


Chapter 10

Constructing an Integrated Sustainable Halal Policy (ISHP) in Brunei Darussalam: Refiguring the Domains of Conventional Policy Multiverses

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ABSTRACT

This chapter aims to revisit some of the foundational questions that help create the domains often treated in exclusion or in silos, particularly those involving public, industrial, and economic policies, and proposed a new framework of which how the three could be integrated and synchronized by using experiences from the Brunei halal industry as a case study. This chapter is timely as the food industry is seen as one of the five main sectors aimed at diversifying the Bruneian economy and development envisioned in the Brunei Vision 2035, in tandem with some of the Sustainable Development Goals (SDG). The study is based on the experiences of Brunei's food industry players. Adapting it to the principles of Islamic governance not only puts into context the logic of why such an integrated halal policy is crucial for the alleviation of poverty (SDG1) and the development of sustainable cities and communities (SDG 8) alike but also answers the calls towards responsible production and consumption (SDG 12) whilst supporting the decent work and economic growth promotion (SDG 11).

BRUNEI'S PROGRESS IN THE SUSTAINABLE DEVELOPMENT GOAL (SDG)

The Brundtland Commission (1987) defined the concept of sustainable development as developing or progressing without jeopardizing the needs of the future generation. Fast forward to 25 years since its inception, numerous studies and research managed to highlight the complexities and multidimensionality

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of diverse issues on people, environment, and development. The growing sentiments and acknowledgements on the role of civil society and governance in upholding the principles of sustainability, issues surrounding poverty, socio-economic inequalities, social and environmental justice, and climate change, to name a few, remained in existence with limited progress despite major changes brought about by technological development and globalisation. The 2030 Agenda for Sustainable Development adopted in 2015 resulted in the introduction of 17 Sustainable Development Goals (henceforth SDGs), calling for active participation and actions of all countries towards peace and prosperity for the people and the planet, at present and in the future.

Brunei Darussalam embraced SDG 17 and has been committed to pursuing and improving nine core areas of the SDG that the country view as important, under the auspice of the Secretariat to the Special National Coordination Committee on SDG (SSNCC), Brunei Prime Minister's Office. The nine core areas as reported by the SSNCC in their 2021 Annual Report on SDG are SDG 1 on zero poverty, SDG 2 on zero hunger, SDG 3 on good health and well-being, SDG 8 on decent work and economic growth, SDG 10 on reduced inequalities, SDG 12 on responsible consumption and production, SDG 13 on Climate Action, SDG 16 on peace, justice, and strong institutions as well as SDG 17 on strong partnerships (SSNCC, 2021). Brunei was ranked 84th in 2021 and 93rd in 2022 respectively concerning the progress made on their SDG commitments. Despite such a drop in ranking, the SDG pursuit was further enhanced by continuously working on its Brunei Vision 2035 through its Whole of Nation Approach. The Whole of Nation approach calls for the cooperation, collaboration and integration of the State's governing apparatuses and its citizens to materialise the national vision while at the same time, adhering to the Malay Islamic Monarchy (MIB) principles. Interestingly, the three main components of the Brunei Vision 2035 launched in 2007 were already in line or embedded with the SDGs 2030 Agenda as the vision aspires to produce educated, highly skilled and accomplished individuals measured by the highest international standards, to have a society which enjoys a high quality of life within the top 10 measurements of the United Nation's Human Development Index and a dynamic and sustainable economy (Secretariat of Brunei Vision 2035, n.d.).

Despite the effort in promoting and integrating the SDGs goals into the existing Vision 2035 framework, certain flaws do exist particularly relating to the definition and interpretation of these goals. Another flaw is also linked to the incongruency between the United Nation's (UN) assessment criteria of 'progress' in SDGs implementation in contrast to the national government's self-assessment. An example of this can be found with SDG 1 on zero poverty where the UN SDG reported its absence due to data unavailability, despite, the existence of poverty-related research being published (see Hassan et al, 2022; Gweshengwe and Hassan, 2019, 2020). The existence of Brunei's National Poverty Eradication Action Plan 2020-2024 as reported in the SSNC annual report (SSNC, 2021) but remained undetected by the UN's SDG reporting also highlighted the challenges in the use of the UN's conventional poverty line indicator against the actual national expected standard of living (Gweshengwe and Hassan, 2020). These discrepancies in the multi-scalar reporting on the SDGs' goal achievements point to the problems of contextualisation and issues in the use of indices or numerals for such reporting especially when it deals with people's experiences of poverty. Such check listings and indexing also indirectly veils poverty, making it less visible to the public. It is beyond the scope of this paper to address these discrepancies in detail. However, such an example is a reflection on how a seemingly globalised universal definition may not necessarily fit the local context in terms of its occurrences and how it is operationalised.

Within the economic sphere, the identification of halal food as a key driver of its economic diversification programme generates interest and warrants further investigation, particularly from the sustainability

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