

IRSA - CONGRESSO MUNDIAL DE SOCIOLOGIA RURAL (01/10/2025 A
20/01/2026) - IRSA 03 - SOCIOLOGY OF FOOD

HALALAN TAYYIBAN: THE MORAL ECONOMY OF HALAL MEAT CONSUMPTION

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Starting from an analysis of the structural dimensions of the commercialization and consumption of halal meat, this article examines the articulation between food practices, religious moralities, and global flows of capital and labor, focusing on the Brazilian state of Rio Grande do Sul (RS). According to Sharia, the Islamic legal-religious system, Halal designates what is permitted for Muslims. In food labels and certifications, particularly in meat production, it indicates suitability for consumption in a Tayyib manner—that is, healthy, pure, and ethical—thereby establishing a religious moralization of eating. In contemporary contexts, Halal principles are increasingly embedded in market formations and economic practices that mobilize religious norms as explicit moral guidelines and ontological assumptions, connecting Islamic dietary regimes to capitalist food systems. Within these systems, halal precepts are often aligned with global demands for sustainability and ethical consumption, given their emphasis on physical and spiritual well-being, transparency,

environmental protection, and traceability across supply chains. This analysis draws on the concept of moral economy to describe practices sustained by mutual social obligations that emerge from economic transactions among humans or between humans and non-humans, such as spiritual entities, considering as “economic” the relations of production, circulation, and consumption. We argue that, contrary to modernization theories that equate modernity with secularization, halal precepts entail a “re-enchantment” of economic and food practices. This process produces concrete effects on global flows of capital and labor, including the migration of Black Muslim Senegalese workers to RS. By foregrounding religious moralities expressed through symbolic and ritual forms, this study moves beyond utilitarian interpretations of food consumption centered on physiological need. Instead, it highlights a mode of consumption grounded in moral obligations toward Allah as a spiritual entity. The research is based on documentary analysis, ethnographic fieldwork conducted in Garibaldi (RS), and semi-structured interviews.

Palavras-chave: halal certification; moral economy; islamic food practices; global capitalism; senegalese migration.