

## SESSION 1 FOOD HABITS AND HALAL CERTIFICATION SYSTEMS

Presentation 4

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### Halal in Chinese Food Culture

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#### Abstract

This paper aims to describe the impact of modern systematization of halal upon non-Muslim societies. The case in point is halal in the Chinese food culture, in particularly, of the Hui people in Mainland China.

With today's increasing global migration, Muslim population, the expanding middle class and halal market, there is increasing global awareness of halal issues, not only in the countries and areas which Muslims are minority also in Muslim countries where halal is natural fact. Halal is a norm of behavior for Muslims which covers the whole of everyday life. Concerning to the current state of halal, now two contrary dynamics is on; expansion and convergence. Expansion: adding to the original meaning of halal, lawful or permitted, various positive values such as hygiene and healthy are attached. Convergence: systematization of halal control such as halal certification applying religious and science technology, seeking unified halal standard and all. The diversity of halal consciousness and practices in everyday life among individuals, ethnic group, areas and countries sometimes bring bewildering situation to both of Muslim/non-Muslim consumer and service providers; how to know certain products and services are really halal, how can trust the halal mark on products or restaurants, and how to guarantee the halalness of them. There are efforts in dealing with the diversity and the gap between localized halals and international standards.

This paper takes these gaps not as difficulty but as richness and possibility of human agency, asks how systematizing halal affects everyday life in the global era. It will illustrate dynamism of the concept of halal, qingzhen (清真) in Chinese, through exploring fluctuation of point of focus defining halal by actors such as Hui people, religious specialist and local government and their negotiation of practical uses. In the case of systematization of halal in Mainland China, there are two points; First, official involvement to halal was conducted within the category of ethnic policy. Second, increasing economic motivation and food safety administration accelerates needs of the negotiation between localized halal and internationally accepted level of halal regulation. The latter is reinforced, in particular, through promoting international connection with halal related organization in foreign countries. Meanwhile, Voices from Hui people suggests that they seek honesty (誠信) of service providers rather than halal control by regulations.