

Expressing 'Halal' in the European Streetscape

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Abstract

Beyond their physical movement from a geographical location to another, immigrants carry extra baggage to their new home. Religious and cultural values, and traditions are perceived indispensable as they impact the daily life of every nation. This form of intangible cultural heritage is often expressed in an architectural shape and identity. When muslim populations started to immigrate to Europe in the 20th century they introduced a new storefront type, which is associated with their eating habits, to the urban fabric of European countries. This facade is known as the halal shop or market which sometimes includes a halal restaurant. The emergence of this type of buildings has divided public opinion. Some consider it an alien feature while others understand its necessity. This paper investigates the history of halal shops and their role in shaping the European streetscape using Dublin city as a case study. It attempts to answer the following questions; how do halal shops contribute to the revitalization of the urban fabric? What is the role of halal facades in connecting the new home with the old?

Halal market is an active tool for social inclusion and tourism. Muslims and non-muslims from all over the country visit the halal shop to purchase a product that can only be found there. This implies increasing the pressure on underdeveloped and poor neighborhoods where some halal shops are located. Advertisements of halal shops in European cities have invaded the internet and the streets. These attract tourists and connect them with immigrants. Halal market also brings economic benefits to individuals and groups in the community as many shops are managed by non-muslims. The research involves analyzing historic maps, planning applications, Thom's Dublin street directories, photographs and relevant texts.