WHEN THE BURGER BECOMES HALAL: A CRITICAL DISCOURSE ANALYSIS OF PRIVILEGE AND MARKETPLACE INCLUSION

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Abstract: Although a rich body of research provides insights to understanding stigma within the marketplace, much less is known regarding its direct corollary, privilege. We posit that this void is problematic as it may inadvertently support and legitimate existing socio-political arrangements which inhibit consumer wellbeing and marketplace equality. The present study addresses this gap by offering a theoretical understanding of privilege within the marketplace. Using a Foucauldian approach to privilege and power, we draw on the discursive perspective on legitimation to critically investigate the contentious debate over the inclusion of halal meat at a popular burger chain in France. In light of French political secularism (laïcité), we demonstrate how power discursively operates through narratives on rights and moral responsibility to constitute, defend and challenge a certain state of privilege within the marketplace. Our resulting theoretical discussion extends existing studies on marketplace equality and the growing body of literature related to the "marketization of religion".

In November 2009, *Quick*, the most frequented burger chain in France after McDonald's, decided to serve exclusively meat that conforms with Islamic dietary laws at eight of its 350+ French outlets. Specifics of the strategy consisted of replacing non-halal beef and bacon with halal beef and smoked turkey respectively. Generally overlooked initially, the initiative gained substantial worldwide media coverage in mid-February 2010 when the socialist mayor of Roubaix, a city in northern France and location of one of the eight "Halal Quicks," lodged a formal complaint against the fast food chain for "discrimination" against non-Muslims and called for a boycott (BBC 2010). A major social uproar followed, questioning the meaning of Quick's strategy in light of French secularism. The quote below illustrates the tenor and composition of the public debate:

> The mind boggles! – Secular republican, I refuse to allow religions to tell me how to eat. Fish on Friday or halal meat, what a shame to see this in a secular republic!!! Quick offering halal meat does not bother me, but imposing it on me is a big problem (I will no longer go there...). [...] Quick must think about its non-Muslim customers (the majority!) Let us eat pork (bacon) and normal meat (no kosher no halal, no nothing)! What a shame to impose the customs of a religion on everybody in a secular country! PS: When I go to a Muslim country I don't throw a shit fit to eat non-halal meat, I bow to the majority... Do the same thing! (#A, Le Point)

The previous quote vividly demonstrates the fervor with which some consumers can reject marketplace inclusion strategies. Extant consumer research on market inclusion focuses predominantly on stigma and explores how stigmatized consumer groups (e.g. sexual and racial minorities, migrants, plus-size consumers) perceive and act in markets that fail to provide them with adequate options to satisfy their wants and needs (e.g. Bone, Christensen, and Williams 2014; Brace-Govan and Burgh-Woodman 2008; Chaplin, Hill, and John 2014; Crockett 2017; Gurrieri, Previte, and Brace-Govan 2013; Harrison III, Thomas, and Cross 2015; Jafari and Goulding 2008; Motley and Perry 2013; Pavia and Mason 2012; Sandıkcı

and Ger 2010; Scaraboto and Fischer 2013; Visconti 2011; Walters and Moore 2002).
Importantly, these studies highlight how stigmatized consumers employ different strategies to either cope with the consequences of being stigmatized or mobilize to influence market dynamics and obtain greater inclusion (Scaraboto and Fischer 2013). While such a focus places stigma in dialogue with its counterpart, privilege, this process has typically occurred through implicit means. Privilege is recognized as framing marketplace stigma, yet the privileged discourses (e.g. of straight, white, rich, thin, and/or secular consumers) remain at best a secondary concern.

Placing stigmatized consumer experiences at the center of the analytical process can have the unintended effect of naturalizing the privileged positionality of non-stigmatized consumers (Burton 2009a; Peñaloza 2001). Indeed, privileged positionalities often go unrecognized by the possessors and the stigmatized. Much like stigmatized populations can internalize externally communicated messages of inferiority, those that are privileged can internalize their superior position as earned and therefore justified (Holley, Stromwall, and Bashor 2012). As a result, the persistence of unjust hierarchical systems may not only negatively impact the marginalized, but may also represent a "burden" to the privileged. For instance, a growing body of scholarship on the psychosocial costs of racism to whites demonstrates the damaging consequences (e.g. guilt, shame, fear, isolation and ignorance) that can result from being in a dominant racial position (e.g. Kivel 1996; Spanierman et al. 2006).

As such, the present study explicitly asks: how does privilege manifest in response to a market inclusion strategy? Cultivating an explicit understanding of privilege in the marketplace can enable a shift from the perception that an equitable marketplace materializes when the conditions of stigmatized consumers are made commensurate with non-stigmatized consumers to one in which an inclusive and equitable marketplace emerges from changing

the institutionally biased marketplace mechanisms that uphold and perpetuate stigma and privilege.

Using a Foucauldian approach to privilege and a netnographic method, we investigate the ways in which consumers respond to marketing strategies perceived as disrupting privilege. The introduction of halal meat by Quick restaurants in France is a revealing case to study privilege as the investigation of the everyday consumption of food can reveal influential social and cultural factors underlying communal behavioral practices (Marshall 2005). Locating our study within the context of food also problematizes the oft assumed duality between the self and other (Martin 2005), and provides much needed nuance to how identity development and expression are understood. Furthermore, given France's fairly emblematic vision of secularism (or laïcité), the case of Quick also provides a unique opportunity to examine privilege and underlying power dynamics using a broader political-historical frame.

In this article, we first chronicle the conceptual apparatus of privilege in the marketplace by synthesizing research pertaining to privilege, market inclusion and legitimation. We then ground our research in the proper socio-political context by briefly historicizing the French concept of laïcité. Next we detail our data collection (netnographic "lurking" via online reader comments) and analytical approach (critical discourse analysis). The findings section details our macro-level themes and their consociation with laïcité. We explicate the ways in which these themes are utilized as the discursive foundation from which power is exercised to defend and challenge a localized instance of privilege within the marketplace. The discussion section highlights the theoretical and practical significance of distinguishing discursive power from privilege. We also discuss how our findings demonstrate the critical role of secularism in the "Marketization of Religion". We close by offering avenues for research to further explore manifestations of privilege within the marketplace.

THEORETICAL CONSIDERATIONS

Dynamics of Power & Privilege

Privilege can be understood as a set of unearned social benefits that a dominant group possesses. Many scholars trace back the academic interest in this concept to W.E.B. Du Bois' (1935: 700) notion of "public and psychological wage" (Roediger, 1991). In his monumental work, *Black Reconstruction in America*, Du Bois argues that white laborers' inability to make common cause with black laborers can be explained by the fact that despite their comparable low wages they were compensated by an additional "wage" consisting of public deference and titles of courtesy. Unlike their black colleagues, white workers were "admitted freely with all classes of white people to public functions, public parks, and the best schools". Du Bois (1935: 701) further explains that even though such a benefit had "small effect upon the economic situation, it had great effect upon their personal treatment and the deference shown them". Later, French-Tunisian essayist Albert Memmi (1957) highlights an analogous phenomenon within the French colonial system. Responding to Marxist critics, he contends that "the colonial privilege is not solely economic" as "even the poorest colonizer thought himself to be—and actually was—superior to the colonized." These authors conceptualize privilege and its psychological consequences as a socio-political phenomenon representing an amalgamation of that which is economic, cultural, and political.

Nonetheless, it can be convincingly argued that it is Peggy McIntosh's (1988) essay on white privilege which has made of privilege a central theme of contemporary academic research. In her essay, McIntosh (1988) compares white privilege to an "invisible package of unearned assets" which white people use in everyday social interaction but that they are unable to recognize as the direct corollary of racism, stigmatization and oppression. Rather, they are socialized to perceive these benefits as neutral, normative and ideal cultural assets which

represent the unique way society should be organized. Illustrating her point, McIntosh (1988) lists 46 privileged conditions that she can expect as a white person (e.g. "I am never asked to speak for all the people of my racial group"; "I can worry about racism without being seen as self-interested or self-seeking"). Since her essay, an impressive multi-disciplinary body of literature related to the various sites of identity where privilege may manifest (e.g. gender, sexual orientation, social class, religion, able-bodiedness and the intersections thereof) has further elucidated the ways in which unearned benefits advantage some and burden others (see Kimmel and Ferber 2013).

However, rather than conceptualizing privilege as an "invisible knapsack," the present study adopts a Foucauldian perspective on privilege and power (McWhorter 2005). Indeed, several scholars have criticized extant studies on privilege for over-emphasizing "privilege" at the expense of higher forms of power dynamics (e.g. Gordon 2004; Leonardo 2004; McWhorter 2005). In particular, McWhorter (2005) contends that these studies reliance on McIntosh's metaphor suggests that their understanding of power lies within what Michel Foucault (1978) calls the "juridico-discursive" conception of power. In this view, power is conceptualized as a top-to-bottom logic of repression where a sovereign (e.g. state, dominant class, parent, doctor) imposes constraints on a subject (e.g. citizen, dominated class, child, patient) through mechanisms of law, taboo, and censorship" (Foucault 1978, 85). This model presents power as the possession of a ruler and distinguishes between a "legislative power on one side and an obedient subject on the other" (Foucault 1978, 85).

Although Foucault (1978) notes that such a form of power did operate, he considers that modern operation of power cannot be reduced to one dimension – the law, the state or domination. In line with this, McWhorter (2005) denounces McIntosh's metaphor for creating the illusion that the operations of power regimes depend exclusively on the existence

of a knapsack that a dominant individual/class possesses to the detriment of a dominated one. Such framing has the problematic capacity to 1) exaggerate the importance of lived experiences in comparison to institutional, structural and systemic considerations (see also Askegaard and Linnet 2011; Crockett et al. 2011), 2) oversimplify the power dynamics that exist within social groups – such as the hierarchies that fund privilege within categories of race, ethnicity, gender, class, and sexuality, and 3) suggest that the eradication of power regimes relies only on the ability and the willingness of the dominant class to recognize and divest itself from its package (McWhorter 2005). In contrast, McWhorter (2005) advocates for a Foucauldian approach which distinguishes power and privilege and places privilege within more complex dynamics of power relations.

More specifically, Foucault (1978) posits that since equality among individuals has been formalized within modern systems of power, privilege and the operation of power cannot be reduced to a simplistic dichotomous top-to-bottom analysis (dominant vs. dominated). Rather, since the marks of privilege have been replaced by "a whole range of degrees of normality" (Foucault 1977, 200), the modern operations of power are ensured by normalization. This implies that from an initial homogeneity/equality from which the norm of conformity is drawn, normalization slowly produces subtle differentiation and individuation, which objectively separates and ranks individuals (Dreyfus and Rabinow 1983). Thus, Foucault (1977) distinguishes power (what is exercised) from privilege (what is possessed) and contends that the latter can only be fully understood as a function of the former as it is from ubiquitous and ever-changing micro-confrontations that larger patterns of domination may emerge.

Furthermore, he invites us to pay particular attention to "discourse" since it is in discourse that knowledge (i.e. what is claimed to be the truth) is articulated to produce, reinforce or

undermine power (Foucault 1978). Accordingly, instead of analyzing privilege and power as a knapsack of pre-constituted privileged subjectivities, the present study shifts the focus to a historicized understanding of the discourses of power within a local market context. In other words, this study explicates how power discursively operates within a particular marketplace context to constitute, defend and challenge privilege, thereby disentangling the practice of power from the possession of privilege.

Privilege & the Marketplace

The Power of the Norm. Denegri-Knott, Zwick, and Schroeder (2006) contend that limited consumer research has questioned how power operates within particular marketplace contexts to constitute "normal" and "abnormal" consumption practice. Likewise, marketplace and consumption research literature has historically been criticized for overlooking "privilege". Several scholars argue that such an oversight is a consequence of a research field dominated by privileged voices and spaces which erroneously conceptualize the marketplace as neutral, free and self correcting (see Burton 2009a; Stern 1998) – except when the focus is on stigmatization. Nonetheless, a growing body of studies have explicitly illuminated the pervasiveness of privilege in marketplace experiences drawing on diverse approaches such as post-colonial theories (e.g. Bonsu 2009; Burton 2009b; Thompson and Tambyah 1999), Bourdieusian forms of capital (e.g. Üstüner and Holt 2010; Üstüner and Thompson 2012) critical visual analysis (Borgerson and Schroeder 2002; Gopaldas and DeRoy 2015; Schroeder and Borgerson 1998; Schroeder and Zwick 2004) and Foucauldian "theory" (Thompson and Haytko 1997; Peñaloza and Barnhart 2011). Of particular interest, Peñaloza and Barnhart (2011) document how privileged consumers in the US (i.e. middle-class white males) normalize credit card use and heavy debt in drawing upon the obligation and entitlement to consume in line with being middle-class members of society. Taking on debt

represents "the American way" without which it becomes impossible to be a "normal consumer". The present study examines what happens when such a "normality" seems disrupted. More specifically, although extant studies confirm that privilege/normality holds a key role in the construction and maintenance of consumer culture, they stop short of deconstructing how privilege/normality is discursively defended and challenged in the marketplace.

Luedicke (2015) offers a preliminary investigation of how privilege is defended within a local marketplace. He shows how "indigenes" in a rural Austrian town (Telfs) reject certain "immigrant" consumption practices and adjust their own to defend their local market privilege. Through his data, Luedicke (2015, 122) illuminates how "indigenes" legitimize their sense of privilege as they "believe they have earned a higher status relative to immigrants because they have discovered, cultivated, shaped, and defended the Telfian territories long before the Turkish immigrants arrived". We build upon this author's work to examine more closely, in a Foucauldian fashion, the discursive construction of space as well as the phenomenological distinction between discursive power and privilege.

An important number of works in the sociology of leisure sets the stage to further conceptualize the relationship between privilege, power and the marketplace (e.g. Carter 2008; Coleman 1996; Harrison 2013; Zwick and Andrews 1999). These studies stress the importance of understanding socio-spatial relations and how some spaces are discursively constituted to maintain privilege via the simultaneous inclusion and exclusion of certain bodies based on race, class, gender, sexuality, age, and mental and physical disability (Sibley 1995). As Foucault (1980, 70-71) notes "the spatializing description of discursive realities gives on to the analysis of related effects of power". Thus, the organization of spaces and the regulation of social bodies within those spaces are fundamental tactics to any exercise of

power and maintenance of privilege (Soja 1989). For instance, studies on the development of downhill skiing in North America illuminate how the discourses surrounding the activity operates to defend the space from threatening others and secure the view that the preponderance of white male skiers is normal, and even natural (e.g. Coleman 1996; Harrison 2013; Stoddart 2011). Similar spatial dynamics are evident in other consumption landscapes, such as golf and chess.

The idea of "deviant" bodies threatening the normal majority's social space is not foreign to marketplace and consumption research literature. In particular, studies on target marketing have repeatedly questioned the necessity to normalize market inclusion strategies so as they become palatable to the privileged consumer segment (Grier and Brumbaugh 1999; Kates 1999, Tsai 2012). Accordingly, understanding privilege within the marketplace and its implications for consumption practices requires a critical appreciation of the (im)material advantages associated with what tends to be discursively constructed as the norm within spaces of commerce. Next, we integrate studies that address the broader sociocultural dynamics of marketplace inclusion to provide further theoretical grounds to conceptualize how power is exercised in the marketplace in relation to privilege. In particular, we discuss how inclusion strategies perceived as disrupting the marketplace norm can lead to legitimation struggles.

(De)legitimizing Marketplace Disruption. Marketplace inclusion has emerged as a significant domain of investigation within consumer research (e.g. Crockett and Wallendorf 2004; Henderson and Williams 2013; Hu et al. 2013; Peñaloza 1996; Sandıkcı and Ger 2010). These studies examine how specific consumer groups produce collective identities and mobilize marketplace resources to combat a stigmatized status and obtain greater marketplace inclusion (Scaraboto and Fischer 2013). Drawing on institutional theory, many of these

studies focus on the notion of legitimacy and argue that greater inclusion is the result of a social process making the presence of a particular group or practice congruent with the regulative, normative and cognitive configurations of the market. Scaraboto and Fisher (2013, 1252) show how marketplace dynamics can be explained via a four-fold matrix which combines 1) the relative legitimacy of the consumer group seeking change and 2) the desires of that group with regard to the mainstream market.

Although their typology provides insight into market legitimacy, it overlooks possible tensions between actors when markets evolve according to the wish of one agent versus the wish of another agent. In other words, how do consumers that have traditionally enjoyed high legitimacy react when traditionally stigmatized consumers begin to gain legitimacy? Only a few studies have examined this particular "legitimation struggle" (e.g. Luedicke 2015; Luedicke and Giesler 2008; Sandıkcı and Ger 2010). They indicate that change in the status of a stigmatized group can challenge social hierarchies, which may lead to legitimation struggles between consumer groups. However, despite the powerful insights of these studies, they fall short of deconstructing how power dynamics and privilege discursively operate within these legitimation struggles. As such, the ways in which specific marketplace legitimation struggles constitute, challenge and defend privilege remains elusive. To redress this oversight, we turn now to a fairly recent body of management literature which has moved away from the regulative, cognitive and normative bases of legitimacy to examine discursive aspects of legitimation (see Vaara and Tienari 2008).

These studies argue that both organizational actions and discourses play a central role in the legitimation of institutional change. Drawing on critical discourse analysis (CDA, Fairclough 2003), they emphasize that the legitimation of particular actions also deals with broader sociopolitical and power dynamics (Vaara and Tienari 2008). Accordingly, the study of

discursive legitimation (defined as seeking a sense of approval for a particular issue within a socially constructed space, Rojo and van Dijk 1997) has traditionally been organized along two key dimensions: 1) the sociopolitical underpinnings upon which legitimation is based, and 2) the set of specific discursive strategies used for legitimation (Vaara 2014). Both dimensions represent the usual distinction between macro and micro levels of analysis.

At the macro level, discursive legitimation questions the place of the different discourses within the struggle for sociopolitical space. The analysis investigates how discourses draw on and reproduce broader-level themes, discourses and ideologies (van Dijk 1998). For example, Vaara et al. (2006) show that discourses seeking to legitimate cross-border industrial restructuring mobilize narratives on globalization which themselves reproduce neo-liberal ideology, whereas those aiming to delegitimate the practice use anti-globalization narratives which draw on nationalist or humanist ideologies. As a result, scholars have described legitimation as an essential aspect of how ideologies function through discourse since it seeks to monopolize the truth by delineating the range of acceptable social phenomena within a particular space (Marion 2006; Vaara et al. 2006; van Dijk 1998). Nevertheless, in a postmodern fashion, discursive legitimation is interdiscursive in nature, that is, discourse may combine various ideological elements, and a similar ideology may be used for both legitimation and delegitimation purposes (Vaara et al. 2006). This approach emphasizes the importance of analyzing discourses in their full-complexity since discourses that seem different, even contradictory, may have the same legitimation objective, whereas discourses that seem similar may involve diverging, even contradictory, objectives (see also Foucault 1978). For instance, Foucault (1978, 101) notes how in the nineteenth-century homosexuality began to demand that its own legitimacy or "naturality" be acknowledged, using the same vocabulary and categories by which it was medically disqualified. The second level of

analysis of discursive legitimation allows a better understanding of how this is possible.

This second, micro dimension is essentially based upon what Theo van Leeuwen (1995) calls the *grammar of legitimation* and involves the specific ways different discourses are deployed to establish legitimacy. These strategies (not always intentional or conscious) are: 1) *authorization*, that is, legitimation based on the authority of tradition, law or persons; 2) *rationalization* is legitimation by reference to knowledge claims or arguments; 3) *moral evaluation* means legitimation by reference to value systems; and 4) *mythopoiesis* is legitimation conveyed through narratives. These legitimation strategies are usually intertwined. Furthermore, each legitimation strategy is specified with a number of sub-types whose relevance depends on contextual factors. Of special interest, Vaara et al. (2006) distinguished normalization as a separate category of authorization to emphasize the importance of strategies used to render specific actions or social phenomena "normal" or "natural." They further note that normalization may represent the primary type of legitimation as it tends to be strongly supported by other practices.

Extant marketing research emphasizes the regulative, cognitive and normative bases of legitimacy (e.g. Press et al. 2014; Scaraboto and Fisher 2013) and neglects its discursive aspect as well as its critical connection to power. Humphreys' (2010 a, 2010b) works can nevertheless be cited as a notable exception. In her examination of US Casino Gambling, she demonstrates the legitimizing power of discourses in shaping the meaning of consumption practices. She shows how the regulatory approval of gambling is accompanied by a shift in the semantic categories used to discuss casinos and to legitimate the activity. However, while her study sheds light on the constitutive role that public discourses play in the legitimation process, she notes that there is still a need to understand 1) delegitimation processes, 2) resistance to dominant discourses and 3) "mechanisms of legitimation (that) could be studied

in greater depth" (Humphreys 2010b, 506).

Accordingly, by focusing attention on discourses used to both legitimate and delegitimate specific marketing actions, the present research complements Humphrey's (2010a, 2010b) work. First, drawing on discursive legitimation to analyze the Quick controversy allows us to examine the ideologies mobilized and the discursive strategies deployed by a multitude of actors during a legitimation struggle. It further allows a shift in focus from established senses of legitimacy to ongoing discursive struggles for marketplace legitimation and, thus, increases our understanding of power and privilege. Second, the discursive perspective on legitimation offers an integrated framework to better understand discursive mechanisms and "orders of discourse," that is, the ensembles of linkages between complex micro-level textual processes and macro-level themes in particular social contexts (Foucault 1981; Fairclough 2003). Nevertheless, to specifically understand the legitimacy struggle over Quick's halal strategy, we need first to examine more closely the socio-historical roots of the market of interest.

Socio-Political Context: When Halal meets Laïcité

The particular political context of this study is France's secularism, namely laïcité. Although laïcité is not exclusive to France and many countries have adopted or adapted such a rule separating the Church from the State (see for instance Bhargava 2006; Kuru 2007), laïcité should not be seen as a strict synonym of secularism as viewed in other nations. The history surrounding its conception plays a central role in understanding present-day discourses, notably in relation to Islamic target marketing. Baubérot (2010) distinguishes three stages in the invention of laïcité in France: 1) the 1789 Revolution; 2) the 1905 separation law; and 3) the contemporary growth of religious diversity (most notably Islam).

The 1789 Revolution. The notion of laïcité finds its inception within the Enlightenment

philosophers' denunciation of "religious fanaticism" and the French Revolution (Bacquet 2012). More specifically, laïcité was developed in direct opposition to the Catholic Church and its legal and political privileges upon which the feudal regime was based (Tarhan 2011). The Revolution tried first to control Catholicism; then it proclaimed secular principles but never applied them; then in 1801 Napoleon signed a Concordat with the Pope which ended the separation between church and state (Baubérot 2010).

The 1905 Separation Law. The official act of the separation of the church and state took place in December 1905. This law established the principles of French laïcité along two main axes: 1) freedom (i.e. freedom of conscience and worship, freedom to express religious beliefs in public, free organization of churches) and 2) equality (i.e. non-recognition of churches and their equality before the law, and non-discrimination for [not] practicing a religion). However, the interpretation of the notion of laïcité, especially in the relations between the State and private (Catholic) schools has remained an important subject of debate, especially in the 1980s. Further, contemporary battles over laïcité have mainly been driven by the growth of Islam within the national space, including target marketing.

Laïcité and Islam. Under article 43 of the 1905 law, the separation of church and state also applies to France's overseas colonies. However, the necessity for the colonial regime to control natives' religions and public speech prevented full implementation of the law (Saaïdia 2005). After many French colonies gained independence in the 1960s, Muslim migrants, who had been initially seen as immigrating to France to work before returning "home," brought over their families and the Muslim population in France substantially grew. By the 1980s, their children, who either were born in France or immigrated at a very young age, saw themselves as French (what most of them were by right) and demanded full cultural citizenship and in the late 1980s many began to cultivate Islamic-focused identities (Bowen

2007).

In 1989, in an incident called "the headscarf affair", a middle school principal denied young Muslim girls entrance because they refused to remove their hijabs. This incident provoked the first legal statement by the highest administrative Supreme Court, the Conseil d'Etat, which authorized the wearing of headscarves in public schools. However, in 2004, the national assembly passed a law banning "signs and clothing that draw attention to the religious affiliations of pupils" in the public schools. This law was followed in 2011 by another that criminalized the wearing of any garment in a public space designed to hide the face. Although this law makes no mention of laïcité, religion, or the niqab, it is carefully designed to target the latter (Laborde 2012) and is commonly known as the "burqa ban".

Such laws and regulations contribute to the mythologization of laïcité in public discourse as it transforms its scope and meaning. There is a recurring debate as to whether the religiously-neutral "public" refers to the public sphere of the State and/or the public sphere of society more generally (Daly 2012). And as laïcité is mythologized to evoke an ever-growing neutral social space, the debate over its application has moved from schools and hospitals to the marketplace. Some argue that under laïcité the marketplace should be characterized by its secular homogeneity rather than its religious diversity (Rigoni 2012). Accordingly, Islamic marketing strategies (e.g. Halal food, Islamic banking, the celebration of Ramadan) have regularly fuelled the invocation of laïcité, even when the strategies were implemented by private enterprises. In March 2012, Nicolas Sarkozy, then the French president campaigning for re-election, announced that halal was the "principle subject of concern in the discussions of the French people" (Cody 2012). The present study explores this particular concern by unpacking the adversarial articulations of laïcité within the legitimacy struggle over Quick's halal strategy. We particularly consider the notion of "secular privilege" and the everyday

benefits enjoyed by people unconcerned with religious or sacred matters (Woodhead 2008).

Next, we present our methodology.

METHOD

The inherent invisibility of privilege renders its empirical exploration challenging (Wildman 1996). Extant studies have predominantly described privilege via conceptual writings, anecdotal observations or introspective reports (e.g. Israel 2012; McIntosh 1988). As a result, these studies tend to focus almost exclusively on individuals and so treat privilege and power dynamics as relatively static variables (McWhorter 2005). In contrast, the present study develops an analytical strategy which consists of illuminating privilege and power within the discourses expressed during a contentious marketing moment: the "Halal Quicks".

Data Collection

Data was collected using the netnographic technique of "lurking" (Kozinets 2002, 2010). We analyze the discourses around the Quick's controversy within online reader comments. Online versions of newspapers, news magazines, television, and radio news stations generally invite commentary from readers and listeners from the general public to react to an article and to facilitate asynchronous interactive discussion (Daniels 2013; Steinfeldt et al. 2010). These commentary sections provide rich chronological traces of past and present writing about one specific topic. Nevertheless, given doubts that online comments symbolize generalizable or truly held attitudes by veritable "consumers", this methodology poses questions about the representativeness and worth of the comments. To address this issue, we adopt Hughey's (2012, 168) conceptualization of comments and do not treat them as "wholesale sociological proxy" but rather as crucial mechanisms in the reproduction of discourses of power. The objective of our analysis is not to generalize but to map how seemingly an atomistic comment about a marketing controversy holds "generalizing effects"

as it aligns with broader political-historical discourses (Hughey 2012). Consequently, even though such a methodology requires analytical precautions, it also constitutes an advantage in comparison to other studies on stigma and privilege as it allows an analytical focus on shared narrative performance instead of on fixed (consumer) social identities and behaviors (Michel and Honegger 2010).

The final data set consisted of online comments extracted from each main French national media outlet as described by the French media organization (i.e. Office de Justification des Tirages): nine daily newspapers, five weekly news magazines and two online news aggregators and blogs. This collection of media outlets represents a broad spectrum of political affiliations, covering liberal, moderate, and conservative perspectives. Gathering comments from a diverse set of media outlets enabled us to retrieve a wide cross-section of opinions, as well as observe the interactions between conflicting viewpoints. On each website, a Quick-related article published in mid-February 2010 (the beginning of the controversy) was randomly selected. All of the comments associated with the article were digitally archived. We gathered a total of 3,595 comments, as shown in the table 1.

Insert the table 1 about here

Analytical Framework

To analyze this data set, we adopted a critical discourse analysis (CDA) approach which can be defined as a set of discourse-analytic traditions that primarily study "the way social power abuse, dominance, and inequality are enacted, reproduced, and resisted by text and talk in the social and political context" (van Dijk 1985, 352). CDA assumes a dialectical relationship between particular discursive events and the structures in which they are embedded. It contends that contexts not only shape and affect discourse but also that discourses influence social and political reality (van Leeuwen and Wodak 1999). Our analysis draws on the

discourse-historical tradition and seeks to integrate as many genres of discourse referring to a particular issue as possible, as well as the historical dimension of that issue (van Leeuwen and Wodak 1999; Wodak and Meyer 2002). Recounting the entire analytical process involved with this methodological technique is challenging as it is intrinsically abductive and requires constant iterations between theory and empirical data (see Wodak and Meyer 2002). Broadly, Vaara et al. (2006) propose three steps involved with discourse-historical analysis in the context of discursive legitimation: (1) a thematic analysis; (2) an interdiscursive analysis; and (3) a textual analysis. We present our analytical process accordingly.

The thematic analysis is recommended as a first step as it gives the opportunity to uncover issues, ideas, and constructs related to the social phenomenon at hand. In our case, this stage provided us with a greater understanding of the issues surrounding the Quick controversy and target marketing in the French context. After going through our data numerous times, three key questions appeared to be recurrently debated amongst the comments: 1) Can Quick impose halal food?; 2) Is Quick's strategy discriminatory? and 3) Do "Muslims" deserve such attention? Identifying these central themes enabled our analytical process to become more focused by exposing important textual materials.

The interdiscursive stage seeks to link the themes distinguished during the first stage to broader political-historical dynamics. This stage is particularly critical to appreciate the overlapping and interrelated relationship between ideologies and themes. In the case of the Quick controversy, we identified a wide range of discourse-ideological underpinnings including nationalism, islamophobia, supremacism, neoliberalism, liberalism, humanism, cosmopolitanism and animal rights. In most comments, discourses based on these ideologies intertwined and blended and could be used for both legitimation and delegitimation purposes.

Although the above list of ideologies is by no means exhaustive, we intentionally left secularism out. Indeed, rather than a specific ideology, laïcité appears in most reader comments as a mythic structure enabling the transformation of various (and sometimes contradictory) ideological beliefs into (de)legitimation discourses (see also Thompson 2004). As such, laïcité emerged as a *legitimizing myth* (Sidanius and Pratto 1999) which behind its consensual dimension was deployed in idealized/exaggerated ways to either legitimize or delegitimize Quick's action depending on the discourses underlying ideology.

The last stage of our analytical process entailed performing a targeted textual analysis to understand how specific discourses are translated into actual practice for legitimation or delegitimation purposes (Vaara et al 2006; Wodak 2004; Fairclough 2003). Our goal here was to ascertain and comprehend the specific discursive strategies deployed in an attempt to (de)legitimatize Quick's strategy. We used van Leeuwen's (1995) *grammar of legitimation* framework to categorize our findings and distinguish their link to the overarching discourse-ideology relationships identified in the second stage. We found that, although all strategies could be used for multiple purposes, they were often combined with ideological beliefs in specific ways. For instance, moral evaluation and authorization (with reference to tradition) strategies were central to the nationalism/(neo-)orientalism ideologies, whereas rationalization and authorization (with reference to the norm and/or to the "market") were key with (neo-)liberal discourses. Nevertheless, the same micro-strategies were used for both legitimation or delegitimation purposes as moral evaluations drew from nationalistic, neo-orientalist, and cosmopolitan discourses.

Through this abductive process and as we shifted towards a more etic standpoint, three broader macro-themes emerged from our data: 1) freedom 2) equality and 3) fraternity/otherness. These three themes echo the French Revolutionary trinity and lie at the

center of both laïcité (see Taylor 2009) and Foucault's analysis of power (see Dreyfus and

Rabinow 1983). As such, they situate the discourses surrounding Quick's controversy in a

broader political-historical frame. Taken together, these themes provide the structural

backdrop in which power is discursively exercised. In other words, online commentators

frame their discourse around one (or more) of these three emergent themes as an expression

of power to either defend or challenge privileged positionalities in the marketplace. These

themes explain the tension between what constitutes a right *versus* what constitutes a

privilege, and to whom such privileges/rights should be morally bestowed (or not). Next, we

show how discourses draw on rights-based narratives (i.e. liberty and equality) and moral

responsibility discourses (i.e. fraternity) to (de)legitimize Quick's strategy (see Table 2).

Insert table 2 about here

In order to remain true to the analytical framework of previous discursive legitimation

research, each macro-theme will be discussed in relation to its accompanying ideologies and

supporting discursive strategies.

FINDINGS

This section highlights the shared and recurrent themes that emerged from the debate over the

legitimacy of Quick's halal strategy. Our analysis shows how various discourses and their

ideological underpinnings frame the reactions to a perceived challenge of privilege. For

instance, the quote (#A, Le Point) introducing the article illustrates a combined articulation of

the emerging themes. In defense of privilege, voiced as "normal meat," the narrative draws

on the three themes which will be the focus of this section: first it places "freedom" in

jeopardy (as Quick imposes halal), then it claims that "equality" should be guaranteed (as

Quick should also [and especially] think about its non-Muslim consumers) and finally it

ascribes halal to its "otherness" (as its legitimate space is in Muslim countries). Next, we discuss each of these themes in their proper political-ideological context and show how power discursively operates through each of them during the "legitimation crisis" of Quick's strategy.

(Re)claiming Marketplace Freedom

In the comments, what freedom means in relation to the legitimacy of the Quick strategy emerges as a heavily-debated theme. The distinction between *negative freedom* and *positive freedom* proposed by political philosopher Isaiah Berlin ([1958] 2002) provides clarity to understanding opposing views on the issue. While some comments frame the halal outlets as a normal and liberal marketplace practice (*negative freedom*), others describe it as a direct loss of (collective) freedom (*positive freedom*):

Negative liberty or freedom from… The quotes in this theme emphasize negative liberty, wherein freedom is situated as the absence of obstacles or constraints (Berlin [1958] 2002) as exemplified in the quote below:

> I do not understand why this decision causes so much controversy. As [another comment] said so well, no one is forced to patronize this restaurant. [Quick] is free to manage its marketing as it wishes. If the project serves its interests then it will confirm it, or vice versa. All restaurants that have decided to serve Halal or Kosher have made a choice, why should Quick not be free to do so? I never thought that intolerance could reach this degree. The republic is certainly secular, but its vocation is to let people practice their religion as they wish. The Muslim who does not want to consume "illicit" meat does not patronize restaurants that serve it; the non-Muslim who does not want to consume halal meat should not patronize restaurants that serve it, it is simple. (#B, L'Express)

The notion of negative liberty is manifest in several ways in the above quote, which emphasizes the individual agents' freedom of commerce, choice and religion. The quote argues that Quick should be free to decide its own strategy; consumers should be free to choose (according to their [non-]religious beliefs); and believers should be free to practice their religion. In this narrative, laïcité is deployed to create a mythical neutral space where a heterogeneity of beliefs and actions exist, and each individual agent is free from obstacles, constraints or interference from others. In this sense, laïcité refers to recent definitions of *secularity*, namely a political approach to religion that endeavors to provide a liberal framework capable of accommodating a broad range of religions, beliefs and actions (Sajó 2008). By using this frame, the controversy is centered on a (neo)liberal understanding of the free market and individual choice. First, the scope of the strategy is minimized as it may only be an ephemeral project in case of failure. Further, evocation of more common, less contentious restaurants targeting religious groups allows the narrative to normalize Quick's decision within the marketplace. Thus, in this instance the discourse based on the negative sense of freedom attempts to legitimize Quick's action by re-placing the controversy's sociopolitical ramifications with a range of (neo)liberal marketplace sensibilities. Most notably, the conviction that, like all businesses, Quick should have the freedom to market to whom they please. As one comment ironically puts it: "Will one oblige vegetarian and cheese restaurants to serve meat? Chinese restaurants to cook coq-au-vin and blanquette?" (#C, Le Point). Quick is perceived to be as free as its competitors to decide on its strategy. Similarly, consumers are viewed as free but only within companies' traditional segmentation practices.

In discursive terms, narratives steeped in the negative sense of freedom dissociate the Quick controversy from its broader political-historical context and focus on what constitutes "normality" within the marketplace. Importantly, from a Foucauldian standpoint, these

normalizing discourses themselves constitute discourses in the reproduction of power as their articulation of normality creates the illusion of a neutral space of consumer agency and prevents the questioning of the marketplace via its political-historical construction (Dumm 2002; Foucault 2003a). In other words, the functioning of the marketplace becomes the site of mythmaking for legitimizing Quick's halal strategy (see also Bergeaud-Blacker 2012). On the other hand, a counter-narrative emphasizes the loss of positive freedom.

Positive liberty or freedom to… In attempts to delegitimize the actions of Quick, commenters often exercised discursive power by aligning their discourses with a loss of freedom in the positive sense:

> It's a shame! It's a shame! And those who do not want to eat Halal? What did we do with freedom? The common goal is secularism. This is a secular country, secular. What a Shame! (#D, Le Point)

> […] Kosher or halal restaurants have always existed. What shocks people is that a large fast food chain becomes 100% halal. We, secular French people, who got rid of the burden of religion 105 years ago, do not want it back. The religions Catholicism, Islam as well as Judaism should remain in the private sphere. PERIOD. (#E, Le Monde)

These comments drew on moral evaluation as they sought to delegitimize the introduction of "Halal Quicks" for impeding their (individual and collective) ability to live congruently with fundamental beliefs and values. In particular, their shared reference to a "violated" laïcité indicates that their loss of freedom concerns the second political sense of liberty. Laïcité is voiced as the "general will", and infringing it, as Quick is perceived to have done in selling religious food, is infringing the freedom of the entire nation.

These comments put an extra emphasis on the imagined historical value of laïcité. They harness the discursive power of History as both founder and guarantor of the secular order to immobilize the debate (Foucault 2003b), and ultimately delegitimize Quick's strategy. Laïcité is further mythologized as a means of naturalizing and simplifying history (Barthes 1972). Laïcité becomes an unquestionable victory over religions and a naturalized privilege (experienced as a right) which is deployed to represent France as a homogenous secular space free from particularism or "communitarianism" (referring to what is perceived as an *insidious* tendency for minority groups to organize along specific cultural identities). Quick's decision is viewed as a step backward that goes against History, the "general will" and France's universalism as it fragments the space to favor a religious minority.

Because of its national status, these comments argue that Quick cannot be compared to other local halal or kosher restaurants. Its nationwide presence extends its role beyond the traditional definition of a private company and makes it a *public* agent beholden to the principle of laïcité. These narratives blur the line between private and public spheres and between constitutional and popular meanings of laïcité. Rather than confront this contentious reality, discourse aligned with positive liberty strived to construct clearly delineated lines by containing religion within its own differentiated "religious" sphere and to maintaining a secular public sphere free from religion (Casanova 2006; Taylor 2009).

As illustrated in both comments below, two additional elements further blur the line between public and private spheres.

> The main shareholder of Quick is the Caisse des Dépôts et Consignations [...], that is to say (for your information)... the French State. In other words, Quick belongs to... the citizens. Consequently, their management choice to "make profits" by pleasing a minority is all the more scandalous! (#F, Le Point)

And the Republic... [...] A restaurant which only serves turkey or rabbit or vegetarian does not require its customers to pay a tithe to any religious authority [...]. It is unbelievable... We are in a secular state and we should still be able to choose whether we want to pay a religious tax or not. (#G, Le Point)

First, the legal situation of Quick is itself confusing as the burger chain is owned by a subsidiary of the *Caisse des Dépôts et Consignations*, a public financial organization. Even though Quick remains legally a private firm, which grants them the ability to segment product offerings as they choose, some commenters positioned Quick's structuring as de facto "nationalization," and as such Quick should hold the same obligation as other State organizations in terms of laïcité. Second, some comments emphasize the disguised "tax" which would be paid by each Quick consumer to the religious organizations arranging the ritual slaughtering associated with halal meat preparation. This tax, compared to a tithe in the comments, would be forced upon consumers and so is experienced as another element violating laïcité.

In discursive terms, narratives steeped in the positive sense of freedom proffered an exacting conceptualization of nationalism, wherein they attempted to delegitimize the actions of Quick by equating their market strategy to a national threat. In this discourse, laïcité offers a homogenous national space, where Quick needs to comply with the "general will" and serve non-halal food to re-find its legitimacy. This mythologized version of laïcité frames secularism as a collective obligation, which in turn becomes the mechanism through which subjugation (Foucault 2003b) and its opposing force, privilege, are naturalized. In the following section, we discuss the controversy in relation to the second pillar of the French national motto, equality.

Calling for Equality in the Eyes of the Market

The second discursive theme used to delegitimize Quick's strategy frames the introduction of the halal outlets as a marketing ploy that discriminates against non-Muslims. Comments using such an approach center their discourses on the concepts of *reverse discrimination* and *double standards* to substantiate their claims of disempowerment and victimization.

When the Market Institutionalizes (Reverse) Discrimination. In line with an understanding of power relations as a zero-sum game (see Denegri-Knott et al. 2006), many comments frame Quick's strategy as empowering Muslim consumers at their direct expense:

> I already do not have any French butcher shop in my neighborhood; local supermarkets have little supply in pork, and now Quick gets involved too. Well I boycott, I will never go to Quick again. They really piss me off, why don't we have the right to eat our bacon sandwiches anymore. It's disgusting; I say it is anti-white racism. (#H, Le Post/Huffington Post)

Here, the narrative places Quick's strategy within a broader disempowerment process. From an unacknowledged but implicit privileged position, this narrative depicts a gradual disempowerment: first the butcher shops, then the local stores, and now a national chain. This process results in marginalizing, victimizing the "us" in what is perceived to be the home market (i.e. "French butcher", "our bacon sandwiches"). Such discourse draws direct attention to how marketplace inclusion may in the long run be experienced amongst some non-targeted privileged consumers as *institutionalized discrimination*. In particular, the tension between privileges and rights becomes vivid when the narrative frames the systematic removal of pork as a civil rights violation and, as a result, an expression of reverse racism. This actual shift to race is notable as it highlights how "Halal Quicks" can be framed as a racial issue rather than a religious one. Specifically, the notion of reverse

racism/discrimination is a recurring theme in the discourse aiming to delegitimize Quick's strategy.

To frame Quick strategy as reverse discrimination, the above narrative draws a definitive line between the past and present. It grounds its purpose in the present moment and the evolution of the marketplace is divorced from contextual factors connected to the past, such as the restrictive nature of previous market strategies targeting practicing Muslims and the privilege enjoyed by non-Muslims. The use of such an existential and ontological standpoint enables the narrative to discursively position the introduction of halal as a discriminatory rather than compensatory act. Paradoxically, while traditional condemnations of "reverse discrimination" draw on neoliberal ideology and meritocratic discourses to criticize anti-discrimination laws and call for less government intervention (Pincus 2000), Quick's detractors plead for the opposite, especially via the denunciation of "double standards".

Advancing Double Standards Discourse. In an attempt to further delegitimize Quick's strategy and portray it as a violator of both equality and laïcité principles, the discourse on reverse discrimination and racism repeatedly referred to "double standards". Specifically, double standards discourses served to abnormalize Quick's decision by referencing what should have been a normal (and moral) application of equality. One comment expressed discontent at not receiving the support of traditional anti-racism organizations: "Weird – No cry against racism, discrimination. What is SOS Racism doing, the HALDE [French Equal Opportunities and Anti-Discrimination Commission], and all these well-meaning associations? It only works in one direction, as usual" (#I, Le Point). Using double-standards discourse allowed this narrative to reaffirm the institutional dimension of anti-white discrimination, as it situates anti-racism organizations as deliberately dismissing majority population accounts of discrimination. Moreover, many comments insisted on the

exclusionary practices associated with Quick's strategy by drawing comparison with more traditional workplace and marketplace discrimination situations in which minority groups are the victims. These comparisons allowed them to conclude that if those discriminations are "normally" condemned, then so should Quick's strategy. In particular, several narratives mentioned the case of a pork soup distribution which was previously prohibited:

> In spite of everything, there are some strange paradoxes in France! When a soup kitchen decided to serve free cabbage and bacon soup, lots of offended voices arose, shouting foul, and the distribution of this soup was banned by the Prefect of Police of Paris. But when Quick only sells "Halal meat", the socialist mayor [of Argenteuil] approves! It is turned on its head!!!!! (#J, Le Parisien)

Refuting Double Standards Discourse. Nevertheless, other comments argued that this type of analysis failed to acknowledge that the soup distribution, organized by a far-right group, was banned because it purposefully aimed to exclude Muslims:

> The difference with the "pork soup" is that it effectively excluded people who could not eat pork, and did so in a conscious and deliberate manner. On the other hand, to my knowledge, nothing prevents a non-Muslim from eating halal. If one considers him/herself to be discriminated against by these new Quicks it is as bacon consumer, which is not a religious requirement but just a personal preference... (#K, Le Monde)

This counter-narrative criticizes the initial commenter's inability to place Quick's actions in the proper context. The claims of double standards and discrimination are rejected on the basis that the situations of Muslim and non-Muslim consumers are not comparable: while the soup kitchen aims to deliberately exclude Muslims by serving a product that they may not eat, Quick's strategy does not aim to deliberately exclude non-Muslims as the latter can eat

halal and have no obligation to eat pork. The narrative suggests that Quick's strategy is not discriminatory, but rather questions the individual choices of non-Muslim consumers.

As opposed to arguing against double standard rhetoric, some comments sarcastically use similar logic to advance an alternative perspective:

> Most restaurants which do not offer Halal meat are consequently discriminatory because the Muslim consumer who likes meat is automatically excluded. So we shall denounce to the HALDE all the restaurants that do not offer a halal, kosher or macrobiotic menu? We could also leave Muslims alone and focus on the REAL problems? The best way to fight communitarianism is to fight workplace and housing discrimination, the rest is just bullshit! (#L, Le Monde)

The above comment suggests that minority consumers are commonly discriminated against by marketing decisions that do not target them. However, the narrative goes on to consider that "real" discriminatory issues do not sit within restaurants but in workplace and housing environments. Interestingly, the narrative still positions communitarianism as detrimental to the republic. However, instead of seeing it as a deliberate tendency of minority groups to reject the universal values of the republic, the discourse depicts communitarianism as a consequence of failed egalitarian practices within workplace and housing domains. This discourse echoes critics on the blindness of secular universalism, who contend that from a tool to guarantee equality it has become an end in itself, serving to deny (and so perpetuate) the existence of discrimination (see Schor 2001; Scott 2005). We now turn our attention to the third and final component of the French national motto, fraternity.

Framing the Market's (Br)Other

Fraternity has traditionally been the most problematic term of the French national motto (Ozouf 1997). Unlike liberty and equality, which refer to specific political rights, fraternity belongs to the philosophical sphere of moral responsibilities. In contemporary French public discourse fraternity is rooted within secular universalism and refers to national harmony and solidarity (Baubérot 2010). The following comment provides a revealing illustration of how (de)legitimation can be reached through mythopoiesis:

> An anecdote… which dates back twenty years. My laboratory director, an archaeologist, received several colleagues including a director of Iraqi antiquities, his wife and sister. When we were serving the lamb, he stopped the gesture of the good [host] that was going to serve his wife and asked if the animal was stunned or slaughtered. The meat came from a good Parisian butchery, he refused and consequently nobody ate meat that night. This intolerance, from an educated person who studied the same Greco-Roman culture as us, distressed everybody. The commercial attitude of Quick is intolerance, as is the attitude of charities that collect products at the entrance of supermarkets, stating "no pork". (#M, Le Point)

Here, halal food and, by extension, Quick's decision, are depicted as a rejection of the fraternal norms of sociability. The decision of the Iraqi guests (or male guest – as gender domination is implicitly described) to not partake of the meat is experienced as a violation of the normal condition of civility. The guests' choice is perceived as even more provocative as their social status creates the expectation that they would perform as their host and other guests. This "anecdote" highlights how fraternalist secularism requires an immediate degree of "cultural convergence" which, expressed through specific cultural conventions and symbols, primarily burdens minority cultural practices (Laborde 2008). Discourses to delegitimize this perceived normative transgression deploy an "us versus them" rhetoric to

emphasize the distinction between those who are legitimate within the space versus those who are not. Next, we highlight the two ways in which "us versus them" rhetoric is deployed: 1) othering; and 2) extreme othering, or demonization.

Delineating the Other. The following exchange between two commenters highlights the adversarial debate on otherness:

> See how Christians are treated in Islamic lands: untolerated, even persecuted. I think Muslims enjoy *chez nous* [emphasis added, can be translated as "in our home"] a tolerance which will eventually become intolerable for many of our citizens. (#Na, L'Express)

To this comment, a person claiming to be Muslim reacts:

> What do you mean by *chez nous* [emphasis added]? You mean in Christian lands; you're out of the middle ages or what? I was born in France and I am a Muslim and here is *chez moi* [emphasis added, can be translated as "my home"], yes chez moi! […] So according to you it is already good that we are accepted here so we must shut up and follow what others tell us. And another thing, there is a difference between religion and origin; it is not because someone is Muslim that he necessarily comes from elsewhere. (#O, L'Express)

To which the first commentator replied:

> […] Islam does not tolerate any other cultures. In France, a secular country, this religion, like any other religion, should not go out of places of worship and private spheres. France is a Judeo-Christian country, Islam should show more reserve. Its dictates, its precepts are unbearable... The Pieds-Noirs [French and other European/white citizens who lived in French Algeria before its independence] were

also born in Algeria, if the place of birth confers rights on the land, this should have

applied 50 years ago. (#Nb, L'Express).

The above interchange highlights a recurring debate in the coded comments over the

legitimacy of Muslim consumers in the national space. The dispute over "chez nous" versus

"chez moi" is symptomatic of how the construction of real or symbolic boundaries defines

socio-spatial relations and constructs otherness (Varman and Costa 2013; Hu, Whittler, and

Tian 2013). The first narrative draws boundaries from perceived original territorial spaces by

opposing Christians/"chez nous" versus Muslims/Islamic lands. These boundaries freeze

religious and racial differences into essentialist spatial categories and so confine Muslims to

an everlasting otherness in France. Tellingly, one of the most common retaliations proposed

against Quick's strategy includes the implementation of 100% pork or non-halal Quicks in

what is perceived to be the "other's space/land". Such framing sutures Islam and Islamic

practices to foreign (non-French, non-white) bodies and spaces, and undermines French-born

individuals, particularly those that are white, from practicing Islam (see also Gallonier 2015).

Furthermore, when the second narrative claims territorial birth-right and political voice

beyond the ascertained categories, the first narrative counter-argues with an "us versus them"

discourse nourished by national rhetoric and historical references (Kastoryano 2010). In

particular, although laïcité is initially presented as the only legitimate way to organize

religions within the national space, the further assertion of the cultural incongruity of Islam

(versus Judeo-Christianity) denotes that laïcité is used here to maintain control over Muslims'

public influence and so reaffirms Judeo-Christianity's hegemony. As such, laïcité is once

again deployed as a legitimizing myth (Sidanius and Pratto 1999). Behind its consensual

ideology on the neutrality of the public sphere and fairness in social/power relationships,

laïcité is employed to maintain the idea that the rule of the hegemonic group is "moral, just, necessary, inevitable, and fair".

Demonizing the Other. Those who are perceived as challenging the myth (here, the Muslims) risk being rejected, or even demonized, as highlighted below:

> Sick of Islam and its latent claims - veil - burka - separation man/woman at the swimming pool - no male gynecologist - halal food and so on. We can no longer take it. It's weird, but the other religions in a secular country do not manifest themselves - which is normal - and in the Arab countries, it is ZERO tolerance, we forget it too often. What about a Quick for Christians that exclusively serves fish on Friday and nothing else? Halal meat horrifies me because of the slaughtering conditions that even shock our French killers in our slaughterhouses, who are not children's choirs, given the suffering of the animal sacrificed in the name of a RELIGIOUS ritual in the presence of an Imam. I hope that those QUICKS will be boycotted. About pork, most French Muslims do not even know why MUHAMMAD considered pork unclean – a story from another age that endures. When I hear on TV a singer of North African origin say "a pig you give him shit or caviar he prefers shit - so give him shit" I am shocked and speechless especially because [nobody] reacts […]. This is very stupid but it does reflect disdain for the culture of the host country […]. (#P, L'Express)

In this narrative, Quick's strategy disappears within a larger grudge towards the targeted other. The multitude of words used to describe this other – successively named "Islam", "Arab", "French Muslim", and "North African" – indicates that the grievance extends beyond religious, racial, national, and geographical boundaries to include anything somehow related to Islam. This particular discourse reflects an experienced "clash of the civilizations" involving a multiform enemy. This latter is depicted as demanding, chauvinistic, intolerant,

barbaric, ignorant, backward, disrespectful, and ungrateful. More than mere hatred, this narrative demonizes an entire group. Muslims are portrayed as an "evil" acting against the moral obligations of the national community and as a threat to France's identity, "way of life," and deepest values (Formosa 2008; Morton 2004). Such a demonization serves the function of making by implicit contrast, the "we" (arguably the unmarked secular republicans) positive and morally superior. Thus, Quick's strategy is experienced within a larger threat of "cultural contamination" (Varman and Belk 2009), often referred as "(latent) islamization" in the comments.

Empathizing with the Other. However, such comments also generate much reprobation amongst people self-identifying as non-Muslims:

> Elections are soon! We need controversies. I'm not Muslim but frankly don't you think they get [attacked] a lot lately? Sometimes I'm really ashamed to be French. [A debate over] national identity that degenerates, stigmatization of one population: "the Muslims". A veiled girl in a political party […]: "controversy". And now Quick. As stated in the article the experience started more than three months ago and we launch the debate only now? All of this is a smokescreen. [Elections, Elections]!! French people wake up and stop getting manipulated. You'll see that after the elections we won't talk about it anymore! (#Q, Le Parisien)

Here, the legitimacy of debate is disputed. Notions such as laïcité, halal, liberty or equality disappear behind what the commenter views as the sole objective of the controversy: using Muslims as scapegoats for the upcoming elections. However, a distinction between French and Muslim still remains. The commenter simultaneously acknowledges the stigmatized status of French Muslims and furthers that status by failing to recognize them as French. Such self-reflexive and empathetic reactions are common within the comments of some self-

proclaimed non-Muslims. This solidarity is also expressed in terms of consumption practices, as highlighted in this comment: "[…] far from being a problem, it's going to allow a Muslim friend to have a choice other than fish, so I'm happy for her" (#R, Le Parisien).

Epilogue: Quick's own Discourse

In conclusion of this findings section, we present Quick's direct response to the debate via two press releases published in the midst of the controversy (Quick 2010a) and upon completion of the "Halal Quick" market test (Quick 2010b). The press releases underline the consequences of the debate on Quick's legitimating discourse and actions. Quick's (2010a) one-page February 2010 press release reads as follows:

> [...] Quick is a commercial venture whose aim is to develop its business and guarantee the employment of its employees. Following the evolution of the market, seeking to respond to it and doing tests accordingly are part of its *normal* operation [emphasis added]. Experimenting the sale of halal food is part of a trend within the [French food and fast food industry] [...]. Only the meat offered in the 8 restaurants is certified halal. The certification concerns products including beef, chicken and turkey. In parallel, a range of products non-Halal is offered with fish or cheese. Restaurants continue to offer beer. For a better monitoring of the test, Quick has decided not to propose [both halal and non-halal meats]. [...] The capital of the Quick Group is owned at 94% by funds managed by Qualium Investment, independent management company under French law [...].

Here, Quick explicitly *normalizes* its decision to test the sale of halal food at three levels: market ("evolution"), industry ("trend"), and corporate ("operation"). Furthermore, by aligning its discourse with neoliberal as well as humanistic (see references to employees) sensibilities, Quick frames its action as sound and unavoidable. Interestingly, while the sale

of halal food is presented as a matter of "normality," the fact of selling exclusively halal is conversely rationalized as a matter of "test monitoring". In other words, Quick discursively normalizes its choice to sell halal (normal business practice) but rationalizes its choice to exclusively sell halal (technical reasons).

In August 2010, Quick (2010b) released a longer document which presents the outcome of the test. This second press release recapitulates the reasons, steps, specifics and objectives of the test and the commercial success of the experiment: "The average sales growth of the 8 restaurants during the period was about 100%; their attendance has almost doubled and the average bill recorded a strong progression." Without providing evidence for their claim, the document also contends that: "Customers not willing to consume halal meat products did not show disaffection with their usual restaurant and remained loyal to the brand either by showing indifference or through the diversity of offer." As a result of this success, Quick announces that from September 2010, 14 new restaurants will become "halal". Nevertheless, even though they re-explain why having halal and non-halal in the same restaurant is extremely difficult for technical reasons, the document closes on the presentation of the new offer:

> In parallel, a special burger made from non-halal beef will be introduced to the menu at the end of 2010. Only reheated in the restaurant, this will ensure to the customers the traceability of their order and avoid any suspicion of error.

While previous research has demonstrated the market's ability to effectively reinvent the cultural meaning of food practices (see Fonseca 2005), Quick's decision to finally offer halal and non-halal options in the same location suggests halal meat may effectively serve a niche market, but has yet to prove itself an economically and politically viable substitute for "normal" meat.

DISCUSSION

The present study examines the antagonistic discourses produced in response to a marketing strategy that exclusively targets a non-majority group – the "Halal Quicks". Our findings illuminate how such discourses exercise power to (de)legitimize the strategy, and ultimately defend/challenge a certain state of privilege in the marketplace. Further, our findings show how power operates through specific discourses related to rights (i.e. liberty and equality) and moral responsibility (i.e. fraternity) to demarcate a discursively created marketplace where the exclusion or inclusion of social practices and bodies is legitimated. Within this social space, laïcité acts as a mythologized structure upon which various ideological beliefs are transformed into discourses of power, which work to (de)stabilize and (de)normalize privilege in the marketplace. Our focus on this (de)stabilizing and (de)normalizing process is key as it illuminates and begins to address a critical gap in current consumer research.

Privilege and Underpinning Power Dynamics

Extant consumer research has traditionally lacked an explicit discussion of privilege in favor of a stigma-centric approach to marketplace inequalities. This phenomenon is exemplified in research which assumes a default norm or implied referent which leads to an overemphasis of the behavior of the anomalous group, and an underemphasis on the characteristics, behavior or legitimacy of the assumed norm. Our findings demonstrate the importance of understanding the inextricable link between stigma and privilege within the marketplace. In particular, our data show how the mainstreaming of a marketing practice associated with stigmatized social bodies can create a contentious marketing moment during which normality/privilege becomes apparent, challenged and in need of protection.

The present research offers insights into dynamics underlying how privilege is challenged and defended within a local marketplace in several important directions. Our critical analysis,

drawing on the discourse-historical tradition (Wodak and Meyer 2002), reveals how humanistic values can offer moral ground where racist and supremacist ideological beliefs (among others) can be surreptitiously re-enacted. In the context of Quick's decision, our findings reveal how the political-historical significance of French post-colonial ideology in relation to laïcité provides the critical context for understanding the re-framing of humanistic values (such as liberty, equality and fraternity) into the defense of privilege. More specifically, we show how narratives on laïcité and associated components are at times instrumentalized to legitimize a discursive neo-orientalist "market civilization wall" between the civilized/secular "Us" (constructed as French and white) and the uncivilized/religious "Others" (constructed as non-French and non-white). Such findings highlight the racialization of religion and demonstrate how identity markers not explicitly related to what is commonly constructed as race (e.g. religion, ethnicity, nationality, etc.) can become proxies for race in daily discourses.

Furthermore, distinguishing power from privilege is critical as it acknowledges that through discourse, power can be exercised to protect as well as challenge privilege. Rather than following the oft-used dichotomous top-to-bottom approach to power wherein dominants deny change while the dominated struggle to push change forward (e.g. Luedicke 2011), our analysis suggests that change occurs co-constitutively via the deployment of antagonistic discourses of power, which work to construct a discursively heterogeneous space wherein once incompatible cultural practices can be reimagined within the market ethos.

Paradoxically, our results also demonstrate how privilege may be sustained via narratives in support of Quick's strategy. While some position Quick's strategy as a means of addressing a market inequity, others frame it purely along economic lines, essentially stating that its success or failure should be determined by the free hand of the market. Such latter narratives

tend to reproduce neoliberal ideology to normalize the relationship between halal marketing

and consumer choice within the traditional segmentation practices of the food industry (e.g.

organic, vegetarian, Italian or Chinese restaurants). However, the *normalization of diversity*

can be problematic (see Beck 2007; Beck and Lau 2005). Indeed, the recognition and

acceptance of diversity as the "normal" can lead to a new institutional emphasis on

individualization and the responsibility of the individual which ultimately deepens social

inequality by transforming previous collective conflicts into individualized struggles (Beck

2007). Much like colorblind discourse, wherein racial inequities are obfuscated by discourses

on individualized meritocracy (Lieberman 2001), positioning Quick's strategy as a simple

matter of the free market removes power and privilege from the discussion, and effectively

normalizes existing structural and institution-based inequities within the marketplace. From a

practical view, a marketers approach to satisfying a majority target market versus a niche

market involves latent power dynamics that guide the seemingly unquestioned expression of

privilege and reinforces the biases which facilitate privilege.

Politicizing the "Marketization of Religion"

The present study also extends the body of research which critically assesses political

ideology in consumption practices (e.g. Crockett and Wallendorf 2004; Izberk-Bilgin 2012;

Jafari and Goulding 2008; Tsai 2012; Varman and Belk 2009; Varman and Vikas 2007) by

demonstrating how secularism, as a political-historical construction, greatly informs

consumer identity work, particularly when faced with contested (religious) practices.

Consumer research on secularism has emphasized the broad categorizations of sacred and

profane with less attention to religious experience per se. In particular, while extant

marketing research on Islam does impressive and necessary work de-essentializing Islam by

showing that Islamist movements are not homogeneous and static groups solely motivated by

resistance to Western secular modernity (Jafari and Goulding 2008; Izberk-Bilgin 2012;

Sandıkcı and Ger 2010), their corresponding treatment of the secular order appears more

limited. As such, secularism seems to stand as a modernist force only interested in de-

legitimizing Islamist practices. Through our results, we show that secularism, like Islam,

needs to be explored within its whole political, social and historical complexity to fully

appreciate the controversies it may engender with the "Marketization of Religion"

(McAlexander et al. 2014). Specifically, our results show how the proclaimed "neutral"

dimension of secularism emerges as a critical tool in the reproduction of power as it allows

for both claims of homogeneous and heterogeneous space, depending on the ideological

underpinning.

(De)constructing Freedom

Finally, our examination of France and its distinct construction of freedom, wherein

positive/collective freedom is in many regards valued more than individual/negative

expressions of freedom, suggest the concept of freedom requires additional complexity within

consumer research. Too oft researchers focus their attention on "Anglo-Saxon" contexts (e.g.

United States, United Kingdom and Australia) where negative/individual freedom and the

agentic actions it affords are overriding considerations (see Varman and Vikas 2007). On the

other hand the positive sense of freedom is generally overlooked and when it is evoked as in

Markus and Hazel (2010) its "collective dimension," central in Berlin's conceptualization, is

typically underutilized. A notable exception is Varman and Vikas (2007), who use collective

notions of positive freedom to distinguish the individual freedoms offered to the privileged

consumers under capitalism from the perpetual state of unfreedom provided to subaltern

populations. In the same vein, our study indicates some consumption practices may have a

greater dependence on collective conceptualizations of freedom. As such, consumer

researchers should be more mindful of the socially constructed nature of freedom and take into account regional and/or cultural distinctions related to how freedom is valued, constructed and expressed. Typically, our critical examination of narratives on freedom points to a potential blind spot in the reimagining of how the market integrates diverse views. The deployment of "freedom" as a means of delegitimizing Quick's strategy reinforces the core contention of privilege, namely an assumed entitlement to an unearned benefit by one group that is summarily denied to others. In this instance, claims that offering halal meat disrupts the majority's (positive) freedom fail to acknowledge how a marketplace absent of halal meat may deny the same experience to some practicing Muslims.

Suggested Future Research

While our study provides an insightful understanding of privilege within the marketplace, a host of questions remains. For instance, how might a greater focus on modes of privilege help bring about a more inclusive marketplace? The stigma-centric paradigm currently popular within consumer research has overemphasized strategies targeted to marginalized consumers as a means of addressing marketplace inequities. The focus of the present research on privilege in the marketplace will hopefully compel researchers to critically analyze how normalized mainstream marketing practices may advantage particular groups. Expanding our conceptualizations of an inclusive marketplace in this way will enable researchers to uncover specific actions for enacting more equitable strategies that explicitly integrate consideration of privilege.

As a result of the socio-historical complexities specific to France and Islam, our examination of privilege mainly investigates the areas of religion, nationality and race. While our critical discourse analysis reveals how these elements of identity are intersectionally deployed within (de)legitimizing discourses, the methodological limitations of using online reader comments

stunted our ability to differentiate forms of usage between those within and outside the privileged population. There are a number of alternative ways in which privilege is made manifest within the marketplace. Future research can utilize intersectional analysis to unravel the ways in which market privilege enacts itself at other coordinates of privilege, such as gender, able-bodiedness and sexuality as well as adopt methodological approaches that clearly identify social identities (Gopalda and Roy 2015). Much like Ger (2013) suggests the use of critical ethnography and multi-sited analysis as a means of better understanding the ways in which Islamic marketing and capitalism commingle, we advocate these same methods for reaching a deeper comprehension of how privilege is constituted, challenged and defended in the marketplace. The present research provides a solid foundation for such studies.

CONCLUSION

In this research, we utilized a Foucauldian conceptualization of power to critically examine the notion of "privilege" in relation to market inclusion strategies. Our results, which elucidate how specific discursive tactics are deployed to challenge or uphold a privileged positionality in the marketplace, offer a typological approach for broadly understanding markets as discursively created socio-spatial entities wherein privilege stands as a form of normative control. Our findings further hold implications beyond the focal French study context. Researchers and marketers alike are working to understand consumers in changing markets fragmented along racial, ethnic and religious dimensions around the world. These investigations must grapple with the realities of how history, social hierarchies, power and privilege inform and shape marketplaces and consumer experiences. Our study provides insight into this important question. In addition, our study shows the complexity of the public-private spaces dichotomy that underlies contemporary life and has an influence on

marketing strategies and how consumers respond to them. By expanding investigations of marketplace inclusion and exclusion to explicitly consider the role of privilege and associated power dynamics, researchers can contribute to the evolution of more equitable marketspaces. Such a focus can not only create a more nuanced and comprehensive understanding of the socio-political construction of consumption spaces and practices, but also contributes to more satisfying, just and equitable market experiences for all consumers.

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TABLE 1

Quick Halal Controversy – Data Set

Online Press Outlet	Political orientation	Date article	Title article (translated from French to English)	Gathered comments
Leparisien.fr	Center-right	2010/02/17	Halal burger: the Mayor of Argenteuil defends "togetherness"	447 comments
Lemonde.fr	Center-left	2010/02/17	Quick Halal burgers hard to swallow	202 comments
Liberation.fr	Center-left	2010/02/17	Quick halal: "The State raises Islamic taxes," according to Marine Le Pen	712 comments
Lefigaro.fr	Center-right	2010/02/17	In Roubaix, halal burger unleashes politicians	518 comments
Lejdd.fr	Center-right	2010/02/21	Roubaix, a city divided by a sandwich	56 comments
Lepoint.fr	Center-right	2010/02/17	QUICK – Halal Burgers, between marketing coup and political coup	374 comments
Lexpress.fr	Center-left	2010/02/19	Fast-food Halal: Roubaix lodges a complaint against Quick	205 comments
Marianne.net	Left	2010/02/22	Quick Halal: welcome to the communitarian-hypocrites	548 comments
Lepost.huffingtonpost.fr	Center-left	2010/02/15	Quick goes halal in 8 restaurants: "Nothing religious, it is business"	279 comments
Rue89.com	Center-left	2010/02/16	Is Quick right to ban pork from its halal restaurants?	502 comments

There were no comments available on the following news media outlet: Lesechos.fr (center-right), Latribune.fr (center-right); Lacroix.com (Christian Democrat), Lhumanité.fr (Communist); Parismatch.com (center-right); Lenouvelobs.com (Center-left).

TABLE 2

Discursive legitimation struggles around Quick's halal strategy

Themes	Subthemes	Examples of legitimation-delegitimation dynamics
Liberté – Question the strategy in relation to freedom of religion, choice, and enterprise.	Positive Freedom	Since when do we live in a religious republic? Democracy is freedom of choice! Religion and vulgar commercial interests should not restrict this freedom! (#S, Liberation)
	Negative Freedom	Quick is not a public service and has no obligation to provide a particular product in a particular place. It is free to determine what it wants to sell when he wants to sell it (...) In short, no legal basis for this case. (#T, Le Parisien) *Legitimation based on exemplarity* (*normalization*): A restaurant is free to offer targeted services: there are Tibetan, Chinese, Kosher, Italian restaurants... So, why not halal? (#U, Le Monde)
Egalité – Debate whether the strategy discriminates against (and disempowers) non-Muslim consumers	Discrimination	It is discriminatory not to provide an alternative to a religious diktat (...). There are countries where the Muslim population is a minority (i.e. 10% as in France), but where it is impossible to find non-halal beef in restaurants, supermarkets or butchers. Something to think about, before it becomes too late. (#V, L' Express). *Delegitimation by reference to double standard* (*abnormalization*): The real question is "WHY have they removed PORK?" There is the problem! Adapt to a certain clientele YES. Exclude other NO! To arguments such as "but it is a business so it does what it wants," I reply: "Tomorrow I open a high-end nightclub for whites-only for commercial reasons," Discrimination or not? (#W, Le Monde)
	Equal Treatment	Is it really discrimination given that non-Muslims can also consume halal? It would be like lodging a complaint against disability-friendly accesses for discriminating against non-disabled... (#X, Le Parisien)
Fraternité – Discuss the strategy in relation to the place of Muslim consumers within the marketplace	Othering and Demonizing	Whether you like it or not, France is a secular country with is a Judeo-Christian history. We accept all religions as long as it remains private (...) If we, French people, go to a Muslim country, pork will not be offered to us on menu, and it will not come to our mind to ask for it; it is about respecting the country where we are. It must be reciprocal. (#Y, Le Parisien) *Delegitimation by reference to animal suffering*: Halal slaughter is a barbaric practice prohibited in France. Watch this video [about halal slaughter] until the end and dare to say again that you are in favor of Quick, KFC and others generalizing halal meat. Dare to say that in this area, as in others, you support barbarism at the expense of the rules that our civilization has put in place for centuries. (#Z, Le Point)
	Empathizing	Great, now I can go with my Muslim friends to Quick. (...) Frankly, I read the comments and I'm ashamed of what my country is becoming. The history lessons of the 20th century were not enough! Will history repeat itself! Free and open minds, react! (#AA, Le Point)