

Workshop Report: Hungry Cities Partnership Knowledge Mobilization Workshop in Nanjing

Zhenzhong Si

Balsillie School of International Affairs, Canada

The Hungry Cities Partnership (HCP) and Nanjing University, China organized a workshop entitled “Wet Market and Urban Food System in Nanjing” on January 12, 2017 at the School of Geographic and Oceanographic Sciences of Nanjing University in Nanjing, China. The workshop aimed to disseminate the results of the HCP household food security survey in Nanjing to government officials and researchers and to discuss the management of the urban food system. It also facilitated communication and understanding between the HCP team and local government officials regarding research themes in 2017. Presenters included Prof. Jonathan Crush, HCP Postdoctoral Fellow Zhenzhong Si, and officials from Nanjing City Administration Bureau, Nanjing Urban Planning Bureau, Commerce Bureau of Jianye District, the manager of the Nanjing Wholesale Market and the manager of Heyuan Wet Market. The officials gave presentations on various relevant policies and regulations and the government’s efforts to manage street vending, and govern the development of wet markets and wholesale markets in Nanjing. Other participants included Professor Xianjin Huang (Vice Dean of the School of Geographic and Oceanographic Sciences of Nanjing University), Associate Professor Dr. Taiyang Zhong, Associate Research Fellow Dr. Shuangshuang Tang and Dr. Jinliao He from Nanjing University, HCP PDF Cameron McCordic, Mr. Roger Dickinson from South Africa, and other researchers and graduate students from Nanjing University.

Session 1. Introduction of HCP and Food Security

Professor Xianjin Huang of Nanjing University welcomed the participants in the Workshop.

Professor Jonathan Crush provided an overview of the HCP project, emphasizing the significance of food security in cities in an increasingly urbanized world and the close connections between urban food security, the informal food economy, inclusive growth and global development agendas.

Dr. Zhenzhong Si presented the results of the HCP household food security survey in Nanjing. The survey respondents, consisting of 1,210 households, were distributed in 100 sub-districts in all 11 districts in Nanjing. Nanjing households experience a high level of food security with almost 80% of households considered food secure on the Household Food Insecure Access Prevalence (HFIAP) scale. Nanjing households also exhibit good dietary diversity. Staple grains, vegetables and fruits were the most commonly consumed. Meat was considered the most unaffordable. The survey did show that food insecure households had an average household monthly income below 4,500 CNY (656 USD) while households with more than 4500 CNY monthly income were generally food secure. Findings about patronage of various food retailing outlets were presented, as were Nanjing residents’ perceptions of food safety. The survey showed that food safety,

particularly chemical residues in fresh produce and hormones in meat, was a major concern for most Nanjing households. Nanjing residents use various strategies in food access and preparation to cope with the food safety risk.



Figure 1. Professor Jonathan Crush Presenting



Figure 2. Dr. Zhenzhong Si Presenting

Session 2. Governance of Food Vendors and Wet Markets in Nanjing

The second session focused on the governance of street vendors and wet markets in Nanjing. Street vendors and wet markets are the respondents in the citywide survey that HCP conducted in Nanjing in January and February 2017. Through interaction with city officials, a clearer understanding of the status quo and policy environment of street vendors and wet markets in Nanjing was achieved.

Mr. Xu Jin (Director of the City Administration Bureau of Qixia District in Nanjing) first provided a broad overview of the rationale for the enduring existence of street food vendors in China, the problems that street food vendors created, and the ideas and principles of the administration of street vendors. He suggested that rapid urbanization process was leading to an increasing number of rural migrants in cities, many of whom find selling food on the street a convenient way of making a living. The demand of cheap food by migrants also sustains the business of street food vendors. Second, city renovation and urban development projects in many cities destroyed old business facilities. Street vendors were filling the gap and making life in these newly developed areas easier for the residents. Problems created included urban environment, transportation and food safety problems. He maintained that street vendors practice of dumping garbage and wastewater on the street leads to serious disruption of the city's appearance. They also cause traffic congestion by taking up transportation space. Due to a lack of monitoring and inspection, food sold by street vendors also has a relatively high food safety risk.

In Nanjing, governing street vendors has long been a major task of the City Administration Bureau of Qixia District. The Bureau has personnel patrolling all the streets within their jurisdiction every day from 7am until 1am. Their major approach is to persuade vendors to rent space and move their business indoors. In 2016, they handled 2,775 cases of street vendors who refused to move indoors. The Bureau has also been trying to work with the urban planning department to make it compulsory that all new residential neighbourhoods have a specific area designated for vendors. Nanjing has also issued policies to facilitate the establishment of vendor centres for mobile vendors, which will provide them with the necessary utilities and other services. Mr. Jin concluded that 90% of the conflicts in urban space governance in China result from the administration of street vendors. Governing the vendors in a humane and effective way and improving their legal awareness so that they can comply with urban management and food safety requirements is a significant challenge.

The second speaker Dr. Zhihua Tu (Deputy Director of the City Center Sub-bureau of Nanjing Urban Planning Bureau) gave a detailed presentation of the Planning Guidance for Public Facilities in Nanjing issued in 2015. Public facilities, which include wet markets, are generally categorized into four levels: municipal, regional, neighbourhood and basic community levels. Facilities at each level have specific service area and population size. These numbers determine the standard requirements (i.e. area and types of service) for urban planning and monitoring purposes. They also make it clear what size of a wet market needs to be established in an area. According to the guidelines, every

and unified electronic payment. The second aspect is the current situation of wet markets in Nanjing. There were 320 wet markets in Nanjing at the end of 2016. The largest wet market is Yingbin Market in Jianye District, which takes up 8,000 square meters. Wet markets in Nanjing are either run by the state or the private sector. While wet markets are considered “people’s livelihood projects”, privately owned wet markets are gradually being bought up by the state and transformed to state-run markets. The third part of the presentation focused on the current situation of wet markets in Jianye District. Jianye District has 17 wet markets in total, eight of which are indoors while the other nine are under arch sheds without walls. The district government invested in the renovation and upgrade of old wet markets in 2013. More wet markets are under construction alongside the construction of community service centers. In 2016, the district government provided a 30 million CNY (4.36 million USD) fund to support the standardization, food safety control and improvement of wet markets.



Figure 4. Mr. Yuzhi Peng Presenting

Session 3. Management of Food Markets in Nanjing

The last session of the workshop shifted the focus from the governance of food markets in Nanjing to their management through the presentations by two market managers. The first presenter was Mr. Zhaolong Fan, the vice CEO of Zhongcai, the largest wholesale market and food distribution center in Nanjing. The other was Mr. Ji Cao, the manager of Heyuan wet market, a market close to the Nanjing University campus.

According to Mr. Fan, Zhongcai is located in Jiangning District of Nanjing and takes up 200 hectares of land. The first phase of the project has been constructed with a total investment of 3.8 billion CNY (0.55 billion USD). They now have 800,000 square metres

of business area for the exhibition and auction of agricultural products, including five specialized markets selling vegetables, fruits, aquatic products, processed food and meat respectively. A large cold storage facility for frozen meat is under construction. The market is the only distribution centre for agricultural products in Nanjing and the vegetable distribution centre for the whole Yangtze River Delta region. The market was established in 2006 through a consolidation of nine wholesale markets and formally commenced business in June 2010. It now has more than 30,000 products and average daily sale exceeds 6,000 tons. In 2015, the total sale of the market reached 42.7 billion CNY (6.2 billion USD) and channeled 85% of the food sold in Nanjing. The market is run by a government-controlled share-holding corporation in which the state owns 70% of the shares. The market space is rented by food vendors and companies and managed by Colourful Logistics. Government controls rent so that it is only half of that of the original wholesale markets. Currently, all 4,000 stalls have been rented out. The company renews the contract with vendors on an annual basis. The management is centralized so that all sales will go through a unified payment system and the real-time sales information is synthesized in an information centre.



Figure 5. Mr. Zhao Long Fan Presenting

The priorities of the market in serving the public interest are stabilizing food prices, maintaining a sufficient food supply, and ensuring food safety. The market has signed contracts with vegetable production bases outside Nanjing to ensure prioritized access to their produce in case of short supply. It also signed a responsibility agreement with the Nanjing government promising a sufficient food supply for Nanjing. If natural disasters occur, the market can meet seven days of food demand with its 3,000 tonnes of food reserve. In terms of food safety control, the market has hired 30 inspectors and spends 3 million CNY (436,100 USD) every year on food inspection. The major challenges facing the market include a lack of coordination in the planning of food markets, which leads to

irrational competition among low-end markets; growing competition from the rising e-commerce sector, and financial pressure due to the increasing level of investment.

The last presenter Mr. Cao introduced the management of Heyuan wet market, a local market located next to the residential neighbourhood close to Nanjing University's Xianlin campus. The market carefully plans its various sections selling different products including vegetables, meat, aquatic products, poultry, baked goods, fruit, cooked food and other products. A private company runs the market and considerable effort is expended on maintaining food safety and hygienic standards, keeping records, ensuring the accuracy of scales and handling complaints. The market has its own facilities and personnel for testing chemical residues of food sold in the market. There is a screening process of vendors and a policy of awards and penalties. The market also helps vendors find restaurant customers and institutional buyers.



Figure 6. Mr. Ji Cao Presenting

Summary

The presenters at the HCP workshop in Nanjing represented not only the three major governmental departments involving in the governance of wet markets and street vendors but also the private sector managing food markets. The workshop not only provided important insights into the operation and governance of the food system from the perspective of city officials but also enabled the HCP project to disseminate its research outcome to people outside the academic field. As such, it was an important opportunity for knowledge mobilization between researchers and policy makers. The workshop was followed by a series of field visits to different sites in the city's food system including a peri-urban agricultural nursery, a major cold storage facility, the Zhongcai wholesale market and the Heyuan wet market.

Fieldtrip: Nanjing's Urban Food System



Figure 7. Farming Plots outside Huashu Village, Xigang Sub-district in Qixia District in Nanjing



Figure 8. Purple Cabbage Greenhouse on Rehabilitated Construction Land at Niushou Agricultural Products Professional Cooperative, Guli Sub-district, Qixia District in Nanjing



Figure 9. Seedling Beds at Niushou Agricultural Products Professional Cooperative, Guli Sub-district, Qixia District in Nanjing



Figure 10. The Distribution Centre of Nanjing Tianhuan Foods Group in Jiangning District, Nanjing



Figure 11. Scooters at Nanjing Tianhuan Foods Group in Jiangning District, Nanjing



Figure 12. Vegetable Wholesalers at Zhongcai Food Distribution Centre in Jiangning District, Nanjing



Figure 13. Wintermelon Wholesalers at Zhongcai Food Distribution Centre in Jiangning District, Nanjing



Figure 14. A Vegetable Buyer at Zhongcai Food Distribution Centre in Jiangning District, Nanjing



Figure 15. The Information Control Centre at Zhongcai Food Distribution Centre in Jiangning District, Nanjing



Figure 16. Staffs at the Food Safety Inspection Lab of Zhongcai Food Distribution Centre in Jiangning District, Nanjing



Figure 17. Fruit Vendors at Heyuan Wet Market in Qixia District, Nanjing



Figure 18. Group Photo of Fieldtrip Participants with Local Government Officials at the Demonstration Centre of Guli Sub-District, Jiangning District, Nanjing