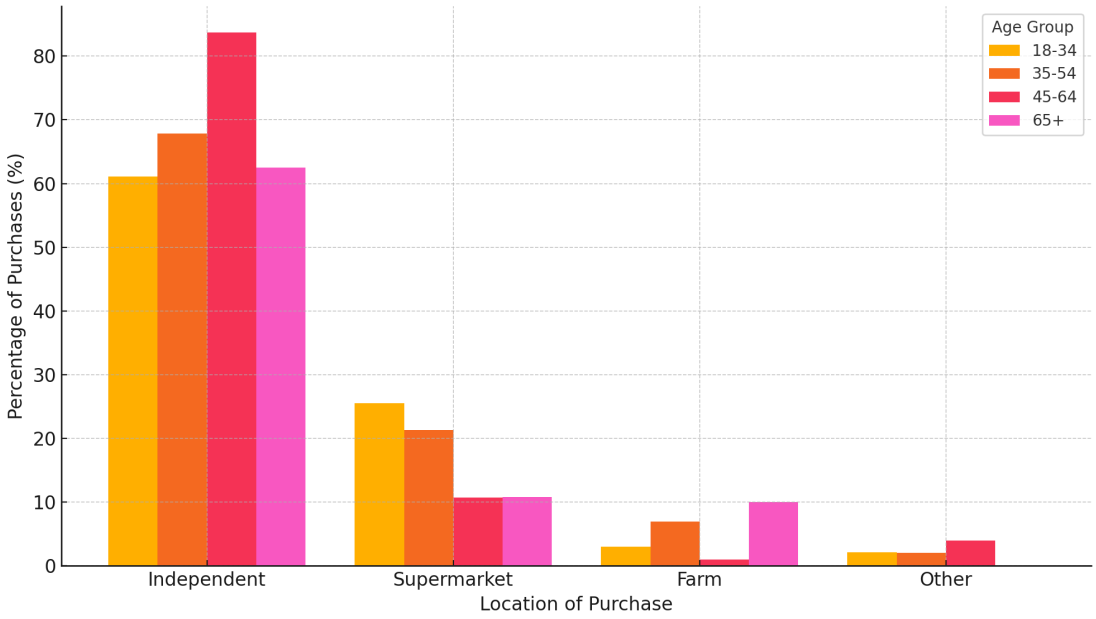

Figure 7: Meat purchase location by age group

As well as food, other culturally-specific services available in the shop are "chopping/skinning/bagging services" and having the "ability to negotiate" prices (SR454). There is also the added resonance of being an ethnic and religious minority community and the struggle for establishing a British Muslim identity; Dwyer's (1999) study participants associated halal meat shops and butchers with feelings of belonging, acceptance and safety in the UK.

I now turn to unpacking the effects of this knowledge intermediary model based on trust on distance/proximity relations with animal lives and deaths, both for butchers/shopkeepers and for customers. The first effect is to create paradoxically situated butchers who sit at the producer/consumer boundary. The second effect is foreclosing consumers' enquiries about halal meat origins, and the third is 'affective breakdown' (Tayob, 2022) if enquiries are made. The fourth effect is deep undertones of distrust from consumers of butcher shops, which could result in moving to different knowledge intermediaries for further information.

The first effect of this reliance on trust relations is butchers without much knowledge about halal meat production. We have seen how the halal butcher shop is a vital knowledge intermediary in halal meat purchasing, but unlike the examples cited in Eden et al. (2008a), this is not necessarily backed up by knowledge about the animals' lives or deaths. Butchers were often described as not having much more knowledge than consumers:

> "...how can you expect consumers to be connected when many other parts of the supply chain are disconnected themselves? Even if they went to their own butcher, he couldn't tell you where the meat is from." (Raheem, regenerative farmer interview)

Mazin, a fine dining halal restauranteur, said most butchers and other business owners "themselves don't have any knowledge of how that meat is delivered to their place", a sentiment that is echoed by survey respondents 10 and 318. Grace describes her efforts to get information from butcher shops:

> "I would go into a butcher's in East London...and ask 'Where does this meat come from? Is this free-range? Who's your wholesaler?', they haven't got a clue." (Animal welfare campaigner interview)

Similarly, a halal industry report found that a "substantial number" of the 50 halal butchers interviewed had not visited the slaughterhouses supplying their meat and were unsure about the slaughter method of their meat (EBLEX, 2013: 5). Ahmad puts this down to the biosecurity and legislation barriers of entering UK slaughterhouses discussed in the two previous chapters, so that "Even a shopkeeper might find it difficult to get into a slaughterhouse" (Organic gourmet producer interview). The figure of the halal butcher therefore troubles the boundary between 'producer' and 'consumer' and occupies an interesting liminal space in terms of connection to animal lives and deaths, being close to the body of the dead animal, but also very disconnected from information about meat production. Goodman (2002) mentions the importance of moving beyond problematic binary separations between the spheres of consumption and production. The butcher is differentially constructed in the data as a trusted intermediary and knowledgeable producer, and also equal to an ignorant consumer, or worse since he is seen as responsible for educating consumers; as butchers are the most common source where consumers buy their meat, Jalal identified them as having the "the biggest power in influencing and educating" (Online gourmet halal business owner interview) if they wished, whilst SR10 felt that "[butchers] should be more aware so you can ask them questions".

The second effect of relations of trust in the halal butcher shop is foreclosing consumers' enquiries by creating a "naive mentality" (SR36), "blind faith" (SR412) and "assumed" halal

status (SR467 , SR654), where such respondents who have this trust "do not ask questions" (SR36), are ignorant about the "process behind it" (SR467) and even never actually reflect on it: "I've actually never thought of how the meat I buy may be stunned or may be compromising animal welfare" (SR654). This can give rise to "not thinking of the actual animal" in the space of the butcher shop (SR118). According to Jalal, for 80% of his customers, receiving a confirmation from him, a Muslim business owner benefiting from similar trust dynamics to the butcher, that the meat was halal foreclosed further questions about certification and slaughter method, and a smaller proportion went on to ask further questions. The positioning of the halal certificate, if present, also makes it difficult to engage with, as it is usually "on the walls" and not very visible.

The third effect is that when enquiries do occur, these rupture precarious assemblages of trust. Penetrating trust dynamics by more formal demands of certification or attempts to gain specific knowledge about animals' lives and deaths can be seen as counter-cultural and transgressive. SR651 felt that "it can be awkward questioning the workers" at independent butchers, showing how purchasing is very much reliant on social relations (Eden et al., 2008a). Similarly, Iman reports getting "terrible…reactions" to enquiries for further information from independent butchers, where "they don't like it" (Halal online nutrition business owner). Here we can see moments of "affective breakdown between Muslim customers and butchers" (Tayob, 2022: 1) caused by asking for further guarantees beyond trust.

The fourth effect of butcher shops that primarily depend on trust relations was, ironically, deep-seated mistrust and suspicion. Butcher shops were repeatedly identified as a site in need of regulation and monitoring (SR116, SR450), particularly around "hygiene and safety measures" (SR95) and to "ensure that they are selling what they claim" (SR81). Butchers were also particularly identified in the data as having problems with food fraud and corruption, with SR709 referring to "a massive problem with illegal and dodgy meat butchers in and around East London claiming to be halal.". Asif argued that a butcher could pass something off as halal "because no one is going to pull him up over it, there's no trading standards issue about whether something's halal or not." (Organic halal provider interview). Osman (a halal slaughterhouse manager) pointed to the risk of cross-contamination due to the prevalence of butchers getting

meat from "questionable slaughterhouses" that also produced pork. Other negative comments about Muslim butcher shops related to lack of hygiene (SR78) and low-quality products (SR209).

Despite numerous expressions of doubt and mistrust about the butcher, the majority of consumers in the survey patronised butcher shops; there is even evidence of people who made very negative claims about butcher shops still sourcing a majority of their meat from butchers. For instance, SR517, who pointed to a "race to the bottom" between butcher shops resulting in "filthy stores" and "underpaid staff", reported that 100% of their household meat purchases came from butcher shops. This was also the case for several other survey respondents:

> "…some wholesalers that supply local butchers will purchase halal meat from an abattoir that also processes pigs." (SR590) [95% of purchases from butcher shops]

> "…the quality of products served is significantly inferior to the general meat and poultry outlets in UK." (SR89) [90% of purchases from butcher shops]

> "…butchers pumping chicken with fluid." (SR232) [80% of purchases from butcher shops]

> "… a lot of halal butchers in the UK that claim they're halal but the chicken looks bruised and the place lacks basic hygiene." (SR36) [50% of purchases from butcher shops]

This could be due to trust overriding mistrust, or due to "limited alternatives" (SR89), or such respondents patronise specific butchers that have extra levels of monitoring in the form of halal certification, a knowledge intermediary described in the next section.

I have shown how the halal butcher shop as a knowledge intermediary can still function to an extent (a level of assurance can be achieved, shown by the high level of trust and patronage of butchers) without underlying knowledge, but the effects are that these relations of trust are fragile and precarious because they can be easily ruptured by a simple enquiry and there is deep-seated distrust evident even for those who continue to patronise butchers. This reveals the precarity of this model as a knowledge intermediary. In the following sections, I show various different

directions in which this model is changing, for instance with certification or supermarkets, but these knowledge intermediaries can act to obscure different elements of the production process.

6.3 Certification bodies

A more recent knowledge intermediary that has emerged, partly in response to discontent with the traditional knowledge intermediary model, is the halal certification body. I think about halal certification by bodies such as the HFA and HMC as an 'assurance scheme' similar to those mentioned in Eden et al. (2008a) such as RSPCA 'Freedom Food' and Red Tractor assurance schemes. The certification bodies that do exist in the UK are self-established bodies that set their own standards. The first halal certification body in the UK, the Halal Food Authority (HFA), which accepts pre-slaughter stunning, emerged in 1994, carrying out inspections of slaughterhouses and granting licenses (Lever 2018). This was followed by the more orthodox Halal Monitoring Committee (HMC) in 2003, who advocated for non-stun slaughter and stressed the religiously dubious nature of stunned meat (Lever 2018). Since then, there has been a proliferation of other certification bodies.

Tayob (2020: np) argues that such newer models based on certification rather than trust represent an "ontological shift in the materiality of halal". According to Tayob (2022:1), this practice of halal predicated upon trust described in the butcher shop section is "now under threat from new forms of halal piety and the documentary demands of halal certification that each foreground complexity, suspicion, and doubt as the basis for halal in the contemporary world." There is a trend of commodification of halal through the proliferation of new products and markets (Lever and Miele 2012) and also a process of 'halalisation' (Fischer, 2008), where products are increasingly being certified as halal and there is increasing effort to label items as halal, right down to the 'molecular halal' scale (Tayob, 2016) Certification fills the gap in the incidence of the loss of trust, as "halal-certification organizations are important intermediaries that sought to replace the loss of personal trust with trust in the certification logo" (Tayob, 2016:74). In fact, Mazin, who is quoted in the butcher shop section about how Islam encourages implicit trust, caveated this by adding "People aren't as trusting anymore" (Fine dining halal restaurateur interview). There is evidence of consumers wanting further vetting and guarantees, taking the certification body as their primary knowledge intermediary rather than the butcher shop. This model is less common; as Jalal, an online gourmet halal business-owner argues,

following the verbal confirmation sufficient for about 80% of consumers, a smaller proportion of consumers would ask to see a certificate.

The majority of consumers who mentioned relying on certification as a knowledge intermediary positioned the HMC specifically as a useful and trusted knowledge intermediary. Respondents 20, 23, 34, 61, 208, 242, 280, 318, 389, 406, 482, 579, 585, 658, 690, 705 mentioned getting reassurance from HMC logos and processes, such as SR280 expressing that "HMC is the highest level of halal." This was because they had a "robust" "system of monitoring and checking up" (SR20), being the "only body which has a vetted process along the supply chain" (SR579), providing "reassurance" (SR23). SR208 also expressed confidence in the HMC's standards, stating that her uncle "works in HMC and has to visit slaughterhouses. Their rules are very strict". This was often directly contrasted with lack of trust for the vetting model of the HFA (and other unnamed bodies), such as respondents 20, 242 and 280, linking to Lever et al.'s (2010) point that the HFA receive much more suspicion from British Muslims. Many of these above responses referred to still purchasing from butcher shops (because the HMC have a system of certifying butchers and the whole supply chain to the butcher shop, as well as some restaurants), such as respondents 23, 482 ("HMC halal shops"), 685 and 690. The butcher is still a knowledge intermediary to an extent in such situations, but the certification body is the dominant one, showing the complex layering of simultaneous knowledge intermediaries.

I now turn to considering the effects of the knowledge intermediary of halal certification for distance/proximity relations with animal lives and deaths. Eden et al. (2008a: 1055) highlight the effect of assurance schemes such as organic re-fetishising production networks: "Rather than unveiling connections, assurance schemes reconnect in a simple, convenient, pick-it-off-the-shelf manner". They similarly suggest that "assurance schemes effectively replace multiple 'black-boxes' of food growing and processing with one 'black-box' of assurance." (Page 1054) Firstly, there is some evidence of halal certification bodies black-boxing the entire production process (both rearing and killing), with, in a similar way to the butcher shop, trust in the certificate stopping further enquiry, as expressed by SR488 that many Muslims "don't dig deep into the halal slaughtering process" due to following a "monitoring committee" and SR271 stating that "if something has a halal certification I tend not to…question the specific authorising bodies or the source of the meat." Steven believed that certification could be "dangerous" because it "filter[ed]

out people's personal responsibility", where "They see the certificate, they don't feel they need to ask any more questions." (Fine dining halal restauranteur interview). Moreover, in response to the survey question on whether they had witnessed halal slaughter, SR126 replied that they had never done so and added that they "rel[ied] on halal certification" and that would only like to witness slaughter if their confidence in the certification body waned. Similarly, in answer to the same question, SR676 said that they trusted in the halal status of meat due to the presence of hanging certificates, again showing a direct link made by consumers between the certification body and the need to witness or connect with slaughter. This shows how certification acts as a knowledge intermediary for the killing specifically.

However, it is more complicated than the halal assurance scheme simply creating one "'black-box' of assurance" (Eden et al. 2008: 1054) for the whole production process, as there is more evidence of such certification opening up conversations around death. In particular, the debate about pre-slaughter stunning in the killing process, reinforced by disagreements between different halal certification bodies, focuses attention on animal death. Stunning is a 'knowledge controversy' (Whatmore, 2009) or a 'hot situation' (Callon, 1998) that 'slows down' reasoning (Whatmore, 2009) and focuses discussions on animal death, both inside and outside of the halal industry. Firstly, inside the halal industry, the HFA accepts stunning before slaughter and the HMC does not, which creates polarised and "intractable" (Harvey, 2010: 32) debates about the issue. The polarised disagreements between the certifying bodies (and their supporters) about stunning focus a lot of attention on method of death. Riaz estimated that only about 15-20% of the British Muslim market wanted un-stunned meat (slaughterhouse owner interview), and only a minority of halal meat in the UK is un-stunned (FSA, 2019) but the attention it attracts is much larger than its proportion of production.

Many of the reasons that consumers sought out certification bodies as a knowledge intermediary, specifically the HMC, was around death (and this is understandable given the ritual requirements around death in the halal process), either around stunning (respondents 242 and 389) - with SR242 stating that she used HMC to determine halal status as she personally did not class stunning as halal - or around other elements of death such as the 'tasmiyyah' (ritual prayer at slaughter) (respondents 280 and 685):

> "I am aware that animals are sometimes slaughtered without the words of Allah being said to make them halal. I only eat HMC for this reason" (SR685)

This shows how the certification body as a knowledge intermediary often focuses attention on death, mostly commonly stunning, but can also include attention on the ritual prayers at slaughter and machine slaughter. Nuances of the stunning debate mean consumers think about the animal's body in further detail. People had different ideas about the acceptability of stunning, with SR230 summing this up by saying that it "depends on the degree of the stunning, and the kind of animal". Respondents 81, 107, 294, 406 and 620 differentiated between the killing and stunning process of different species, particularly larger and smaller animals, for instance:

> "For larger animals, such as cows and sheep, stunning is therefore fine as they're unlikely to die from it. However for chickens, the stunning could kill them and therefore the meat would not be halal." (SR294)

This shows a focus on details on the killing process from consumers. Outside of the halal industry, the stunning issue focuses a lot of attention on animal death (section see 5.3.1 for a discussion on how stunning and ritual slaughter more generally focuses attention on Muslims as a minority community and is politicised in media headlines) The stunning debate therefore represents an example where, contrary to the usual trend of distancing animal death, death is widely discussed, and both inside and outside of the industry.

However, this focus on death by certification bodies and their supporters encapsulated by the stunning debate can act to "black-box" other elements of the production process, namely rearing. This anecdote encapsulates how certification in practice can black-box animal lives and welfare: Iman, an entrepreneur who owns a halal nutrition company spoke of her experience questioning independent halal butchers in Birmingham about the animals' lives, specifically "the breed of the animal, lineage, what diet it was fed, how old it was when slaughtered":

> "They would point to the wall and they would say 'Do you see that halal certificate there, that's all you need to know'."

Survey respondents 44, 93, 115, 362, 462, 538 and 705 expressed their desire for halal certification bodies to factor in animal welfare, not "just slaughter method" (SR362), and a desire to go "beyond a simple certification plastered on the wall of a fried chicken shop (where the animals we consume have been mistreated on a battery farm)" (SR462). This desire was also evident in my textual analysis of online halal campaigning organisations; for example, 'Halal Focus', a campaigning organisation that produces blog posts on practices within the halal meat industry wrote that it was "very sad and very difficult to understand" that the main British certifying bodies had not "made the slightest effort to incorporate any animal welfare standards (relating to the life of the animal prior to slaughter) into their code." Moreover, 95% of survey respondents agreed with the statement that 'halal certifiers should take animal welfare into account during the halal certification process (71% strongly agree and 24% agree).Therefore, in contrast to knowledge intermediaries of assurance schemes like RSPCA 'Freedom Food' and Red Tractor mentioned in Eden *et al.* (2008a: 1054), who work on "opening up the black-box of food production more generally", halal assurance schemes of certification bodies like the HFA and HMC work to provide assurance about a specific part of production (killing).

The focus on stunning was posited as the reason for the lack of focus on animal welfare. It was framed as a reductionist fixation by some that distracted attention from more holistic issues:

> "After 10 years of working in the area if I hear the word stunning I usually want to run screaming from the room. It's almost a form of Islamic OCD. There is a lot more to halal than stunning." (Slaughterwoman interview)

The focus on stunning was described as "zealotry" (SR560) that took away focus from animal welfare in particular. This focus on death was also framed as antithetical to progress in general, not just welfare, with the certifiers "stuck on the stun/non-stun standard" and the (non-halal) industry "moving so much faster than that,", with Grace citing examples of lack of understanding in the halal industry on technological advances such as laboratory-grown meat (Animal welfare campaigner interview). It could also be argued that the stunning debate black-boxes other elements of killing as well because it does not take into account other elements of welfare at slaughter, including added recommendations of the halal ritual such as calming the animal before slaughter (see chapter 4 for a discussion of this).

Interestingly, stakeholders other than halal certification bodies were accused of a fixation on stunning that disregarded other elements of life, even welfare organisations and, as described in the subsequent section on 'alternative halal', organic certification bodies. Grace described an encounter with a prominent animal welfare NGO, who refused to work with her on promoting animal welfare in Islam because she opposed stunning:

> "Unless I push that specific one little bit of this vast, vast thing, they don't want to know." (Animal welfare campaigner interview)

Several reasons were given for many stakeholders' fixation on stunning. Death was perceived as easier to regulate, firstly for certification bodies. Riaz, while he believed it would be beneficial for halal certifiers to also become organic certifiers, said that it would be cumbersome to obtain ISO certification and would require "time and investment" (Slaughterhouse owner interview). Grace stated that the major halal certification bodies did not currently have the "funding, the expertise or the manpower" to monitor welfare standards (Animal welfare campaigner interview). The idea of death being "easier" to focus was also highlighted by Riaz, in the context of "welfare people" (such as NGOs and regulators) focusing more on slaughter without stunning than other more painful husbandry procedures, believed it was easy to get people worried about animal death because "…they know that slaughter is emotional so it's almost like an easy way to get into that". Susan also declared that this focus on stunning "keeps people frightened and makes money" for certification bodies (Slaughterwoman interview, 2020).

Just like with the butcher shop model, the knowledge intermediary of halal certification bodies was also precarious. This is firstly because of the ease of labelling fraud since "there's nothing legal there for somebody to turn up and say 'that's against the law, you can't do that', even the halal certifiers themselves" (Animal welfare campaigner interview), leading to an undermining of the certification's credibility, and sometimes an interruption of purchasing patterns:

> "I only eat HMC…but have been aware that sometimes HMC-certified butchers sell HFA chicken as HMC. When they get caught, I don't shop there for a while." (SR658)

Secondly, precarity of this knowledge intermediary is also often linked to the fact that they do not focus on all elements of production. The lack of animal welfare monitoring resulted in negative perceptions of certification bodies, with SR115 characterising them as "*Desi* [South-Asian-origin] dudes who don't even have the capacity to address the animal welfare aspect of halal meat." Similarly, the disregard of animal welfare resulted in SR232 perceiving halal certification as a mere "rubber stamp".

Overall, the black-boxing of halal certification may be "more grey than black, in that it may provide more information than before" as it does open up some conversations as in Eden et al.'s (2008a:1054) assurance schemes, but it does tend to open up conversations around death more than the schemes mentioned in that example. Also, although debates around halal certification do tend to take away focus from the life of the animal, there is also evidence of caring about slaughter method providing an entry point into thinking more about animal lives and other elements of production.

> "…because the HMC crowd are a bit more questioning, anecdotally, I would say they are slightly more inclined to ask about animal rearing and welfare." (Jalal, online halal gourmet retailer interview)

Discontent with halal certification bodies described above and/or the debates opened up by halal certification bodies can lead some customers to seek further information and different knowledge intermediaries such as 'alternative halal', which will be explored in the following section.

6.4 'Alternative' halal

Frustration with knowledge intermediaries such as butcher shops and certification bodies led some consumers to seek out other knowledge intermediaries that addressed their frustrations, mostly notably around the lack of attention to rearing and animal *lives* as well as deaths.

There is evidence of consumers seeking out alternative knowledge intermediaries in the 'alternative' halal movement, most commonly characterised in small-scale Muslim-owned/established halal farms who adhere to free-range and/or organic (although due to issues

discussed later they cannot always use this term) standards and place a large emphasis on rearing and on welfare at all stages of the supply chain, as well as environmental sustainability, called "ethical farms" by some survey respondents (such as SR273). For example, SR209, who sourced 100% of her household meat purchases from a halal farm, stated that: "I sadly wouldn't buy meat from any average halal butcher as my perception is that it is low quality and not ethical."

This is a less common and newer knowledge intermediary than the previous ones mentioned; consumers in the survey sourced an average of 5 percent of household halal meat purchases from alternative halal farms, the first of which was established in 2007. Asif, an organic halal employee, compared the hundred customers they had in a week to "a day for a butcher shop", describing the movement as a "niche of a niche". However, it is emerging as an increasingly popular alternative knowledge intermediary, as identified by multiple interviewees, who heralded "a social shift" (Grace, animal welfare campaigner interview) and a "sea change" (Mazin, fine dining halal restauranteur interview) already in motion and accelerating. Ahmad characterised 'alternative halal' as comprising of 5-6% of the overall halal meat market, but was hopeful as compared this to "only 3% a few years ago" (Organic gourmet producer interview). There is evidence of the layering of different knowledge intermediaries, with SR34 saying that "when I have access to a farm then I buy from them", and in the absence of that HMC being the next "best solution". Likewise, SR406 mentioned only buying "organic halal chicken and HMC red meat".

Many alternative suppliers eschewed mainstream halal certification. Halal assurance in the alternative halal movement was predicated on providing information directly to consumers about the animals' lives and deaths. This is illustrated by this comment on choosing not to obtain certification on the website a free-range halal farm:

> "We have…been able to obtain a reputation in the UK and abroad as providers of high quality, natural and halal produce. Our guarantee is a very personal one where our customers take responsibility for their own choices and have a direct connection with the source of their food." [Willowbrook Farm 'Halal Standard', 2023]

Iman, the owner of a small-scale online business selling health products similarly spoke about how:

> "...when my customers ask me why I'm not halal certified myself as an organisation and I explain it to them, they very much understand my reasons." (Halal nutrition business owner interview)

Raheem, who uses regenerative farming techniques and supplies halal free-range meat, describes that he would rather prove himself "through transparent production" than "paying a certification body". However, he makes use of the knowledge intermediary of certification bodies by taking his animals to an HMC-certified abattoir whilst he builds relations of trust with his customers:

> "...if consumers establish relationships with producers, they may not need the HMC or HFA to give them reassurance. But at the moment, certification is *crucial* for consumer confidence and I wouldn't take my animals to a non-HMC abattoir because I don't think my customers would trust me enough" (Regenerative farmer interview)

'Alternative halal' therefore emerges as an alternative where consumers can directly go to farms and farmers to find out the information about animals' deaths and crucially their lives, providing a less mediated experience. This knowledge intermediary relies on shorter supply chains, creating relationships with producer and "personal" guarantees (Willowbrook Farm 'Halal' Standard). Such farms also rely on intra-community trust dynamics since they are almost exclusively Muslim-owned and operated. However, these personal guarantees and trust relations operate differently than in the butcher shop as these producers are seen as knowledgeable about the animal origins of the meat products they sell, and interact closely with the animals. This is also described by Ahmad:

> "we work on trust with customers, we say to them look this is how we rear and feed the animals, we tell them about the process.. I got the IT guys to do presentations and YouTube videos of our process. I took pictures of the farm and abattoir and that's what people want." (Organic halal gourmet producer interview)

This links to alternative meat provisioning networks outside of halal, where "ethically raised meat is often marketed through direct-to-consumer supply chains…and butchers and farmers often play an active role in educating consumers" (Jeske, 2023: 3). This model foregrounds the importance of local connections, with Raheem describing his ideal model of reverting to older systems of production of only "supplying local customers in a 30-mile radius". Raheem talks about "invit[ing] people to see my production system and see what I do…." (Regenerative farmer interview) in order to create assurance without certification, and Willowbrook Farm (whose Halal Standard is quoted above) similarly hold regular open days and encourage halal consumers to visit. This can create barriers to who is able to access this knowledge intermediary, particularly with the majority of Muslims in the UK living in urban areas (MCB, 2022), making it difficult to easily access these farms which are in "far-flung places" (SR273). Those who do not live close enough to buy products directly from the farm or a farmers' market close to the farm are obliged to order online, which presents issues, such as "online deliveries are awkward for me as I'm not regularly home to receive them" (SR335) and an "inconvenient…delivery process" (SR190). This knowledge intermediary was also seen as financially exclusive, "only affordable to the well-off" (SR108), and having "ridiculous prices" (SR168, SR273), which prevented SR34 from "regularly buy[ing] from a farm". Therefore, the alternative halal farm is a knowledge intermediary which relies on less black-boxing and more personal guarantees, but is a very small and exclusive sector.

In the case of the alternative halal movement, they also dealt with issues around black-boxing life due to fixations on death, shown interestingly through the case of organic certification. There was a conflict between small-scale ethical halal establishments who wanted to do un-stunned slaughter and organic bodies in the UK in the aftermath of the European Court of Justice's ruling in 2019 that unstunned ritual slaughter could not be called organic. At the time of our interview, Asif's organisation had recently lost their organic certification. Ahmad also mentioned being initially "stuck" in the aftermath of the ECJ's ruling, before changing their set-up. There was a frustration with perceived reductionism on behalf of organic bodies, drawing a comparison to halal certification bodies:

> "[for the organic body], the slaughter method now destroys the whole history of the animal, and HMC, the life of the animal doesn't matter, it's just about the cut." (Asif, organic halal provider interview).

Ironically, this was a similar criticism that people levelled at halal certification bodies for being dogmatic and "conservative" (SR600) and fixated on death at the expense of rearing. This results in such businesses finding creative ways to circumvent their inability to call their products organic, such as "meat from an organic animal" rather than "organic meat" (slaughterhouse owner interview) or "beyond organic" (Asif), or Willowbrook using the term "free-range"[13]. This was seen as not impacting distance/proximity relations with consumers as Mazin argues that "people don't know the difference between free-range and organic" and having to constantly correct customers:

> "I keep telling them 'Guys, we're not organic, we're free-range', we have to keep telling them that, because every time somebody posts a story on Instagram that they're here, they will say 'We've just gone and had some fantastic organic food." (Fine dining halal restauranteur interview).

6.5 The 'knowledge fix'

There was a significant appetite for more knowledge about halal meat production evident throughout the consumer survey and in extracts already quoted above. Consumers from the survey were often eager for information, and expressed shame about not knowing more about halal production, with SR32 stating that they were "embarrassingly ignorant on the whole process" and SR707 expressing "I wish I was more educated on…halal slaughter guidelines and animal and environmental welfare in Islam". Customers were frustrated with the lack of information available in general about halal meat in the UK and the amount of "secrecy". The words 'transparent'/'transparency' and 'openness' were used repeatedly in consumer survey comments (SR1, 7, 30, 37, 44, 64, 96, 115, 173, 246, 383, 433, 470, 499, 514, 530, 534, 536, 542, 564, 620, 668, 689, 705).

[13] As previously mentioned in section 3.4, to differentiate between the different 'alternative halal' players, I refer to the ones who previously had organic certification as 'organic', and others as 'free-range', even though, because of the issues mentioned above, they all ended up marketing themselves using some variation of 'free-range'

> "Little information is available beyond the claim by meat providers that it is halal" (SR352)

Knowledge was specifically desired in the form of labels,, with some respondents desiring more information about *killing* on labels, with SR256 calling for an "advanced marking system for all halal authorities which states whether it is stunned/not stunned, mechanical/by hand, etc", in order to "clearly know what type of slaughter is used." (SR389) This was in addition to desire for knowledge about rearing conditions; SR44 proposed "transparent labels" that included details like "'non terminal stunned, organically reared' or 'unstunned, free range'", while SR577 said "labelling should include farm as well as slaughterhouse info", in order to be "100% transparent about how animals are slaughtered/kept" (SR669) and SR651 wanted labels that showed how meat "was sourced and if it's environmentally friendly". Consumers gave the impression that if further information were available, they would act upon it. SR705 said she would like to take environmental sustainability "into consideration" in purchasing, but "this kind of information is rarely available (for specific butchers), so I wouldn't be able to." Similarly, SR219 would "like to factor in everything else if there is more guidance available" on "full source and process". SR564 believed that "a clearer picture" of "quality of animals' lives prior to slaughter" would "entice consumers to make more conscious decisions with regards to their meat purchasing habits".

However, this assumes that providing knowledge will in itself be a solution. Eden (2011) and Eden et al. (2008a;2008b) problematise the "knowledge fix", arguing that providing information does not always change attitudes or behaviours and that "information is only one of many inputs to a purchase decision, rather than the dominant factor in "rational" decision-making under the deficit model" (Eden, 2011: 180)

Riaz argued that most consumers were not interested in the details of meat production beyond knowing that the animal had been treated well and slaughtered properly, and just wanted a little bit of "reassurance", but referred to the existence of:

> "a minority of vocal consumers, and at the UK I would put that at 5-10%...but they are the vocal minority but they make the most noise and media attention and all the rest of

> it, they say 'All consumers want to know this', but other consumers…they would probably say 'oh, that's good to know', but the vast majority will not make their purchasing decisions on that, they just want to know that it has been done well." (Slaughterhouse owner interview, 2020)

Echoing Miele and Evans (2010), Buller and Roe (2014: 148) argue that the absence of labelling allows a "largely welcome transfer of responsibility from consumer to retailer." This reticence towards responsibility is backed up by large-scale opinion surveys that show that consumers are happy not to know the specifics of farm animal welfare (Eurobarometer, 2005). Buller and Roe (2018:121) talk about consumers preferring to transfer responsibilities to other stakeholders in the food chain, including "farmers…retailers…government and the regulatory agencies". Similarly, there was a tendency for halal consumers to shift responsibility and "pass the buck" (Grace, animal welfare campaigner interview) towards other actors:

> "It is up to those providing the halal meat to comply with Islamic laws regulating what is halal as they are ultimately accountable" (SR664)

There was a shift of responsibility in particular towards religious scholars:

> "Whether I personally agree/disagree with [stunning and machine slaughter] is by the by if a scholar has judged it to be halal I guess." (SR18)

> "Trustworthy *Fuqaha* [legal scholars] should come together and make that statement, not lay people" (SR461)

> "It is all too confusing for laymen like me." (SR396)

In the case of halal, this transfer of responsibility may additionally be due to a general reticence (not just related to food production) to speak on religious legal issues without proper training, especially when it comes to making statements about the permissibility of certain practices and items. Taking responsibility as an ethical consumer can also be emotionally taxing:

> "… can you imagine doing your weekly shop and you have to make not just a decision on what you are going to buy and how much, but all the ethical values that correspond with it, it can get emotionally exhausting." (Slaughterhouse owner interview)

This struggle was encapsulated by SR144, who described the multiple competing priorities when purchasing meat:

> "Regarding animal welfare, it's not that I see it to be less important, it's more that I think of it less when I am focused on shopping or cooking for the family or myself. It's difficult to be mindful of the welfare of the animal when shopping" (SR144)

Also, providing information such as both rearing and killing information on labels could lead to a change in purchasing habits, but might result in an unthinking approach, and would be subject to the same problems mentioned by Eden et al. 2008a: (1055) in the above halal certification bodies section, where "the solution of assurance itself can therefore become a problem for assurance" and "ethicality becomes a fetish itself in that the consumer is left simply to trust that the label speaks for itself" (Guthman, 2004: 513). Some consumers from the survey desired this unthinking approach, with a preference for simple labels "similar to FairTrade" that clearly communicated details "at a quick glance" so the consumer does not "think further than that" (SR369). Riaz similarly argued that consumers were "just looking for the key information" and that a "heavy label on the package" was "very off-putting" (Slaughterhouse owner interview).

The knowledge fix also assumes each individual makes choices for themselves, but in fact consumers are embedded in local, regional, community and familial scales that shape consumption decisions. There was evidence in the data of family members acting as knowledge intermediaries, which, in a similar way to the butcher shop model, acted to foreclose enquiries about meat production, where SR144 would "follow family blindly" and SR642 said they had "no idea" about certain elements of the halal industry "seeing that my sources come from the family". Respondents talked about following preferences of husbands (SR144, SR548, SR690), mothers, fathers (SR144, SR353, SR461), in-laws (SR548) mothers-in-law (Grace, halal animal welfare campaigner interview) and sons (SR351) in purchasing decisions. This was even in the case of when it actively went against their own preferences and convictions. This influence was

mentioned for both directions, pushing people to eat more meat than they would prefer to otherwise (SR548) or less meat (SR351, SR711). There were examples of going against family consumption patterns, such as being a "vegan who lives in a traditional Pakistani Muslim household" (SR346), but this was much rarer and framed as more difficult. Divisions of labour in the household can lead to a lack of autonomy for individuals in household purchasing decisions:

> "I'm trying to reduce my intake but it's hard because I live with family who are old-fashioned and I don't have a say in the food shopping." (SR555)

> "The animal welfare is important for me, personally. However, as my family do the food shopping, I don't know if it's actually being taken into consideration." (SR705)

Another factor of household dynamics that mediated consumption choices was the fact that many interviewees and survey respondents reported having larger-than-average family sizes, which is reflected in statistical data about the size of British Muslim households (MCB, 2015). Grace described how financial barriers are amplified for larger families, making it harder to reconnect with food production:

> "I feel like all this knowledge I'm spilling onto people, they get home and then they go 'Eh, I need to feed my children, I've got six children' and it just goes out of the window." (Animal welfare campaigner interview)

Furthermore, several survey respondents specifically cited being part of a big family as a barrier to them choosing alternative options:

> "I currently can't afford the halal organic options on the market. . Esp with a large family, if it was more reasonably priced for families I would." (SR116)

> "I have had organic halal meat many times before but it's very expensive for a large family" (SR191)

> "This is why I try to avoid eating meat only 2 or 3 times a month. My family is very big and we're not that financially stable so can't afford organic chicken" (SR208)

This demonstrates how consumption is situated in multiple scales that shape consumers' abilities to respond to information about meat production, and fills a gap in understanding halal consumption at the scale of the household specifically (Isakjee and Carroll, 2019). Therefore, in a similar way to how in the previous chapter, witnessing gave rise to ambivalent (un)ethical effects that refused simple relations between proximity and ethics, here proximity (in the form of information about killing and rearing during purchasing and labelling rather than directly witnessing death) can give rise to ambivalent effects.

6.6 Changing trends

There is evidence of a shift away to a larger variety of knowledge intermediaries for halal meat purchases. One trend is moving towards supermarkets as knowledge intermediaries. In the consumer survey, I found that younger people were more likely to buy meat from a supermarket than older generations (see figure 7), also found by Stannard and Clarke (2020), with increased availability of halal meat in supermarkets; for instance, SR126 spoke about supermarkets have "recently start[ed] selling halal chicken and beef", with specific product ranges such as Shazan's (SR396) and Haji Baba (SR427) mentioned by others. Part of this shift away from traditional butchers is due to changing preferences of halal consumers, and a desire for more 'British' patterns of consumption, for cuts that may not be available in traditional 'Asian' butcher shops, and that Asian butchers usually do not have the skills to prepare (Jalal, online halal gourmet business owner). Raheem also identified this skills-gap in traditional halal butchers not knowing how to prepare cuts beyond the "traditional diced and chopped for curry" (Regenerative farmer interview). Riaz pointed to the increased prevalence of people seeing meat dishes in mainstream supermarkets and thinking "Why haven't we got a halal version of that?" (Slaughterhouse owner interview). Stannard and Clarke (2020) found that second- and third-generation Muslims were more likely to cook different cuisines than first-generation Muslims, and third-generation Muslims were mostly likely to prepare British-influenced meals. There is also rising beef consumption, shown in the survey (with younger people consuming more beef, as shown in figure 8) and also highlighted by Susan (slaughterwoman interview), a departure from previous patterns where the South Asian population were "not traditional beef eaters" (Asif, organic halal

employee interview). This shift towards supermarkets could contribute to a purchasing experience with less reflection on animal origins of meat products, where meat becomes a "grocery like any other" in supermarket aisles (Syse and Bjørkdahl, 2021: 128). The move to the supermarket also means that halal meat will be encountered in a packaged form with labels, as Jalal pointed at that meat bought at butcher shops was unlikely to be labelled, although as I have shown above, more information through labelling has mixed effects for connection to animals' lives and deaths.

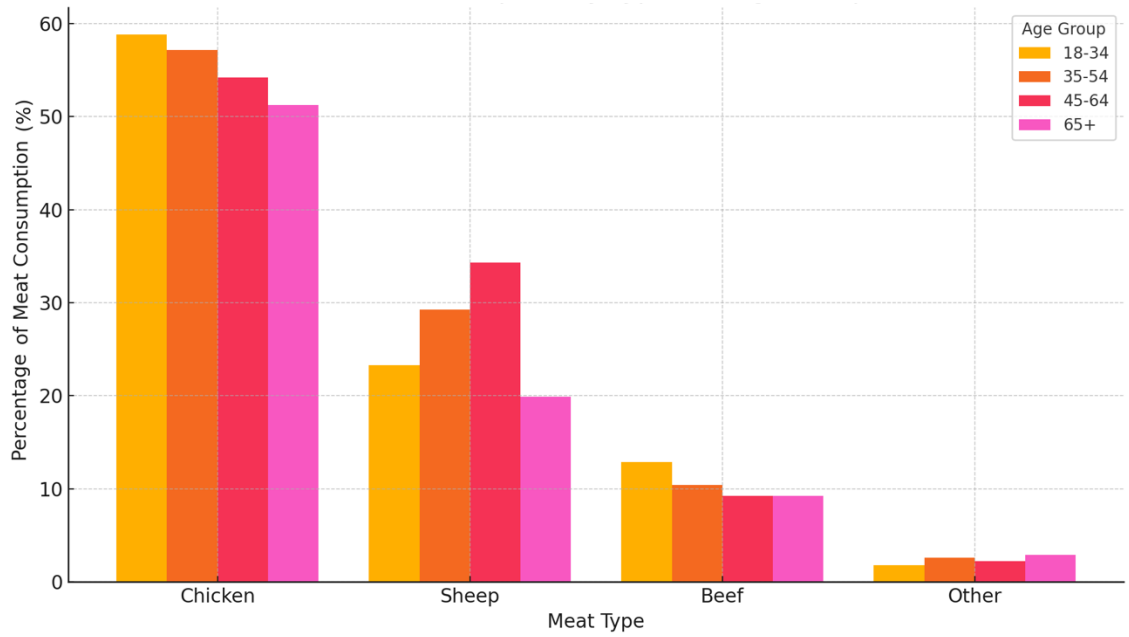

Figure 8: Proportion of meat consumption from different animals by age group

Mainstream fast-food and restaurant chains are also increasingly selling halal products, such as Nando's (mentioned by SR508) and KFC (mentioned by SR467 and 508), although both respondents mentioned these accompanied by doubt about the halal status of such sources. In such cases of supermarkets and fast-food chains above, these still rely on halal certification bodies as knowledge intermediaries, with certification allowing halal meat to travel out of the culturally and religiously specific place of the butcher shop and Muslim-owned businesses, although note this is mostly for halal certification bodies that allow stunning, such as in the case of KFC. Despite all these changing trends, the traditional butcher shop model is unlikely to completely disappear and the consumer survey showed sustained reliance on butcher shops and networks of trust.

An additional knowledge intermediary implicit throughout the discussion of all the knowledge intermediaries stated above is that of the government, particularly in the desire for the regulation of butcher shops and certification bodies mentioned earlier. Opinions about government involvement were extremely divided, with 48% of consumer respondents agreeing that the government should regulate halal meat, 25% neither agreeing nor disagreeing and 27% disagreeing. This poses interesting questions about the future of regulation in the British halal meat industry.

6.7 Conclusion

I have developed Eden et al.'s (2008a) concept of a "knowledge intermediary" in several ways, firstly by showing that a knowledge intermediary can still function even without the underlying knowledge to support knowledge claims (as seen in the halal butcher shop) due to intra-community trust dynamics, although these relations are precarious. Second, rather than black-boxing all of production as assurance schemes did in Eden et al. (2008a) I show how halal certificates can black-box some elements of production (rearing) and open up conversations around others (methods of killing). Overall there is a complex picture of distance and proximity created by knowledge intermediaries in halal meat purchasing sites.

I have also shown how such certification and assurance is embedded in cultural and social norms, and how "information about food is contingently valued in the context of intermediaries, location in time and space and histories of relationships with food providers, both faceless and personally known." (Eden et al., 2008: 1053). I have added to work on how spaces such as butcher shops act as knowledge intermediaries explored by Eden et al. (2008a) but shown additional cultural and religious resonances of these spaces not attended to in such literature.

I have demonstrated how what counts as sufficient halal compliance takes varying forms for different consumers, where they could use one knowledge intermediary or a complex layering of several, such as certificates within the space of the butcher shop or Muslim-owned halal eco-farms. Consumers can also use multiple knowledge intermediaries at different times, as shown by the fact that many consumers' household meat purchases came from a mixture of sources, including butcher shops, farms and supermarkets. Despite changing trends towards newer knowledge intermediaries and purchasing sites such as supermarkets and mainstream fast-food chains, there is evidence of sustained reliance on butcher shops and networks of trust. I have

also demonstrated the diversity of halal consumers, with "a massive big scope" (Mazin, fine dining halal restauranteur interview), from people who "want to be absolutely certain that what they are consuming is halal in every way" (Mazin) to someone who just looks for "the Arabic symbol" (SR642) in the restaurant window. This demonstrates how halal is not "a singular, essentialised Muslim food choice" (Isakjee and Carroll, 2019: 3)

The following chapter examines the animal body during the eating process as a knowledge intermediary, and the ambivalent ethical effects that emerge from this.

7. Eating

1) *How does the embodied process of halal meat consumption create relations of distance and proximity with animal lives and deaths?*
2) *Where, when and how does halal meat become (in)edible?*
3) *How do the concepts of 'halal' and 'tayyib' inform embodied ethical consumption?*

7.1 Introduction

This chapter explores how the embodied eating experience affects halal consumers' proximity and/or distance to animals' lives and deaths and how they perceive the implications of this for their bodies, souls, and consumption decisions. Whilst the previous chapters focused on how halal meat emerges through following ritual slaughter processes in the slaughterhouse, through witnessing animal killing and rearing in and beyond the UK, and through interactions in common purchasing sites, this one focuses on how halal meat becomes known through the process of eating. The previous chapter examined how the purchasing experience is mediated by knowledge intermediaries, this chapter explores how, after the meat is bought, the process of eating and ingesting the animal body acts a knowledge intermediary of the animal's life and death. I consider the two directions of the relationship between the embodied eating experience on the one hand and connection with food animals' lives and deaths on the other.

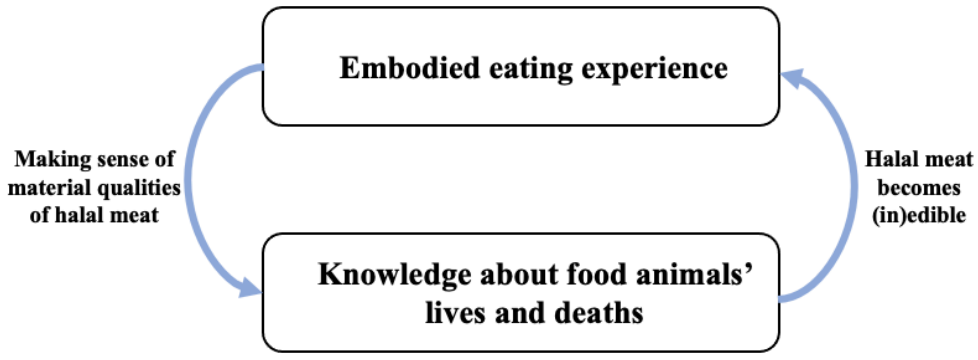

Figure 9: The relationship between the eating experience and knowledge about animals' lives and deaths

The first half of the chapter ('Eating') attends to how the embodied eating experience (in the form of material qualities of meat) imparts knowledge about how animals live and die in the production of halal meat. Various (socio-) material qualities of the animal body (such as the taste, texture, nutrition, presentation and preparation of the meat) create different relations with animal death. I ask what sets of ethical relations are co-generated by these halal meat materialities, such as a higher concern for animal welfare, environmental sustainability or the working conditions of food producers. Since food is so "profoundly and deeply felt in the gut" (Goodman, 2011: 244) it is unsurprising that concerns at the bodily scale are a key starting point for reconnecting with food production and achieving ethical transformation.

Evans and Miele (2012: 300-301) stress the importance of recognising an embodied approach to consumption in order to reduce future farm animal suffering, highlighting that "our relationship with food is deeply visceral: we all taste and ingest foods, we incorporate them into our bodies." I understand the body as an instrument of politics in alternative food systems, after Hayes-Conroy and Hayes-Conroy (2010), paying attention to 'gut feelings' created by the taste of the meat, presentation of the meat, cut of the meat, and how the tasting/cooking experience is another 'material discursive practice' (Barad, 2007 in Roe, 2010) that allows 'halalness' to emerge. Isakjee and Carroll (2019) highlight the importance of the scale of the body in understanding halal consumption in particular, emphasising how beliefs become inscribed on the body as embodied impulses of disgust and desire. My work extends the literature in food and more-than-human geographies on embodiment by highlighting the importance of the spiritual body in visceral approaches.

The second half of the chapter ('Edibility') examines how connection with certain aspects of animals' lives and deaths "intervene with" (Evans and Miele, 2012: 6) the embodied eating experience (leading to the food becoming physically inedible, rejected by both body and soul). Roe (2006a;2006b) describes the ways in which food is deemed edible, or 'things become food', in which consumers sense material and immaterial qualities of a foodstuff to decide whether they will consume it. I push this idea of edibility further by considering how religious dietary prescriptions create different forms of contested edibility in order to emphasise the spiritual motivations that make halal consumption distinctive and to illustrate the complex ways in which halal consumers navigate consumption choices. I show how edibility is mediated by concerns for

the soul as well as for the body, encapsulated in understandings of the Islamic scriptural term '*tayyib*'. This brings the dimension of spirituality and faith into understandings of human-animal relations, meat consumption, and materiality of human and animal bodies, showing how halal meat comes to matter for the body and the soul.

Whilst work in consumption geographies has acknowledged that ethical consumption can be influenced by a range of ethical concerns including faith-based commitments (Barnett et al., 2005; Clarke et al., 2005; Barnett et al., 2017), there is scope to further explore the ways in which these commitments shape consumers' material interactions with food. Much of the geographical work on halal has explored halal slaughter (Higgin et al. 2011; Miele and Rucinska, 2015; Miele, 2016), which focuses our attention on the slaughterhouse, paying less attention to the rearing of the animal and the term 'tayyib'. The term 'tayyib' is mentioned briefly in Isakjee and Carroll (2019) and explored in more depth in anthropology (Istasse, 2015) and religious studies (Robinson, 2014), but there is a need to bring geographers' attention to the spatio-temporal dimensions of tayyib, which take into account spaces of rearing. I argue that whilst there are similar spatialities involved in secular ethical consumption and ethical halal consumption under 'tayyib', in the latter there are different temporalities, socio-material bodies and relations at stake.

This chapter draws upon primary data from the consumer survey as a source of evidence for consumers' perceptions and motivations in the meat-eating experience. Equally, it draws upon interviews with various producers (farmers, retailers, restauranteurs) who comment on their experience of consumers' buying patterns and concerns. Textual analysis from various halal meat retailers' product and marketing information is also integrated throughout as it illustrates how products are made appealing to consumers through the emphasis placed on certain material qualities.

7.2 Eating

Roe (2006b) describes the consuming experience through different 'material connections' between human consumers and nonhuman foodstuffs. Roe (2006b: 471) points out that many aspects of a foodstuff are invisible, such as GM-status, sustainability and animal welfare, although consumers often use material clues (such as size, texture and colour) "to discern such elements

and decide edibility". Evans and Miele (2012:4) use the term 'foodsensing' to describe a similar process of "reaching out to the world through flesh…as prosthetic". Through sensing various material qualities of halal meat, consumers infer information about the animal's life and death. Eden et al. (2008a) also talk about using material qualities (such as dirt/muddiness, colour), to determine certain aspects like organic-ness of food. This section goes through the different stages of the eating experience and the material qualities that come to matter at each stage, starting with the presentation of the meat, and the embodied preparation practices before ingestion, then focusing on certain material qualities sensed through ingesting the meat, including taste and texture. Through this we explore how a concern for halal motivates consumers to use their embodied knowledge to speculatively reach across the distance which separates them as consumers from the practice of rearing and slaughtering meat, as well as the extent to which this can create more ethical modes of halal meat production.

7.2.1 Preparation and presentation

Halal meat presentation affects how consumers 'sensed' animal lives and deaths. The presentation of the animal body shapes how consumers interact with it and what relations with animal death are engendered. For example, Asif suggests that the more processed or disassembled an animal body, the more disconnection there is from the animal's life and death. He recounts being sent to buy meat as a ten-year-old boy from the halal butcher, and links the fact that the chicken was available in "nice diced things without any fat in a little packet" with his feelings of alienation from meat production, where:

> "…we actually had no idea what's going on in the meat industry, what are you even eating?" (Organic halal provider interview)

This links to Jackson's (2010: 156) article, where an agricultural technologist at a major British food retailer is quoted as saying "When something's being cut up and is not visibly a piece of raw meat, people then tend to lose their [interest in understanding] where it's come from".

Yet, despite Asif's experience, there is evidence to suggest that halal meat consumers encounter less disassembled and processed animal bodies. As discussed in the previous chapter, the British

halal meat sector has historically been characterised by heavy patronage of independent butchers rather than supermarkets; only 27% of halal consumers frequently buy their meat from supermarkets, compared to the 81% for non-halal consumers (Stannard and Clarke, 2020). This could allow more opportunity for sensing aspects of animals' lives and deaths, as a butcher shop includes seeing the "silhouette of an animal" (Gillespie, 2011:155), whereas supermarkets generally provide a more de-animalised experience. This may be muted by changing trends in the halal industry; in the consumer survey, I found that younger people were more likely to buy meat from a supermarket than older generations. Moreover, a free-range halal producer who has experience in butchery for both Muslim and non-Muslim markets and argues that the former involves less waste due to more bones in "traditional *Desi* [South-Asian-origin] cuts" (Raheem regenerative farmer interview). Jalal observed that his customers wanted other cuts of meat like steaks and racks of lamb, "things that Westerners can have and have been to be able to have for a long time", halal versions of which are not easily available, and for which Asian butchers usually do not have the skills to prepare (Halal gourmet company owner interview, 2020).

In addition, changing food preparation practices may also influence consumers' material relationship with animal bodies. Trends towards more de-animalised modes of food preparation, with the rise in demand for convenience foods, can reinforce alienation from food production and hinder reconnection. In the halal meat industry, there is rising demand for convenience foods such as halal ready meals and snack items (EBLEX, 2013). This demand is similarly highlighted by Asif, who observes that younger generations are cooking less and demanding more "ready-made" meals and more halal processed options beyond burgers and samosas (Organic halal provider interview, 2020). An industry report found that over 50% of 55-65-year-old halal consumers cooked meals from scratch, compared to under 40% of 18-24-year-olds (Stannard and Clarke, 2020). This trend of less cooking is accompanied by more eating out, with halal consumers dining out more than the national average (Lever, 2020; Stannard and Clarke, 2020). My consumer survey found that the average proportion of meat consumption coming from eating out (restaurants, take-aways) was 22%, with younger people eating more takeaway meals than older people, as illustrated in figure 10. Roe (2006: 117) describes the importance of embodied practices of food preparation as they allow a more intimate "material relationship forged between the foodstuff and the human", but the rise of pre-prepared food is making these practices less prevalent. This decline of cooking and rise in convenience meals means less

embodied labour in meat preparation, perhaps increasing alienation from the process of meat production.

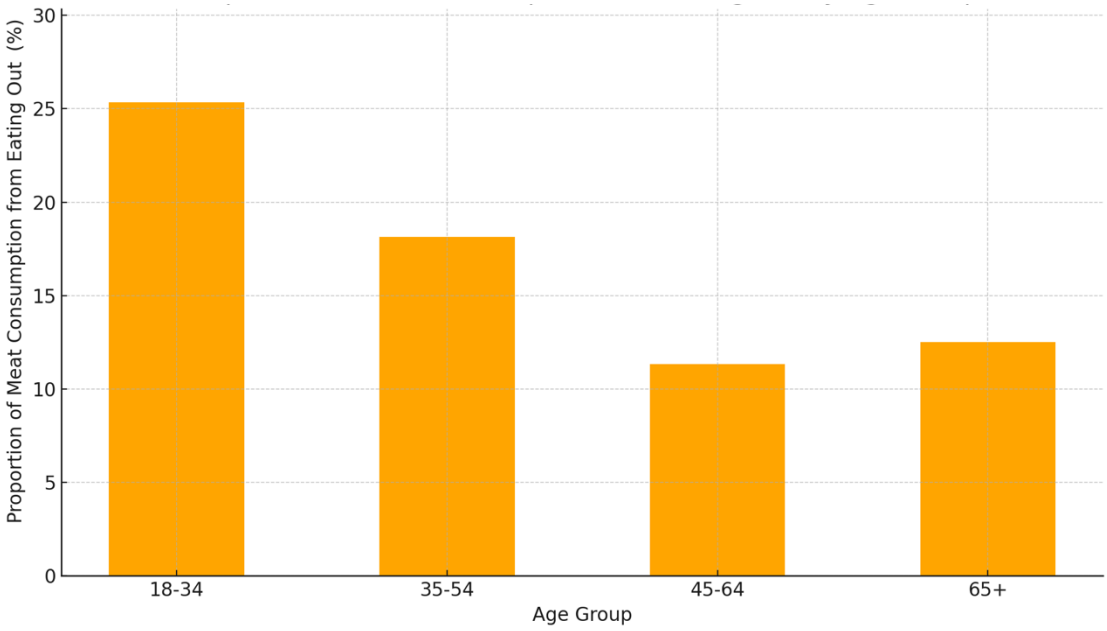

Figure 10: Proportion of meat consumption from eating out by age group

However, there is also a rising counter-trend of valuing more "overtly animal-like ingredients" such as offal and bones (Kupsala, 2018: 202). This is shown in the alternative halal meat industry, where one website selling free-range halal products advertises their "nose-to-tail" approaches (see figure 11) which create "nutrient-dense products using real foods with a zero-wastage policy".

Figure 11: Free-range halal company website marketing (February 2021 screenshot)

This company sells a range of products online including bone broths labelled 'Paya Detox Lamb & Goat Trotters' and 'Beef Oxtail and Cow Foot'. Similarly, Healthy Halal, an online business that provides subscription boxes of organic and free-range halal meat, describes their beef tongue product (see figure 12) as "the ideal cut for real nose-to-tail eaters", claiming that they are "firm advocates of the philosophy of eating everything we can from a carcass, not just the prime cuts and bits that look neat."

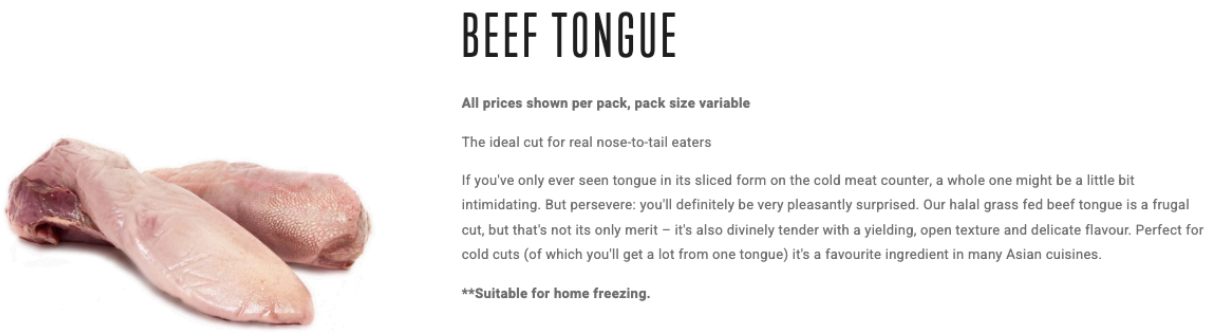

Figure 12: Healthy Halal's Beef Tongue product description [Source: Healthy Halal website] (July 2023 screenshot)

The value placed on eating the entire animal also appears in the consumer survey:

> "It's very important to me as Muslims that any meat I consume by the grace of God has been treated with respect And the animal In as little pain as possible and that no waste of the animal should occur a.k.a. every part of the animals should be used." (SR709)

Kupsala (2018), drawing upon Vialles (1988), identifies those valuing more animalised products as 'zoophages', who do not seek to erase the animal from the act of meat consumption, in opposition to 'sarcophages'. This move towards more animalised food products could allow for greater connection with the shape of the animal body and centre the animal in the act of meat consumption. How meat is presented and prepared, whether in butcher shops or online, could encourage consumers to connect with both the food's animal origins but also a broader set of values about how animals should be consumed "with respect". This is then deepened though a visceral encounter at the point at which the meat is consumed, as we shall see in the next section. The value of more animalised products is however inextricably associated with their superior

taste, texture and nutritional content, which gives rise to ambivalent effects in terms of their ability to provoke significant reflection on animals' lives and deaths, which will also be discussed in the following section.

7.2.2 Taste and texture

Taste and texture were important material qualities sensed by consumers, which were 'made to matter' by what they revealed about health, welfare and nutrition, and therefore about the food animal's life and death. Buller and Roe (2018: 96) draw attention to how welfare is "rarely if ever a stand-alone quality" and is "frequently bundled together with…taste, type of animal feed, authenticity, provenance, traceability, environmental impact, human health, bucolic aesthetics, nostalgia, naturality, even colour." This is also reflected in the emphasis on 'happier' animals tasting better (Miele, 2011; Buller and Roe, 2014). Roe (2006b) emphasises the importance of taste in particular when determining edibility, especially in the decline of the use of gardening, rearing and cooking skills by many western consumers. Mol (2021) also points to the importance of taste in relating to food and argues that attunement (eaters sensing certain properties of a food) may play a role in determining edibility. For alternative halal meat marketers the 'superficial material' quality of taste was used to infer the 'integral material' quality (Roe, 2006b) of higher nutritive content, better welfare and slower growing practices. For example, Healthy Halal's website proclaims that the animals they source are fed only on "their mother's milk and green grass", which results in a "superior and more complex taste, lower fat content and higher levels of essential nutrients." This link between taste and nutrition is also evident in the animalised, 'nose-to-tail' products described in the previous section, where the company shown in figure 11 states that the "fat, cartilage and bone marrow add plenty of flavour" and a "good source of iron". This is in line with movements that value "more animal-like qualities, such as fats, skin, fascia, and bones" due to their "taste and nutritive quality" (Kupsala, 2018: 203).

As a matter of principle, we keep food miles to a minimum en route to reduce animal stress and then onto our master butchers to ensure optimum freshness, whilst hanging the beef which enables the grains to relax into tenderness, the meat to darken, and to lose excess moisture.

Figure 13: Healthy Halal's emphasis on embodied benefits of higher welfare [Source: Healthy Halal website] (May 2021 screenshot)

Figure 13 demonstrates how higher welfare is not only linked to superior taste, but also simultaneously with a superior texture (often higher tenderness). Roe (2010: 272) argues that "The meat industry's primary interest in animal sentience is to alleviate the stress of animals because of how it affects meat quality". Roe (2010) describes how the effect of high animal stress levels (hours and even days) before slaughter can show up in pH measurements of the carcass and in the discolouration of the meat. This taste was mediated by the material effect of stress on the animal body, which, alongside the human body, becomes implicated and 'made to matter' (Evans and Miele, 2012) in the meat consumption experience. Figure 13 from Healthy Halal's website emphasises reducing animal stress to ensure "optimum freshness" and "tenderness". Moreover, the beef tongue in figure 12 is not only idealised for representing a zero-waste philosophy, but for being "divinely tender with a yielding, open texture". This shows how arguments for animal welfare are justified by aesthetic (texture and flavour) motivations (Miele and Murdoch, 2002).

7.2.3 Ethical ambivalence?

Roe (2010: 273) argues that linking animal welfare and sentience with quality motivations creates more "utilitarian" rather than "empathetic" relations. Here, the animal body is 'made to matter' through its taste and other material qualities, rather than welfare for the sake of welfare (Evans and Miele, 2012), which Miele (2011: 2087) argues is ethically "ambivalent". Miele (2011: 2076) further asserts that such motivations are "precarious" due to culturally contingent preferences, with softer meat being able to be interpreted as both an indication of higher and lower welfare

(Evans and Miele, 2012). This precarity is demonstrated by the consumer survey, where one participant associates superior tasting chicken with organic practices:

> "Chicken used to taste better and assuming was more organic years ago but now a days chicken taste bland and all the same." (SR191)

This is contradicted by another consumer who believes that organic chicken is "less palatable":

> "…the texture of organic chicken is somewhat different to non-organic chicken and is less palatable even though it's preferable from a welfare perspective. I think we have been accustomed to so much intensively reared meat that our palate has become debased." (SR452)

This ambivalence is further illustrated by the cultural contingency of tenderness/toughness preferences of sheep meat over different spaces, moments of history, cuisines and cultural practices. There is a much higher consumption of mutton amongst British Muslims than the UK national average (EBLEX, 2013), an older and tougher type of sheep meat, as opposed to the UK national preference for younger and softer lamb meat (generally younger than 8 months according to Raheem). Raheem, a regenerative halal farmer, links the rising preference for the tenderness of lamb with the change in food preparation practices:

> "Lamb suits itself to a quicker cutting method which suits our fast lifestyle – we don't want to be spending too much time on food preparation."

Raheem also argues that the fact that halal consumers are more likely to accept "lambs with less conformity" and mutton results in less waste.

> "I think if Muslims just adopt wholesale the non-Muslim approach of valuing high conformity cuts and lamb then there will certainly be more waste and probably more export, I mean a lot of beef cuts and pork cuts that the English consumer won't have get exported to Germany for sausages and things."

In the case of mutton (meat from sheep older than two years), Raheem sets up a dichotomy between texture and taste, where softer texture may interrupt better flavour:

> "we've [average English consumer] come to appreciate only lamb, anything under 8 months, we value its tenderness over its flavour, we demand the younger stock…However, it is plausible and possible (like in Scandinavian countries) – to have resurgence in certain cuts like mutton. The only thing that needs to change is the cutting process to deal with tougher meat, and what Scandinavian chefs have shown that when you do the right cuts etc, mutton can be far superior to lamb."

In order to reduce waste, Raheem suggests a recalibration of "what we perceive as quality", in order to include tougher-texture meats as high-quality. This references back to Miele's (2011) and Evans and Miele's (2012) point about the culturally contingent and fluid nature of interpreting material qualities in meat, where softer texture can be an indication of both higher and lower quality in different cultures.

Despite encouraging more precarious and utilitarian relations, making sense of animal welfare through aesthetic material qualities can still be valuable because it may be the only opportunity for reconnection accessible to many halal consumers. Mazin, a free-range halal restauranteur, felt that taste was a generative entry point into thinking about food production because for many "the only experience you have with that meat is how it tastes" (Fine dining halal restauranteur interview). Steven, his business partner, similarly felt that taste was an effective driver because if people appreciated "how the flavour changes, how the texture changes… based on whether it's organic, free-range, free-roaming…more people would be willing to spend and to engage." Similarly, Miele (2011: 2087) points out that, despite being flawed, these instrumentally driven framings of animal welfare have been valuable in terms of mobilising a large number of people, whether "caring" or "material" consumers.

Similarly, in concerns for health of the human body, this mobilises many consumers and acts as a generative entry point, but as with aesthetic taste motivations, concerns for health may have ambivalent effects as they are primarily concerned with preserving the human body. Asif, who

works for an organic halal provider and has been dealing with customer enquiries for the past five years, argued that health was an especially dominant concern, observing that most people who had "converted" to alternative halal and started to research the industry had done it for health reasons:

> "People are getting sicker, they're getting fatter, they're getting more cancer, you know, they are going to do something about it and they are going to look into that." (Organic halal provider interview)

He highlighted that this is especially the case for parents, who ask themselves "'hold on a minute, am I really going to feed them what we grew up on?'". Ahmad (organic gourmet halal provider interview) also mentioned many customers coming to him who were concerned about feeding their children healthy food. Such reflections on bodily vulnerability (in these cases sickness and youth) proved ethically generative. Health acted as a common entry point to behaviour change and reconnection with animal life and death; in the consumer survey halal meat consumption was linked to health in two distinctive ways, firstly as a motivation to consume higher-quality halal meat and secondly as a reason to reduce meat consumption overall. When asked how important certain factors were to them when making a halal meat purchase, 62% of consumers put health and nutrition as 'very important', which was higher than most other factors (see figure 14). Also, reduction of meat consumption was strongly linked to health; out of 208 people who had reduced their meat consumption between 2018 and 2019, 77% cited health as a factor, compared to 54% citing environmental sustainability and 34% mentioning animal welfare.

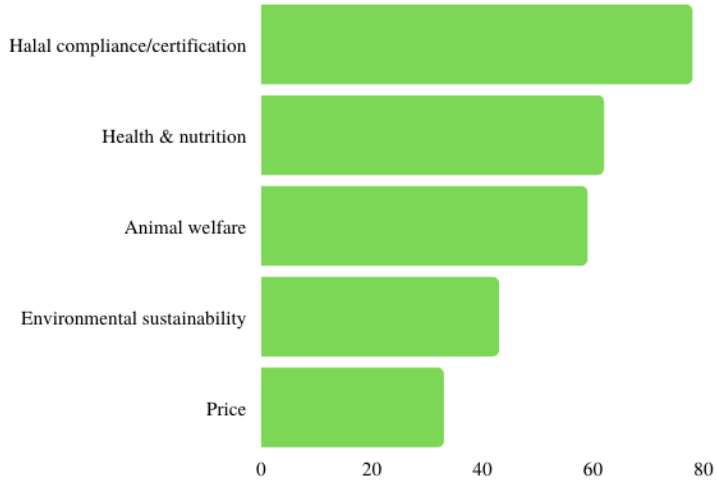

Figure 14: Percentage of consumer survey respondents who rated factors 'very important' when making a halal meat purchase.

Here, the human body comes to the fore in efforts to reconnect with food production and the animal body becomes important only so far as it affects the health, nutrition and taste experience of the human body, which can have ambivalent effects.

Thus far, this chapter has described largely similar trends in halal and non-halal consumption. In a similar way to Roe's (2006b) organic consumers, and Evans and Miele's (2012) contemporary European consumers, we see how consumers use material cues to infer characteristics of food and justify purchasing alternative (higher-welfare, more sustainable) products, and how this can give rise to ethically ambivalent effects. In the rest of the chapter, I demonstrate how faith-based motivations can temper this ambivalence and nudge such "utilitarian" relations more towards "empathetic" relations (Roe, 2010). This is suggested by how there is little evidence of halal consumers mentioning "superficial material" qualities (Roe, 2006b) such as taste and texture when discussing aspirational 'tayyib' consumption (see section 7.3.1), rather the bulk of the evidence above of valorising aesthetic material qualities comes from producers marketing alternative products to halal consumers. The analytical role of halal and its sociological and psychological relevance to meat consumption will be further discussed in section 7.3.4 where I argue that distinct temporalities, socio-material bodies and relations are at stake.

7.3 Edibility: Halal ontologies

> *"...what halal is to someone, or their idea of what halal is isn't the same as another person's beliefs and ideas of what halal meat is." (Mazin, free-range halal restauranteur interview, 2020)*

Religious permissibility was a major factor in determining edibility. Permissible/'halal' refers to whether something is permitted in Islamic law and there is a spectrum that divides acts into "1) Mandatory/required acts 2) Recommended acts 3) Permissible/neutral acts 4) Disapproved/disliked acts 5) Forbidden acts" (EBLEX, 2013). I now move on to discuss how this religious dimension connects consumers with food animals' lives and deaths in a different but intersecting way with the meat's material qualities, with material consequences for the eating experience (resulting in embodied decisions to ingest or not ingest something), allowing halal meat to become edible, inedible, or a complex constellation of both, giving rise to multiple halal ontologies. Table 3 draws on consumer experiences and narratives to map out a landscape of contested edibility, whereby knowledge of experiences of food animals (both in their rearing and death) serves to make meat either edible or inedible.

Table 3: Halal ontologies and effects produced by practices of killing & rearing

	Practice of rearing: Alternative	Practice of rearing: Intensive
Practice of killing: Dhabihah [14] [15]	**Ontology: 'Tayyib' halal** **Practice:** Slaughtered according to Islamic legal requirements and also adhering to high welfare/health/sustainability ('tayyib') standards. **Effect:** EDIBLE	**Ontology: Intensive halal** **Practice:** Technically deemed as permissible by Islamic legal requirements of slaughter but lacking in welfare or sustainability measures. Adhering to 'mandatory/required' acts in Islamic law but not incorporating 'recommended' acts and perhaps incorporating 'disapproved/disliked' acts. **Effect:** (IN)EDIBLE
Practice of killing: Non-dhabihah	**Ontology: Non-ritual halal** **Practice:** Reared to high standards of sustainability and welfare but not slaughtered according to Islamic legal process. **Effect:** (IN)EDIBLE	**Ontology: Intensive haram** **Practice:** Intensively reared chicken/beef etc not slaughtered according to Islamic legal process, or intensively reared pork. **Effect:** INEDIBLE

Jackson et al. (2019) adopt a material-semiotic approach to illustrate the way in which 'freshness' of food is multiple and fluid, while Lever et al. (2023) use this approach to demonstrate the ontological politics of kosher. In a similar way, through table 3, this chapter shows the multiple ontologies of halal, demonstrating how it is not a stable category (as illustrated in Mazin's statement at the beginning of this section), nor is it only limited to a concern with the spaces

[14] The core criteria of this process are outlined in section 4.2.

[15] Although I include this as a homogenous category for the purposes of clarity of the table, I demonstrate throughout chapter 4 how the halal killing process can take a variety of forms, relying on different methods, technologies and spaces. I also show how the killing process includes both core and additional recommended acts that aim to improve welfare, and therefore how 'tayyib' can encompass the killing process and not just rearing.

and methods of slaughter. I examine each of these ontologies in turn in the following sub-sections. The highest standard of edibility is 'tayyib halal' in the top-left corner of table 3 (section 7.3.1). The top-right (intensive halal, section 7.3.2) and bottom-left (non-ritual halal, section 7.3.3) quadrants are examples of contested edibility. The bottom-right ('intensive haram') quadrant is an example of complete inedibility, where neither the rearing nor the slaughtering methods are adhering to ritual requirements. It is not discussed in detail here because it was not a contested category. Section 7.3.4 evaluates the difference between secular ethical and alternative halal consumption.

7.3.1 'Tayyib' halal

> "*Halal…should really be the highest possible iteration of high welfare, free-range, organic, really free-roaming, so it should be synonymous with quality and welfare.*" (Fine dining halal restauranteur interview)

'Tayyib' is an Arabic term from the *Qur'an* that (mostly) appears alongside the word 'halal'. Whilst the term can have several different interpretations (Yasin, 2017), a popular interpretation amongst respondents was to link it to food, in particular healthy, ethical and sustainable food. In the open text responses to the survey question 'What do you understand the word 'tayyib' to mean?', the following words were most common: Good (214 times), pure (188 times), animal(s) (118 times), clean (114 times), halal (82 times), meat (53 times), wholesome (46 times), welfare (36 times), food (35 times), ethical (33 times), healthy (30 times) and organic (24 times).

Figure 15: Word cloud for word frequency list for answers to survey question 'What do you understand the word 'tayyib' to mean?'

Participants believed that the term 'tayyib' encompassed high levels of quality, welfare, sustainability and health. Such interpretations of 'tayyib' resonate with the 'One Health' concept, which addresses "human, animal, and environmental health in an integrated and holistic manner" (Lebov et al., 2017: 44), but also go beyond this in emphasising how failure to consume tayyib has direct implications for the individual consumer. White and Samuel (2016: 395) argue that, unlike Fairtrade, halal labelling is not "altruistic" but instead is "driven by religious necessity". Whilst there is certainly evidence in the data of this sense of religious necessity, understandings of the term 'tayyib' reveal how altruistic motivations (around animal welfare, environmental sustainability and workers' rights) can be driven by feelings of religious necessity and are taken as sacred concerns. Participants saw 'tayyib' as a holistic solution to the ills of the industry, which were perceived to be because of a "disconnect between what the religion says and what Muslims do" (Lamb slaughterhouse owner interview), and rediscovering religious traditions was seen as a way to counter this. SR190 said: "the Muslim community have forgotten the second part of Halal: 'tayyib'." SR287 felt very strongly about this and, when asked if they had any additional comments to add about the survey, simply wrote: "Devastated :(I hate to see the tayyib aspect of Islamic meat being so readily overlooked".

> "Halal and tayyib are RIGHT next to each other in the Quran and we shouldn't sacrifice the wellbeing for the animals in this evil mass slaughtering that has been normalised." (SR357)

Participants frequently referenced scriptural sources (both *Qur'an* and *hadith*) for their guide of treatment of animals and there was an effort to align with the practice of important religious figures. One survey respondent said they had decreased their meat consumption because:

> "…the prophet Muhammed (PBUH) would consume meat rarely and occasionally." (SR555)

Religious motivations for prioritising animal welfare, human health and environmental sustainability were most evident in the alternative halal meat movement. Producers in this movement marketed themselves as ethical, free-range and high-welfare and made a concerted effort to emphasise their difference from the mainstream halal industry:

> "We're in it for the ethical side of it, people are in it for the business, and that's the primary difference between the two parts of this movement." (Asif, Organic halal provider interview)

They explicitly cited religious reasons for doing so, quoting scriptural verses with the term 'tayyib' (Figure 16).

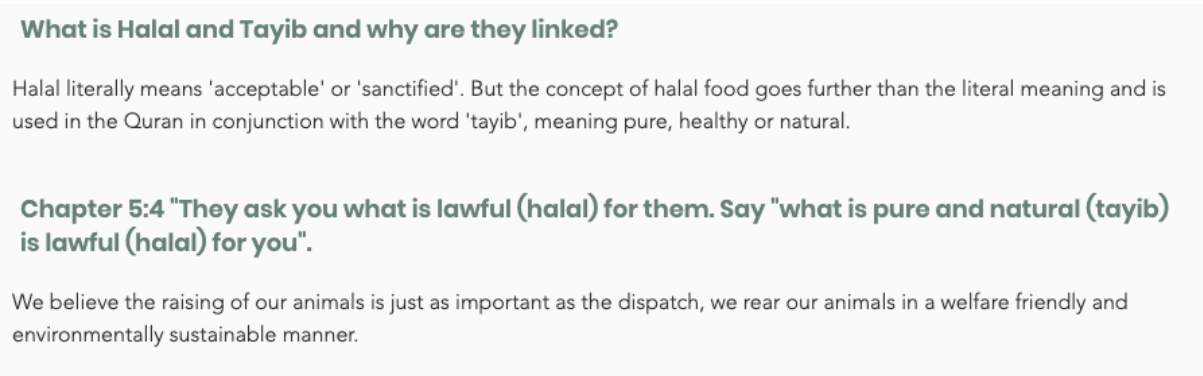

Figure 16: Willowbrook Farm Free-range halal provider website (Screenshot from May 2021)

In aspirations towards 'tayyib halal' consumption, Buller and Roe's (2018: 96) argument that animal welfare is "rarely if ever a stand-alone quality" is exemplified, but rather than being primarily bundled with associations like "taste…authenticity…nostalgia", welfare is bundled with

religious motivations such as preserving the soul, pleasing God and following scripture. This may create more "empathetic" rather than "utilitarian" (Roe, 2010) relations with non-humans.

7.3.2 Intensive halal

'Intensive halal' meat was deemed to be edible by some participants. From this category, we can see how the degree to which people saw 'tayyib' as a necessary requirement or instead a "gold standard" to which to aspire (Lamb slaughterhouse owner interview) was contested. Mazin was careful to make a distinction between correct slaughter method, which was the technical legal requirement, and the higher aspirational standards of 'tayyib' and considered intensively-reared but ritually slaughtered meat 'edible':

> "...if you take away how an animal has lived, if zabiha [slaughter method] has been done correctly, that meat itself is completely halal for consumption, and that's a clear distinction we need to make sure we have." (Fine dining halal restauranteur interview).

Although he did market higher-welfare meat, he still refused to call other ritually-slaughtered meat impermissible. By contrast, SR236 found "intensively reared animals" 'inedible', whether correctly slaughtered or not:

> "I don't think intensively reared animals should be classed as halal as they are not raised in dignity like the Halal method warrants." (SR234)

> "Intensively reared animals are not halal in my opinion as the animals have suffered." (SR464)

This sentiment is echoed in an interview with an organic retailer:

> "I don't eat chicken that's been reared conventionally, I don't believe it's halal. The life that it's led, I think it's cruelty..." (Asif, organic halal provider interview)

There were participants who did not go as far as to directly class intensive halal meat as 'inedible', but expressed disappointment towards its reductionist approach and the "preoccupation with sacrifice methods rather than animal welfare concerns." (SR92). SR336 said that "as Muslims, we only concentrate on the end result" of slaughtering, and Steven felt that "responsibility doesn't end with slaughter." (Fine dining halal restauranteur interview) There was a comparison set up between the 'spirit of the law' and the 'letter of the law', as SR270 said that halal certification bodies' focus on slaughter instead of welfare "isn't what I feel is congruent with the ethics of Islam, as it focuses on the ritual and disregards the spirit." Similarly, when asked what they understood the word 'tayyib' to mean, another SR11 referred to "a level of practice beyond that demanded by the letter of the law".

The challenging of the 'halalness' of the 'intensive halal' category is echoed in the challenging of the 'vegan-ness' of new "plant-based" products such as meat-free Burger King and McDonald's burgers, where "while these products might not contain animal ingredients, they are not vegan in the more expansive sense of the term" due to the lack of attention paid to how intensive, industrialised production methods restructured human-animal relations (Giraud, 2021: 136). Such products were therefore deemed inedible by many of the activist vegans interviewed by Giraud. Through this, she shows how there are multiple veganisms that co-exist and overlap, and in the same way, there are multiple 'halal ontologies' that emerge from consumers' making sense of halal meat.

It is important to note, however, that, for some, 'intensive halal' was in principle inedible, but practically speaking they still consumed it out of necessity, making it in edible or 'edible enough' in practice. This demonstrates how edibility is mediated by factors such as price, cultural acceptability and accessibility. Often what this results in is an incomplete edibility that does not align with consumers' aspirations to higher standards and alienates them from alternative meat choices. Ethical consumption decisions were often constrained by price; when asked how important the factors in figure 14 were in their meat purchasing decisions, SR92 stated that "all of the above hold high importance but the overriding factor is cost, therefore higher welfare meat is often sacrificed out of necessity". Similarly, SR555, who had put 'important' for animal welfare and environmental sustainability, said that if they became "better off" in the future, these would increase to 'very important', showing that more affluent people were more likely to concern

themselves with these issues. Many people alluded to the idea that quality, animal welfare and sustainability were concerns that ran along class lines, and that for "low-income households these are not immediate concerns." (SR338). This sense of 'tayyib halal' being a concern for the wealthy were supported by the consumer survey correlations, where people with higher household income were willing to pay a higher premium for an organic chicken (correlation coefficient of 0.02, statistically significant at the 1% level) (see figure 17) and, of those that had reduced their meat consumption, people with higher household income were more likely to have reduced for environmental and welfare reasons (see figures 18 and 19).

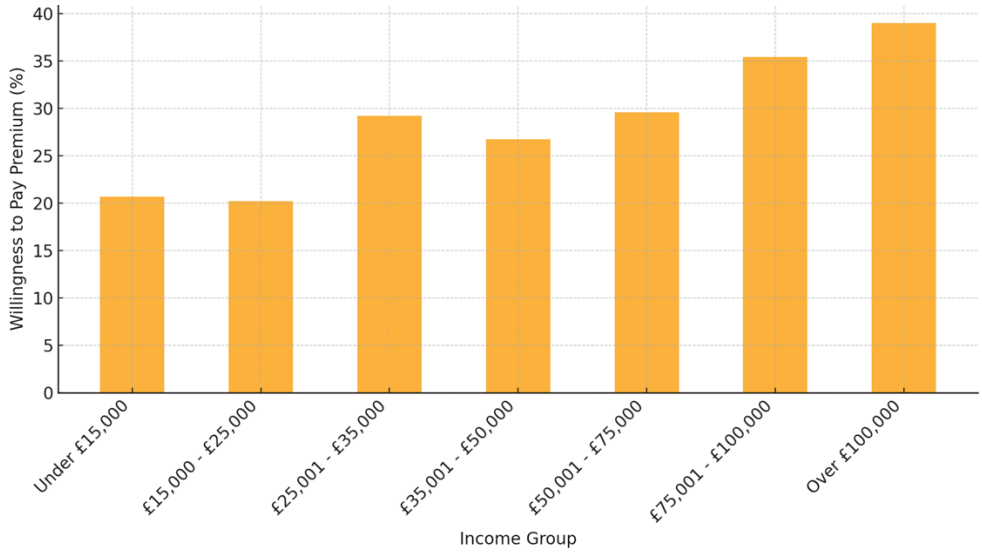

Figure 17: Willingness to pay premium for organic/free-range chicken by household income

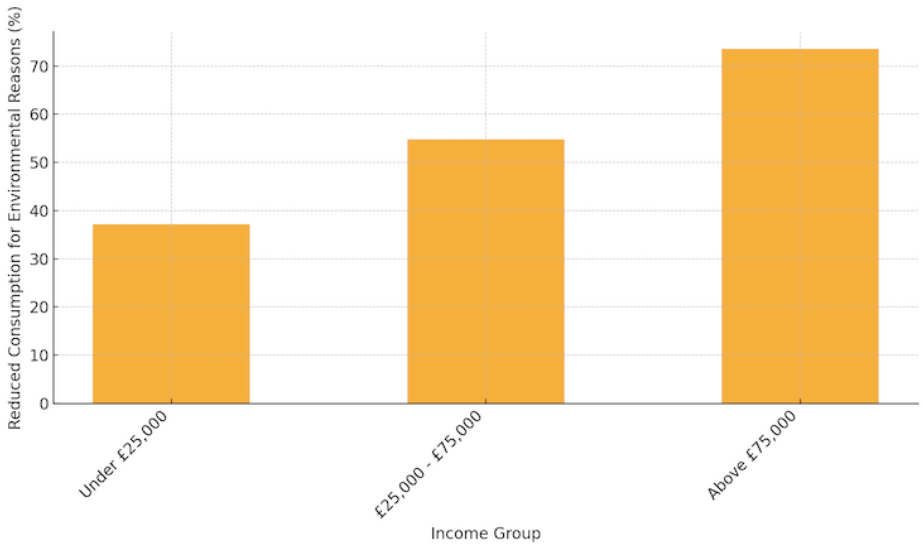

Figure 18: Likelihood of reducing consumption for environmental reasons by household income

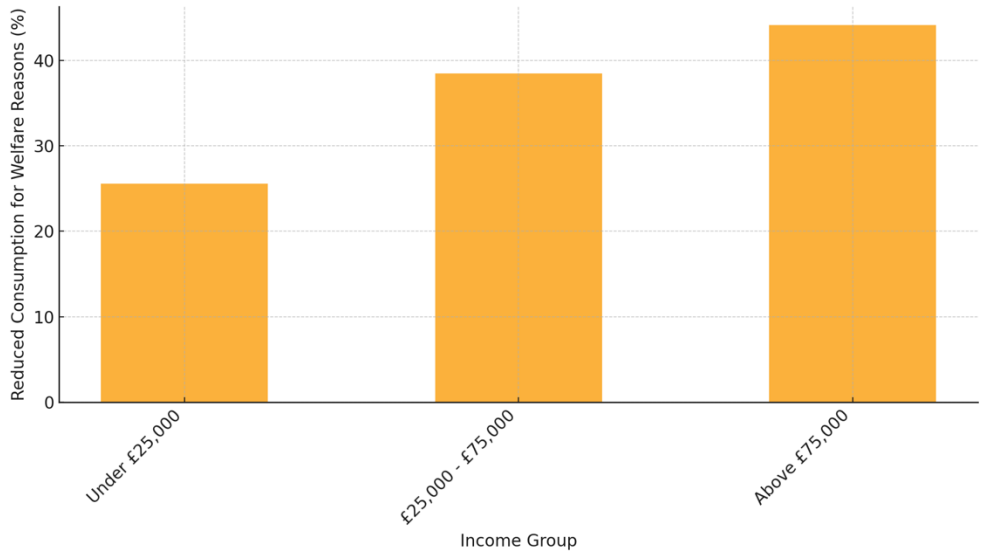

Figure 19: Likelihood of reducing consumption for animal welfare reasons by household income

For some, negotiating the constraints of price and accessibility had the consequence of the embodied decision to consume 'tayyib halal' meat but less of it. There was a constant refrain throughout the data, not just from the producers of the alternative movement, but in the consumer survey, of consuming 'less but better quality' meat to address the higher price of higher welfare alternatives.

> "I really want to do the right thing and buy organic and I try as much as I can but it's expensive and hard to access - so I've sort of struck the balance by just eating less meat." (SR543)

> "I have a limited budget (I'm not 'loaded'). Yet I have often prescribed: pay twice as much, consume half the amount. This is a simplistic formula I use as a way to make the right changes to the industry." (SR600)

'Intensive halal' demonstrates how there are contradictory understandings of edibility of the same type of halal meat product. It also brings to light how even the same understanding of edibility can give rise to multiple differing implications for the embodied eating experience, where halal consumers who classed such meat as 'inedible' either chose not to consume it or ate it with conflicting emotions due to practical constraints.

7.3.3 Non-ritual halal

The edibility of 'non-ritual halal' meat was highly contested. It was deemed by some to be edible due to high rearing and welfare standards. For example, SR709 believed it would be "less sinful" to eat "organic fairly treated meat than meat cruelly obtained but stamped halal". This was echoed by another two respondents who believed that because of people not following the "correct guidelines", they "sometimes feel that is just best to eat organic food that is not halal" (SR285) while another (SR71) for the same reasons often preferred to buy "an organic free-range non-zabiha [halal slaughter method] chicken over the "halal"".

> "Animal welfare…is *MORE important to me than whether some guy mindlessly said "bismillah" during slaughter*." (SR71)

Similarly, SR353 described how they started eating non-halal-certified meat due to "becoming increasingly aware of animal welfare and so wanted to eat better over eating halal." However, it is important to note that this is very contested, as 'non-ritual halal' remains inedible to many halal consumers due to the lack of adherence of ritual requirements of slaughter. Even those who aligned themselves with 'non-ritual halal', such as SR709 who is quoted above, framed this more as a personal conviction than a popular belief, adding the caveat that "I'm not sure others would agree". Likewise, SR600, whilst they did not mention higher welfare/alternative meat explicitly, made sure to caveat their statement that they considered "ordinary supermarket meat (beef, chicken, lamb)" to be edible and "within the scope of "halal" meat", with the addition that "I never cook regular supermarket meat for my guests or my wider family, out of respect for them."

7.3.4 Sacred/secular: the analytic role of halal

Throughout this chapter, we have seen how there are similar spatialities and practices involved in ethical halal consumption under 'tayyib' and secular ethical consumption (in terms of focusing on spaces of animal rearing as well as animal killing). In fact, this similarity is something that was openly acknowledged by several producers in the halal industry:

> "…whatever you are seeing in the non-Muslim community, we tend to take that up probably a couple of years later, if not more." (Asif, organic halal provider interview)

For example, he argues that the "eco, farmers' market sort of thing" is coming from the "western movement" and influencing the halal industry. This idea is echoed by Riaz:

> "We seem to see trends in the general sector and then that comes into the halal sector." (Lamb slaughterhouse owner interview)

That said, whilst there may be similar practices in secular ethical consumption, I argue that in halal consumption there are different socio-material bodies, relations and temporalities at stake. Firstly, halal consumption involves different socio-material bodies due to the invocation of the soul as well as the physical body. For other dietary choices like veganism, often what is at stake is the body of the eater (health) or the body of the animal, and human-animal relations more widely (Giraud, 2021), yet in the halal diet, the soul is also at stake. Spiritual embodiment of halal meat consumption is evident from the linking of the very consumption of food with spiritual wellbeing alongside health and environmental or welfare commitments. Iman declared that "food is deeply spiritual, and that consuming "toxic processed food" was not fulfilling the primary function of food in the first place, which was to "nourish our mind, our body and our spirit" (Halal nutrition company owner interview). Similarly, Grace remarked that there was "a lot to be said" about the fact that, referencing the Garden of Eden story, "food was the original sin", alluding to the effects of great spiritual detriment (and benefit) from the act of food consumption (Halal animal welfare campaigner interview). Similarly, SR280 stated that there were "physical and spiritual benefits" to consuming halal meat. SR674 also made this link when they argued that the widespread consumption of fast-grown "synthetic" chicken was leading to abandonment of morals and "shameless" behaviour by current generations, whilst SR117 believed that a "Godly approach" translated to being conscious about "the volume and quality of meat we consume".

This discussion about spiritual effects is complicated by the fact that it also occurs in ostensibly secular domains of food consumption. This is highlighted by Susan:

> "It's funny, when you talk to vegetarians about why they don't eat certain things, they are very much like Muslims, it is very much about personal purity." (Slaughterwoman interview)

Susan's comments echo those who have noted how it is becoming more difficult to distinguish between faith-based and non-faith-based foodways. Food self-denial and consumption are increasingly "secular-spiritual" pursuits, where adherents "seek to recover order, meaning and purpose without making any personal commitment to…institutional religion" (Grumett, 2014: 4). Zeller (2014: 295) examines vegetarianism and locavorism as "quasi-religious foodways', where dietary practices are not only imbued with meaning but represent to their practitioners "ways of life, systems of values, and symbols of meaning". He found that vegetarians and locavores used overwhelmingly religious language, describing becoming vegetarian as a 'conversion' and linking avoiding certain foods with cultivating a 'healthy soul'. According to Zeller (2014), associating diets with a wider spiritual significance is a way for adherents to alleviate their anxiety and disillusionment with the contemporary global food system. Such combinations of religious and non-religious motivations for food "confound neat understandings of religion" (Finch, 2014: xii). Although there is evidence of soul-based language amongst non-faith-based communities (e.g. Zeller 2014 on vegetarians and locavores), the more popular concerns in lifestyles like veganism are health, animal ethics and restructuring human-animal relations (Giraud, 2021). Halal consumption in my study involved more frequent invocation of the socio-material body of the soul, although this is not to be overstated due to evidence of similar language used elsewhere.

As well as involving the soul, halal consumption also involves different relations at stake. Giraud (2021) argues that veganism is fundamentally tied to a commitment to restructuring human-animal relations. Both involve a restructuring of animal-human relations but in different ways. The relationship with animals in 'tayyib' halal consumption is mediated by a relationship to a divine figure, where Muslims are encouraged to see animals as fellow members of creation (Masri, 2006). Many respondents mentioned a religious obligation to look after animals, which was linked to respecting fellow members of creation, as illustrated by Steven:

> "…if an animal is one of Allah's creations, then it has to be treated with the utmost care and respect." (Fine dining halal restauranteur interview)

Responsibilities towards animals were also derived from believing in the divinely mandated place of humans as custodians over animals:

> "*Allah Taala* [God Almighty] has given us rights in terms of what we can do with animals…[but] we've also got responsibilities" (Riaz, lamb slaughterhouse owner interview)

> "But as we are '*khaleefas*' [stewards] of the earth, we need to ensure we conduct ourselves with the rest of creation appropriately in a caretaking and responsible manner." (SR336)

By contrast, in Giraud's (2021) characterisation of veganism it seems to be about a creating more direct and equal relationship with animals/non-humans.

Moreover, halal consumption involves different temporalities, often extending to beliefs about the afterlife; when asked whether they would be willing to pay more for an intensive versus organic/free-range chicken, SR233 answered: "I would gladly pay more in the *dunya* [current life] to save my *akhira* [afterlife]". 'Tayyib halal' was also often embedded in a historical tradition. Mazin argued that the "organic, free-range" "gold standard" was part of reclaiming an ancient Islamic tradition:

> "…we had it 1400 years ago, we've just kind of lost our way a little bit! Due to demand and facilities and mass production and things like that." (Fine dining halal restauranteur interview)

Grace likewise described how she was accused of being a "hippie Muslim" jumping on the tayyib "trend", and argued that:

> "I don't feel tayyib is a trend…tayyib has always been in the Qur'an, from 1400 years ago." (Halal animal welfare campaigner interview)

The sociological, cognitive and material resonances of halal consumption are therefore evident through the unique socio-material bodies, relations and temporalities invoked.

7.4 Conclusion

This chapter has highlighted how both the animal body, the human body, and the human soul come to matter in the process of halal meat consumption, shaping halal consumers' ability to reconnect with how animals live and die in spaces of food production. These halal meat materialities co-generate different sets of ethical relations. The act of consuming meat can bring people closer to the animal, and therefore, at times to a concern for its welfare during rearing as well as its mode of slaughter. The eaten animal's body, and the material traces left by the animal's mode of life and death, come to matter in meat consumption in an ethically ambivalent manner, as they are driven by instrumental rather than purely empathetic concerns.

The soul of the eater also comes to matter; there is an important process of spiritual embodiment in halal meat consumption, where seemingly secular ethical concerns around animal welfare, environmental sustainability and working conditions are driven by religious compliance. This demonstrates the importance of not setting up a dichotomy between religious practice and ethical concerns, or between secular and faith-based foodways. What counts as 'edible' halal meat is contested, as shown by table 3 which illustrates how religious permissibility and knowledge of rearing practices shape multiple, often contradictory understandings of edibility. Through my discussion of each of the halal ontologies that emerge, I show how these different understandings of edibility give rise to different embodied decisions. I also demonstrate how the same understanding of edibility can give rise to multiple differing implications for the embodied eating experience, such as in the example of 'intensive halal', where halal consumers chose not to eat it at all, ate it with conflicting emotions due to price constraints, or chose to consume less of it.

There is a blurring of sacred and secular motivations, demonstrating how "ethical and religious practices bleed through the constructed boundary of religious/secular." (Isakjee and Carroll, 2019:12). 'Tayyib' shows how such categories should be reworked, as 'secular' concerns such as animal welfare become spiritually significant. Equally, 'sacred' concerns such as purity are implicated in non-religious dietary choices. For halal consumers specifically, faith-based motivations can temper the ethical ambivalence of relying on aesthetic material cues and nudge

such “utilitarian” relations more towards “empathetic” relations (Roe, 2010). This is suggested by how there is very little evidence of halal consumers mentioning “superficial material” qualities (Roe, 2006b) such as taste and texture when discussing aspirational ‘tayyib’ consumption (see section 7.3.1), rather the bulk of the evidence above comes from producers marketing alternative products to halal consumers. Most of the comments made on material qualities of halal meat were from producers, whereas in the ‘tayyib’/immaterial connections section of the chapter, there is a shift in the weight of evidence towards consumers. This suggests that producers are more preoccupied with established consumer patterns and what they practically purchase, whereas consumers are more focused on their aspirational rather than current consumption. Given the more ambivalent relations between material connections (presentation, taste, texture) and edibility in the ‘Eating’ section and the much clearer associations between ‘tayyib’ and ‘edibility’, this suggests that for halal consumers, religious practice is a stronger motivation towards ethical consumption than material qualities of the meat.

8. Conclusion

1) *How do the geographies of halal meat production and consumption shape British Muslim relations to animal life and death?*
2) *How does the study of halal meat in the UK inform work in geography on the ethics and politics of meat consumption?*

This thesis has been a journey of tracing the contours of the distance and proximity relations to animal death (and lives of animals reared for death) involved in halal meat production and consumption, focusing on several key practices in the process to help bring these into focus: slaughtering, witnessing, purchasing and eating. Halal consumers' encounters with rearing and killing through these practices, despite being distinctive from non-halal consumers' encounters in important ways, refuse straightforward narratives of comparatively more distance or more proximity. I organise the contributions of my study of the geographies of British halal meat production and consumption to the geographical and wider literature on the ethics and politics of meat consumption around several key themes below:

8.1 Identity

The study of British Muslims and meat production and consumption reveals the complex and intersectional nature of identity, illustrating how racial, cultural, religious, ethno-religious, minority/majority, self/other, diaspora, migrant, national, urban/rural, gender and generational manifestations of identity (and many diverse combinations of each of these, including some and not others) both shape and can be shaped by relations with animal killing and rearing. Identities influence animal killing relations and relations with animal killing shape identities in a multi-directional process that is difficult to disentangle.

Attempting to characterise how distanced or not British Muslims are from animal killing and rearing for meat production is not a neutral exercise, where proclamations of their heightened proximity to or distance from animal death are entangled in their status as a minority community (either reinforcing stereotypes of rural disconnection or those of cruelty and barbarity). I specifically show the complexities of minority identity with respect to British Muslims, who are

constructed as more visible (due to lack of whiteness and religious/cultural dress codes), growing (with higher fertility rates than the rest of British population - MCB, 2022) and more dangerous (with concerns around extremism and terrorism) than other (ethnic and/or religious) minority communities. This distinctive 'minority within minorities' identity means that the relations of distance and proximity that emerge from halal meat production and consumption in the UK have effects not just for halal consumers, but also on 'majority identity'. In other words, their religious identity brings up questions around secular and/or Christian identity and their urban identity brings up questions around rural identity. By extension, their relations with animal death (whether characterised by closeness or distance or complex combinations of both) create confrontations with animal killing and rearing relations, practices and assumptions in wider British society, shaping overall British distance/proximity relations, and sometimes also spilling over into regional European identity and animal relations (Lever, 2018).

Identity also shapes the 'politics of sight', where that which is usually invisible is made visible with the aim of ethical and political transformation (Pachirat, 2013). The complexity of these sites of encounter created by this multi-layered identity shape the ability to be affected and/or transformed by animal death (for instance, associations with death can make British Muslims defensive against certain possibly ethically transformative movements, or such associations with death can allow them to be more mindful and reflective of their consumption practices), showing that a politics of sight is always also a politics of site, and that identity complicates the relationship between visibility/witnessing and ethical transformation.

8.2 Spaces, times and scales of production/consumption

By drawing upon a large (and fairly representative) sample size of consumers of a variety of ages, genders, incomes, ethnicities, regions of the UK, degrees of religious conservatism and levels of meat consumption, alongside textual analysis of a variety of sources, interviews with industry leaders and 'alternative halal' stakeholders, I have given an in-depth insight into British halal consumers' preferences, habits, motivations, frustrations, anxieties and hopes for current and future halal meat practices. Through this, I have opened up the category of 'halal' and pointed to the existence of multiple, overlapping, reinforcing and contradicting 'halal ontologies'. This is firstly through the purchasing chapter, where halal assurance/certification takes many forms and consumers take many diverse knowledge intermediaries to determine halalness; for some

consumers, a neon 'halal sign' outside a restaurant is sufficient, whilst others need to have a direct relationship with the farmer and have personally witnessed the slaughter. Secondly, in the eating chapter, I show how different levels of edibility emerge within the category of halal, encompassing elements of the food animal's life and death. In particular, I show how **space**, **time** and **scale** shape this variety of halal ontologies:

I have shown the highly spatial nature of halal production and consumption, and how spaces come to matter in shaping distance/proximity relations, but also crucially temporal and scalar dimensions to this. I have engaged in detail with a wealth of space-times across the production and consumption process, including the modern British halal slaughterhouse, 'domestic' sites of killing abroad, childhood memories, British ruralities, halal butcher shops, 'alternative halal' farms and the halal eater's body and soul (whereas much existing work in geography on halal is limited to one or a few of these space-times).

This study has also provided a strong sense of how distance/proximity relations and halal meat production and consumption are changing over time as well as space, focusing in on several temporal shifts. These include accounts of looser slaughter regulations and informal, 'DIY' slaughter networks and halal meat provisioning in the UK in the 1970s, and reports of how British slaughter regulations/slaughterhouses have become stricter even in the past 10-15 years. These temporal shifts also include the history of the halal butcher shop and its significance for some of the earliest Muslim migrants from the 1940s onwards, the emergence of new certification bodies in the 1990s and early 2000s, the emergence of alternative halal farms from 2007 onwards, the acceleration of the mainstreaming of halal with supermarkets and fast-food chains starting to offer halal options in the past decade, and the emergence of Muslim-owned fine dining restaurants in the past five years. Statistical survey correlations across different generations helped me convey a quantitatively and qualitatively robust sense of these changing trends, with younger consumers more likely to buy halal meat from supermarkets, less likely to buy halal meat from independent halal butchers, have a higher proportion of meat consumption from eating out (restaurants, takeaways), eat more beef and less sheep-meat than older generations.

As well as the highly spatial and temporal nature of halal meat consumption, I provide insights on its multi-scalar nature, and on understudied scales. The 'knowledge fix' assumes each individual consumer makes independent choices for themselves, but I have shown that they are not standalone entities, but embedded in local, regional, community and familial scales. A comparatively under-explored scale in halal consumption (even though Isakjee and Carroll (2019) briefly mention the importance of the home) is the scale of households and families. In the purchasing chapter, respondents spoke of consumption decisions being shaped by spouses, parents, and children. Again, there are specific contextual factors of British Muslim identity and culture shaping this, such as larger average family size (MCB, 2015), more emphasis on familial ties (Standard and Clarke, 2020), and more intergenerational living arrangements). I also do not take this scale of the household as homogenous by showing that there are many different types of family dynamics and family members, and there are certain gendered and aged dynamics and divisions of labour that could be unpacked further at the scale of the family such as the prevalence of women in food purchasing and preparation roles (Armanios and Ergene, 2020).

Other scales that I engage with in the purchasing chapter are the importance of the local community and neighbourhood scale (shown in the perceived 'local-ness' of the halal butcher shop and the repeated mentions of specific areas such as East London) and regional scales (many references to the north of England and how preferences regarding stunning and certification bodies vary according to north/south divides). The scale of the body (and the soul) is also explored in detail in chapter 7 on eating, a scale that has also received detailed attention by Isakjee and Carroll (2019). These scales all affect production and consumption practices. "Information about food is contingently valued in the context of intermediaries, location in time and space and histories of relationships with food providers, both faceless and personally known." (Eden et al., 2008: 1053). I have added to work on how spaces such as butcher shops act as knowledge intermediaries explored by Eden et al. (2008a) but shown additional cultural and religious resonances of these spaces not attended to in such literature.

The insights gained from this study on spaces, times and scales of halal meat consumption were facilitated by my methodology. I have contributed methodologically to geographical studies of meat consumption and production through a mixed methods approach. I have given both a high-level view of overall trends (through the large sample size of the consumer survey and textual

analysis and participant observation of industry steering meetings and industry stakeholder conferences) and in-depth qualitative and ethnographic engagement (through interviews, farm/abattoir visits and qualitative survey comments) of the deeply personal, embodied, visceral, spiritual and contingent nature of halal meat consumption. Vivid anecdotes from individual interviewees or survey respondents were supplemented by statistical survey analysis of different correlations. As well as getting a sense of how trends were changing over *time* through statistical analysis as mentioned above, statistical analysis allowed me to get a sense of how different elements of identity shaped decisions (for instance, those with higher household income were more willing to pay more for an organic chicken and more likely to have decreased meat for health, welfare or sustainability reasons, whilst older people were more likely to be concerned about health in meat purchasing). Information on ethnicity would have added further richness to my study. Although not included as a question in the survey as previous industry reports had provided detailed breakdowns of ethnicity and meat consumption (see EBLEX (2013) and Standard and Clarke (2020)), given the intriguing insights in the qualitative data around diaspora, country of origin and cultural identity, I might have benefited from additionally analysing data around ethnic groups' animal death relations.

I was able to use the quantitative data to 'test' assertions/possible trends from the qualitative data, in particular the interviews, such as checking for the existence of knowledge gaps that producers claimed were present (for instance, producers posited that there was a widespread misconception that the HFA and HMC were government bodies, which did not come through in the survey). There were also some unexpected aspects revealed by the survey that could be explored further. For example, despite statements from interviews that younger consumers were more likely to be interested in meat reduction, vegetarianism, welfare and sustainability, I found that older people in the survey ate less meat on average and were more likely to find welfare and environmental sustainability important in their purchasing decisions, and there was no correlation of younger people being more concerned about health, welfare or environmental sustainability. I also did not find evidence that older generations were more likely to have witnessed halal slaughter, despite accounts of more visible and informal slaughter in earlier decades. A wealth of other statistical correlations emerged from the data that provide directions for further investigation, but were not in the scope of this project. For instance, patterns emerged around regional identities, with those residing in London and the South-East more likely to eat

beef and other meat products such as goat and duck than other regions of the UK. There were particularly strong correlations around gender (Women were more likely to consume less meat, more likely to have decreased meat consumption, would pay higher premium for an organic/free-range chicken, were less likely to want to see slaughter or to have been to a slaughterhouse). My interview with one of the only British halal slaughterwomen also provided some very interesting provocations about the role of gender in halal meat production and consumption.

8.3 Ritual

I have helped to throw up questions about the role of ritual in modern secular Western society, of which the halal ritual in the industrial slaughterhouse is one striking example.

What is the effect and possible benefit of ritual as a discursive framing for animal killing? Is ritual antithesis to or especially suited to the space of the modern slaughterhouse? In the slaughtering chapter, I show the tensions and challenges of bringing the halal ritual into the modern slaughterhouse, and the tensions between commercial halal and 'ideal' halal slaughter. I show the difficulties of situating the ritual in the space of the modern slaughterhouse, which makes it difficult to cultivate the radical closeness to death and the sacred imperative to be affected in the Qurbani ritual and beyond. The ritual of halal slaughter was perceived to transform 'improper violence' into 'proper violence', but in the average British halal slaughterhouse, the pursuit of 'proper violence' was undermined by the conditions of 'cruel intimacies' created by large-scale slaughter and worker vulnerabilities. The study of how the halal ritual creates meaning around life, death and consumption offers insights for killing in other contexts, such as the non-halal modern slaughterhouse. Can ritual in some form be productively incorporated into non-halal slaughterhouses (such as the protective aspects of a ritual for slaughterhouse workers) and how can ritual be better implemented in the halal slaughterhouse to leverage the perceived benefits of protection and mindfulness? Jeske (2023) shows how ethical meat producers 're-enchant' slaughter by having quasi-religious rituals, showing one example of how halal discursive traditions can move out of halal slaughter and address postdomestic animal relations.

Also well as different space-times of slaughter, I have provided a detailed account of different methods of killing across the thesis, and the distance/proximity relations and affective resonances engendered by them: non-stun sheep slaughter, electrical head-only sheep stunning,

small-scale chicken slaughter in cones, upside down shackled chicken slaughter, slow slaughter, hand slaughter, and contrasts with gas stun pig slaughter. As well as opening up the halal meat category, I have opened up the category of death and killing. Whilst there has been a lot of work (in meat science, geography) on acceptability, pain levels of stun versus non-stun slaughter, I have provided a detailed account of the different affective resonances and distance/proximity relations provoked by stun versus non-stun slaughter in the slaughtering chapter.

8.4 The soul

Similar to the previous point on ritual, this theme is also about the interface between the sacred and the secular, but is less about doing things in a specific way and order (ritual), but more wider discursive framings of the soul. I have filled a gap on work in halal geographies of UK on 'alternative halal', providing the first in-depth study of 'tayyib' in geography. Through this, I show the importance of spiritual embodiment in halal meat consumption, where seemingly secular ethical concerns around animal welfare, environmental sustainability and working conditions are driven by a desire for religious compliance. This demonstrates the importance of not setting up a dichotomy between religious practice and ethical concerns, or between secular and faith-based foodways. Religious permissibility shapes multiple, often contradictory understandings of edibility. Through my discussion of each of the halal ontologies that emerge, I show how these different understandings of edibility give rise to different embodied decisions.

There is a blurring of sacred and secular motivations, demonstrating how "ethical and religious practices bleed through the constructed boundary of religious/secular." (Isakjee and Carroll, 2019:12). 'Tayyib' shows how such categories should be reworked, as 'secular' concerns such as animal welfare become spiritually significant. Equally, 'sacred' concerns such as purity are implicated in non-religious dietary choices. For halal consumers specifically, faith-based motivations can temper the ethical ambivalence of relying on aesthetic material cues and nudge such "utilitarian" relations more towards "empathetic" relations (Roe, 2010). Given the more ambivalent relations between material connections and edibility in the 'Eating' section and the much clearer associations between 'tayyib' and 'edibility', this suggests that for halal consumers, religious practice is a stronger motivation towards ethical consumption than material qualities of the meat.

8.5 Materiality

The lens of materiality is key in bringing our attention to distance/proximity relations. Firstly, in the slaughtering chapter I show how halal slaughter is a material-discursive practice and a series of materials and bodies are key in allowing halal meat to come into being. The materiality of technologies like the stun gun come to matter because they bring into focus debates around the translation of ritual to modern slaughterhouse, and the materiality of the human body is important in discussions of labour, alienation, stigma, responsibility and the 'Muslim-ness' of the slaughterer. The materiality of the animal body during slaughter comes to matter because it reacts in different ways to stun versus non-stun slaughter, by convulsing and expelling blood differentially and therefore involving different levels of immediacy with the act of killing. Secondly, in the eating chapter, I demonstrate how the materiality of the animal body is important in the eating process (in processes of cooking, deboning, cutting, chewing, tasting, digesting) and comes to matter in ambivalent ways due to creating more utilitarian rather than caring/empathetic relations, but perhaps spiritual embodiment /the materiality of the soul can be harnessed here to move towards more caring relations. Again, cultural identity is important here because it shapes preferences for certain meat materialities over others (more offal, more bones, less conformity, tougher texture), which create different types of relations to the animal body.

8.6 Future directions

8.6.1 Animal worlds

I have spoken in detail about proximity to animal lives and deaths in the meat consumption process, but very much from a human perspective. There is scope to go further methodologically to access animal experiences, particularly in trying to understand how the animal feels during the ritual halal process, and trying to navigating the halal slaughterhouse and rituals such as Qurbani from ovine or 'chickenly' perspectives and social relations (Donati, 2019). I have spoken at length about the distance/proximity relations of the halal ritual and the implications for humans (for slaughterworkers in particular), but I could also investigate further the effects of the halal ritual (such as the prayer) on animals. Another area for expansion regarding animal worlds and perspectives is further considering animal joy, pleasure and individual subjectivities in halal meat production, leaning "more towards a politics of hope than critique" (Donati, 2019: 119).

Whilst there were glimpses of producers attending to animal individual personalities and pleasures, these were limited in the scope of the animal agriculture contexts, and they also could be better communicated to consumers.

8.6.2 International context

Further work could explore international halal meat production and distance/proximity relations. Debates about the meaning of halal and whether it should have a wider and a more holistic meaning are echoed in large global halal meat production centres, where, in the wake of labour exploitation scandals in Brazil, some certification bodies "have responded by reassembling and/or re-adjusting some of their practices and starting to explicitly condemn exploitation as not halal" as well as stating that certification should also take into account soil and environmental health (Husseini de Araújo, 2019: 226). Therefore, it would be interesting to explore these conversations outside of a British, or indeed a European context, especially for the world's largest exporters of halal meat such as Brazil . Studies like Lever and Miele (2012) examine and compare across different European (UK, France, Norway) and global contexts (Malaysia). Looking at other contexts would also be in line with Mills and Gökarıksel's (2014) call for the need for work in religious geographies on Muslims to go beyond Muslims in diaspora in Euro-America, but also understand Muslims in Muslim-majority societies. Given that a lot of my insights around British Muslims' distance/proximity relations with animal death are that they are entangled with their diaspora identity and status as a religious and ethnic minority community, it would be interesting to explore how Muslims in Muslim-majority countries understand these questions of halal meat, belonging, distance and proximity with animal death, and how their distance/proximity relations differ to those of British Muslims.

8.6.3 Education and dissemination

There is scope for me to extend the project further with the data I have already collected (there was a wealth of data that did not end up in the thesis around certification, regulation, national standards, financial constraints and the role of government as a knowledge intermediary in certification). Throughout my fieldwork and research period, there was a constant stress by industry stakeholders and consumers about the need for more education, but stakeholders embedded in the system had limited bandwidth to deliver this education that was so urgently

demanded by everyone. When discussing things that needed to change in the industry, and "legitimate questions" related to overconsumption of meat, meat pricing and food waste, Riaz, a slaughterhouse owner and influential industry player said:

> "I don't have the answer to that, when you're in the system if you like, you're only dealing with the reality of it, as opposed to the bigger picture of what the reality should be."

> "…for us as businesses it's very expensive and time-consuming to educate consumers." (Iman, Halal nutrition business owner interview)

Similarly, Steven, a fine dining halal restaurant owner, spoke of a project they were working on to get regenerative farmers and people within the halal industry together, and having made initial contact with stakeholders on both sides and received very enthusiastic responses, but being limited by time and bandwidth:

> "The only reason it hasn't happened yet is because we've not had time! We're a small restaurant!… we've been stuck in service here and running this place that we haven't managed to pin everything down yet."

Likewise, Asif, an organic halal provider, had an intention to develop the education section on their website, but "…because we're so small we don't really have time. I've got the whole FAQs that I want to set up, it's just when you're small…it's hard to get a lot of stuff done."

As well as limited time and resources, there was evidence of a shifting of responsibility for education onto other stakeholders in the supply chain. I propose using my fieldwork and findings (from both within and beyond the thesis) to produce an interactive educational resource with the intention of connecting and educating halal consumers about food animals' lives and deaths.

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Appendices

Appendix A: Consumer survey

A Survey on British Halal Meat Consumption

1. Consent

General Information

This online survey explores halal meat consumption patterns in the United Kingdom. The researcher (Hibba Mazhary, School of Geography and the Environment, University of Oxford) is studying the British halal meat industry as part of a PhD project. This survey is aimed at Muslims living in the UK. Please read the information below and in this document (https://docs.google.com/document/d/1yPYA4aDbCkArqw2EZBztlUgdwUR85WTDWbCu3b2HxG0/edit?usp=sharing)before agreeing to participate by ticking the boxes below. You may ask any questions before deciding to take part by contacting the researcher at hibba.mazhary@ouce.ox.ac.uk. The survey should take less than 10 minutes to complete. No background knowledge is required.

Do I have to take part?

Please note that your participation is voluntary. If you do decide to take part, you may withdraw at any point during the questionnaire for any reason by closing the browser. Your answers will not be saved unless you press the submit button at the end of the survey.

How will my data be used?

The only personal data that will be collected is an email address for those who wish to be entered into a prize draw for a £30 Amazon voucher, which is optional. The email addresses will be separated from the rest of the data, and data analysis will only take place after this process of anonymisation. The email addresses will be used only for the purposes of selecting the winner of the prize draw, and destroyed as soon as this process is complete. Your data will be stored in a password-protected file and will be used as part of the researcher's PhD thesis and further academic publications, and all reasonable measures will be taken to ensure that they remain confidential. Research data will be stored for a minimum of three years after publication or public release.

Please note that you may only participate in this survey if you are 18 years of age or over. *

☐ I certify that I am 18 years of age or over

If you have read the information above and agree to participate with the understanding that the data (including any personal data) you submit will be processed accordingly, please check the relevant box below to get started. *

☐ Yes, I agree to take part.

2. Your consumption

The next few questions refer to your average meat consumption in 2019 (therefore not including any recent COVID-19-related changes to consumption). 'Meat' here refers to chicken, lamb, mutton, beef, goat etc (NOT fish).

In a typical 7-day week in 2019, approximately how many days a week did you consume meat? *

- [ ] 0 (I do not consume meat in a typical week)
- [ ] 1
- [ ] 2
- [ ] 3
- [ ] 4
- [ ] 5
- [ ] 6
- [ ] 7

3. Your consumption

On a typical day that you are consuming meat, approximately how many of your meals would contain meat (assuming 3 meals per day)? *

- [ ] 1
- [ ] 2
- [ ] 3
- [ ] I do not consume meat

4. Your consumption

Estimate the proportion of different types of meat in your meat consumption over the past 12 months (please ensure that the values add up to 100%). *

Chicken ☐ %

Sheep meat (lamb, mutton etc) ☐ %

Beef	%
Other (e.g. goat, duck)	%
Total:	%

5. Your consumption

Approximately how much does your household typically spend per week on meat (in GBP, not including eating out)? *

6. Your consumption

Estimate the proportion of your total household meat purchases (both in-person and online, not including eating out) from the following (please ensure that the values add up to 100%. If you don't know, please put '100' in the 'I don't know' option). *

Supermarket	%
Independent butcher	%
Farm/farmer's market	%
Other	%
I don't know	%
Total:	%

If Other, please specify

7. Your consumption

Approximately what proportion of your meat consumption comes from eating out (restaurants, take-aways etc)? *

- [ ] 0-20%
- [ ] 21-40%
- [ ] 41-60%
- [ ] 61-80%
- [ ] 81-100%
- [ ] Not applicable

8. Your consumption

How did the quantity of meat you consumed in 2019 compare to the quantity you consumed in 2018? *

- [ ] Significant increase
- [ ] Slight increase
- [ ] No change
- [ ] Slight decrease
- [ ] Significant decrease

9. Your consumption

What are the main reasons for this decrease? (Tick all that apply) *

- [ ] Health and nutrition
- [ ] Cost
- [ ] Environmental sustainability
- [ ] Animal welfare
- [ ] Availability
- [ ] Religious/spiritual
- [ ] Other (please specify):

10. Halal meat industry

The next few questions are designed to explore your knowledge of the British halal meat industry, so please answer based on your prior knowledge and do not look up answers.

Have you witnessed halal slaughter (in-person or via video)? *

- [ ] No, never
- [ ] Once
- [ ] A few times
- [ ] Many times

Optional comments:

11. Halal meat industry

Do you have a desire to witness halal slaughter? *

- [ ] Definitely yes
- [ ] Probably yes
- [ ] Probably no
- [ ] Definitely no

Optional comments:

12. Halal meat industry

Have you been inside a halal slaughterhouse? *

- [ ] No, never
- [ ] Once
- [ ] A few times
- [ ] Many times

Optional comments:

13. Halal meat industry

Please read the statements below and tick all the statements that you think are true. *

- [ ] The Halal Monitoring Committee (HMC) and the Halal Food Authority (HFA) are government bodies.
- [ ] The Halal Food Authority (HFA) currently certifies machine slaughter as halal (this is defined as a mechanical blade making the cut with a slaughter man reading the prayer).
- [ ] The Halal Food Authority (HFA) only certifies meat products and no other foods.
- [ ] The Halal Monitoring Committee (HMC) permits stunning.
- [ ] Halal unstunned slaughter can be certified as organic in the UK.
- [ ] All the above statements are false.

Optional comments:

14. Preferences

To what extent do you agree with the following statements? *

	Strongly agree	Agree	Neither agree nor disagree	Disagree	Strongly disagree
I am knowledgeable about the halal slaughter process.	☐	☐	☐	☐	☐
Halal meat should be regulated by the UK government.	☐	☐	☐	☐	☐
Halal certifiers should take animal welfare into account during the halal certification process.	☐	☐	☐	☐	☐
To be considered halal, the animal must not be stunned before slaughter.	☐	☐	☐	☐	☐

Optional comments:

15. Preferences

Would you be willing to pay more for a free-range/organic halal chicken compared to a standard (intensively-reared) halal chicken? *

- ☐ Yes
- ☐ No

Optional comments:

16. Preferences

Approximately how much more would you be willing to pay for a free-range/organic halal chicken compared to a standard (intensively-reared) halal chicken? *

- ☐ 0-20%
- ☐ 21-40%
- ☐ 41-60%

- [ ] 61-80%
- [ ] 81-100%
- [ ] More than 100% (more than twice the price)

Optional comments:

17. Preferences

How important are the following factors in your decision when making a halal meat purchase? *

	Very important	Somewhat important	Not at all important	Not applicable
Halal compliance/certification	☐	☐	☐	☐
Slaughter method (e.g. stunning, no stunning)	☐	☐	☐	☐
Health and nutrition	☐	☐	☐	☐
Price	☐	☐	☐	☐
Animal welfare	☐	☐	☐	☐
Environmental sustainability	☐	☐	☐	☐

Optional comments:

18. Preferences

What do you understand the term 'tayyib' to mean?

19. Preferences

Please share any further comments that you may have regarding the above questions or the state of the British halal meat industry in general.

20. A little about you

What is your age? *

- [ ] 18-24
- [ ] 25-34
- [ ] 35-44
- [ ] 45-54
- [ ] 55-64
- [ ] 65-74
- [ ] 75+
- [ ] Prefer not to say

21. A little about you

What is your gender? *

- [ ] Male
- [ ] Female
- [ ] Prefer not to say

22. A little about you

Where do you live in the UK? *

- [ ] North East
- [ ] North West
- [ ] Yorkshire and The Humber
- [ ] East Midlands
- [ ] West Midlands
- [ ] East of England
- [ ] London & the South East
- [ ] South West
- [ ] Wales
- [ ] Scotland
- [ ] Northern Ireland

23. A little about you

In 2019, what was your approximate total household income? *

- [ ] Under £15,000
- [ ] £15,000 - £25,000
- [ ] £25,001 - £35,000
- [ ] £35,001 - £50,000
- [ ] £50,001 - £75,000
- [ ] £75,001 - £100,000
- [ ] Over £100,000
- [ ] Prefer not to say

Appendix B: List of sources for textual analysis

Table A: List of sources for textual analysis

Method	Sources
Textual and visual analysis of discursive material (apps, forums, blogs, newsletters, YouTube videos, images)	**Blogs:** My Big Fat Halal Blog http://www.mybigfathalalblog.com/ Haloodie Foodie http://haloodiefoodie.com/ The Halal Food Blog http://thehalalfoodblog.com/ HalalGirlAboutTown https://www.halalgirlabouttown.com/ My Halal Kitchen https://myhalalkitchen.com/ HalalFoodGuy https://halalfoodguy.co.uk/ **Instagram accounts:** Halal Food Blog https://www.instagram.com/halal_eats/ HaloodieFoodie https://www.instagram.com/haloodiefoodie/ Steak and Teeth https://www.instagram.com/steakandteeth/?hl=en Man vs Halal Food https://www.instagram.com/mvshf/?hl=en Halal Food Diaries https://www.instagram.com/_halalfooddiaries/?hl=en-gb Halal Hunt https://www.instagram.com/halalhunt/?hl=en **YouTube videos:** Mercy Halal slaughter 1 https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=gA7-7igGU1I Mercy Halal Slaughter 2 https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=quhVxLUwiBw AHDB Beef & Lamb. Farm to Fork - the journey of homegrown lamb for Halal consumers https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=BfrumvlW0Xg **Apps:** Halal Gems http://halalgems.com/ Zabihah https://www.zabihah.com/ Scan Halal http://www.scanhalal.org/index **Campaign websites:** Halal Focus https://halalfocus.net/ Halal Slaughter Watch http://www.halal-slaughter-watch.org/

Textual and visual analysis of industry/professional organisations' materials	Halal Food Authority https://halalfoodauthority.com/ Halal Monitoring Committee https://halalhmc.org/ Agriculture and Horticulture Development Board https://ahdb.org.uk/
Textual and visual analysis of promotional material	**Alternative halal business websites:** Willowbrook Farm https://www.willowbrookfarm.co.uk/ Am1nah https://www.am1nah.com/ Hill Farm Finest https://hillfarmfinest.com/about/ Healthy Halal https://www.healthy-halal.co.uk/blog Branding and packaging of two sites/companies visited (large-scale lamb slaughterhouse and small-scale chicken slaughterhouse)