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Panel086: Food culture and food business

session1 Adapting business to religion: challenges and changes

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Culinary image and food business as conscience

A case study of the halal food business in China

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1.1. Ethnic Term “qingzhen” and Modern Halal

- Traditional signs and meanings of “qingzhen”
- Food, commodity, and shops which Muslims are able to use without anxiety
 - cf. *Qinzehsi*清真寺 (*Masjid*), *Qinzhenyan* 清真言 (*Shahahda*), *Qingzhenli* 清真曆 (Islamic calendar) etc
 - “Islamic”, “of Muslims “



[Broomhall 1987(1910)]



Official involvement and Standardization of qingzhen food management

- related sections of governments + Islamic associations
- *Qingzhen* 清真 ⇒ Halal
- ethnic, cultural and economic capital

清真牌

Food of Muslims



1.2. Objectives

- How both Muslims and non-Muslims in China interpret and consume qingzhen foods?
- How consumers assess qinzhen foods?
- How food service providers leverage the concept of halal in China?

Research Method



- Review of qingzhen/halal related articles on publication and website
- Data collected through fieldworks in China and Malaysia.
 - Fujian, China: Total 6 weeks, February and September 2010, 2011
 - Kuala Lumpur, Malaysia: about 20 days, April 2010, 2011
- Interview and participant observation.

1.3. Main Findings

- a) Halal and the term *qingzhen*, originally the Mandarin translation for Islam, have been negotiated through the institutionalization of *qingzhen* food regulation
- b) With today's increasing global awareness of the halal market, *qingzhen* foods and cuisine have been rediscovered as ethnic, cultural, and economic capital
- c) Modern halal brought new players into the *qingzhen* food business

1.3. Main Findings

- d) Attempts to practice religiously correct eating to the extent possible within a given circumstances
- e) Attitudes to availability and options
- f) Honesty of the service provider is an important element for consumers.

1.3. Main Findings

- g) Culinary image of *qingzhen* cuisine have also emerged through the historical interactions of regional food cultures and Islamic religious culture in China.
- h) Relationship between the common notions of a cuisine and the practicalities of the food business- a complex of religious, regional, and ethnic dimension

Outline

- 1. Introduction
- 2. Standardizing *qingzhen*: top-down policies
- 3. Daily *qingzhen* food practices and interpretations
- 4. *Qingzhen* cuisine and regional food
- 5. Conclusion

2-1. Traditional sign and meanings of “qingzhen”

1900

“Water-pot signifies **ceremonial cleanliness**, and is a guarantee that **no pork is use**”

“The two characters on the tea-pot are ‘**pure and true**’.”



[Broomhall 1987(1910)]



1950

Special measure of meat and food service for ethnic minorities

- “*Qingzhen*” = “Custom of ethnic minority” , “Food of the Hui people” , “Pork-prohibited minorities” , “Islam”

2-2. “Qingzhen” mark and Standardizing halal food business

mid of 1990s

The official rule for halal food production and control by local government

- “*Qingzhen*” = “Custom of ethnic minority”
- Emphasis on the **ethnic** of the persons who engaged in.

2000s

Halal related Books are published by state-run publishers

- “*Qingzhen* food”, “*Qingzhen* food industry”, “*Qingzhen* food management”
- “*Qingzhen* food” ≈ “Halal food”



2-2. “Qingzhen” and Standardizing halal food business

2010s

Guideline for halal food certification

- “Qingzhen” was defined as “Halal” , also as “***cultural and economic capital***”
- Referred to “*General Guidelines for Use of the Term “HALAL”*” by The Codex Alimentarius Commission, FAO, UN
- Ningxia Hui autonomous region (2009)
- Five provinces in the west part of china signed to establish confederal guideline (2012).



Voluntary labeled “Qingzhen”



1997



2011

Officially labeled “qingzhen”



The name of certification body in Chinese



“Halal” in Arabic



“Halal” in Alphabet



The name of certification body in Arabic

3. 1. Characteristics of the research area

3.2. Availability

- Single/Family, Married/Unmarried, living with family
- Cooking their own meals/dining out
- Options: Local food, *qingzhen* food (Northwestern local food/Arab food), Chinese vegetarian, seafood

Familiarity, customs, and habit

3.2. Choice criteria

- Possibility of containing pork
- Possibility of containing animals
- Sign or label on food shops: *qingzhen/halal*

3.3. Distributing halal food by individual courtesy

Few Muslim, no *qingzhen* food shop, few *qingzhen* or halal restaurants, no official rule for *qingzhen* food.

- How to get halal food?

- Muslim and restaurant's owner asks Imam for slaughtering
- One of my Hui informants, an Arabic translator, is distributing halal meat and ingredients for the convenience for muslims.

*"He is so **honest**, he is not for pursuit of gain, he doing that for us."*

(March 2010, Muslim owner of Xinjiang restaurant)



3.4. Exchanging opinions about improper display

Removing improper display of *qingzhen* at a noodle shop owned by non-Muslim

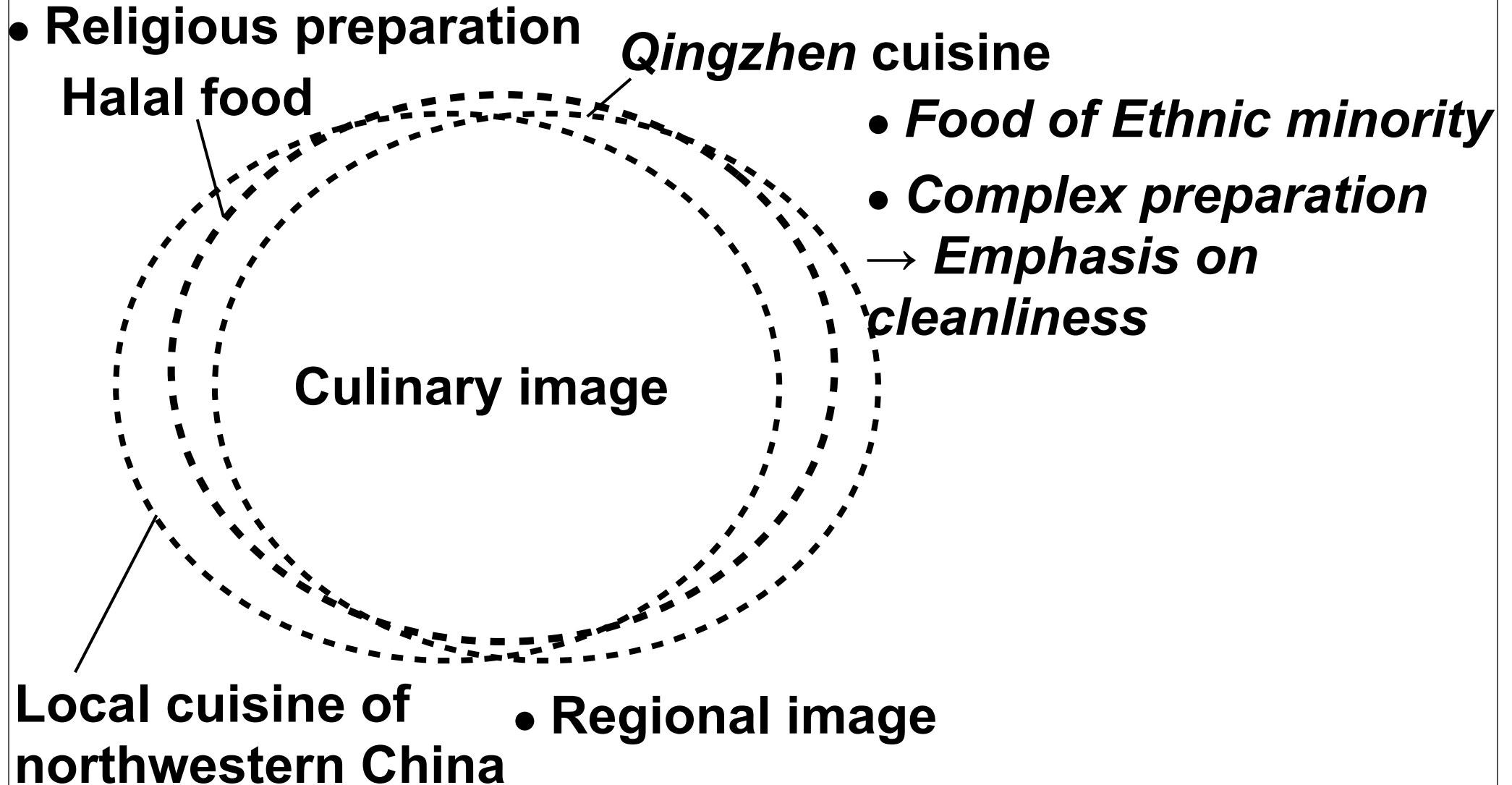
- Imam explained what is halal for muslim, then non-Muslim owner agreed to remove the improper display.
- This occurred because of the previous muslim owner sold his shop with all its furnishings.

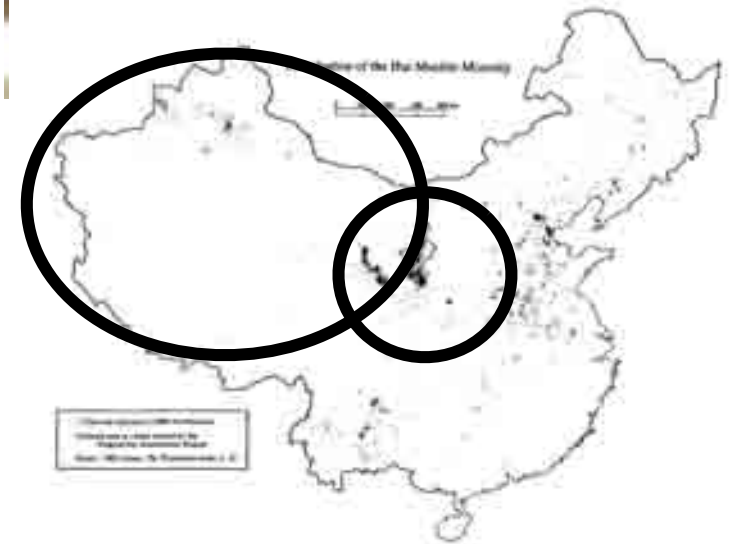
“Imam is excellent, the non-muslim owner is excellent but the previous muslim owner is wrong”

“that was the problem of the previous owner, he has no sense of responsibility”.

<http://www.2muslim.com>

4.1. Overlapping culinary image by non-Muslim Chinese





“qingzhen” cuisine

- Wide sense: cuisine of Muslim
 - **Religious**
- Narrow sense: cuisine of Hui minority
 - **Ethnic**
- Preparation: based on regional food and cooking method
 - **Regional**
- Blank area of “traditional” classification of four or eight chinese cuisine ⇔ Northwest



Northwestern noodle

Muslim restaurant

Northwestern taste

Ethnic Speciality

4.2. “non-qingzhen” local cuisine of west part of China



- Flavor of west part of China

- Utilizing a motif of Mosque

- “It will attracts more consumers. I provided pork dishes before, but I stopped now because it was rarely ordered.”



(Interview at Fujian, February 2011, non-Muslim, Chinese, male, 40s, Owner of Xingjiang restaurant)

4.3. Revaluating “qingzhen”

- “Originally I don’t like *qinzhen*. Because when I visited the area such as Yunnan, where the Hui muslim population concentrated, I felt it was bad hygiene there...subsequently I come to know *qingzhen* is **clean and good**, more and more interested in *qingzhen*. I have joined MIHAS* several times. At first I didn’t expect lot, but gradually I come to convinced of there is **big chance**. Next October we will have *qingzhen* (halal) expo in Ningxia in China. I will invite you if you are interested!”

(Interview at Kuala Lunpur, April 2011, non-Muslim, Chinese, male, 50s, distributor of agricultural products) *MIHAS: Malaysian International Halal Showcase

4.3. Revaluing “qingzhen”

- ◎ “ I have been to Tokyo, Aichi, Okinawa, Kyoto, Nikko, Sizuoka, and other cities in Japan. Japan should move positively (into halal market). Japanese products has **high standard** at the first place. It should fit naturally into *qingzhen*, also **high quality**. Perhaps Muslim population is not so large, *qingzhen* industry might hold promise of **future growth** also in Japan.”

(Interview at Kuala Lunpur, April 2011, non-Muslim, Chinese, male, 50s, distributor of agricultural products)

5. Conclusion

- 1) The government regulation of *qingzhen* food facilitates the entry of various actors into *qingzhen* food business
- 2) Methods of *qingzhen* access suggest that Muslim Chinese prioritize service providers' honesty and responsibility.
- 3) The overlapping culinary image of *qingzhen* and local cuisine in Northwest part of China influences the marketing of and access to *qingzhen* in the country.
- 4) Non-Muslim Chinese have recently come to associate *qingzhen* with positive values, such as cleanliness, high quality, and economic potential.

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