

# Bottom-Up Process of Market Mainstreaming and Migrant as Agents of Cultural Intermediaries: The Case of Kyoto's Halal Food Market

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## Field research background

- Japan halal food market is predicted to be on the rise (Crescent Rating and Halal Media Japan, 2017).
- In Kyoto particularly, the number is on the 6<sup>th</sup> position compared to other regions (Field work data, based on Internet companies and Crescent Rating Index, 2017).
- On the contrary, the investment cost to make breaking-out is at ¥2,000,000 only for halal certification alone that last up to 2 years.
- This cost can soar if added with providing separate kitchen set as well as ingredients.
- To overcome such situations, local industry try to create halal industry that based on inter-group relations, with employing foreign workers.

# Research Questions

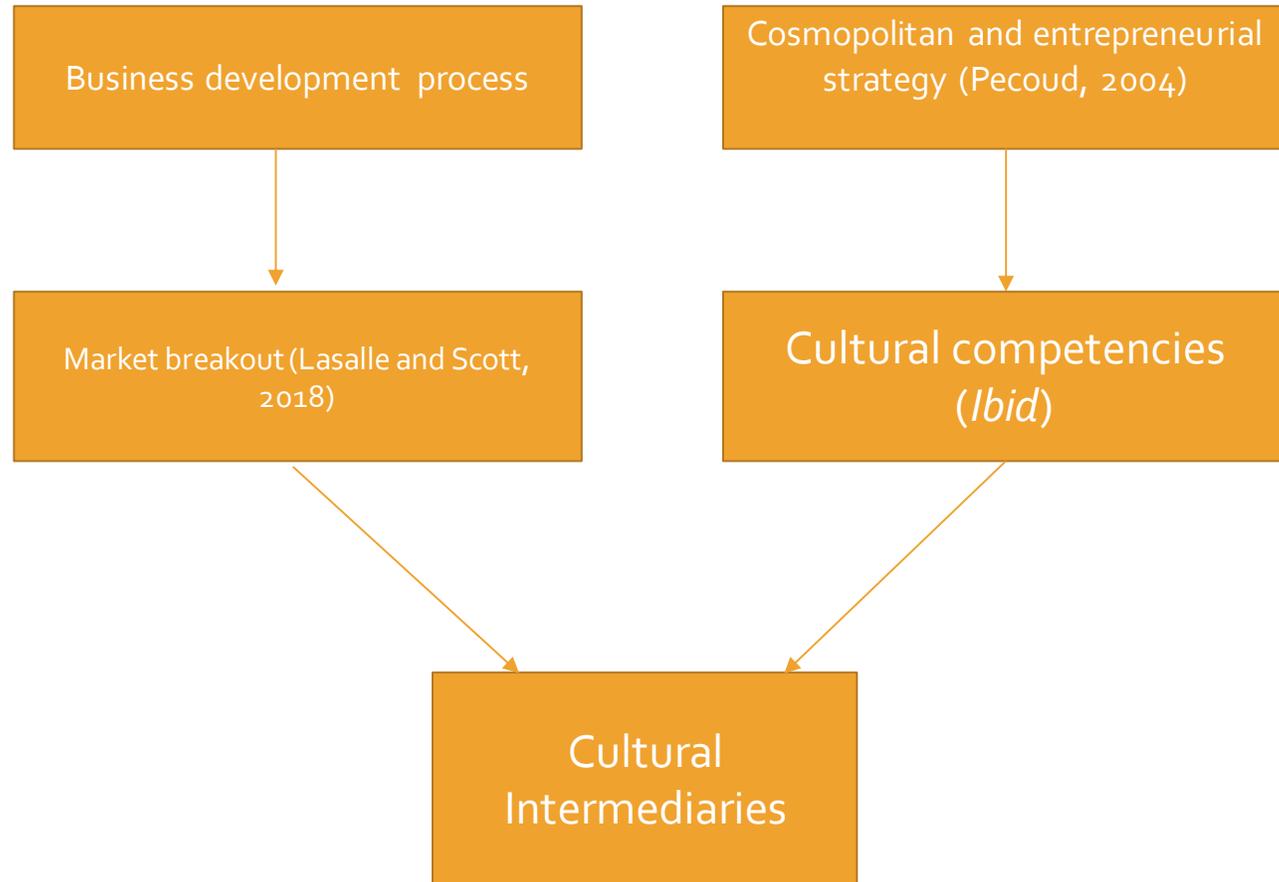
Activities that mediating production and consumption or “cultural intermediaries”, in later situation, is used as analysis in conceiving following questions:

- What roles do migrants or foreign workers play in mediating production and consumption within setting of mixed economy or cosmopolitan business environment?
- How do these relations change the operation of halal food market?
- In a brief way, how does migration/ people with migrant background challenge dominant discourse of policy in migration?

# Definition

- **Cultural competencies:** set of abilities required by entrepreneurs to perform in diverse cultural environment (cosmopolitan).
- **Market breakout:** diversification of products that reach broader clientele.
- **Cultural intermediaries:** the activities that explaining process in mediating the gap in production and consumption.

# Study Focus



# Kyoto Branding Organization



# Common Problems of Market Diversification (Kyoto case of halal food market)

- Most of business owners who experienced investing in halal food, complain on low level of investment return.
- Kyoto branding organization held seminar entitled “Let’s think about food business without considering Halal Certification” (*Musirimu shounisha nishouku wo dei kyousuru koto*)”
- The seminar expresses local frustration with all the promotion of international certifying organization
- In essence, it lacks of cultural understanding of targeted customers.
- Lack of structural regulation in halal certification

# Mediating production and consumption



# Dealing with customers and market breaking-out strategy

Type of products	Transformation	product and market outcome
Ramen noodle restaurant	Original ingredients contain pork, the halal ramen noodle try to change such basic substance and substitute with chicken, instead. In addition, local owners employ many foreign workers in the restaurant in accommodating the need to improve and market its business to broader ethnic clientele	The product is consumed by broader market segments including Muslims.
Japanese restaurant serving traditional dishes	Change in menu and taste as the restaurant also aims for religious consumer. Diversification product not only delimited to food, but also renting Kimono (Japanese traditional dress) that accommodating people wearing head-scarf	Broader targeted consumers including vegetarian.

The changing shape of halal: a shift from religious authority to mediation by inter-group relations

- The problem of religious authority has been addressed by Ayang Utriza Yakin (2017) as problem of lack of agreement among religious scholars in Japan.
- Such problem seems slowing down market breakout process, yet in micro-scale local business respond by using cosmopolitan strategies.
- It changes the shape of halal-certified food into “Muslim friendly food”.
- Marketplace sociability (Upcoming publication)

Concluding  
remarks:  
Connecting  
policy  
challenge and  
bottom-up  
process in  
Kyoto case  
study

- Multi-cultural backlash is sourced by too focusing on ethnicities as general categories of foreigners or people with migrant background; without reflecting on their contribution in reshaping localities (Caglar, 2017; Mizukami, 2018), their interaction in creating social field that shaped by broader structural contexts ( Glick Schiller and Caglar, 2017).
- While ethnic differences is not resulting segregation, do social scientist be able to locate broader interaction among local-and people with migrant background that determine local development?