

A photograph of a dining table filled with various Chinese dishes. In the center, there is a large bowl of white rice with a wooden spoon. To the left, a large ceramic pot sits in a woven basket, containing a whole chicken. Other dishes include a whole fish in a white bowl, a plate of stir-fried vegetables, a plate of shrimp with cucumbers, and a plate of scrambled eggs. A hand is visible at the top, using chopsticks to pick up a piece of food. The table is set with white bowls, glasses, and chopsticks.

CHINESE ATTITUDES ON FOOD WASTE

Hingman Leung
Master of Arts in
Intercultural and International Communication

First, a bit of context



- Each year, one-third of the world's food produced for human consumption is wasted.
- Over 70% of that wasted food is attributed to Asia and Africa.
- 2 main types of food waste:
 - ▣ Pre-consumer
 - ▣ Consumer

Why study food waste in China?



- Implications for food security and safety, sustainable development, health, and environment.
- Gap in current research.
- Intersection of personal, professional, and academic interests.

What did I set out to do?

Purpose: To **explore the variety of attitudes** towards food waste exhibited by Chinese residents in first tier Chinese cities.

Objective: **Examine the cultural themes** that emerge from talking about and interacting with food waste with Chinese residents.

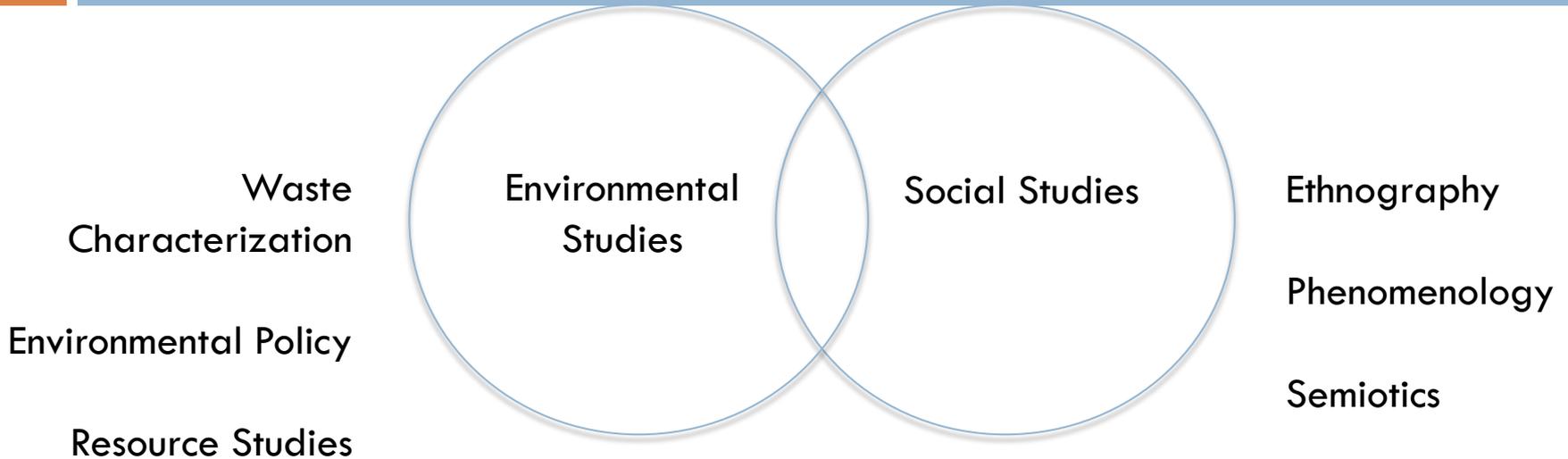
Goal: Launch an **intercultural dialogue** on food waste to contribute to the growing interdisciplinary field of the socio-cultural aspect of environmental studies.

How was it done?



- Emphasis on “laobaixing”
- Opportunistic and snowball sampling
- Unstructured interviews with individuals and groups
- Participant observation and interaction
- 25 participants in total, 19 female, 6 male, aged 30-60
- Illustrative sample to show variation, not representative of Chinese culture at large

What about the theoretical approach?



What is food waste from a scientific perspective?
What happens to food waste in the landfill?
How does it impact the environment?
How can food waste be properly managed?

What is food? And what does it mean?
How do Chinese people interact with food?
What do certain food rituals mean?
What feelings and values are placed on food?

**How do Chinese people feel about food waste,
and what are the motivations that drive food waste creation in China?**

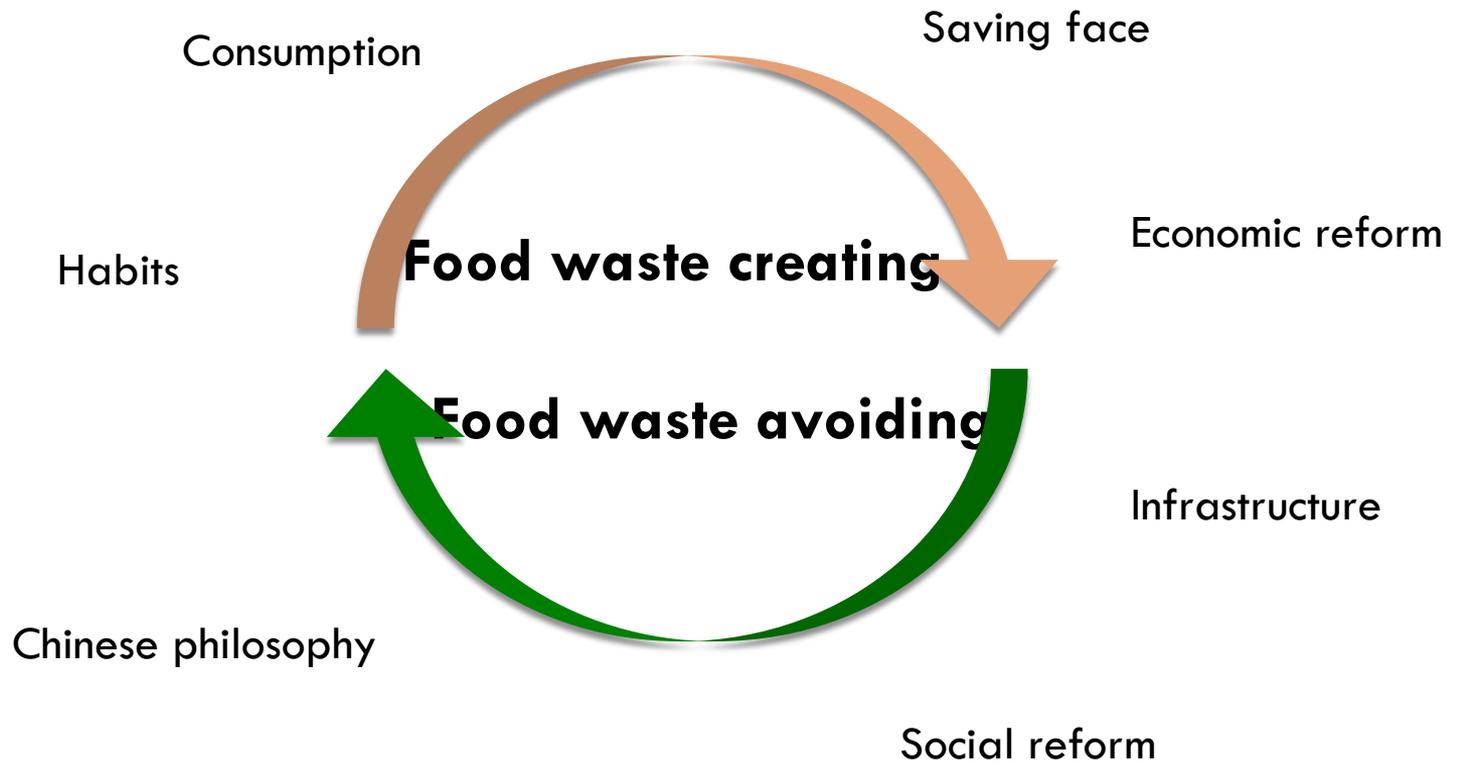
What did I ask people?



What did I find out?



Conclusions



Discussion

- How does this compare to your experience of Chinese food?
- For those who have lived in China, what was your experience like?
- As an immigrant – have your views on food waste changed? How?