



Fangzhou Guo

The Influence of Urbanization on Food Consumption Patterns in East Asia

A Comparative Study on China and Indonesia in 2002-2010

Topic and Research Question

East Asia, especially developing countries in East Asia, is undergoing rapid urbanization. Urbanization not only transforms rural-urban structures, but also influences societies in various aspects. However, one consequence of urbanization is rarely studied, namely, the impact of urbanization on food consumption patterns.

In order to explicitly analyze the food consumption patterns during the recent period of the urbanization in East Asia, the main research question of this master thesis is how the urbanization in China and Indonesia influenced the food consumption patterns in 2002-2010. The further sub-question is the similarities and differences of urbanization and the changes in the food consumption patterns between these two countries. China and Indonesia are respectively the largest and most populated countries in Northeast Asia and Southeast Asia. Moreover, China and Indonesia were urbanized at a similar pace in the first decade of the 21st century, and their urbanization trends were consistent with that of East Asia.

State of the Art

The relevant topics on the influence of urbanization on the food consumption commonly concentrate on food price. Jesper Stage, Jorn Stage and Gordon Mcgranahan (2010, 199) argued that urbanization affected food price, because a growing number of people relied on commercial supply food rather than their own production.

The research of the urbanization influences on food consumption patterns was mostly explored in the context of European countries. The food consumption patterns of European cities during the period of industrialization and urbanization, were generally characterized by increasing consumption of meat and milk products (Nicolau-Nos and Pujol-Andreu 2007, 47). The food pattern alternation in Europe may not apply to East Asian countries because of the dietary and custom differences. Additionally, most European countries were urbanized fairly early in comparison with the urbanization in East Asian countries.

Literatures on the urbanization in East Asian countries are referential but inadequate. Pernia (1986, 19) discovered that urbanization was positively relevant to food consumption in Asia. Pernia's research was quite general, which merely confirmed the relevance and the overall trends in consumption patterns. Liu and Cao

(2014) analyzed the food consumption in China from 2000 to 2011. They discussed the impact of urbanization but did not dissect the influence of urbanization. Lipoeto, Geok and Angeles-Agdeppa (2013) studied the food consumption patterns and the nutrition transitions in three Southeast Asian countries. Nevertheless, the research only focused on Southeast Asia and emphasized the nutrition transitions. Consequently, further research needs to be conducted.

Methodology and Approach

Urbanization is significantly reconstructing food consumption patterns by changing foodways. Rappoport (1987) summarized a three dimensional model, pleasure, health and metaphysics, in exploring the psychosocial meaning of foodways. He also depicted three limitations which influence foodways: immediate situational constraints, social structural and environmental conditions and world system events. In the process of urbanization, all of the three limiting conditions which influence foodways and food consumption patterns were envisaged.

The author extracts eight criteria to analyze the influence of urbanization on food consumption patterns and to compare it among different countries. The criteria are, urbanization rate, urbanization patterns, structural shift of labor force, number of employed persons in different industries, rural and urban labor force, traditional food consumption patterns, urban and rural food consumption patterns, and urbanization and food consumption patterns.

The criteria follow a logical order starting from urbanization to the shift of labor force, and eventually to the food consumption patterns. Leppman (2005, 75) mentioned that "of the complex collection of transformations that constitutes economic development, two have the greatest relevance for a household's foodways: changes in occupation (labor force shift) and changes in the living environment (urbanization)". Urbanization is the external factor, and the shift of labor force is the internal reason on the changes in food consumption patterns. The shift of labor force during the period of industrialization is highly relevant to the location of the occupation. And, as a country urbanizes, the labor force will undergo a structural transformation.

Different occupations possibly have dissimilar physical activity and nutritional needs. Nutritionists suggested that athletes and people practicing heavy physical activity could consume more carbohydrates for better performance (Miles 2012, 121; Fontan and Amadio 2015;

FAO 2015b). In the era of urbanization, researchers found an increase in sedentary urban workers with more brainwork especially the technology-driven jobs in China (Monda et al. 2006, 867).

In terms of food consumption patterns, it is necessary to construct a background of food consumption before a further analysis. The national food consumption patterns are used to sketch the contemporary situations of food consumption. Afterwards, food consumption patterns in urban areas and rural areas will be clearly analyzed and compared.

Main Facts

During 2002-2010, China and Indonesia were both experiencing rapid urbanization, and the urbanization in villages was not sufficient, compared with the fast developing urban regions of these two countries.

The urbanization in the two countries had geographical differences, but the reasons that drove their urbanization were similar. The largest megacities were urbanized most rapidly in China, whereas the fastest urbanizing cities in Indonesia had already become the large metropolitan areas. The more urbanized areas in these two countries had industrial foundations and resource advantages.

Although the transformations of specific industries and the structures of industrial sectors differed between China and Indonesia, the occupations in the two countries tended to require more manual labor than physical labor regardless of rural areas or urban areas.

The structures and transformation trends in the food consumption patterns in China and Indonesia presented more similarities than differences. The traditional food habits in both countries accepted rice as a staple food and localized foreign diets.

At the national level, the food consumption patterns in China and in Indonesia resembled in several perspectives. The most consumed food groups were identical, namely cereal grains and vegetables. Chinese consumed more animal proteins from meat, while Indonesians consumed more fish. Both of the two countries decreased the consumption of cereal grains and increased the consumption of animal proteins. The consumption amount of vegetables and oils barely changed.

In both two countries, the structures of food consumption patterns in urban areas significantly differed from the rural food consumption patterns. The "cereal grains" was

the only food group in rural areas, which was higher in consumption amount than that of urban areas. The urban dwellers consumed much more animal proteins and fruits. The consumption of vegetables and oils in urban areas and rural areas was exceptionally similar.

Results

The resembling transformation trends in most food groups in China and Indonesia were accordance with the rapid urbanization and the structural shift of labor force in 2002-2010. The decreasing consumption of cereal grains and the increasing consumption of animal proteins and fruits constituted a changing consumption pattern, which was close to the urban consumption patterns. Moreover, this transformation suggested a lower intake of carbohydrates and higher consumption of proteins. It fit the occupational nutrition demand.

Besides, the stable consumption of vegetables and oils in rural and urban areas, was barely influenced by urbanization. The stable consumption of vegetables signified one of the characteristics of the food consumption patterns in East Asia.

Consequently, China and Indonesia from 2002 to 2010 demonstrated a similar influence of the urbanization on the food consumption patterns. The rapid urbanization influenced the food consumption patterns by the reduction of cereal grains and by the increase of animal proteins and fruits. Besides, it hardly affected the consumption of vegetables and oils.

References

All references can be found in the full version of the MA thesis available at <http://othes.univie.ac.at>.

About the Author

Fangzhou Guo obtained a Bachelor of Arts degree in Anthropology at the University of Minnesota, Twin Cities.

Contact information:

a1300657@unet.univie.ac.at



Examination Date: 10 June, 2016